

FINNISH
DEFENCE
STUDIES



**THE SOVIET PLANS
FOR THE NORTH
WESTERN THEATRE OF
OPERATIONS
IN 1939–1944**

Ohto Manninen

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The Soviet Plans for the North
Western Theatre of Operations
in 1939-1944

Ohto Manninen

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FOREWORD

In this study my intention has been to analyse the operation plans made by the Red Army for the Finnish theatre of war in the eve of and during the Second World War. During my visits in Russia to research in the former Soviet archives it was not possible to see the original plans for operations. It was pointed out to me that the "ground level vegetation" is still the same in the border areas of Russia and Finland. This, of course, was a friendly way of saying to me that the legislation still forbids of giving those materials for researchers.

On the other hand, since about 1988, it has been possible to research other materials of the Red Army. The battle orders of the operations which were realised are mostly available, as are the directives for planning issued by the Commissariat of Defence and by the High Command or Stavka. And basing the study on these materials it is now possible to see both the general ideas of the planned operations and the solutions which were then chosen at the lower levels of decision. Some of the more important Stavka directives are not available but their content can be deduced from the lower level decisions and orders.

The above referred "vegetation" remained of course the same in Finland and in her border areas. The front lines, from which the operations were started, changed, and this in turn changed the objectives which could be put on the paper, for a front (or army group), for an army, for an army corps or a division. Some more roads and railways were built during the war, but this did not change the overall picture of the theatre. The main problem for the Red Army seems to have been the scarcity of available roads to move the troops and the difficulty of getting logistic support to the fighting armies.

Many of the operations which were planned were never realised, because the military capability needed was lacking or the high command looked for a political solution of the crisis. On the other hand the knowledge of the plans presented in this book gives, I hope, material for discussion of the great political decisions, too.

I wish to present my thanks to the friendly officials of the military and naval archives in Sanct Peterburg, Gatchina, Moscow and

Podolsk, whom I have been able to consult during these 15 years, to my colleagues in Russia and Finland, to the translators Ms. Laura Loikkanen and Mr. Malcolm Hicks and to Ms. Marjo Grönroos who has produced the maps for this book.

In Helsinki, December 6th, 2004

Ohto Manninen, Professor of Military History

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1. The first phase of the Winter War

The Soviet Union's assessment of the threat to its territory remained quite constant throughout the late 1930s, and the operative plan for 1939 began on the assumption that Germany and Poland would attack the Soviet Union simultaneously from the west - with the probable participation of the Italian navy - while Japan would attack from the east. It was estimated that Estonia, Latvia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Finland would join the war only if the operations of the Red Army and the Red Navy did not meet with success from the outset.¹

The general guidelines (or directives) for the Soviet war plans, as proposed by the General Staff, were approved by the Soviet government, the Council of People's Commissars, the Defence Committee of which was chaired by the Prime Minister, V.M. Molotov. The activities of the Red Army were directed by the Main War Council of the People's Commissariat for Defence, People's Commissar K. Voroshilov, and the activities of the Red Navy by the Main War Council of the People's Commissariat for the Navy, People's Commissar N.G. Kuznetsov. It was part of the system that the central committee of the Party and its Politburo voiced their opinions when decisions concerning important policies were made. An important position as far as operative planning was concerned was occupied by the General Staff of the Red Army, under Army Commander (1st class) B.M. Shaposhnikov (1937-1940), while the chief of the General Staff of the Navy was Flagman (2nd class) L.M. Galler (1938-1940).

In a memo that he drew up in 1937, Marshall M.N. Tukhatshevski foresaw that if war broke out, the Soviet Union would first have to seize Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and then advance to the line Grodno - Slonim in Poland. Battleships would have to be built for the Navy, and naval bases would have to be procured for these (Tallinn, Riga, Vindava and Libau). These plans bear a close resemblance to the action that Stalin took in September 1939, when the Second World War had broken out. On the other hand, Tukhatshevski considered Finland to be a separate issue from the events of Central Europe, and one for which a separate war plan would have to be made.²

It was not widely believed in the Soviet Union that Finland

would attempt an invasion. Finland's total population was 3 650 000 people, i.e. equal to that of Leningrad, and it was not capable of any extensive offensive actions on its own. However, as the threat of a world war grew, the Soviet Union did take Finland into account as a route for an attack directed at it. According to the memoirs of K.A. Meretskov, who was Commander of the Leningrad Military District at the time, Stalin's description of the situation at the end of June 1939 was that Germany was "ready to attack her neighbours, e.g. Poland and the Soviet Union, from any direction. Finland could easily become the bridgehead of the anti-Soviet actions of either of the main bourgeois-imperialist groups - the Germans or the British-French-American bloc. It was also possible that the blocs might agree on a joint attack against the Soviet Union, whereupon Finland would become small change in a game in which others would urge it to attack us as the champion of the Great War."

Certain writers have maintained that the Soviet leadership suspected the Finnish government of being ready "to benefit at the Soviet Union's expense if Japan were to attack the Soviet Union, or if any intervention against the Soviet Union were to take place." Moscow held the belief that the Finnish army would act only in a protective capacity, its most important task being to secure the free strategic concentration and organization of strong foreign troops for the invasion of the Soviet Union, and especially for the seizing of Leningrad. On the other hand - as noted above - the directives issued to the Leningrad Military District started out in 1939 from the assumption that Finland was likely to join the war only if the situation was disadvantageous to the Soviet Union. The Finns had been told several times in threatening terms that the Soviet Union would not wait for the intervening troops at the Finnish border.³

Finland's defence plan was based on the idea that the Soviet Union's main attack would come from the direction of the Karelian Isthmus. The numerous waterways of the Isthmus would direct the attack into narrow passages, and the idea was to stop the enemy at a line where the lakes in the middle part of the Isthmus and the River Vuoksi would cause congestion among the troops and their action potential would be weakened. The main defences, strengthened with permanent fortifications, were built along this line. By the beginning of the Winter War 101 concrete defence posts had been installed or rebuilt there, to form what came to be known as the Mannerheim Line. By comparison, the often mentioned Maginot

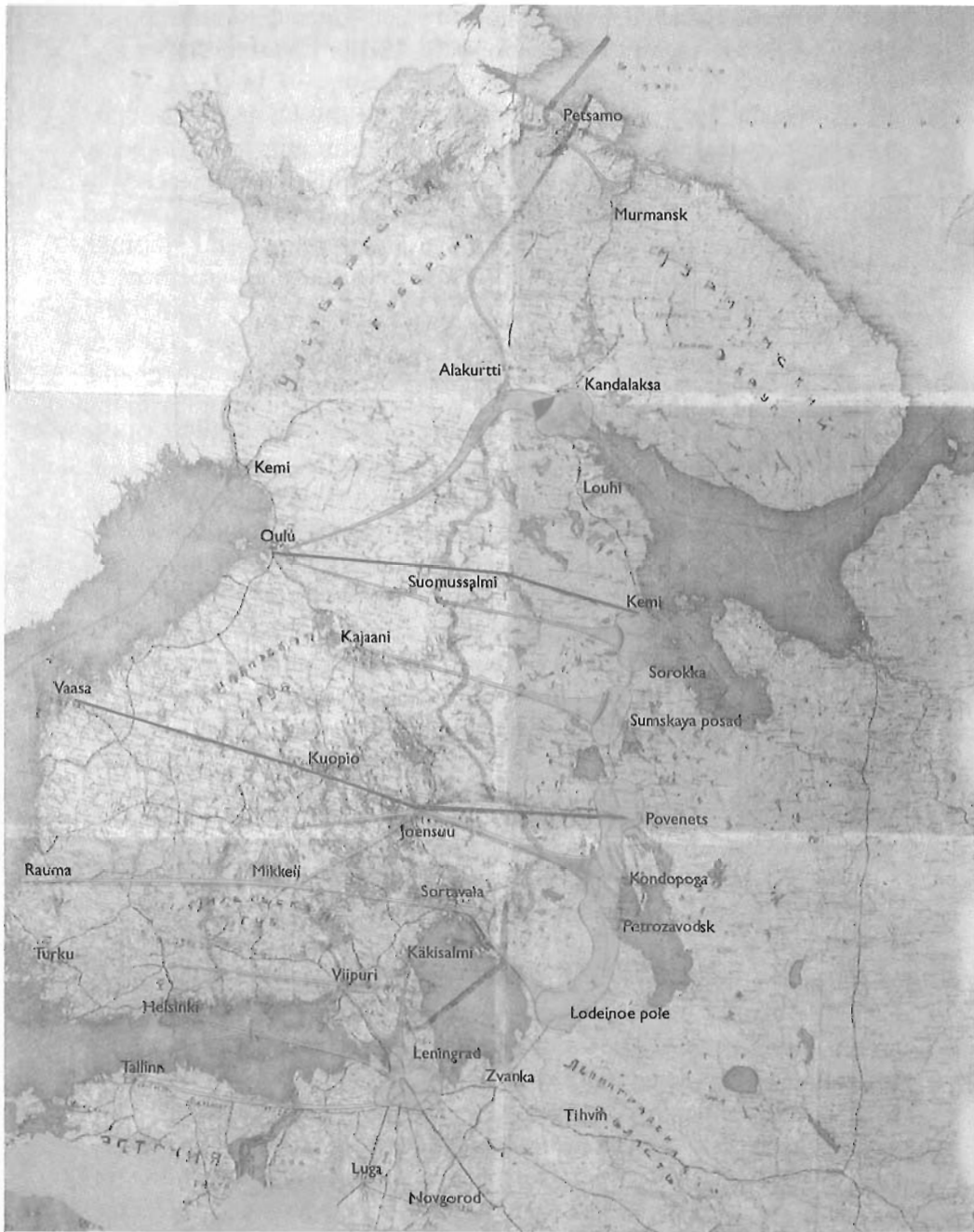
Line in the French defence zone had 5 800 concrete fortifications in an area only slightly longer, along the border between France and Germany.⁴

In the light of the directives issued to the Leningrad Military District in the 1930s, it can be deduced that an offensive was being planned and that it was calculated that Helsinki could be reached in three weeks. The main attack was to proceed through the Karelian Isthmus and Viipuri (now Vyborg) to Hämeenlinna and Helsinki. There would be an attempt to attack from the northern shore of Lake Ladoga through Sortavala and Mikkeli to reach Rauma, and small detachments – although with extensive aims – were to be sent in the direction of Pieksämäki and Oulu (*Map 1*). On the other hand, as part of a more general war plan (24.3.1938), there would be in the Northwestern theatre an operation in the Karelian isthmus to the line Käkisalme – Viipuri, and another one in the North to snatch away the Arctic coast in Petsamo and Rybatshii. A third task was, put in a vague way, to cut the connection between Finland and Sweden, while more to the south, the troops of the Red Army would attack Tallinn (from Pskov) and Riga with an “special army” of as much as 12 divisions from the reserves of High Command.⁵

The strategic position of the Åland or Ahvenanmaa Islands as the key to the Gulf of Bothnia was well known in view of experiences in World War I, but even in 1939 the great powers had no chances of invading it. The German Navy estimated its transportation capacity to be too small, and the Soviet Union believed, in the estimates it produced in the late 1930s, that Germany would try to use Finnish territory, especially the southern coast, for an offensive, and thus possibly the Åland Islands as well.

When negotiating for cooperation with France and Great Britain in the summer of 1939, the Soviet Union planned to obtain bases in the mouth of the Gulf of Finland and on the Åland Islands. In a crisis situation these bases were to be taken over without asking for permission from Finland and Estonia. The great powers did not reach an agreement, however.

The Åland Islands did not play an important role in the plans of the Soviet Baltic Fleet in the 1930s. A surprise attack on the Åland Islands from Kronstadt was not even considered feasible. On the political level, however, Moscow stood firm and persuaded Sweden to give up its planned defence treaty with Finland regarding the Åland Islands. The practical plans of the Baltic Fleet were limited to the idea



Map 1. The operative idea in the 1930's

of invading a few islands in the Gulf of Finland, in addition to which mine fields were to be laid on the Finnish side of Suursaari. Nevertheless, preparations were made in November 1939 for an invasion of Hanko from the sea once the Red Army's offensive had proceeded to the inner parts of Finland.

According to the directive that the Baltic Fleet received from the People's Commissariat for the Navy on 2 August, 1939, the war plan had to include: 1) destruction of the Navies of Finland, Estonia and Latvia, 2) invasions of Suursaari, Suurtytärsaari, Pieni Tytärsaari, Lavansaari and Seiskari, and 3) the use of submarines to prevent the Germans from using the Turku archipelago, the Åland Islands, Helsinki and Tallinn as support bases.

The operative significance of the islands in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland was emphasized by the fact that they were to be occupied even without a declaration of war if Finland were to violate her declaration of neutrality or if the Soviet government decided to ignore this neutrality. The Soviet Union had proposed a similar solution for the mouth of the Gulf of Finland to the Western states in Moscow in summer 1939.⁶

Meretskov's plan

From the point of view of the Winter War, an important planning phase for the Red Army was related to summer 1939, as recounted in the memoirs of A. Vasilyevski and K.A. Meretskov. One significant point about this time is that the operational plans were changed during the year, whereas reviews were usually ordered in the winter. Vasilyevski, who was deputy chief of the operational division of the General Staff at the time, recalls that the Main Military Soviet reconsidered the readiness of the Soviet armed forces for action on the Finnish front when "the international situation was weakening", i.e. before the Second World War had broken out. The General Staff presented a detailed plan that had been drawn up earlier and approved by Voroshilov, the basic ideas and main features having been the work of B.M. Shaposhnikov. When drawing up the plan, the General Staff had set out from the fact that Finland might receive help from some of the great powers. According to Shaposhnikov, a "retaliatory strike" against Finland would by no means be a simple matter. It would require "a harsh and difficult war lasting months, at least." It should be remembered that Shaposhnikov had been the

commander of the Leningrad Military District in 1935-1937. He emphasized at a meeting of the Main Military Soviet that war operations should be carried out quickly, otherwise Finland would receive significant help from the outside and the conflict would expand.

Stalin laughed at Shaposhnikov: "You are asking for such immense strength and resources to defeat a country like Finland. Such strength is not needed."

The military and political leadership of the Soviet Union did not expect Finland to put up serious resistance. This was partly based on wishful thinking, and partly it was calculated that the weaponry of the Finnish armed forces was old, since it had been inherited from the Tsar's army, that there would be desertion, and that fighting against the Red Army would be considered an overwhelming task. The workers and the poorest peasants were thought to be secretly unhappy with the government's policy, and it was expected that they would demand improved relations with the Soviet Union and threaten to punish those whose policy was hostile to the Soviet Union.

The Main Military Soviet did not choose Shaposhnikov's plan, but ordered the commander of the Leningrad Military District, Meretskov, to draw up a new version. Related to this is the fact that the People's Commissariat for Defence decided on 13 June that military exercises should be held in the Leningrad Military District in the autumn under Meretskov's command. Preparations were made in practice, as well. On 15 June the logistic administration of the Red Army ordered the Leningrad Military District to establish provisions stations for arriving troops along the railways leading to Leningrad, Murmansk and Archangelsk by 25 August, and logistic centres in Vologda, Tikhvin and Dno by 28 August.

According to his memoirs, Meretskov personally received a task from Stalin at the end of June 1939 to draw up a memorandum on the options for "a retaliatory attack" on Finland in the area of Murmansk and Leningrad. Meretskov drew up the memorandum in the appointed time - 2-3 weeks - and received comments on it from Stalin and Voroshilov in Moscow in late July. They insisted that the attack should last only a couple of weeks and promised that Red Army troops even from outside the Leningrad Military District could be used. Meretskov was told to submit a new report on the defence preparations in the early autumn.⁷

Prior to the military expedition to Poland that began on 17 Sep-

tember, the Soviet Union raised the level of its war preparations in other directions as well, e.g. by moving troops to the Baltic and to the Finnish border. The concentration of troops at the border on the Arctic Ocean coast in the north was commenced on 3 September, and soon the Murmansk operative group was established. Its tasks were to prevent an attack on the Polyarnoye-Murmansk-Kandalaksha area from the west, defend the Kola Peninsula in the north and prevent landings. Troops on the Karelian Isthmus were similarly made ready for war.

An important change was made in the plans of the military council of the Leningrad Military District in mid-September concerning the basic grouping on the eastern border of Finland, in that it was decided to create a larger force by moving three divisions there in addition to the four already dispatched to the area. The leading organs were to be the headquarters of the 8th Army and two Corps headquarters.

The reinforcement of the 8th Army also meant that there was now one additional direction of attack. Previously only defence had been planned in the Uhtua-Repola (or Rebola) area, but now the Special Army Corps was to be positioned there to operate towards Kajaani and Nurmes and thus support the attack on Vitele (eastern coast of Ladoga) by the main force of the 8th Army. The idea of attacking the rear of the Finnish main forces from the east got more strength. Implementation of this plan depended on how the Baltic (and European) situation developed. The planning work was aimed at a readiness to commence operations against Finland in late October - early November, but in mid-September the time when the attack groupings were to be completed was moved to November.⁸

The concentration of Soviet troops along the border in the Karelian Isthmus began in early October, i.e. after the Baltic negotiations had ended with results that satisfied the Soviet Union and when negotiations with Finland were beginning. At the same time, Finland mobilized its defences. It was at this point in time that the Finnish operation formally began, as the Leningrad Military District issued battle order number 1 to its troops at 1830 hours on 8 October: they were to group themselves along the border in the Isthmus by the morning of 10 October. Heavy artillery and three armoured brigades were sent to the area as well as reinforcements to the eastern border of Finland.

Determined preparations for an attack on Finland began in the

last week of October. New troops were brought in and there were changes in the grouping. In accordance with the plans made in September, an order was given on 24 October for three more divisions to move to the Isthmus. The signal activities of the district that were an important prerequisite for the attack were mobilized with an order given on 29 October, on the basis of which the 8th Army, among others, sent out its own signal order on 2 November in which the future location of the headquarters was defined as Loimola on the Finnish side of the border.

A good example of this line of thinking is Meretskov's report written at the end of his inspection of combat training by the 8th Army (on 28.10. - 4.11.1939), in which he noted that there were only a limited number of days available for the troops to adjust to new battle conditions (i.e. in Finland). He also urged them to prepare signposts and name boards in Russian for the main population centres.⁹

The main task laid down in the plan "to defeat the Army and Navy of Finland" prepared by the military council of the Leningrad Military District for the General Staff on 29 October was to break Finland's defences: "our troops will force their way into Finnish territory simultaneously from all directions with the aim of isolating the enemy's grouping and in cooperation with the Air Force will deliver the decisive blow that will lead to the defeat of the Finnish army". In the Karelian Isthmus this meant "disbanding the protective groups, seizing the defence line across the Isthmus and crushing the enemy's main force with a decisive strike to the north-east, in cooperation with the troops proceeding in the direction of Vitele and those in the Sortavala, Viipuri and Käkisalme sectors and seizing the area to line Hiitola - Imatra - Viipuri." After performing this task, the troops were to prepare for further action directed towards the inner parts of Finland. The plan also considered it possible that Sweden would send 2 or 3 divisions and at most 100 aircraft to assist the Finns.

The plan deduced that "the endurance of Finland's army will depend on the result of the first battles." Therefore emphasis was placed on a massive first strike to be carried out with a major force. It was calculated that the operation could be accomplished in 10-15 days, i.e. in 8-10 days on the Isthmus and in 15 days in the middle parts of Finland, the rate of advance being 10-12 km per day. In the instructions given to the commands on 29 November the Leningrad Military District set even stricter goals - apparently in order to raise

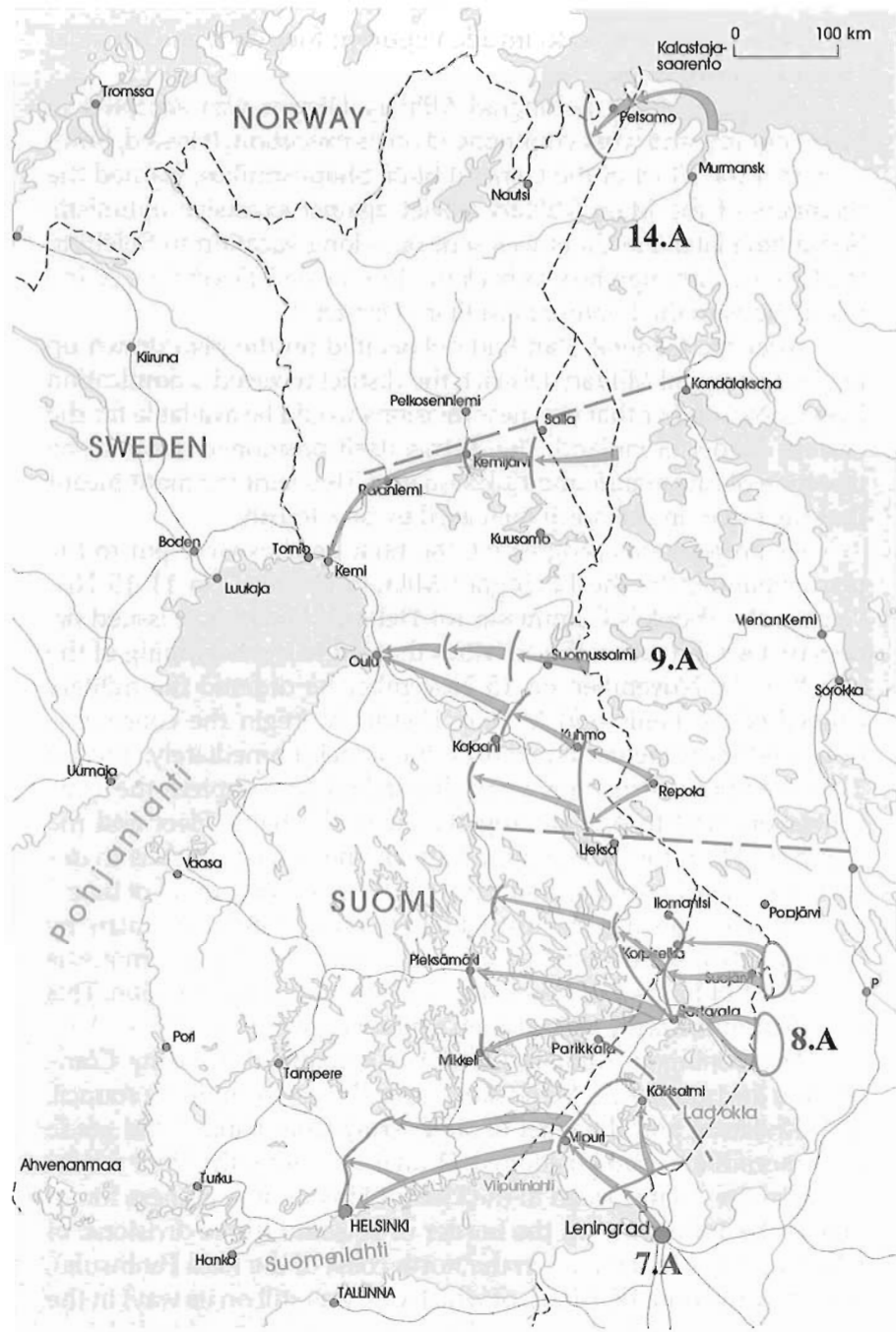
the spirits of the troops: to invade Viipuri in four days and arrive at Helsinki in two weeks.¹⁰

The plan of the Leningrad Military District was accepted in broad outline, and work commenced on its execution. It is said, however, that the Chief of the General Staff, Shaposhnikov, warned the members of the Main Military Soviet against excessive optimism. Some time later the Chief was sent on a long vacation to Sotshi in the Crimea, although he was back in Moscow on 1 December, giving instructions to the Leningrad Military District.¹¹

After the General Staff had deliberated on the plan drawn up by the Leningrad Military District, the district received a notification in early November that two new divisions would be available for the eastern border of Finland. The district itself positioned them in the direction of Murmansk and Kuhmoniemi. This reinforcement meant that the forces in the north increased by one-fourth.

As preparations progressed, the final touches were put to the plan submitted by the Leningrad Military District. On 11-15 November the People's Commissar for Defence, Voroshilov, issued orders that set in motion the activities that led to the beginning of the attack on 30 November, on 15 November he ordered the military council of the Leningrad Military District to begin the concentrations and movements required by the attack immediately, and on 17 November instructions were dispatched to complete the concentrations and to prepare, together with the Baltic Fleet and the Northern Fleet, for "a determined attack, the aim of which is to destroy the enemy's ground and naval forces in a short period of time". The military council of the district had to present its "action plan" by 20 November. At this time an army corps was established that was composed of Finns and Karelians resident in the Soviet Union. This was to form the army of Kuusinen's puppet government.¹²

The Leningrad Military District (commanded by Army Commander 2nd grade K.A. Meretskov, a member of the military council, A.A. Zhdanov, and the chief of staff, Army Commander 2nd grade I.V. Smorodinov) had positioned 21 divisions along the front reaching from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Finland in readiness for an attack: the 14th Army on the border of Petsamo (three divisions, of which one was in the rear on the north coast of the Kola Peninsula), the 9th Army (four divisions, of which one was still on its way) in the areas of Kandalaksha, Uhtua and Repola, the 8th Army (six divisions and one armoured brigade) in the area of Petrozavodsk, and the 7th



Map 2. The operation orders in November 1939

Army (nine divisions, one armoured corps and three armoured brigades), and one division in reserve on the Karelian Isthmus. (*Map 2*)

The size of the Soviet concentration on the north-eastern border of Finland at the end of November (excluding border troops and the rearguard and special troops) was approximately 400 000 men, 1 915 cannons, 1 500 tanks and 1 000 combat aircraft. The Baltic Fleet then had another 383 combat aircraft at the ready.

The high command of the Soviet armed forces organized itself into a command body, adopting the traditional name of "stavka". The members were Voroshilov, as commander-in-chief, Stalin, N.G. Kuznetsov and the Chief of General Staff, Shaposhnikov.¹³

Against the Mannerheim line

On 30 November at 0730/0830 hours, after 30 -minutes of artillery preparation, the Red Army troops positioned along the border commenced an attack along a 1 610 km front that stretched all the way from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Finland. The Soviet Union had grouped at least one division along every road leading from east to west, and in some places even two divisions. The attack began along all the roads at the same time, and the Finnish troops everywhere had to withdraw long distances, approximately 80-100 km.

According to a directive issued by the Leningrad Military District on 29 November, the tasks of the Baltic fleet included seizing Suursaari, Lavansaari, Tytärsaari and Seiskari and landing with a regiment-sized force to the coast of Finland. The Fleet did seize the islands in the Gulf of Finland on the first days of the war according to plan, there being no resistance.¹⁴

After seizing the islands, the Baltic Fleet was ordered to begin destroying Finland's coastal fortifications (2.12.) and to begin preparations for a landing in the Koivisto area and between Viipuri and Hamina (4.12.), using one division. The target chosen was the Pitkäpaasi area, and Soviet vessels were carrying out reconnaissance related to this operation when they attacked the Kilpisaari battery (6.12.). The landings never took place, however, at first because it was not possible to silence the Finnish coastal batteries, and later because the high command decided on 30 December to cancel the instructions to this effect. By 20 January the situation had changed, as the Gulf of Finland had frozen over and it was not possible to start

planning for operations that would take place on ice.¹⁵

The Red Army was prepared for a swift breakthrough, and it required an undelayed, flexible lightning war: "Once the attack has commenced, the action of the troops must be determined, they cannot be tied down to front-line battles where the enemy's fortified positions are. We must leave protective troops at the front, go round the flanks and to the rear, and continue to carry out the task assigned to us."

The attack did not go at all according to the preconceptions of the Soviet military and political leadership. The course of events was in every respect different from what had been presumed. The battles became prolonged, and every kilometre of the advance had to be accomplished with great difficulty. After crossing the border quickly, the attack stopped almost completely.

The high command of the Red Army had already taken the Leningrad Military District under firm patronage at the beginning of the war. Exhortations arrived frequently. Three days after the start of the war (2.12.) the high command admonished the 8th and 9th Armies for their slow and indecisive advance: "We cannot slouch down in Finland for a long time, carrying out day's marches of 4--5 km. We have to finish the matter quickly with a determined offensive by our troops." In order to intensify the attack, Army Commissar Lev Mekhlis was sent to the 9th Army as a representative of the high command and Army Commander (1st class) G.I. Kulik to the 8th Army.

The patience of the Soviet leadership lasted a little over a week. The "front-line headquarters that exists in practice" (i.e. the staff of the Leningrad district) was dissolved on 9 December and the 14th, 9th, 8th and 7th armies and the Baltic and Northern Fleets were moved from the command of the Leningrad Military District to the direct control of the Red Army high command "stavka".¹⁶

The Soviets were advancing through the sparse road network of the uninhabited forests and approaching intersections from which they were to spread out and thus use their superiority in numbers to full advantage. Above all their troops were approaching the Sortavala – Nurmes - Oulu railway line, which was important to the Finnish logistics and movement of troops. If the line fell into Soviet hands, it would soon have meant that Finland was cut in two at the level of Oulu and overland traffic between Finland and Sweden was cease.

Both sides considered the most important front of the war to be on the Karelian Isthmus, where the main forces were concentrated.

This is where the 7th Army (commanded by Army Commander 2nd class V.F. Jakovlev) attacked. Its task, with support from the Baltic Fleet, was to destroy the Finnish troops in front of it, seize the defence lines on the Isthmus and advance to a line Hiitola station - Antrea station - Viipuri, after which it was to organize an advance to Lahti, Hyvinkää and Helsinki together with the 8th Army. The army included the 19th Army Corps in the west (its goal being Viipuri) and the 50th Army Corps in the east (its target being the Antrea station).

The schedule of the 7th Army was determined as follows: the depth of the operation would be 85-110 km and the goal would be reached in 12-15 days. In other words, the first stage (advancing to Finland's main defence line) would last 4-5 days, the second stage (breaking the line) another 4-5 days, and the third stage to the Viipuri - Käkisalme line, a further 4-5 days.¹⁷ It was later emphasized to the troops that it would be very appropriate to arrive at Helsinki by Stalin's 60th birthday on 21 December. The Red Army progressed very cautiously, however, and could not always remain in contact with the Finns, who had built obstacles, minefields, tank barriers and support lines with the help of which they could move slowly from one line to another and carry out confusing strikes with small patrols between the advancing Soviet troops. The Red Army would cease hostilities at night and withdraw to cover. Its traffic arrangements were also inadequate at first. There were traffic jams on the Isthmus, men and sometimes even detachments lost their way, and the grouping of troops became more difficult.¹⁸

The depth of Finland's area for protective delaying action was 12 km on the eastern side, 45-50 in the middle and 60-65 km in the west. The Soviet troops made contact with Finland's main defence position in the east, by Suvanto, on 4 December, that in the middle sector on 6 December and that in the west, on the coast of the Gulf of Finland, on 10 December. The average speed of attack of the 7th Army had been 3-7 km per day, less than half of what had been planned. Traffic jams in the rear and the fact that the battles were called off at night played a role in this slow progress.

Despite the slow advance, the Soviet troops waged war mainly with pre-war points of emphasis at first, their planning being focused on solving immediate concrete problems. Meretskov was already being told by the high command on 2 December to reinforce the attack near Taipaleenjoki from one division to two, with the aim

of crossing the River Vuoksi at Taipaleenjoki and proceeding from there to the rear of the main Finnish position. The troops on this flank were combined into an operation group commanded by Corps Commander V.D. Gröndahl, with the 10th Armoured Corps in reserve, its light tanks waiting for the resistance to break down in order to be able to reach out quickly far into the Finns' rear. According to Matvei Zakharov, Meretskov was exaggerating the attack on the Eastern Isthmus against the ideas of the General Staff.

The troops of Gröndahl's group began an attack on three sectors on 6 December. Their attempts at breakthrough were supported by strong artillery and approximately 150 tanks, but they failed, leaving 35 destroyed tanks in front of the Finnish positions. After advancing 1-1.5 km, the detachments of the most successful 19th Infantry Regiment seized a bridgehead position on the other side of the river at Koukunniemi and took a firm hold on it. The Red Army attempted to cross the River Vuoksi in the direction of Kiviniemi on 7 December, but failed.¹⁹

In order to make the command more effective, Meretskov himself was ordered to take charge of the 7th Army. In practice he had already moved to the post on 7 December. The command in the field was reinforced with personnel from the headquarters of the military district. The operative solution did not change much when preparations were made to break the Mannerheim Line. The Army's battle order on 12 December 1939 entailed the following goals: Gröndahl's group was to attack Käkisalmi and Antrea, the 19th Army Corps was to break the defence position in Leipäsuo and then attack the Pienpero area, the 50th Army Corps was to break the defence position in the area of Lähde - Summa, advance to Kämärä station and then attack Näykkijärvi, while the Lazarenko detachment, which consisted mainly of fortification troops, was to attack the area of Kilpola - Kolkkala and secure the left flank.

Thus the plan now had - even for the command headquarters - a clear point of emphasis in the direction of the main Leningrad-Viipuri railway. After the breakthrough the light armoured troops were to advance through its western flank using the main road and cut off the road used by the Finns for withdrawal. To do this, the 10th Armoured Corps was to follow the 50th Corps and then spread out in the direction of Huumola, Säiniö station and Repola (in the north part of the Isthmus). This would prevent a Finnish withdrawal into Viipuri and it would be possible to attack their rear. In accordance

with the original plan, the Armoured Corps was supposed to be used for expansion of the breakthrough, i.e. a rapid advance to Viipuri after the collapse of the main defence line. At first this corps had been heading towards the Kiviniemi bridge and the road on the east side of the River Vuoksi, but when the road became blocked there, it was thrown to Summa to wait for the breakthrough. The high command wanted to increase the use of the Air Force in further battles, and sent bomber regiments from the reserve of stavka (1st Special Air Force) to the 7th Army.

Due to the partial regrouping of the troops, the delayed operation did not begin until 15-17 December, and it reached its greatest strength on 19 December. Despite unusually fierce attacks, the troops could not achieve any notable success during the first week. The attack by three Soviet divisions on the eastern Isthmus on 15-17 December was fended off, while in the direction of the main attack, along the Viipuri-Leningrad railway, the Soviet troops tried to break through with the strength of three divisions in the Summa-Lähde section, which was considered the most dangerous. Dozens of destroyed tanks were left on the battlefield. In five days the 20th Armoured Brigade alone lost 67 heavy tanks along this part of the front, most of them on 17 and 19 December. The Finnish defensive victory came to be called "the miracle of Summa" all over the world.

By 20 December the Soviet troops in the Isthmus had completely lost the initiative, and the Finns considered the situation suitable for an extensive counter-offensive. The aim was to beat the enemy in front of the Mannerheim Line with a two-sided encirclement. The operation began on 23 December, but soon lost its strength. It nevertheless came very close to the headquarters of the 50th Corps, which Meretskov was visiting at the time, and in this way it had a concrete effect on the command of the Soviet offensive. It was becoming clear that troops would have to be increased if the Mannerheim Line was to be broken.

After receiving more troops, the Gröndahl group began yet another attack on the eastern Isthmus. It suddenly tried to cross Suvanto into the western flank of the defenders of Taipale with a strength of approximately one division on 25-27 December. The aim was to advance to Viljakkala and then to Sakkola station and Käkisalmi after the breakthrough. The crossing of Suvanto was successful, but the attackers were fended off.²⁰

After this the battles quietened down on the Isthmus. It had be-

come clear that the Red Army's operation plan was unrealistic. The troops were exhausted, they had suffered great losses and needed rest and reinforcements. For this reason the Main Military Soviet decided to temporarily stop the offensive and prepare more carefully for a breakthrough at the Mannerheim Line.

Preparations were begun by first improving the organization of the command of the troops. By order of the "stavka", the 7th Army was divided into two parts on 26 December: the 13th Army, operating in the direction of Käkisalmi and commanded by Corps Commander V.D. Gröndahl, and the 7th Army, operating in the direction of Viipuri, still commanded by Army Commander 2nd grade K.A. Meretskoy.²¹

Battles to the north of Lake Ladoga

The task of the Soviet 8th Army stationed in Olonets (commanded by Division Commander I.N. Khabarov, and from approximately 4 December onwards by Corps Commander V.N. Kurdyumov) was to advance 90 km in ten days to the line Joensuu-Tohmajärvi-Sortavala. After that it was to force its way to the rear of the Finnish troops on the Isthmus and help the 7th Army destroy them. In the next phase it was to attack Mikkeli, and its right wing was to attack the Pielisjärvi and Maanselkä areas and Kuopio and contact the 9th Army. The 8th Army included six divisions, a total of 75 000 men and 154 tanks.

The attack began successfully, and the Finnish troops of the IV Army Corps had to surrender the Tulemajoki Line on the road along the north-east shore of Lake Ladoga on 2 December.

Further north, the Soviet troops advanced 30 km in a week to Kollaanjoki and 60 km to Tolvajärvi in the Korpiselkä direction, to which the defenders had withdrawn from the level of Ägläjärvi on 5 December. The same speed was maintained by the (155th) Division, which attacked Ilomantsi from Porajärvi and arrived at Lutikkavaara on 6 December.

As the Soviet attack in the Karelian Isthmus had been stopped, the emphasis of the overall plan was moved (around 10th December) a little to the South: now the main idea for the 8th Army was to reach the line Parikkala station – Hiitola, to meet the 7th Army there, and the left flank of the 9th Army was moved a little southwards, from Iisalmi to Kuopio.²²

Some of the forces of the Finnish IV Army Corps held the Soviet troops back on the Syskyjärvi-Kitelä defence line, while another part began counter-offensives on the northern flank and between detachments. At Tolvajärvi the Soviet troops were dangerously approaching road networks that reached to the rear of the IV Army Corps, so that the Talvela Group was given the task of defeating the enemy forces that had advanced in the direction of Korpiselkä and Ilomantsi and, together with the IV Army Corps, of recapturing Suojärvi. This strike caused the Soviet advance to halt. In three days the Soviet 139th Division was defeated, and in the same manner the 75th Division was overcome at Ägläjärvi by Christmas Eve. After this the front in this area remained stationary until the end of the war.

Around this time the IV Army Corps began its own counter-offensive on the north side of Lake Ladoga. After some initial difficulties, this led to the encirclement of two Soviet divisions by mid-January. Both divisions on the left flank of the 8th Army (the 18th and 168th Divisions) had already had to stop their attack by 19 December, and at the end of the year the situation on the front forced the command of the 8th Army to switch to active defence. The 18th Division, which had advanced in the direction of Ruhtinaanmäki moved to a defensive grouping, and the Finns had cut off all its communications in the direction of Uomaa by 3 January.²³

The Red Army's offensive halted in this direction, but on the other hand, the Finnish troops were tied down to an exhausting phase of siege warfare, as they did not have enough fire power to resolve the encirclement. The basic problem for the Soviet 8th Army was the difficulty of obtaining enough troops for the operation.

The thought of cutting Finland in two

Battles were fought under even more difficult conditions in the directions of Kuhmo, Suomussalmi and Salla than on the east side of Lake Ladoga. The climate was harsher, habitation was sparse and roadless areas dozens of kilometres wide separated the attacking divisions from each other. Thus a single front did not form on the eastern border of Finland, but instead narrow fronts that were only a few kilometres wide at first were created along the main roads. Superiority could not be used to any benefit in the direction of the roads. On the contrary, the advancing division formed a column dozens of kilometres long, so that it was difficult to organize protection for its

flanks. Under these conditions skill in moving over roadless terrain and maintaining troops there became decisive.

It was not until the end of October 1939, as war with Finland became a current issue, that the Red Army's strength had been increased in this area and a decision had been made to advance to Oulu with the Special Army Corps in the lead. The number of troops in the northern sections of the front was increased further in November, and this made it necessary to establish a new army headquarters (the 9th Army) in Kemi on the White Sea. The Murmansk group was renamed as the 14th Army. The Special Army Corps and the headquarters of the 47th Army Corps were subordinated to the 9th Army (commanded by Corps Commander M.P. Dukhanov, and from 22 December onwards by Corps Commander V.I. Tshuikov). When the battles began the army had 110 000 men and 191 tanks. Russian Karelia, including the Kantalahti (Kandalaksha) area, became the support area. Thus the Oulu direction had altered within a few weeks from a binding front into an independent and important direction for attack.

Finland's "waist" was a very sensitive area. If the Soviet troops could reach the good roads leading west from Suomussalmi, they could quickly advance to Oulu, cut the country in half and isolate it from Sweden.

The task of the 9th Army was to attack Kajaani and advance to the Kemijärvi-Kontiomäki line and seize Oulu. The Military Soviet of the army began with the thought that it was highly improbable that large troops from other Scandinavian countries would come to Finland's aid. The seizing of Oulu would prevent outside material and assistance from reaching the Finnish army and it would leave it completely encircled. A sufficiently large group would have to be directed against Oulu that it could also operate to the south-west, and a strong detachment would have to be sent from Oulu to Kemi. The supportive attack would start from Suomussalmi through Puolanka to Oulu and the Red Army's right flank would advance through Salla and Kemijärvi to Rovaniemi and Kemi.

According to the military council of the 9th Army, the overall duration of the operation would be approximately 20 days to the Oulu - Kemi line and spreading to the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. The operation was planned to take place in three long leaps (70 km, 75 km and 90 km; approximately 14, 15 and 30 km per day, respectively). It was obvious that an advance would be made to the Swed-

ish border. The directions given by the Leningrad Military District on 29 November were that "When arriving at the borders of Sweden and Norway, these are not to be violated nor are provocations to be tolerated. The soldiers of the Swedish and Norwegian armed forces are to be saluted at the border."

As a result of a superficial and limited evaluation of the Finnish troops, the 9th Army assumed that the main forces would be met with along the line Puolanka - Kontiomäki, or even around Oulu, but in reality the encounter took place along the border between Finland and the Soviet Union. The 9th Army was greeted by only four Finnish battalions at the beginning of the war, but these soon received reinforcements from Kajaani and Oulu.²⁴

The 54th Division of the Red Army Special Army Corps attacked in the Repola-Kuhmo direction, fighting its way towards Kuhmo and Korpisalmi, arriving in one week at the important crossroads at Rasti (6 December) and threatening Finland's connections running from north to south. The Finnish troops carried out a counter-offensive, however, and encircled the enemy, so that the division had to fend off Finnish attacks until the end of the war.²⁵

The Soviet aim in the Kandalaksha - Salla direction was to seize Rovaniemi and continue from there towards Tornio. The task of the defending Finnish battalion was difficult, because there was only a little snow and the freezing of the ground increased the infantry's opportunities to advance off the roads. The detachments of the Soviet 122nd Division defeated the delaying Finns - now two battalions - and reached the village of Salla, 110 km from the border, on 8 December. They captured an intersection from where it was possible to advance through Joutsijärvi to Kemijärvi and through Savukoski to Pelkosenniemi, and arrived in Joutsijärvi and the Pelkosenniemi area to the north on 16 December. In two and a half weeks they had advanced 200 km. The troops were directly threatening Kemijärvi, the terminal of the Kemi-Rovaniemi-Kemijärvi railway.

The counter-attack by the Finnish Lapland Group drove the Soviet troops back from Pelkosenniemi for a distance of 20 km through Savukoski to Saija (north-west of the village of Salla) on 19 December. There the front line settled, and the imminent threat to the Finnish road from the Arctic Ocean was removed²⁶

The Red Army's 163rd Division from Uhtua (now known as Kalevala) attacked Suomussalmi from the direction of the roads of Juntusranta and Raate, and its troops joined in the village of Suomus-

salmi on 8 December. The strength of the defenders increased from one battalion to two, and first the Siilasvuo Brigade and then the Siilasvuo Group were established on 6-7 December (commanded by Colonel Hjalmar Siilasvuo). Siilasvuo began a counter-offensive on 11 December that cut off the maintenance connections of the Soviet troops in the direction of Raate. The initiative now switched to the Finns. The 163rd Division was defending the village of Suomussalmi and the areas to the west and north of it.

The task given to the 9th Army before the war had emphasized speedy advance and circumventing enemy units that had settled for defence. When faced with resistance, the army headquarters was supposed to shift its emphasis to solving the problem and to finding a faster way of advancing. In practice, regroupings took more time than had been expected. When the Raate road had been cut off, the emphasis of the Soviet troops was shifted towards Juntusranta-Suomussalmi. Following an order from the high command, the commander of the army ordered the 44th Division, originally meant for the area south of Kajaani, to move in the direction of Raate.

Once reinforcements had arrived, the Finns could attack the main forces of the 163rd Division on 27 December. At first the situation seemed unclear, but the Soviet troops had already given up fighting by 28 December. What was left of the division regrouped for defence at the level of Juntusranta.

When the battle at Suomussalmi ended, the Finns already knew that the new 44th Division was coming to the 163rd Division's assistance from Vashenvara. To the Finns' surprise, it stopped on the Raate road and formed a long march column – with its head 33 km over the border – and did not attempt to use its superiority to crush the fairly small Finnish detachment that could be spared from the battle of Suomussalmi. Snow and the difficult terrain prevented the Soviet troops from making full use of their technical superiority. The 44th Division had arrived from the Ukraine completely unprepared for fighting under the conditions prevailing in this north-western theatre of war. The Finns cut off the column that had squeezed along the road in several places and had destroyed them one by one in fierce battles by 7 January. The Division was almost completely annihilated. The remaining parts moved to defence positions along the road 9 km from the border, but it took a long time for the Soviet troops to concentrate reinforcements in the direction of Suomussalmi.²⁷

On 26 December the new commander of the 9th Army, V.I. Tshuikov, decisively transferred the point of emphasis to the right flank, in the direction of Kandalaksha-Salla. The headquarters of the Special Army Corps had been brought there from the blocked Kuhmo direction to act as the command echelon and the 88th Division began to arrive from Archangel to the aid of the 122nd Division. There was not enough manpower to continue the attack here, either, however, as the troops had been exhausted by the difficult conditions under which the previous attack had taken place. Due to maintenance difficulties, the Russians withdrew from Joutsijärvi to Märkäjärvi on 11-16 January. Bringing in new troops was a slow process because of limited rail transport capacity and ice obstacles, which meant that shipments to Kemi from the Archangel direction were effectively blocked from 8 January onwards.²⁸

The defeats at Suomussalmi, Raate, Joutsijärvi and Kuhmo caused a threatening situation that continued for a long time, and in early 1940 the 9th Army had to concentrate on resolving this situation.

The capture of Petsamo

When the Winter War broke out, the task of the 14th Army, established in Murmansk, was to seize Kalastajasaarento and Petsamo with the support of the Northern Fleet, build fortifications in the area and protect the southern side, preventing men and weapons from being brought in from the harbour of Kirkenes in Norway and preventing landings on the Murmansk coast. The Army also had to take account of Norway's participation in the war.

In the Murmansk direction the Soviet 104th and 52nd Divisions seized without much effort Kalastajasaarento, Srednisaarento and the monastery and Liinahamari harbour in Petsamo itself shortly after war broke out. In the first 8 days the detachments of the Red Army advanced 150 km. The Finns destroyed the harbour equipment and fishing boats at Liinahamari, however, and carried out delaying actions as far as the level of Höyhenjärvi, where the Soviet advance stopped on 18 December. The long distances required the securing of traffic connections, and they also made troop maintenance more difficult. Naturally, maintenance preparations had not been made for an attack on Rovaniemi through the wild countryside of Lapland, even though the goal of the army after the first success was set

as being the capture of Rovaniemi and an advance to Alapitkä and Pelkosenniemi. Fighting was also hampered by the arctic weather conditions and the two months of almost continuous night.²⁹

Notes

- ¹ For this study directives from several years were used: 9.3. and 9.12. 1935 and 15.5. 1936 (RGAVMF fond 92 opis 2 delo 260), 30.12. 1936 and 13.1. and 23.3. 1937 (RGAVMF fond 92 opis 2 delo 297), 27.2. 1939 (RGAVMF Fond 1877 opis 1 delo 77) and 2.8. 1939 (RGAVMF fond 92 opis 2 delo 448). Manninen, Neuvostoliiton operatiiviset suunnitelmat 1939-1941 Suomen suunnalla. 1993 p. 78.
- ² 1937. Okazanija marshala Tuhatshevskogo. Voenno-Istoritsheskij Zhurnal (lyh. VIZ) 8/1991 p. 44-53 and 9/1991 p. 55-63.
- ³ Manninen 1993 p. 78-80. 85, I.N. Venkov, Plany storon i hod boevykh dejstvij (mscr. 1992), p. 8.
- ⁴ Reino Arimo, Suomen puolustus suunnitelmat, passim. Arimo, Suomen linnoittamisen historia, 114.
- ⁵ Manninen 1993 p.80-85. God 1941:2 p. 565 (24.3.1938). The more wide lines are on a booty map in the Finnish War Museum. - The means are dating the map are not very good. It was printed before 1938, but the attack arrows may have been made later, anyway before the autumn of 1939.
- ⁶ Manninen 1993 p. 83-84.
- ⁷ RGVA Fond 25888 opis 15 delo 458 p. 70-72. Manninen 1993 p.85- 87; Manninen, 1987 p. 84-85; A. Vasilevskiy, Delo vsej zhizni p. 95-96; K.A. Meretskov, Na sluzhbe narodu p. 178-179; N. I. Baryshnikov, Neuvostoliittolais-suomalainen sota. 1989 p. 136.
- ⁸ Manninen 1993 p. 88-89. Sovjetsko-finljandskaja vojna 1939-1940 gg. na more, 1946, II p. 17. Mikhail Semiryaga, The Winter War (Moscow 1990), p. 12. The border of Murmansk group on the left to 56. Corps was Knjazhaja – Orijärvi – Vuorijärvi. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 7 introduction and Fond 25888 opis 11 delo 17 p. 19-37, 176-186. - In earlier plans the headquarters of the 7th Army had been reserved for the Karelian Isthmus, but this was at the time tied down on the Latvian border, so the plan was to establish the headquarters of the 14th Army on the Isthmus.
- ⁹ RGVA 25888-11-17 p. 108-116, 142, 149; Manninen 1993 p. 87, 91-92.
- ¹⁰ Memo 29.10. 1939 and operative directive 11. 1939 in Tainy ... p. 53-60, 76-79. N.I. Baryshnikov, Sovetsko-Finljandskaja vojna 1939-1940 gg. Novaja i novejsjaja istorija 4/1989 p. 33; G. Kumanev, Tshto my znaem o "zimnej vojne" (Sovetskaja Rossija 10. 3. 1990); Zaharov p. 181. Manninen 1993 p. 92-94.
- ¹¹ Manninen 1993 p. 94. K. Simonov, Glazami tsheloveka moego pokolenija, p. 442-443. Zaharov p. 182.

- ¹² RGVA Fond 25888 opis 11 delo 17 p. 266; Fond 34980 opis 5 delo 2 (Tshibisov 21.11.1939). Order 11.11. 1939 in Tainy ... p. 74-75. Manninen 1993 p. 94, Baryshnikov, Sovetsko .. p. 34, Kumanev, Tshto my znaem.
- ¹³ Venkov, Plany p. 11-12. Manninen 1993 p. 133-162. see RGVA Fond 37977 opis 1 delo 595, p. 78, Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 57, p. 6, S-FV na more I:1 p. 20, II p. 14.
- ¹⁴ Venkov, Plany p. 29. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 46, p. 13. RGAVMF 92-2-497 p. 1-4, 92-2-496 p. 2. S-FV na more I:2 p. 3. Groehler p. 156. - The Soviet Navy was ordered not to force its way into Swedish territorial waters. Sweden, on the other hand, refrained from military cooperation with Finland, although it did lay mines on the west coast of the light house of Märket at the level of the Åland Islands. The Soviet Navy requested maintenance vessels from Germany on 10 December so that the Soviet submarines could use them for support, but the idea was subsequently given up, even though Germany had agreed.
- ¹⁵ S-FV na more I:2 p. 4-9, 17-22, 27, 32, 48-50, 57-59. Y.A. Järvinen, Suomalainen ja venäläinen taktiikka talvisodassa, 1948, p. 140. - 37.
- ¹⁶ Manninen 100-102. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 4 delo 91, p. 33, opis 5 delo 4 p.4 (order of the 9.Army 4.12.1939). Semirjaga, Neuvostoliittolais-.. p. 193; Semirjaga p. 24.
- ¹⁷ Manninen 1993 p. 94-95. Directive of the Leningrad district 21.11.1939 to the 7. Army, RGVA 34980-14-57; P.F. Vashtshenko, Yesli by Finljandija i SSSR (VIZ 1/1990). - In the attack order of 12.12. the boundary between 7. and 8. Army was defined: western coast of Ladoga - Tervus - Parikkala (RGAVMF 92-2-505 p. 292). RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 56 (Memo of the actions of 7. Army), and opis 3 delo 230.
- ¹⁸ Järvinen p. 72, 74, 86.
- ¹⁹ Operative directive 1.12.1939 to 7.Army, Tainy p. 122-123. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 57, p. 9. Manninen 1993 p. 102, Manninen 1987 p. 285, Venkov, Plany p. 18.
- ²⁰ Manninen 1993 p. 102-103. Manninen 1987 p. 286. Järvinen p. 97-100, Meretskov, Na sluzhbe ... p. 100. RGAVMF 92-2-505 p. 292. Oper. directive to 7th Army in Tainy p. 173-175. See also the emphasis in the oper. directive to 8th Army in Tainy p. 176-177. Plans of Gröndahl RGVA 34980-6-85 p. 5-19, 22-32 and RGVA 34980-6-77 p. 1-11.
- ²¹ Manninen 1993 p. 103, 105. Oper. directives 27.12.1939 to 7th and 13th Armies in Tainy p. 219-221.
- ²² Memo of the actions of the 8.Army, RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 56, Order for the 8. Army and the 9. Army, Tainy .. p. 176-178. Manninen 1993 p. 96. Manninen 1987 p. 286.
- ²³ Manninen 1987 p. 286-287, 290. Venkov, Sovetskoe nastuplenie (mscr. 1992) p. 26-27. Järvinen p. 188-191, 194, 196-203.
- ²⁴ RGVA Fond 25888 opis 11 delo 17 p. 205-207, 232, Fond 34980 opis 5 delo 292, p. 33-35. War council of the Leningrad district 16.11. 1939 to Dukhanov, RGVA Fond 34980 opis 5 delo 1; Order of the 14.Army 19.11. 1939, Fond 34980 opis 7 delo 10 p. 42, "Assessment of the realization of the operation" 25.11.1939 by War council of the 9. Army, 34980-5-3 p. 1-7. Venkov, Plany p. 13. Manninen 1993 p. 99. Semirjaga, Neuvostoliittolais-suomalainen sota vv. 1939-1940 kansainvälisen oikeuden näkökulmasta. Talvisota, Venäjä ja Suomi. Helsinki 1991, p. 186.

- ²⁵ Venkov, Plany p. 14. Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 30. Manninen 1987 p. 290-291.
- ²⁶ Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 31. Manninen 1987 p. 291.
- ²⁷ Manninen 1987 p. 287-290. War council of the Leningrad district 21.11.39, RGVA Fond 34980 opis 5 delo 4 p. 10-11, 21, 70, 92; 34980- opis 5 introduction p. 11. Operation directive 10.12. 1939 to the 9th Army in Tainy ... p. 178-179. Järvinen p. 228.
- ²⁸ Manninen 1993 p. 103. RGVA 34980 delo 5 opis 4 p. 21, 70, 92.
- ²⁹ RGVA 34980-5-2. S-FV na more II p. 20. Manninen 1987 p. 286. Manninen 1993 p. 98, 100.

Order of battle of the Red Army in the Finnish theatre of war 30.11.1939 – 13.3. 1940

In Karelian Isthmus

Leningrad military district - commander 2 cl. komandarm K. A. Meretskov, members of war council A. A. Zhdanov, korpkom N. N. Vashugin, korpkom A. N. Melnikov; chief of staff komdiv N. E. Tshibisov. - Functioned as front staff 30.11. - 9.12.

Northwestern front- commander 1 cl. komandarm S.K. Timoshenko, member of war council A. A. Zhdanov, chief of staff 2 cl. komandarm I.V. Smorodinov. - Formed 7.1. to control the operations of 7. Army and 13. Army.

7.Army - commander 2 cl. komandarm V.F. Jakovlev -6.12., 2 cl. komandarm K.A. Meretskov 6.12.-; members of war council brigkom N.N. Klementiev, Shtykov, korpkom N.N.Vashugin; chief of staff kombrig V.N. Gordov -6.12., komdiv G.S. Issersson (already 17.12., still 30.12.), 2 cl. komandarm I.V. Smorodinov -7.1., kombrig S.G. Trofimenko, komdiv N. E. Tshibisov. - Formed in Kalinin district 14.9. 1939. Moved 26.9. into Pskov oblast and 15.11. to Karelian isthmus. Disbanded 26.3. 1940.

13.Army - commander komkor (16.1.- 2 cl. komandarm) V.D. Gröndahl -2.3., komkor F. A. Parusinov 2.3.-5.4.; members of war council korpkom A.I. Zaporozhets, F.P. Polynin; chief of staff colonel/kombrig V.S. Golushkevitch -2.3., kombrig G.I. Sokolov 3.3.-. - Formed 25.12. from Gröndahl operation group. Disbanded 5.4. 1940.

Reserve group of Northwestern front. - commander komkor D.G. Pavlov. – In function 9.2.-29.2.

19.Corps - commander komdiv F. N. Starikov, kombrig I. F. Nikolaev (in February), komdiv M.F. Teryohin (in March). - In Karelian Isthmus already in September 1939, in 7. Army 15.11.-1.3., in 13. Army 1.3.- (13.3.).

50.Corps. - commander kombrig/komdiv F.D. Gorelenko. - To Karelian isthmus 21.9. 1939. In 7. Army 15.11.- (13.3.)

Gröndahl operation group - commander komkor V.D. Gröndahl. 4-25.12. 1939.

10.Armoured corps - commander komdiv/komkor P.L. Romanenko. – In 7. Army (30.11.)-17.1.

10.Corps - commander komdiv Davydovskii (still 11.1.), kombrig I. F. Nikolaev (from the end of February). - In 7. Army 15.12.-7.4.

34.Corps - commander komdiv V.M. Gonin (February), komdiv K.P. Piadyshev (March). - In 7. Army 3.2. - 23.4.

28.Corps - commander komdiv V.S. Popov, komdiv P.A. Kurotshkin (in March). - In 7. Army 29.2. – (13.3.).

15. **Corps** - commander kombrig M.F. Korolev - In 13. Army 7.1. – (13.3).
23. **Corps** - commander komdiv S.D. Akimov. - In 13. Army (25.1.-)30.1.- (13.3).
3. **Corps** - commander komdiv P.A. Batov -5.3. - In Gröndahl group and 13. Army 13.12.- (13.3).
3. **Cavalry corps** - commander komdiv Y.T. Tsherevitshenko. – In reserve group 22.2.-1.3., in front reserve 1.-10.3., in 7. Army 10.-16.3.
1. **Mountain corps** of Finnish People’s Army. - commander komdiv A.M. Anttila 11.1939-3.1940.
1. **D** of Finnish people’s army – In North Western front (30.11.)-(13.3).
2. **D** of Finnish people’s army - In North Western front (30.11.)-(13.3).
4. **D** – From Belorussian district. In Gröndahl group and 13. Army 12.12.- (13.3.), in 3. Corps 26.12.-7.1. (possibly to 26.1.), in 15. Corps 7.1.- (13.3.).
7. **D** - From Kiev district. In 7. Army 11.1.-, 50. Corps 29.1.-20.2., in 10. Corps 20.2.-, in 34. Corps 1.3.- (13.3.).
8. **D** - From Belorussian district. In Northwestern front 22.1.-, in 13. Army 25.1.-, in 23. Corps 31.1.-, in 15. Corps 8.3.-.
17. **Motorized D** - From Moscow district. In 13. Army 19.1.-, in 15. Corps 20.1.— (13.3.).
24. **D** - Formed in Leningrad district. In 50. Corps 21.9. 1939-, in 19. Corps 8.10.- (19.2.), in 7. Army reserve (already 1.3.), in 34. Corps 6.3.-, in 50. Corps 9.3.-.
42. **Light Motorized D** – Formed 17.1. 1940 in Leningrad military district, from fortification troops in Terijoki. In 34. Corps (already 11.2.), in 7. Army reserve 25.2.-, in 10. Corps 1.3.- (13.3.).
43. **D** - From Kalinin district. In 50. Corps 21.9.-, in 19. Corps 8.10.-. In 7. Army reserve 20.12.-. In 10. Corps 1.1. 1940-, in 34. Corps 3.2.-, in 7. Army reserve 25.2.-, in 28. Corps 29.2.- and in 10. Corps 1.3.-.
49. **D** - Formed in Leningrad district. In 7. Army 14.9.-, in 50. Corps 25.10.-3.12., in Gröndahl group and 13. Army 4.12.- (13.3.), in 3. Corps (26.12.) - (13.3. 1940).
50. **D** - From Belorussian district. In Karelian Isthmus 6.1.-. In 13. Army 18.1.-, in 15. Corps 30.1.- (13.3.).
51. **D** – From Odessa district. In 7. Army 23.1.-, in 10. Corps area 3.2.-, in 7. Army reserve (17.2.), detached (19.2.), in 50. Corps 20.2.-, in 19. Corps and 13. Army 10.3.- (13.3.).
62. **D** - From Kiev district. In 13. Army 14.1.-, in 23. Corps 17.2.- (13.3.).
70. **D** – From Volga district. In 19. Corps (17.10.)-, in 10. Corps of 7. Army (26.1.), in 34. AK:ssa 31.1./3.2.-25.2., in 10. Corps 25.2.-, in 28. Corps 29.2.- (13.3.).
80. **D** – From Kiev district. In 7. Army 8.1.-, in 13. Army 1.3.- (13.3.). In 19. Corps (26.1.)- 10.3., in 23. Corps 10.3.- (13.3.).
84. **Motorized D** - From Moscow district. In 7. Army 22.1.-, in 50. Corps (11.2.-13.3.).
86. **Motorized D** - From Volga district. In Reserve group of stavka 19.1.-28.2., in 28. Corps 29.2.- (13.3.).
90. **D** - Formed in Leningrad district. In 50. Corps 8.10.-, in (already 26.1.) – (13.3.).
91. **Motorized D** – From Siberian district. In Reserve group of stavka 20.1.- (actually from 20.2.), in front reserve 1.3.-, in 34. Corps 9.3.-22.3.
95. **Motorized D** – From Odessa district. In Northwestern front reserve 25.1.-, in 19. Corps 21.2.-, in 34. Corps 1.3.- (13.3.).

- 97.**D** – From Kiev district. In 13. Army (by order 18.1.). In Northwestern front reserve 1.2.-, in 23.Corps 20.2.- 7.3., in 15.Corps 7.3.- (13.3.).
- 100.**D** – From Belorussian front. In 7. Army 4.12.-, in 50.Corps (already 26.1.), in 34.Corps 28.2.- (13.3.).
- 113.**D** - From Belorussian district. In 7.Army reserve 24.12.-, in 10.Corps 3.2.- (13.3.).
- 123.**D** – From Kalinin district. In 19.Corps 26.10.-, in 50.Corps (already 26.1.). In 7.Army reserve (about 25.2.-), in 50.Corps 1.3.- (13.3.).
- 138.**D** - From Kalinin district. In 7.Army reserve (11.1939)-. In 50.Corps 11.12.-, in Army reserve 27.12.-, in 10.Corps 27.1.- (13.3.).
- 142.**D** - Formed in Leningad district. In Karelian Isthmus 14.9.-, in 50.Corps (already 8.10), detached (17.10.), in 50.Corps 23.10.-, in Gröndahl group (5.12.), in 13. Army 25.12.-, in 15.Corps 7.1.- (26.1.), detached 30.1.- (13.3.).
- 150.**D** - From Belorussian district. In 7. Army reserve 5.11.-. To Karelian isthmus 5.12.-. In Gröndahl group (15.12.)- and in 13.Army 25.12.-, in 3.Corps (already 13.1., still 13.3.).
- 173.**Motorized D** - From Volga district. In stavka reserve group 25.1.-. In North-western front reserve 1.3.-, in 28.Corps 5.3.- (13.3.).
- Karelian fortification area (KAUR) – In Karelian Isthmus.

- 7.**Cavalry D** – From Belorussian district. In 3.Cavalry Corps to Finnish direction 20.2., in Reserve group of stavka. In 7. Army 10.3.- (13.3.).
- 36.**Cavalry D** - From Belorussian district. In 3.Cavalry Corps to Finnish direction 22.2., in Reserve group of stavka. In 7. Army 10.3.- (13.3.).

- 1.**Light armoured brigade** - In 10.Tank corps, in 7. Army (30.11.)- (13.3.).
- 13.**Light armoured brigade** - In 10.Tank corps, in 7. Army (30.11.)- (13.3.).
- 20.**Armoured brigade** – In 19.Corps 8.- 23.10. In 7. Army (30.11.)- (13.3.).
- 29.**Light armoured brigade** – From Belorussian district. In Reserve 15.2.-, in front reserve 1.3., in 34.Corps 12.3.- (13.3.).

- 35.**Armoured brigade** – In 50.Corps 8.10.-, in 7. Army 15.11.- (13.3.).
- 39.**Armoured brigade** – From Moscow district. In 7. Army 47.Corps (20.10. 1939). In 7. Army (30.11.), in Gröndahl group and 13.Army (15.12.)- (13.3.).
- 40.**Armoured brigade** – In 8. Army 28.9.-, in 19.Corps 9.10.-, in 7. Army 15.11.- (13.3.).
- 15.**Infantry-machinegun brigade** - In Leningad district 10.Tank corps. In 7.Army 15.11.- (13.3.).

Marine brigade of the Baltic fleet – Fought in the Gulf of Finland 3-13.3.

Between Ladoga and Arctic Ocean

Southern group of 8. Army - commander 2 cl. komandarm M.P. Kovaliov 13.1.-11.2. Renamed 15. Army.

15.Army - commander 2 cl. komandarm M.P. Kovaliov 11.-25.2., 2 cl. komandarm V.N. Kurdiunov 25.2.-28.3.; member of war council N.N. Vatutin, A.I. Gusev, korpkom N.N. Vashugin; chief of staff kombrig M.I. Kozlov 11.-12.2., colonel/kombrig P.A. Ivanov 12.2.-28.3. - Formed from 8.Army Southern group 11.2., disbanded 28.3.

8.Army - commander komdiv I.N. Habarov -n. 4.12., komkor V.N. Kurdiunov n. 4.12.-10.1., 2 cl. komandarm G.M. Shtern 10.1.-; member of war council brigkom S.I. Shabolov -17.12., korpkom K.N. Zimin 17.12.-; chief of staff colonel/kombrig Larionov -17.12., kombrig F.D. Rubtsov 17.12.-5.1., colonel G.P. Kotov 5.1.-. - Formed from Novgorod group in 14.9. 1939, to Petrozavodsk 29.10.

Operation group of kombrig Koroteev. – 13.1.-13.3. 1940.

9.Army - commander komkor M.P. Duhanov 17.11.-21.12., komkor V.I. Tshuikov 22.12.-; members of war council brigkom Furt 16.11.-5.4., 1 cl. armkom L.Z. Mehlis 8.1.-5.4; chief of staff komdiv A.P. Sokolov 17.11.-7.1., komdiv D.N. Nikishev 7.1.-5.4., (pt.) colonel Razuvaev (7.2.), (pt.) komdiv M.S. Shmyrev (already 13.3.). - Formed 17.11. in Kemi in Eastern Karelia, disbanded 5.4. 1940.

14.Army - commander komdiv A.A. Tjurin 17.9.-2.10., (pt.) kombrig B.A. Pigarevitsh 2.-17.10., komdiv V.A. Frolov 17.10.- (13.3.); member of war council brigkom A.I. Krjukov, T.T. Hrjukin; chief of staff kombrig B.A. Pigarevitsh 17.9.-. - Formed 16.9. as Murmansk group, renamed 19.11.

56.Corps - commander komdiv A.I. Tsherepanov -28.2., kombrig K.A. Koroteev 28.2.-. - In Petrozavodsk since September 1939. In 8. Army 26.10.-11.2., in 15. Army 11.2.-20.3. 1940.

1.Corps - commander komdiv V.A. Frolov (-17.10.1939), kombrig R.I. Panin -29.12., komdiv/komkor D.T. Kozlov 29.12.-. - In 8. Army 22.11.-18.4.

8.Corps - commander komdiv I.G. Rubin. - In 8.Army 2.2.-11.2., in 15. Army 11.2.-21.4.

14.Corps - commander komdiv V.G. Vorontsov. - In 8. Army 16.1.- 21.4.

Special Corps - commander komdiv M.S. Shmyrov -6.3., komdiv P.I. Batov 6.3.-. - In 8.Army (already 30.10.), then in 9.Army 17.11.1939-23.3. 1940.

47.Corps - commander kombrig/komdiv I.F. Dashitshev (already in October)-c. 8.1.1940, kombrig V.I. Vinogradov c. 8.1.-. - In 9.Army 19.11.- 20.3.

Repola (Rebola) operation group - commander komdiv D.N. Nikishev. - Formed 2.2., disbanded 22.3.

3.D of Finnish people's army - Formed 10.1. 1940, in 8.Army and in 15.Army - (13.3.).

- 4.D** of Finnish people's army – Was up to 13.3. Border guards division.
- Border Guard division** of Finnish people's army - Formed 12.1. 1940 in Murmansk, renamed 13.3. 4. D of Finnish people's army.
- 11.D** - Formed in Leningad district. In 8.Army 12.1.-, in 8.Corps 20.1.-. Then as detached in 15.Army 12.2. (still 21.2.). In 56.Corps 10.3.-.
- 14.D** - Formed in Leningad district. Murmansk Group 16.9.-, in 14.Army 19.11.- (13.3.).
- 18.D** - Formed in Leningad district. In 56.Corps (already 17.9.1939), in 15.Army 11.2. 1940-. Disbanded (before 8.4. 1940).
- 37. Motorized D** - Formed in Siberian district. In 8.Army 8.2.-, in 8.Corps 10.2.-, in 56.Corps 9.3.-.
- 44.D** - From Kiev district. In 9.Army 9.12.- (13.3.).
- 52.D** – From Belorussian district. In 14.Army (by order 10.11.)- (13.3.).
- 54.D** - Formed in Leningad district. In 9.Army 16.11.- (13.3.).
- 56.D** - Formed in Leningad district. In 8.Army 1.Corps 17.9.- (13.3.).
- 60.D** – From Kiev district. In 8.Army 9.1.-, in 15.Army 11.2.- (13.3.), in 56.Corps 19.1.- (2.3.), detached (9.3.).
- 72.D** - From Kiev district. In 8.Army 24.1.-, in 15.Army 11.2.- (13.3.). In 8.Corps 10.2.- (13.3.).
- 75.D** - Formed in Leningad district. In 1.Corps (17.9.)-, in Olonets 7.12. - 20.3. In 8.Army (22.10.) – (13.3.).
- 87.D** – From Ural district. In 8.Army 14.Corps 12.2. (actually 2.3.-) – (13.3.).
- 88.D** - Formed in Leningad district Arkhangelsk area. In 9.Army Special Corps 26.12.- 21.3.
- 104. Mountain D** - Formed in Leningad district Murmansk area. In Murmansk Group 16.9.-, in 14.Army 19.11.-.
- 119.Motorized D** - From Siberian district, in 8.Army (nominally from 4.2.) and 15.Army 11.2.-: In 56.Corps 10.3.- (13.3.).
- 122.D** - From Belorussian district. In Murmansk Group 7.11. 1939-, in 9.Army 16.11.-, in Special Corps 27.12.-.
- 128.Motorized D** – From Ural district. In 8.Army 14.Corps 12.2.- (13.3.).
- 131.D** - From Kiev district. In Arkhangelsk (already 13.1. 1940.) In 9.Army (nominally from 31.12.). Partly in 47.Corps (already 13.3.).
- 136.D** - From Moscow district. In 8.Army (already 20.10. 1939). In 7.Army 12.12.-, in 13.Army 25.12.-. In 15.Corps 24.1.-, detached 26.-31.1., in 23.Corps 30.1.- (13.3.).
- 139.D** – From Belorussian district. In 8.Army 1.Corps 18.11.-, later 14.Corps - (13.3.).
- 144.Motorized D** - From Moscow district. In 15.Army 11.2.- (actually 1.3.-), in 8.Corps 9.3.-, in 56.Corps 11.3.-.
- 155.D** - From Kalinin district. In 7.Army (-25.10). To Medvezhegorsk (5.11.), in 8.Army 1.Corps, later 14.Corps (13.3. 1940).
- 163.D** - From Moscow district. In 7.Army 47.Corps (24.9.). In Special Corps 18.11.-, then 9.Army 47.Corps (30.11.). In Repola operation group 15.2.- (13.3.).
- 164.D** - From Belorussian district. To Petrozavodsk 22-27.12. In 8.Army 25.12.-, in 1.Corps 12.1.- (13.3.).
- 168.D** - Formed in Leningad district. In 56.Corps 24.9.- (15.3.), in 8.Army 29.10.-, in 15.Army 11.2.-.

- 172.D** - From Moscow district. In 9.Army 1.3.-, in Special Corps 6.3.-.
- 24.Motorized Cavalry D** – From Belorussian district 3. Cavalry Corps. Since 31.1. 1940 motorized cavalry division. In 8. army 8.2.-, in 1.Corps (already 9.3) – (13.3.).
- 25.Motorized Cavalry D** - Formed in Leningad district. In 8. Army in Pskov area (20.10., 13.11. 1939). Since 8.1. 1940 light motorized division. In 8. Army 16.1.-, in 15. Army 11.2.-. In 8.Corps 2.2.- (13.3.).
- 34.Armoured brigade** – In 8. Army (30.11.)- , 15. Army 11.2.-. In 56.Corps 11.12.-" (13.3.).
- 201.Air landing brigade** – In Leningrad district. In 15.Army 11.2.-, in 8.Corps 13.2.-. Later detached.
- 204.Air landing brigade** – From Kiev district. In 8.Army 9.2.-, in 15. Army 11.2.-, in 8.Corps 13.2.-, later detached, in 56.Corps (9.3., still 13.3.).
- 214.Air landing brigade** – From Belorussian district. In 8.Army 8.2.-, in 15. Army 11.2.-, in 8.Corps 13.2.-, later detached.
- Ski brigade** commanded by colonel V.D. Dolin. Formed in 9. Army in 3.2. 1940, destroyed by 20.2. 1940..

Sources

- RGVA: Leningrad military district and Winter war archives.
- RGAVMF: Baltic fleet archives.
- Finnish military archives (SArk), booty and prisoner documents.
- German Bundes archiv – Militär archiv: Intelligence reports.
- Red Army – internet site (www.rkka.ru).
- Soviet historical books and memoirs.

2. The Soviet mass attack in 1940

Re-evaluation and preparations

During the first phase of the war the Soviet troops had not achieved results that would have forced the Finnish military command to give up resistance. The offensive on the Karelian Isthmus had stopped at the main Finnish defence position, and there had been few successes on the northern side of Lake Ladoga.

The Finns had already achieved impressive victories on the eastern border, and the Soviet advance had been fended off in the main position on the Isthmus. The minimal activity shown by the Soviet troops along the eastern border could have been due to the fact that the Main Military Soviet had decided that the result of the war would be determined on the Isthmus, so that the majority of the resources were to be directed there.

When the advance came to a halt, four divisions not included in the original battle plan had already been brought into the Leningrad Military District: two to the Isthmus, one to the 8th Army and another to the 9th Army. 27 divisions and a further 15 000 men of the Finnish People's Army (two divisions) were now gathered against Finland.

According to Meretskov's own account, Stalin was extremely angry. He had scolded the commander because poor success in the war against Finland would have a deleterious effect "on our foreign policy, because these days the entire world is looking at us." Stalin had demanded that a change must take place in the operation.

The basic weakness of the original war plan was that the troops had been distributed in an inefficient way. Adequate superiority could not be achieved in the areas of emphasis, as the Soviet Union was trying to attack in too many directions. The concentration of troops had been slower than expected, and the capacity of the roads in the directions of the attacks along the east coast had proved inadequate, so that it was impossible to take advantage of Soviet superiority. Detachments arrived at the battle area one after another. The Murmansk railway, having only a single track, became a bottleneck for both the transportation of troops and maintenance.

Already by early December the Soviet high command had started to suspect that Army Commander Meretskov, who had been in

charge of the operation had lost grasp and his readiness to consider other alternatives. Matvei Zakharov, who worked in the Operative Department of the General Staff, was ordered to investigate a suitable area for the main attack on location and to suggest appropriate command arrangements. On 16 December, after returning to Moscow from the front, Zakharov suggested the following: 1) The main attack must be moved from the direction of Kiviniemi to that of Viipuri. 2) The destruction of the fortification zone must be organized in the way suggested by the Directions for the Breaking of Fortification Zones. 3) In order to improve the command arrangements, it would be sensible to create two fronts: the North-Western Front (on the Karelian Isthmus) and the Karelian Front (from Lake Ladoga to Murmansk).

After this preparatory work, high-level commanders were sent from Moscow to acquaint themselves with the situation: the commander of the Kiev Military District, Army Commander 1st class S.K. Timoshenko, went to the Isthmus, and the commander of the Belorussian Military District, Army Commander 2nd Class M.P. Kovalev, went to the north-eastern side of Lake Ladoga.³⁰

After the operations of the troops from the Leningrad Military District had proved fruitless, the Main Military Soviet had to halt the offensive in late December 1939 so that the command could be organized in a more reliable manner and a new operation plan could be drawn up for breaking through the Mannerheim Line.

Individual improvements were already carried out in December. Starting on 24 December, a series of orders were given concerning the establishment of special ski battalions and squadrons. A total of 45 000 men were assigned to approximately 40 ski battalions and 200 ski squadrons. Most of them did not get into battle until the end of February and March.³¹

There was no desire to leave the Finns alone during this period of deliberation. On 3 January the high command (Voroshilov, Stalin and Shaposhnikov) ordered: "For ten days we must use air bombings to strike systematically and forcefully at targets located deep in the rear: administrative targets and armament industries, rail bridges, railway intersections, ports and cargo ships." This ended a long, relatively peaceful period on the Finnish home front. The Soviet Air Force was to concentrate on the destruction of the centre and port of Kemi in northern Finland, and assistance arriving from Sweden was to be cut off. At the end of January the blockade of Finnish ports was

emphasized with air bombings and the dropping of mines along waterways.

A special session of the Politburo dealt with the issues of the war in Finland during the first days of January. Among those present were the commander of the Leningrad Military District and the members of the Main Military Soviet, the commanders of the military districts of Kiev and Belorussia, who had returned from the front, and key figures of the People's Commissariat for Defence and the General Staff. The Chief of the General Staff, Shaposhnikov, put forward the same plan for breaking through the Mannerheim Line as he had presented a few months earlier, and this time Stalin accepted it. The final shaping of the plan was entrusted to Timoshenko and the General Staff.

At the suggestion of the General Staff, a North-Western Front was established in Leningrad by an order of the Red Army's Main War Council on 7 January 1940. On the same day, Timoshenko, who already had a knowledge of the Isthmus, was appointed commander of the troops at the front, which included the 7th Army (commanded by K.A. Meretskov) and the 13th Army (commanded by Army Commander 2nd grade V.D. Gröndahl) as well as several air force, artillery and rear detachments. The Baltic Fleet was also operatively subordinated to the front.

Kovalev had not suggested a shared command at the front for the troops on the northern side of Lake Ladoga, and these remained directly under the People's Commissariat for Defence. Thus the General Staff acted as the administrative organ for all these armies and created a sub-centre for their rear maintenance (at the headquarters of the deputy commander of the Leningrad Military District). The main depot for this centre was in Vologda. Kovalev himself was moved to take charge personally of the operations on the north-eastern side of Lake Ladoga.³²

The preparations for a new attack had to be carried out as quickly as possible, because if the attack was prolonged, there was a danger that Britain and France would become involved in the war on Finland's side. This would have caused new difficulties for the Soviet Union, and not only as far as Finland was concerned.

A notable reinforcement of the troops to be used in the offensive was already under way even while planning was still going on. During the 20-25 days of the preparation phase the front was reinforced with 12 divisions, two Army Corps headquarters and six

artillery regiments. The last replacement troops arrived at the front when fighting had already commenced. The Red Army command already had to rely on reserves from military districts as far away as Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, the Urals, Siberia and the Volga, but troops from the southern districts were not engaged, nor were any from the southernmost of the inner military districts (Orel and Kharkov), as a Western intervention was feared from the direction of the Caucasus. The defence against Japan in the Far East was also left intact. On the other hand, it was becoming more and more clear that the level of alert had to be increased in other border areas of the Soviet Union as well. When the secret service found out that France and Britain were planning an operation against the oil areas of the Caucasus, the highest war council of the Red Navy, among others, decided on 29 January to improve the air defence of the loading areas in Baku and on the Caspian Sea.

When the attack began, there were eight Army Corps headquarters (including one of the so-called Finnish People's Army) on this front, of which the 7th Army had four and the 13th Army three, and 23 divisions (of which two were Finnish).

A high command reserve detachment was put together to the west of Leningrad (a cavalry corps, three infantry divisions and an armoured brigade). This was to cross the Gulf of Finland and attack across the Bay of Viipuri after the breakthrough had been achieved on the Isthmus, or alternatively use the breakthrough in the Viipuri direction to its advantage. Before the start of the mass attack, the reserve group was placed under the commander of the North-Western Front on 8 February.³³

After taking up his post, Timoshenko paid great attention to choosing the direction of the main attack, which was very important to the overall result of the war. He toured the front, familiarized himself with the terrain, studied the Finnish defences and fighting methods and had discussions at the headquarters and at the front. Based on his observations and on analyses of his subordinates' reports and suggestions, the front commander decided to direct the main attack at Viipuri, justifying his decision on the following operative-strategic and tactical grounds:

- a) A breakthrough in this sector would create favourable conditions for a decisive operation involving the entire front that could destroy the enemy's main grouping on the Karelian Isthmus and prevent it from withdrawing behind the Saimaa lake system.

- b) The seizure of Viipuri would cause immense moral and material damage to the enemy, because this was Finland's second most important political, economic and military centre as well as a coastal fortification area. Furthermore, Viipuri was an important intersection for railways and main roads and a seaport. Seizing it would prevent the movement of the enemy's troops in south-eastern Finland, whereas the Red Army would have an opportunity to attack southern and central Finland. Viipuri was the "key" to southern Finland for the Finns, and if it was lost, defending the Karelian Isthmus would lose its meaning.
- c) The Soviet troops in this sector were only 30--35 km away from Viipuri.
- d) The troops had a very advantageous sector terrain-wise, from Muolaanjärvi to Summa. In this direction there were notably more roads and less lakes, in addition to which it was more densely populated. It was easier to use technology to break a strongly fortified line than to advance through roadless terrain and wooded areas of with water and mires. The aim was that the 7th and 13th Armies would execute a breakthrough simultaneously over a relatively wide front using the advantages offered by the front that extended from the River Vuoksi to the village of Karhula. The parallel flanks of the Armies would then carry out the main attack.
- e) The strikes by the Air Force and artillery had weakened the morale of the defenders. The effects of the artillery had been greatest in this particular sector.

The continuity of the operation of the North-Western Front was to be guaranteed by drawing up reserves in echelons in the rear. Timoshenko decided to organize the troops for the main attack into four echelons: eleven divisions in the front line, the third divisions in the second line of the Army Corps in the second echelon, the two reserve divisions of the Armies, armoured brigades and a mechanized sharpshooter-machine gun brigade in the third echelon, and the front commander's two reserve divisions and the two divisions of the "Finnish People's Army" in the fourth echelon. The infantry divisions had been organized into one echelon with all three regiments in line, while every regiment had positioned its battalions in three successive echelons. The width of the front of an Army Corps was ordered to be 5--6 km, while a division's front was 2--2.5 km, a

regiment's 700-800 m, and a company's at least 400 m. This kind of echelon was to make it possible to carry out a massive first strike and reinforce the troops from depth at the right moment. It also created good preconditions for directing the emphasis of the troops flexibly as dictated by the situation.

No one in the world had yet attacked a permanently fortified line like this. The English and French had not dared to attack the Siegfried Line, even though a notable part of the German Army had been tied down in Poland in the autumn of 1939. Similarly the Germans waited eight months in front of the Maginot Line and then went around it through Belgium in the spring of 1940.

The attacking troops had to be trained before they were sent into the assault against the fortification zone. The instructions explained in detail how cooperation between the services was to be organized at different levels when breaking through fortified areas, and how artillery and air preparations and the actual attack were to be carried out, in addition to fighting in the rear and securing victory.

The period from late December to early February was in practice one of trench warfare on the Isthmus. The Soviet troops were developing the way in which they should fight. They tried to approach the Finnish lines using the protection provided by trenches and ditches, and using armoured protective shields. The infantry was pulled behind tanks on armoured sleds. The balloons used for fire control purposes were troublesome to the Finns, because they enabled the Soviet artillery to project accurate fire into the nests of the defence line. There was also an attempt to soften up the dugouts of the Mannerheim Line with the heavy artillery fire over the sights, with flame-throwing tanks and with tanks left in front of the weapon holes of the fortifications. In some places the tanks managed to force their way through the Finnish defence line and settle there as nests - this happened at Oinola on the shore of Muolaanjärvi, for example. The result was that the Finns exhausted their strength trying to recapture the line.

The Soviet troops operating in the area between the Arctic Ocean and the Baltic Sea on 1 February comprised a total of 40 divisions, the total strength being 957 675 men. More troops were arriving and the Red Army of 3.5 million men had more than adequate reserves. Of the 13 Finnish divisions, 9 were on the Isthmus, together with a cavalry brigade. The Soviet troops on the Isthmus had a

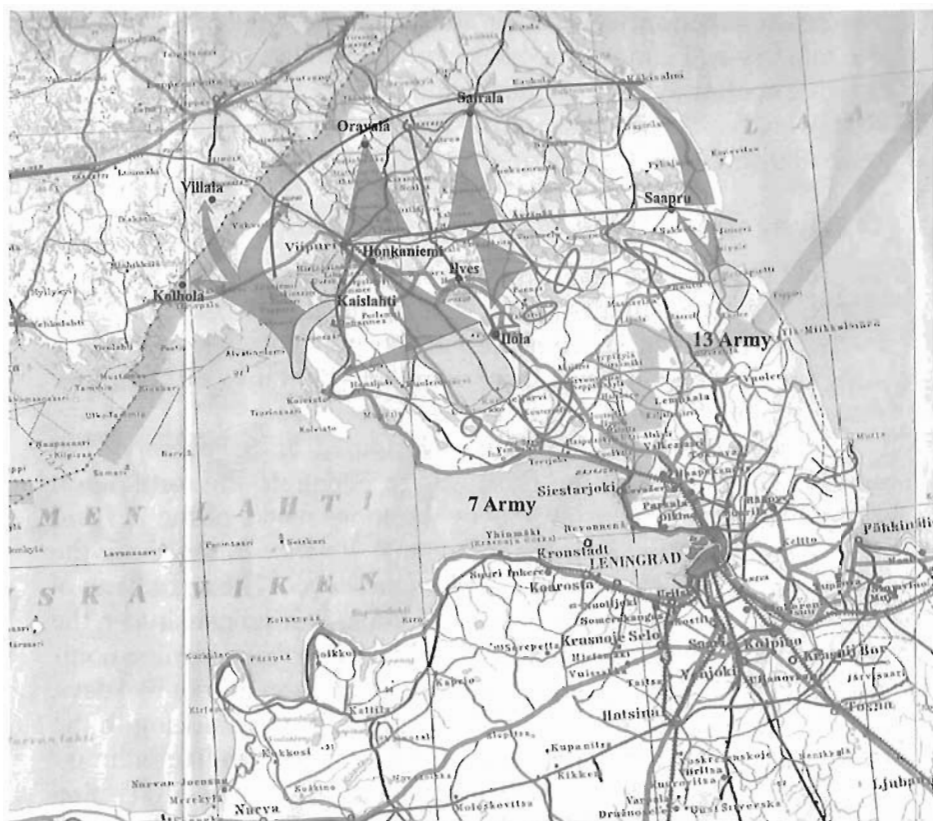
significant superiority over their adversary: more than two-fold for the infantry and almost three-fold for the artillery, while they were utterly superior in terms of tanks and aircraft. On 11 February the Red Army had 1 558 tanks on the Isthmus, whereas the Finns had only 10 usable tanks in their reserves.³⁴

Breaking through the Mannerheim Line

Before the start of the mass attack the Soviet troops carried out small attacks in early February to improve their initial position. These relatively powerful attacks from the Finnish point of view took place daily on 1-9 February, and there were 100-150 tanks on the move on 5 February.

A North-Western Front directive issued on 3 February 1940 stated that the task of the front was to penetrate the fortification zone with simultaneous attacks by the inner flanks of the 7th and 13th Armies and disperse the opponent's defence forces along the line from the River Vuoksi to Karhula (*see Map 3*). The right flank of the 7th Army was to attack on the line Vuoksi - Muolaajärvi, in the direction of Yrjölä - Ristseppälä. It would have to reach the line Lohijoki - Purpua - Ilves - Kämärä station - Huumola in four or five days, and would then have to prevent the enemy from advancing to the west, destroy the entire enemy grouping on the Karelian Isthmus. The North Western Front was then to advance to the line Käkisalmi - Antrea station - Viipuri. The depth of the first operation was 20-25 km and the overall depth of the operations, for which 12-15 days had been reserved, was 60-65 km. The speed of attack was to be 2-3 km per day when breaking through the defence line and 6-10 km per day when chasing the Finnish troops. (The North Western Front provided additional instructions that pinpointed a target for mass attack on the western side of Viipuri; i.e. the troops crossing the Bay of Viipuri had to cut off the main road and railway leading west from Viipuri and advance to the line Kolhola - Villala - Nurmi station.)³⁵

The commander of the 7th Army, Meretskov, ordered that artillery preparations should last two hours and twenty minutes (from 0940 to 1200 hours on 11 February), while the commander of the 13th Army, Gröndahl, ordered three hours of artillery preparation and an infantry attack to begin at 1150 hours. Due to unfavourable weather conditions, the Air Force could not participate in the fire preparations. Flying conditions in the direction of the Gulf of Fin-



Map 3. The idea of mass attack in February 1940

land were very poor on 5-17 February and 21-28 February.

Fighting was fierce from the start. The attackers had to cross a zone full of granite posts and anti-tank ditches, fields of barbed wire, minefields, obstacles and entanglements. The infantry attack took place under the protection of the artillery's avalanche of fire. The distance of impact for the infantry was to be 200 m at most, and the tanks were to advance to holes cleared in the obstacle zone on a level with the first echelon of the infantry, and then cover the infantry and make way for it while fighting alongside it. The assault troops attacked behind the first echelon of the infantry. After the artillery preparations, the strike detachments set off to capture bunkers and firing nests.

Three Soviet divisions supported by several hundred tanks attacked along the entire width of the defence sector of one Finnish division, and in the Lähde sector the attackers managed to force their way forward along the road.

The assault detachments of the Red Army captured seven bunkers during the first day of the attack, and advanced to the depth of one or one and a half kilometres. They reached the support line of the main Finnish position, although only at a width of two companies. In the other defence sectors of the 7th and 13th Armies the assault detachments managed to capture only a few bunkers and firing nests. They crossed the Finnish obstacle zone everywhere, but then became stuck.

The following day the Soviet attack continued on the eastern side of Lake Summajärvi, and with the Finns thoroughly exhausted the front line was captured throughout the Lähde sector.

With strong artillery support, the Soviet troops overcame a wide tank obstacle ditch of the support line on 13 February and by the evening the 123rd Division, with a strength of two regiments supported by tanks, had forced its way into the terrain around the Lähde intersection. At night they formed a tank fortress and dug in for the counter-offensive. The depth of penetration was now four kilometres.

The troops were quickly regrouped in support of the breakthrough. The 7th Division was taken into battle on the left flank of the 123rd Division, and the 90th Division on the right flank. To guarantee success, the commander of the 7th Army assigned a mobile detachment including an armoured battalion and a motorized infantry-machine gun battalion to the 50th Army Corps. (The 7th Army had a total of three such mobile groups at its disposal.)

On the evening of 13 February Timoshenko gave the troops new directions in accordance with developments in the situation. The 7th Army was to provide efficient reinforcement for the breakthrough in the direction of Lehtola (Lahti) and to the rear of the defence position at Summa (Hotinen), as well as destroying the latter. The left flank of the 19th Army Corps was to strike in the direction of Leipäsuo station and capture it with the help of a mobile detachment appointed by the front commander. The activities of the 10th and 34th Army Corps had to be made more efficient. On the night of 13 February the Air Force was to attack the enemy reserves who were approaching the front along roads from the direction of

Käkisalmi and Viipuri. Special attention had to be paid to the area of Kämärä (Huumola) station. Timoshenko criticised the commanders harshly for their slackness and warned that in the future he would make sure that everyone would have to answer for his actions. On the following day the breakthrough was extended, so that by night-fall its width was approximately 4 km and its depth 5--6 km.

The Soviet breakthrough forced the Finns to withdraw to temporary stations further back in the Summa and Lähde sectors, and on 15 February the supreme commander, Mannerheim, gave the army on the Isthmus permission to withdraw to temporary stations at the level of Samonlahti - Somme - the southern end of Näykkijärvi - Kämärä station.

On the following day the 90th Division captured Merkki and the 123rd Division pushed its first detachments into the area of Lukusuo, three kilometres north of Lähde, and to the Autio front three kilometres west of Lähde. The 84th Division attacked in the direction of Kiltinen. With the attacks by the 100th Division from the front and the 7th Division from the rear and flanks, the Soviet troops eliminated the strongest base of the Mannerheim Line, Summa, on 15 February. By the evening of 15 February the width of the breakthrough had expanded to eight kilometres.

On 16 February the detachments of the 50th Army Corps advanced successfully to the north and north-west, and the troops of the left flank of the 19th Army Corps (90th Division) and the mobile detachment attacked Leipäsuu station. The mobile group captured Kämärä station. By the evening the breakthrough by the 7th Army had widened to 11-12 km and its depth was now 11 km, its tip being at Kämärä station.

After persistent battles, the efforts of the left flank of the 13th Army began to bear fruit on 14-16 February. The first defence zone on the 18 km front of the 17th Division and 23rd Army Corps was crossed and the Soviet troops advanced to a depth of 4--5 km, reaching the northern shore of Lake Punnujärvi, the northern part of Kyyrölä and the northern shore of Lake Muolaanjärvi. By the evening of 16 February the key parts of the Mannerheim Line had been destroyed and the defenders had suffered heavy losses. The speed at which the 7th Army had advanced corresponded to the goals of the command of the North-Western Front, but the success of the 13th Army was only about half of what had been expected.³⁶

A gaping hole had been bored in the Finnish defence line on

the Isthmus, and on 17-19 February the Finns, successfully concealing what they were doing, withdrew along the entire front between the Vuoksi waterway system and the Gulf of Finland to a Temporary (VI) Position. On 17 February the commander of the North-Western Front ordered the commander of the 7th Army to begin pursuing them. The army had to harry the enemy energetically so that it would be impossible to reorganize resistance in the direction of Viipuri. Contacts with the mobile troops ordered to proceed in the direction of Leipäsuo station, Kämärä station and Säiniö should be maintained if at all possible. The army had one day in which to organize special ski groups to follow the enemy. The 19th Corps had to finish clearing Leipäsuo station, Väisänen and Taasionlampi of enemy troops, and was to move its main strength to the Hotokka - Kämärä front (near Kämäräjärvi) on 18 February. One division of the corps had to be moved to another attack echelon, away from the west to help the 13th Army capture the Muolaa base. After clearing the area of Pien-Pero - Näykki - Huumola of enemy troops, the main forces of the 50th Corps were to move to the south-western shore of Lake Kämäräjärvi, Honkaniemi station yard and Mannila, also on 18 February. The 10th Corps had to begin a strong attack in the direction of Johannes in order to prevent the enemy from withdrawing to Viipuri by that route. The 34th Corps had to follow the enemy along the west coast of the Isthmus and force the troops onto the Gulf of Finland.

Stalin had formed too optimistic an image of the progress of the attack. He assumed the vanguard to be 6 km from Viipuri and ordered the North-Western Front to support the "mobile detachment" in the lead with truck and horse transport and to seize the Finnish defence positions in front of Viipuri. There was no going into Viipuri before heavy artillery, munitions and other maintenance had been brought closer by rail (using the Säiniö station). A quick attack would narrow the flanks, but it was hoped that aerial surveillance would spot the Finns' counter-measures in time. Throughout the operation, all the way to the capture of Viipuri, the city would be bombed without interruption, "sparing nothing and no one".³⁷

The Soviet advance increased significantly in speed, covering as much as 6-10 km in one day in some directions. The troops had already made contact with the Temporary position by 17 February, and two days later tanks managed to force their way behind this position in the terrain of Mustalampi and all the way to the main Viipuri-

Muolaa road. The inexperienced draftees were nervous when tanks appeared in the rear, even though the tanks could not capture the area permanently without protective infantry. At night they grouped themselves in a circle close to the Finnish rear.

On 17-25 February the Red Army cleared the area west of the Mannerheim Line of enemy forces, captured the fortresses of Koivisto and the islands and capes whose batteries protected the entrance to the Bay of Viipuri, and established control over the routes leading from the east coast.

The Finns were forced to admit that the continuous cold was a disadvantage to them, in terms of both the well-being of individual soldiers and the military situation as a whole. The waterways, which the Finns had considered to be their best lines of defence, had such a thick covering of ice that even heavy tanks could cross them, turning them into paths for an enemy attack. The activities of the Soviet troops began to extend to the Bay of Viipuri on 18 February. The crevices cut in the ice by the Finns did not remain open for long, and from 22 February onwards, the islands in the bay found themselves becoming targets for a Soviet attack.³⁸

Breaking into the Finnish Temporary position

The Temporary position ran from the north-western shore of Lake Muolaanjärvi through Pien-Pero and Näykkijärvi to Sommee station on the coast of the Bay of Viipuri. Mainly because of the difficult terrain (forest, snow and the lack of roads) the mobile detachments of the 7th Army did not succeed in their attempts at capturing this line. Another reason was that the Finns had had time to settle into a defensive position. A three-day snowstorm on 21-23 February was a great advantage to the Finns, because it slowed down the advance of the Soviet troops and covered the narrow forest roads with snow. The Finns referred to this snowstorm as their "last ally".

In spite of the fact that the Finnish detachments had managed to dig themselves in at the temporary position and on the north-western side of Lake Muolaanjärvi, the detachments of the 7th Army captured a defence centre belonging to the second zone in the area between Mustalampi and Näykkijärvi on 21 February. In this sector the Finns had maintained their positions along a line from Pien-Pero through Suuri Ryövärinsuo to the north shore of Lake Näykkijärvi. They attempted with one battalion on 22 February and with

three or four battalions on 24 February to remove the curve that had been created into the temporary position, but failed.

23 February was the Red Army's day. Its troops had been encouraged to carry out the decisive breakthrough on that particular day, but the North-Western Front had to stop in order to organize a co-ordinated strike.

The attack troops were exhausted after having fought continuously for several days, but the troops of the 7th Army and the right flank of the 13th Army had an opportunity to rest on 26-27 February. During this time they reorganized themselves, carried out maintenance and regrouped. The divisions in the first echelons in particular were reinforced, and in the early morning hours of 26 February the commander of the North-Western Front issued directions on how they were to break down the Finns' second defence zone.

The withdrawal to the VT position increased pressure in the Vuoksi area, and the Finnish III Army Corps had to reinforce its western flank, to which the 13th Army moved its point of emphasis from Taipale at the end of February.

On 27 February a division (136th) of the 13th Army partially captured the Muola-Ilves defence area from the south-east and another division (62nd) threatened to go round the area in the north-east. Still another division (97th) penetrated the isthmus between the lakes, passed Lake Äyräpäänjärvi, forced its way to the main defence zone on the northern shore of the latter and began an attack against the Heikurila defence area.

After two days of rest and preparations, the Soviet troops on the Isthmus commenced an attack on 28 February. The aim of the North-Western Front was to destroy the Finnish grouping in the Viipuri area and reach the line Käkisalmi - Joutseno - Lappeenranta - Luumäki - Virojoki. The attack took place under extremely difficult conditions, as the winter was unusually harsh

As the Finns were withdrawing to a rear position, the Soviet troops could now report great successes. The attacks regularly stopped for the night, however, and thus could not keep up with the withdrawing Finns. The artillery did not cause any great damage to the Finns this time, because it was still for the most part paralysed on the jammed roads of the Isthmus. For the same reason, it took the Soviet troops some time to move armoured reserves to the front line. They reached the T or Rear position in the direction of Viipuri - Tali on 1-2 March, but the terrain there was equally difficult and

limited the use of armoured weapons. Now it was the turn of the 13th Army to advance, capturing the main Finnish position behind Lake Äyräpäänjärvi.

The detachments of the 7th Army were preparing to go north to skirt round the fortifications in the Vüपुरi area, while the 13th Army continued to attack from the north and north-west and some of its troops were preparing to cross the middle course of the River Vuoksi at Vuosalmi. The former reserve group was designated as the 28th Corps (three divisions and reinforcements) on 29 February and placed within the 7th Army.³⁹

Operations between Lake Ladoga and the Arctic Ocean

The experiences acquired by the Red Army at the beginning of the war showed that time had to be reserved for battles in the uninhabited forests of the border area. Nevertheless reinforcements were brought to the eastern border within the limits of transportation and maintenance capacity. The Soviet troops were preparing attacks along some parts of the front on the northern side of Lake Ladoga at the end of the Winter War, although only a few of these attacks were ever carried out. There were no opportunities for operative, let alone tactical cooperation between sectors of activity.

The forces of the Red Army fighting in the direction of Petrozavodsk - Sortavala doubled in size in January-February, so that there were (or would soon be) eight infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions in addition to the original eight divisions. Regiments that were worn out by battle were also reinforced, the maintenance organization was improved and a new field railway was quickly built.

In order to facilitate command, the 8th Army was divided in two in January, and Army Commander (2nd class) G.M. Stern took charge of the army on 10 January, with Army Commander 2nd class M.P. Kovalev commanding the southern group. This division was confirmed on 11 February by establishing another army headquarters. In the southern group, a new 15th Army was formed (commanded by Kovalev), while Army Commander 1st class G.I. Kulik, chief of the Main Artillery Administration and a friend of Stalin's from the civil war period, still acted as inspector in this direction. With special authorization from the high command, he intervened both in questions of personnel and in operative issues.

The Finns continued to harry the Soviet troops they had encir-

cled on the north side of Lake Ladoga. The Soviet divisions defended dourly in the great encirclement of Kiteä and in several smaller ones that were gradually set up by the Finns during February. During this phase of encirclement warfare the Finns had to fend off all the Soviet troops that tried to enter the area by any of the roads leading to it.

When the mass attack on the Karelian Isthmus had commenced, the 15th Army received an order on 12 February to attack the Impilahti - Sortavala area over the ice and advance to the line Sortavala - Kuokkaniemi - Rauhalahti. Before that the army had to try to free the 18th Division at once from encirclement and capture the islands on the western side of Pitkäranta and Salmi. The stavka probably intended to facilitate the success of the breakthrough by increasing pressure on the rear of the defenders in the "Käkisalmi direction", and Kovalev drew up a three-phase attack plan, but the attempts did not meet with any great success. Commissar Vashugin, who arrived from the Isthmus, found great shortcomings in order and discipline, and Kovalev received an order on 25 February to hand over the army to his successor.⁴⁰

In the first days of March the 8th and 15th Armies began a mass attack. After spreading out to the flanks in the uninhabited areas of Kollaa, the attack troops of the 8th Army (6 divisions) began to advance slowly, supported by heavy artillery, as the strong attack detachments of the Red Army applied powerful pressure, and along the flanks, too, with their ski squadrons. Although the Finns brought reserves into these areas, they could not completely stop the advance of the Soviet troops. The first bases in the centre of the defence position were captured on 10 March after a week of fighting, and on the evening of 12 March the Soviet troops penetrated 1.5 km along the railway track on the southern side of Lake Kollaanjärvi. The counter-attack prepared by the Finns never took place as news of the newly achieved peace arrived at this point.

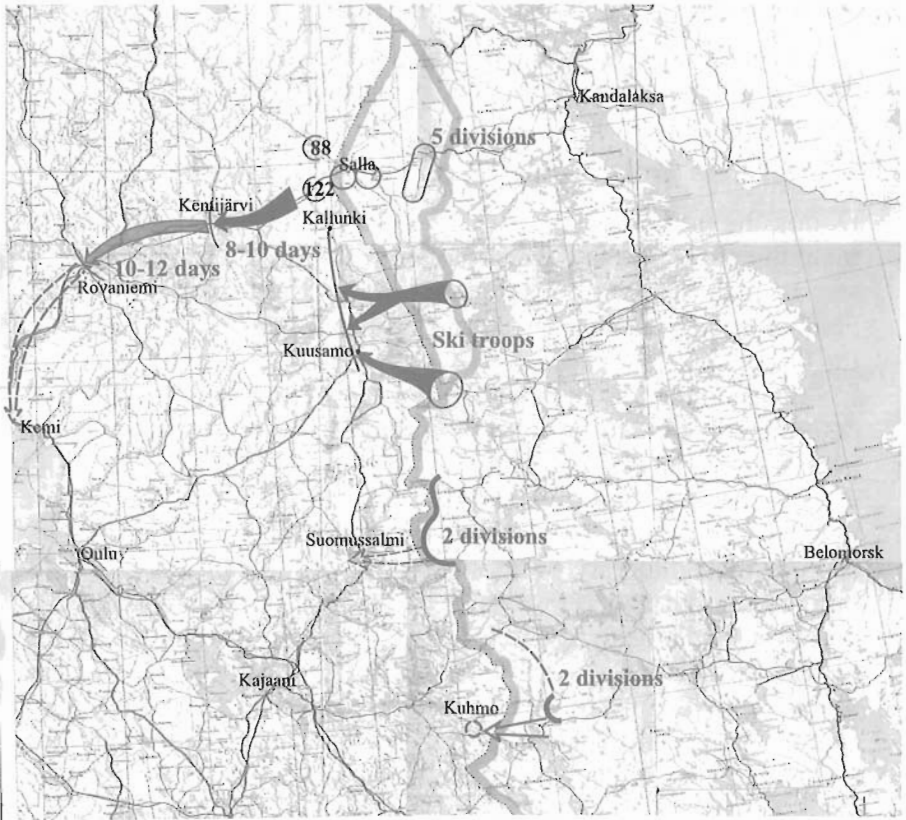
In early March the situation of the 15th Army at the front was much more difficult than that of the 8th Army. The Finns managed to keep the 168th Division and what was left of the 18th Division encircled, and the 15th Army had only one line of communication at its disposal, passing through Lodeinoe Pole, Salmi and Pitkäranta along the shore of Lake Ladoga. The Finns had managed to cut off this important line of communication on the north side of Pitkäranta, but the command of the 15th Army had to try to open it before the attack on Sortavala. Kulik had the operation plan approved by the

General Staff on 1 March, and after that the operation to capture the islands to the west of Pitkäranta. Kulik himself supervised the operation. The task of capturing Maksimansaari, Petäjäsaaari, Paimionsaari and Vuoratsu were given to the 37th Division. On the morning of 6 March the troops of the division began the attack on Petäjäsaaari and Paimionsaari after artillery preparations. This time the artillery fire had been well organized and the defenders were not capable of organized resistance. Every one of them died. By the evening the detachments of the Red Army had captured three islands - Maksimansaari, Petäjäsaaari and Paimionsaari. Connections were re-established with the 168th Division and the Finns' maintenance roads were now in danger. Hence the Finns withdrew a kilometre in the direction of Pitkäranta. The next phase was meant to be an advance, with the support of two new divisions, to Impilahti.⁴¹

When the battles of Suomussalmi and Raate were over, the main parts of Siilasvuo's 9th Division were concentrated more in the south, in the direction of Kuhmo. At the end of January most of the Soviet 54th Division was encircled there, but it managed to defend itself under difficult conditions until peace was announced. The ski troops that tried to reach the division from the east failed in their attempt, and Colonel Dolin's three-battalion ski brigade, for example, was destroyed completely in mid-February. A special Repola operation group commanded by the chief of staff of the 9th Army had been formed in early February for an assistance operation, but a headquarters for this group could not be organized before the failure of the ski troops.⁴²

The Special Army Corps of the Red Army was tied by 6 - 9 Finnish battalions, and then by a Swedish volunteer brigade. A new Soviet attack was delayed by the difficulty of transporting additional troops. The 9th Army was supposed (*Map 4*) to begin an attack from 15-17 March onwards with emphasis on the Salla direction, and most of the 9th Army Aviation was also to be concentrated in the direction of Kemijärvi. The aim was to cut off the connections between Märkäjärvi and Kemijärvi and destroy the Finnish group in Kemijärvi. At the same time the 54th Division had to be helped to break free from encirclement. Eight Soviet ski battalions were about to begin their raids to cut the connecting road from Kuusamo, and a reconnaissance attack against the Swedish brigade began on 12-13 March, the last day of the war.⁴³

There were numerous rumours during the war that France and



Map 4. The idea of an operation through Salla in February 1940

England would send troops to help Finland in Petsamo, Murmansk and Archangel area, and thus the Soviet 14th Army had to be continuously prepared to defend the Kola Peninsula and Petsamo against a landing. Furthermore, the army began to prepare for an attack to the south, although it considered only the capture of the village of Nautsi possible because of the difficult circumstances and the limited troops available. Nautsi was located in the western "arm-pit" of the arm of Petsamo. Movement to the south began in late February and Nautsi was taken on 7 March. The Soviet troops in this direction as well then positioned themselves for defence after having advanced 165 km.

At the end of the Winter War the 14th Army included in its planning the capture of the Kirkenes harbour on the Norwegian side of the border, because of the threatening situation in north-western Europe. On the other hand, the Soviet Union did not want to pro-

voke Norway unnecessarily, and the air force of the 14th Army was ordered not to fly close to the Norwegian border.⁴⁴

The Finnish army on the threshold of defeat

During the first half of March decisive battles were fought in three main directions in the Karelian Isthmus: in the direction of Antrea station as the Soviet troops tried to advance to the rear of the main Finnish troops, on the eastern and northern sides of Viipuri and in the Bay of Viipuri.

The commander of the North-Western Front, Timoshenko, still determinedly tried to carry out his original plan - to defeat the Finnish troops in the Karelian Isthmus without allowing them to withdraw to the inner parts of Finland. The advance to the rear of Viipuri was to cause great distress to the main Finnish forces.

As the temporary position fell, the commander at the front ordered the 7th and 13th Armies on 29 February to break the defences of the Finns once and for all and to crush the Finnish troops on the Isthmus. The overall task did not change: the troops were to follow the enemy, break its resistance in the positions of Viipuri, capture Viipuri and acquire a bridgehead position on the western shore of the Bay of Viipuri. The 7th Army was to advance to the line Karisalmi station - Lavola - Jukola - Ahokas and additionally to bite down firmly on the western shore of the Bay of Viipuri, while the 13th Army was to "ensure success on its left flank in the direction of Antrea station."

The high command of the Red Army and the command of the North-Western Front were, after a few days, prepared to deliver the decisive blow, as planned, even from the Koivisto peninsula, across the Bay of Viipuri and deep into the rear of the Finnish grouping in the direction of Pitkämäki, in Viipuri and even into the Saimaa area. On the afternoon of 3 March the commander of the 7th Army was ordered to send troops of the 28th Corps over the Bay of Viipuri the following night and with their assistance gain a bridgehead position some distance along the main Viipuri-Helsinki road. The corps was to seize on the western coast the areas of Repola, Nisalahti and Vilajoki and then continue the attack to the north, towards the Simola station (15 km south of Lappeenranta). The Soviet troops were able to obtain reinforcements over the ice as the roads on the Isthmus were overloaded. The commander of the Baltic Fleet was ordered to

send coastal troops to assist the Red Army.

The situation in the Bay of Viipuri was becoming critical for the Finns. At first they did not have any infantry at all to protect their flank and the firing possibilities of the coastal artillery were limited. It was a slow process to arrange the operative headquarters and connections required by the situation.

The Soviet troops who had advanced over the ice from Pullinniemi landed at Häränpäänniemi and Vilaniemi on the western shore of the Bay of Viipuri, and on 8 March they managed to cut off the main road leading from Viipuri to Helsinki. They contained the forces of the enemy by advancing at the same time over the ice through Suursaari and Lavansaari towards Kotka and Virolahti. A total of seven ski battalions of the Baltic Fleet attacked the area between Ristniemi and Kotka on 4 March.

The six divisions of the left flank of the 7th Army (the 10th and 28th Corps) finally converged upon a coastal strip 40 km wide, and the Soviet troops widened their bridgehead position to the west, north and north-east, extending it even to a depth of 12-13 km in the west.

For the protection of the area between Hamina and Vilaniemi the Finns formed a new Hamina group that was directly subordinated to the supreme commander. All available reserves were gathered on the coast, so that the defence of the rear position weakened. The limiting of bridgeheads was successful, but the situation was becoming very dangerous for the Finns. Only a few roads leading to the north-west and north, in the direction of the mire and forest areas of the province of Mikkeli, remained under the control of the Finnish troops on the Isthmus, and the Soviet Air Force and ski detachments were trying to prevent them from using these roads wherever a narrow passage existed.⁴⁵

The right flank of the 7th Army, with a strength of six divisions and a mobile group, broke the enemy's resistance on the north-eastern side of Viipuri and advanced to the north-west. The railway was cut between Viipuri and Antrea station, thus severing the rail connections of the Finnish troops in the Käkisalmi and Sortavala area to the west as well. The Soviet attack on Tali, north-east of Viipuri, surprised the adversary, but defences held up better elsewhere in the rear position despite the losses suffered.

The detachments of the 34th Corps at the centre of the 7th Army managed to force their way first to the perimeter of Viipuri

and then to the suburbs, and finally, on 12 March, they captured a part of Viipuri, but the defenders were able to position themselves along a new defence line. Fierce battles were still being fought over Viipuri on the day when peace was declared on 13 March. According to Meretskov, the commander of the 7th Army, the aim was to show the Finns that the road to Helsinki was open to Soviet troops, and prevent possible intervention by Britain and France.⁴⁶

The left flank of the 13th Army advanced to Kaunissaari (in Vuoksi) and Noskuanselkä and the centre of the front advanced to Kaupinsaari in the Pölläkkälä station sector and crossed the River Vuoksi in two places with five regiments, with the intention of striking at the enemy's rear. The Finns had to try to get reserves from Taipale and other places. Fierce battles were fought beside the Äyräpää church and in Vuosalmi, where daily losses among the attacking forces were as high as 700 men. On 11 March the Soviet troops were about to cross Vuosalmi and the situation was beginning to be intolerable for the Finns in the unprotected clearings on the north-eastern shore of Vuoksi as well.⁴⁷

Things were beginning to improve for the troops of the North-Western Front. Even though they were tired and had suffered heavy losses, the battle could be continued. In order to take advantage of the success of the troops that had crossed the Bay of Viipuri and to spread quickly across southern Finland and partly into central Finland, the commander of the North-Western Front had a cavalry corps, armoured brigades and ski battalions and squadrons in complete readiness. These troops were situated in the Koivisto area. Reserve troops assigned by the Headquarters for this purpose were also brought to the Isthmus.⁴⁸

It has been calculated that at the end of the war a total of 960 000 men, 11 266 cannons and mortar, 2 998 tanks and 3 253 military aircraft were grouped against Finland. The total strength of the Finnish army at the end of the war was 340 000 men. The Finns had 944 field guns, although a third of them were completely outdated and had a stiff gun carriage, and 241 anti-armour guns. When the operations were over, the Red Army had 58 divisions on the front in Finland - according to Shaposhnikov. In the next phase, the intention was to bring four divisions to the front and then ten more.⁴⁹ Thus a decision in principle had been made for a strength of 72 divisions, i.e. six-fold superiority in numbers. Any war expedition from France and Britain would have ended up in a defensive position.

Notes

- ³⁰ Manninen 1989 p. 104 – 105, Manninen 1993 p. 133-162, Zaharov p. 182-183.
- ³¹ Manninen, Dolinin hiihtoprikaati. Sotilasaikakauslehti 2/1995 p. 60.
- ³² Vasilevskii p. 96-97; Semiryaga p. 24; RGAVMF 92-2-497 p. 8-10. Venkov, Plany p. 21-27. Manninen 1993 p. 105.
RGVA Fond 34980 opis 1 delo 62, p. 169-171. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 1 delo 126, p. 11; opis 14 delo 46, p. 36. Zaharov p. 183. According to oral tradition Army Commander Stern had proposed to direct the main attack through the waist of Finland. Manninen p. 85-86; Vitaly Rapoport--Yuri Alexeev, High Treason p. 328, 417.
- ³³ Stavka directive 17.1. 1940, RGASPI Fond 71 opis 25 delo 132; Stavka order 8.2. 1940, RGVA Fond 34980 opis 1 delo 2, p. 90. Directive to the North-Western Front and Pavlov 6.2. 1940 in Tainy p. 324-325. Manninen 1993 p. 106, 133-162.
- ³⁴ RGVA Fond 33987 opis 3 delo 1380, p. 223, Fond 34980 opis 1 delo 39 p. 37-68. Järvinen p. 143-146.
- ³⁵ Manninen 1987 p. 311. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 46, p. 43-45. Istorija Ordena Lenina Leningradskogo Voennogo Okruga (3. p. Moskva 1988) p. 135, 140-141; The 13th Army received orders on 21.2. and 9.3. to reach Antrea on 11-14.3. and the 13.Army war council ordered on 4.3. an attack to the Antrea area. – According to a front directive the 23.Corps was to attack to the line Kuusa – Mutaranto – Muolaa and then to the line Ristiseppälä station – Heinjoki station. After this the corps had to be ready to advance together with the 7. Army towards Kämärä. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 53.
- ³⁶ Venkov, Sovetskoe 9-15. Manninen 1987 p. 311. Järvinen p. 100. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 10 delo 7, p. 2; opis 14 delo 46, p. 45, 48, 49, 51-52.
- ³⁷ RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 46, p. 54-55, opis 1 delo 69. Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 15-17. Manninen 1987 p. 311, 313.
- ³⁸ Järvinen p. 180, 183. Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 16-17. Manninen 1987 p. 313-314.
- ³⁹ Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 18-21. Manninen 1987 p. 315. 113. Division's order of the day, Collection of bounty materials, SArk. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 46 p. 58-62, opis 1 delo 54 p. 149-152. Stavka directive 29.2. 1940 to Timoshenko, RGASPI, Fond 71 opis 25 delo 132.
- ⁴⁰ Manninen 1993 p. 108, 133-162. Manninen 1987 p. 312. Manninen 1993 p. 108. RGVA 34980 opis 8 introduction, opis 8 delo 2 p. 40-41. The advance on ice of Ladoga had been envisaged already in a directive to the 8th Army on 26 January. Tainy p. 310.
- ⁴¹ Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 28-29. RGVA Fond 34980 opis 14 delo 46, p. 76, delo 43 p. 93, opis 8 delo 2 p. 30, 88, 180. Directive 11.3. 1940 for the 15. Army, in Tainy p. 359.
- ⁴² Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 30. Manninen, Dolinin, 2/1995 p. 60-63. - The Red Army, too, used guerillas in the area of Suomussalmi and Kuhmo. A detachment of 300 men commanded by Colonel Mamsurov operated mainly in the southern part of Kuhmo (RGASPI Fond 17 opis 265 delo 77 p. 119-126). No significant results are recorded in the Finnish archives.
- ⁴³ Manninen 1993 p. 108-109. Directive to the 9th Army 9.2. and 22.2. 1940 in Tainy p. 328, 344-345. RGVA 34980 opis 5 introduction, opis 5 delo 4 p. 103; opis 5 delo 5 p. 62, delo 19 (Orders of the 9.Army 24.2., 26.2., 1.3.1940).

- ⁴⁴ Manninen 1993 p. 109, RGVA Fond 34980 opis 7 introduction, delo 25 p. 32-36 (Plan of operations 20.1. 1940), p. 24 (14.Army battle order 29.2 1940), 43-48 (Diariet 23.3. 1940).
- ⁴⁵ Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 22-24. Manninen 1987 p. 315-316. S-FV na more II p. 24-25.
- ⁴⁶ Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 25. Manninen 1987 p. 316. Järvinen p. 177. Manninen 1994 p. 29.
- ⁴⁷ Venkov, Sovetskoe p. 25. Manninen 1987 p. 315-316.
- ⁴⁸ RGVA Fond 34980 opis10 delo 1400 p. 167.
- ⁴⁹ Mihail Semirjaga, Talvisota, 1990, p. 24. Talvisodan historia 4 p. 166-170, 298. Manninen 1987 p. 316. RGASPI Fond 17 opis 265 delo 76 p. 158-159.

3. The period of the 'Interim peace'

The overall plan of the Soviet General Staff in 1940-1941

In the Finnish historiography the period between the Winter War and the so called Continuation War is called the 'Interim peace'. When the Winter War came to an end, the Soviet Union had to fear the war operations of England and France only from the south, from the direction of Persia and Turkey, even though the north could not be left completely without attention. This situation analysis was described by the transfer of troops that took place after the Winter War. Of the troops that had participated in the Winter War, several divisions were moved to the Caucasus.

The operation begun by Germany in May 1940 on the western front turned the eyes of the Soviet leadership towards Rumania. The occupation of Bessarabia and North Bukovina was carried out almost bloodlessly on 28 June - 1 July 1940, using the troops of the Odessa and Kiev Military Districts.

This decisive phase on the western front meant for the Soviet Union an opportunity to expand its security zone in the direction of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. On 15-17 June 1940 Soviet troops advanced into all the Baltic republics without any fighting. The example of the Baltic States, the transfers of troops and the threatening allusions to "Finland's turn" in speeches by officers of the Red Army led to a sharp shift in the tone of diplomatic reporting. In Finland the "August crisis" arose, but actually no greater concentrations than before were brought to bear on the Finnish border, even though some military exercises, e.g. one for paratroopers, were held in the Leningrad Military District. After the Winter War Finland took a background position in Stalin's great policy, although it was still taken into consideration in military planning as a likely enemy state.

When the Soviet borders were continuously moving to the west in the first years of World War II, the operative situation changed decisively, which meant that the strategic overall plan had to be changed from that in force in autumn 1939. This was complicated, however, by occasional differences of opinion between Stalin and the General Staff.

From mid-April 1940 Major-General A.M. Vasilevskii acted as the main architect of the operation plan. The main framework was

drawn up by the Chief of the General Staff, Marshall Shaposhnikov, but Vasilevskii did the main work, together with N.F. Vatutin and G.K. Malandin. When Germany's western military expedition was over, and the Baltic States, Bessarabia and Bukovina had been added to the Soviet Union, the new plan was completed in late July 1940, and the image of a threat that it presented remained practically unchanged until June 1941.

Shaposhnikov saw that only enough troops to guarantee the status quo should be left in the east to face Japan. It was also considered that the northern sea border and the southern land border could be left almost unprotected. The main forces of the Soviet Union would have to be positioned on the North-Western and Western Fronts, against Germany, along a line from the Baltic Sea to Poles'ya (in central area of the German border).

In September 1940 the Soviet General Staff had returned to its routine working mode to the extent that its "operative thinking" could be renewed. Shaposhnikov had had to step aside from his post in August 1940, but planning was continued on the same basis. In September the Minister of Defence, Marshal Timoshenko, the new Chief of the General Staff, Meretskov, and Vatutin presented Stalin and some members of the Politburo with a memo by Timoshenko and Meretskov dated 18 September 1940. Stalin thought that the Germans would attack in the south-west in order to seize economic and production centres, and ordered the main concentration to take place in that direction. Vasilevskii, Malandin and A.F. Anisov now made corrections to the outline. The basis for planning was approved on 14 October 1940, and the detailed plan was to be ready by 15 December, so that the commanders of the military districts and headquarters could start making plans for their districts by 1 January 1941.

From the autumn of 1940 - when Meretskov became Chief of the General Staff - the basic notion of the grouping of the Red Army changed: the emphasis moved to the south-west, where it remained until June 1941. Lying behind the reinforcement of the South-Western Front were the views of Stalin and the Party.

In the new "plan to defend the borders of the state", which was completed in late winter 1941, even larger concentrations were to take place in the western border areas. Certain military districts were already being instructed in January to move troops to Belorussia, the Ukraine and the Caucasus in the spring. The orders to carry out the

transfer plans were given in late April and May and the actual transfer of troops was commenced in May - June.

In August – September 1940 the perceived enemies in the west were Germany, Italy, Hungary, Rumania and Finland, while Japan would maintain armed neutrality but could attack at any time.

The probability that the plans for action against Germany would have to be used increased in spring 1941, when Germany had given up the idea of landing in Britain, at least for the time being, and turned its attention to the Balkans.

The Chief of the General Staff, General Zhukov, proposed to Stalin on 15 May 1941 that a preventive attack against Germany should be commenced immediately. Germany must not be given the initiative. Zhukov would not have proposed this had the idea been entirely unknown to Stalin, but the latter nevertheless considered the Red Army to be still unprepared for war.

The main doctrine of the Red Army was an offensive one. According to Stalin, a modern army did not have to spend too much time on defensive action. Since the Soviet doctrine began with the idea of fighting on the enemy's territory, it was clear that the plans were for an attack or counter-attack.

The first alternative for a Soviet attack on Germany was to concentrate troops to the south of Brest-Litovsk from 1940 onwards and mount powerful attacks on Lublin, Cracow and finally Breslau (Wroclaw), followed by an advance to the upper course of the Oder. The direction was considered advantageous because Germany was not thought to have updated its defence in the area of the former Poland. During these attacks the German main forces would have to be actively contained to the north of Brest. The aim in the first phase of the war was to cut off Germany's connections to the Balkans, capture its most valuable economic support area and prevent the Balkan states from joining in the war. This required a mass concentration in the area of the Kiev Military District. According to calculations in spring 1941, there would be 152 Soviet divisions available on the main front between Tshizev and Ljudovleno, arrayed against an assumed 100 German divisions. In other directions (those of Finland, East Prussia, Hungary and Rumania) active defensive action was to be taken, as well as preparatory measures for an attack on Rumania when circumstances became favourable.

The second alternative was to centralize the main forces on the north side of Brest, causing losses to the main German forces and

capturing East Prussia. This alternative became more and more unlikely as troops were moved from Siberia, their emphasis being in the Ukraine.⁵⁰

The Finnish theatre of war as a part of the whole

After the Finnish Winter War and the occupation of the Baltic countries, the strategic position of the Soviet Union in the Baltic region had changed decisively. A directive from the People's Commissariat for the Navy defined the task of the Baltic Fleet as being the creation of a defence system in the mouth of the Gulf of Finland that could be used to achieve control of the northern part of the Baltic Sea and destroy the enemy's bases and vessels.

The image of the enemy projected in the Baltic Fleet's general plans of summer 1940 is interesting. The main enemy in the Baltic Sea is seen to be Germany, if that country succeeds in defeating Britain and the two settle into a compromise peace. And even if Germany were to suffer defeat, Britain might still make use of it against the Soviet Union. In any case the alliance between Finland and Sweden would play an important part in the war operations, as these two countries could bring about a conflict by attacking the Soviet Union on Germany's orders.

In summer 1940, Sweden was defined as an enemy along with Germany and Finland. As the defence line was now at the level of the mouth of the Gulf of Finland, the Baltic Fleet had an opportunity to direct its operations in the direction of Sweden as well. These opportunities had not been taken particularly seriously until the Winter War, when the involvement of Sweden seemed a likely prospect. The plans included the use of submarines and the air force to impose a blockade on Sweden's harbours and the Göta canal system.

Matvei Zakharov notes in his memoirs that the Soviet Union underestimated Finland's ability to recover from the losses of the Winter War. The overall picture was that "The likelihood of significant forces of the Finnish army, supported by German divisions, will be stationed in the direction of Viipuri - Leningrad points to a probability of activity in this direction. It is not impossible that supporting attacks by the enemy would follow later in the direction of Petrozavodsk and Kandalaksha (Kantalahti)."

Zakharov recalls that (according to calculations made in July 1940) Finland was believed to have placed the "Österman army" (6

divisions and 3 brigades) at the front on the Isthmus, with the three divisions of the "Talvela Group" in the "central sector", towards Svir. It was calculated that Finland would not be much of a threat without German forces and that 3-4 divisions would be needed on the Isthmus. This Soviet estimate was based on the situation at the beginning of the Winter War, however, for in reality the Finnish army would be much stronger - 20 divisions and 3 brigades after receiving German reinforcements - and the Soviet Union would be attacked everywhere from Hanko to Petsamo (later Petchenga), although with emphasis on the River Svir. The Soviet headquarters had calculated that the concentration of Finnish troops would take 20-25 days, but in practice it took approximately 12 days in 1941.

On 14 August 1940 the Chief of the General Staff gave instructions to the Leningrad Military District to draw up new plans by 25 August concerning the positioning of the troops in the district and to specify the district's plans, including its protection plan. Work on drawing up the district's new operative plan was commenced on 13 September. Sweden, Finland and Germany were considered the likely enemies, and an evident need to remedy the greatest shortcomings is shown by the fact that the district carried out exercises in 1940 that concentrated on fending off a landing in the Baltic region and in Murmansk, together with a paratroop exercise (by the headquarters of the airborne brigade and a special paratroop battalion). Experiences of landing operations had been gathered in connection with the occupation of Estonia.

After the Winter War most of the Soviet troops on the Finnish border had been moved elsewhere to new tasks, and although the divisions that remained there retained their wartime strength, Finland, too, kept more troops in service than the 1939 peacetime strength would have presupposed.

On 26 September, after the planning work was completed, the districts were ordered to establish a headquarters for the 7th Army in Petrozavodsk by 1 November on the basis of the headquarters of the 56th Army Corps. All the army headquarters had been removed from the Finnish border after the Winter War, except for the 14th Army in Murmansk. In practice, the 7th Army headquarters began operating on 23 November. The 54th Division from the 14th Army was also subordinated to it. As the winter passed, the 23rd Army headquarters, which was to be positioned on the Karelian Isthmus, was also included in the plan. This began operating in May 1941.⁵¹

The race to the Åland Islands

In January 1940, during the Winter War, the Soviet Union drew up a plan to occupy the Åland Islands that would have required the transportation of approximately 20 000 men to the Islands from Estonia and Latvia. The basic idea was to cut Finland in two with an attack by ground forces at the latitude of Oulu and, with the navy attacking the Åland Islands, cut off Finland's sea connections as well. Bases for light naval troops, submarines and air forces would be located in the Åland Islands, and the Finnish Navy would be prevented from escaping from the archipelago of Turku, which would lead to its destruction. These basic ideas remained in later plans.

In a plan drawn up by the Baltic Fleet in September 1940 the starting point was that the enemies in the coming war in the Baltic would be Sweden and Finland, or possibly Germany, Sweden and Finland. The main tasks of the Baltic Fleet were to destroy the enemy's navy and its bases, prevent its main forces from entering the Gulf of Finland, lay protective mines and capture the Åland Islands. The naval air force was to support the capture with assaults and landings.

In a more detailed plan to capture the Åland Islands (10 September 1940) the targets of the operation were Eckerö, Åland proper and Lemland. The other islands in the archipelago were to be captured later. The Soviet fleet would face Finnish and Swedish armoured coastal vessels, German cruisers and submarines, destroyers and torpedo boats from the enemy states, minefields, coastal artillery and ground forces. The landing would require one infantry division from the troops of the Leningrad Military District, three marine battalions and one airborne battalion. All in all, an entire airborne brigade from the Leningrad Military District would be reserved for the operation, although the commander of the air forces of the Baltic Fleet nevertheless allowed only two battalions to be borrowed in addition to the aircraft of the Red Army's air force that were suitable for an airborne operation.

The airborne battalion would start out from New Peterhof and the three marine battalions from Paldiski. The first echelon of the landing would include two infantry regiments, an artillery regiment, a reconnaissance battalion and an engineer battalion from the division, while the second would include one infantry regiment, an artillery regiment, a tank battalion and maintenance troops. These

echelons would start out from Tallinn and Paldiski. It had to be taken into account in the planning that it would be difficult to prepare for a landing in secret when operating from the Tallinn area, because the Russians had enemies in Estonia.

Half of the first landing was to be directed at Eckerö Bay and the other half at Mariehamn. By morning the first landing was to create fronts in the central area of the Åland Islands and the place names Eckerö Bay, Mariehamn, Godby and Torpö were mentioned in this context, as the extreme points of the first phase.

The troops were to move from the harbours to the landing area by night in order to avoid being noticed, and the strike was to be carried out quickly and powerfully enough that troops could not be sent to Finland's assistance from Sweden in time.

The special naval detachment (OON) established for the operation would include:

- a) 5 destroyers and one "turboelektrohod" (Stalin),
- b) 3 patrol vessels and one "turboelektrohod" (Molotov),
- c) 3 patrol vessels,
- d) three transport groups forming a detachment, a total of 12 vessels
- e) a detachment (OVR) to protect the sea area where the landing was to take place: 6+7 minesweepers, 8 boats and three gunboats
- f) the air detachment of the OON:
 - the 44th squadron (MBR-2 reconnaissance aircraft)
 - two squadrons from the 13th and 138th Air Regiments (land-based fighters)
 - two squadrons (from the 73rd Air Regiment) (SB fast bombers)

The commander of the detachment was to have been in charge of the invasion.

A supportive squadron of the Baltic Fleet comprising two battleships and other large vessels would arrive in the area, and the SB aircraft of the 35th and 37th Bomber regiments operating from the airports of Pärnu and Tartu would also prepare to support the operation.

To deceive the enemy, the intention was to simulate a landing fleet that was on its way to Gotland. These vessels were to depart from Libau.

A surprise attack could conceivably have been successful, as Finland was forced in autumn 1940 to dismantle the defences built up in the Åland Islands during the Winter War. The issue had been made more urgent by rumours reaching Moscow about the possibility of a closer relationship between Finland and Sweden, although these rumours were not taken very seriously at the time. The greatest danger would have faced Finland and the Åland Islands if Germany had decided to carry out the carefully prepared operation *Seelöwe* and had thus been committed to a protracted exercise on the coast of England.

The most advantageous time for the operation was not mentioned in the plan. The Åland Islands were at least to some extent protected by ice in winter, although this had not prevented Sweden and Germany from bringing their troops there in winter 1918. In any case, the threat increased towards the spring, and Sweden was exploring the possibilities in April-May 1940 of sending troops to the islands to provide reinforcements for the Finns.⁵²

The Hanko expansion plan

In his radio speech to the people of Finland on 26 June 1941, when a new war broke out, President Ryti compared the Soviet base in Hanko to a pistol that was aimed at Finland's heart. According to Soviet Navy documents, the base was indeed preparing an attack on either Helsinki or Turku.

The main strength of the ground forces in Hanko was the separate 8th Brigade, established in spring 1940. This consisted almost entirely of experienced men from the 24th Samara-Ulyanovsk "Iron" Division that had taken part in the Winter War on the Isthmus. Two infantry regiments, an artillery regiment, an engineer battalion and a signal battalion had been taken from this division to form the 8th Brigade. The Brigade included a tank battalion, too. The organization of a brigade was almost unknown in the Red Army infantry at that time, but it was apparently considered appropriate to coastal conditions, where fire power and special expertise were important rather than the number of men. When Estonia had been occupied, the Leningrad Military District established another infantry brigade, the 3rd Brigade, for the Estonian islands.

The presence of railway batteries (three 12-inch cannons and four 180 mm cannons) was explained by the fact that these could be

useful in mobilizing the artillery power of the base for rapid action. The actual coastal batteries meant for closing the Gulf of Finland were still in the process of construction when the Continuation War broke out.

In August 1940 the commander of the base, Rear Admiral Belousov, outlined its tasks in relation to the overall plan for the Baltic Fleet. At that time the only adversary to be taken seriously was Germany together with Finland and Sweden, although Belousov considered it possible that a war might break out with Finland alone or together with Sweden but not supported by Germany. This would be virtually a repeat of the situation in the Winter War.

In the case of war, the tasks of the Baltic Fleet would be:

1. to protect the coast,
2. to protect the fleet's own connections (especially between Kronstadt and Hanko)
3. to cut off enemy connections in the Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Bothnia and the Finnish archipelago,
4. to support the land forces with fire power and tactical landings, and
5. to attack enemy territory.

With regard to the third and the fifth tasks, it was important to capture the Åland Islands at once. This would be followed by a landing on the Finnish coast of the Gulf of Bothnia and possibly even on the Swedish side. Belousov regretted that an insufficient number of transport vessels had been reserved during the Winter War, and because of that no attack on the Åland Islands had been carried out.

The tasks of the Hanko base were:

1. to protect the mine-laying and artillery positions between Hanko and Osmussaari that could be used to close the Gulf of Finland, and to "neutralize" or capture related Finnish batteries surrounding Hanko.
2. to organize a base for submarines and light naval forces for activities in the northern part of the Baltic Sea.
3. to expand the base in order to gain depth for defence and to protect the anchorages at Lappohja, Tvärminne and the outer harbour of Hanko.
4. to protect the base on land, at sea and in the air.

The third point in Belousov's plan (expanding the base to cover the area of Tammisaari-Bromarv) is especially noteworthy, as it was

in connection with this that Belousov pointed out that the expansion could be turned into an operation that fitted the scale of the entire Baltic Fleet, i.e. it would be the first phase of an operative or strategic landing directed at Helsinki or Turku. Thus the base could really have been used in the manner of a pistol aimed at Finland's heart. The attack would probably have been directed at Turku, too, if the Finnish defences had been crushed quickly at the mainland front in the east.

The order of importance of these tasks defined by Belousov and the possibility of carrying them out naturally depended on the extent of the war and the resources available. In the overall plan prepared by the Baltic Fleet in summer 1941 the first task of the Hanko base was to create a springboard for the Red Army's attack on Finland.

It is interesting to see how the Hanko base intended to carry out its expansion attack (*Map 5*). The operation was to commence simultaneously on land and with landings directed towards the north-west and the east. As the landings were taking place, submarines and light forces would encircle the Finnish coastal area from Öro to the cape of Porkkala.



Map 5. The idea of enlarging the military base in Hanko (1940)

An order given on 12 November 1940 can be regarded as proof that the Hanko base was turning away from a naval target and towards the mainland of Finland in its thinking. This order transferred the 8th Brigade from the Baltic Fleet to the command of the Leningrad Military District from 1 December onwards.

Only the first and fourth tasks (defending the mine-laying and artillery position and the base itself) are mentioned in the operation report for the Hanko base for the period of the Continuation War (drawn up in 1942), since General Kabanov generally mentioned only its defensive tasks. It must be noted that most of the reinforcements planned for the base during the war did not arrive and that its position became more difficult than had been expected. Attack was not an option under the circumstances.

It was calculated that a total of three infantry divisions would be needed, and that they would have to be available by the start of the operation. The 8th Brigade would have been used in the first echelons, and Belousov emphasized training the brigade for landing operations. The detachments would operate as follows:

- One regiment (without regimental artillery or logistics) would land in small vessels and boats at Degerö and attack Tammisaari from the east. The plan included the option of a landing from the air, but it was not specified any further in the calculations.

- One division would operate in the main landing in the direction of Padvamaa. After arriving at Tenhola, this division would advance towards Tammisaari from the north-west using the “strategic road” and side-roads. The first shipment would be loaded in the port of Hanko and on the islands of Bengtsår and Prästö, mostly onto smaller vessels and in five fairly small Sextant-type transport vessels. The troops would land at Bromarv, Padvamaa and the cape of Krokby (in Tenhola), destroy the enemy’s fire positions and cover the arrival of the second shipment.

- The second shipment, including artillery, would be carried in 12 Sibir-type transport vessels from Tallinn and Paldiski and arrive at the Hanko roadstead at a specified time, proceeding from there to various sides of Padvamaa from Vestervik to Bromarv.

- 1.5 divisions were to be grouped at the land front on the Hanko Peninsula in order to be able to attack the “fortification area” in Tammisaari simultaneously with the landings. This detachment was to be supported by an armoured force and artillery. The goal was that the division proceeding through Tenhola, together with the detach-

ment attacking from the Lappohja area, would destroy the Finnish troops grouped in the northern part of the Hanko peninsula.

The operation was expected to require an air force comprising one fighter regiment with 1-2 squadrons of assault aircraft and one bomber regiment. Not all these aircraft could be stationed on Hanko, however. Two fighter regiments, one reconnaissance squadron and one bomber squadron could have been based there, but the rest would have had to operate from Estonia.

In spring 1940 the Finnish headquarters calculated that two divisions could attack Finland from Hanko. The strength of the base - 27 809 men were evacuated in December 1941 - corresponded well to two infantry divisions, although the battle troops maintained by the land forces amounted to only one strong division.⁵³

The attack plan for the year 1941

A basic idea was in September 1940 formulated for a situation in which Finland would be alone against the Soviet Union, and also for a war in which the main enemy would be Germany. The directives to the Leningrad Military District concerning a war against Finland were dated 18 September, the same day as the general plan. In these instructions the General Staff defined the following main tasks:

1. To protect the border while troops are being transported.
2. To advance with the main forces on the North-Western Front through Savonlinna towards Mikkeli and through Lappeenranta towards Heinola, circling round the new border fortifications and attacking Helsinki from the direction of Viipuri, through Sippola, and to penetrate into central Finland, destroy most of the Finnish army there and capture the region. This attack was to be timed to coincide with an attack on Helsinki carried out from the Hanko Peninsula and by the Baltic Fleet from the Gulf of Finland.
3. Simultaneously with the main attack on the North-Western Front, an attack was to be mounted by the Northern Front in the direction of Rovaniemi, Kemi and Oulu, with the aim of reaching the Gulf of Bothnia and thereby isolating the northern part of Finland and cutting off the direct connections from central Finland to Sweden and Norway.
4. To take active measures in the north to capture the harbour of Petsamo from Finland in the first few days of the war, in con-

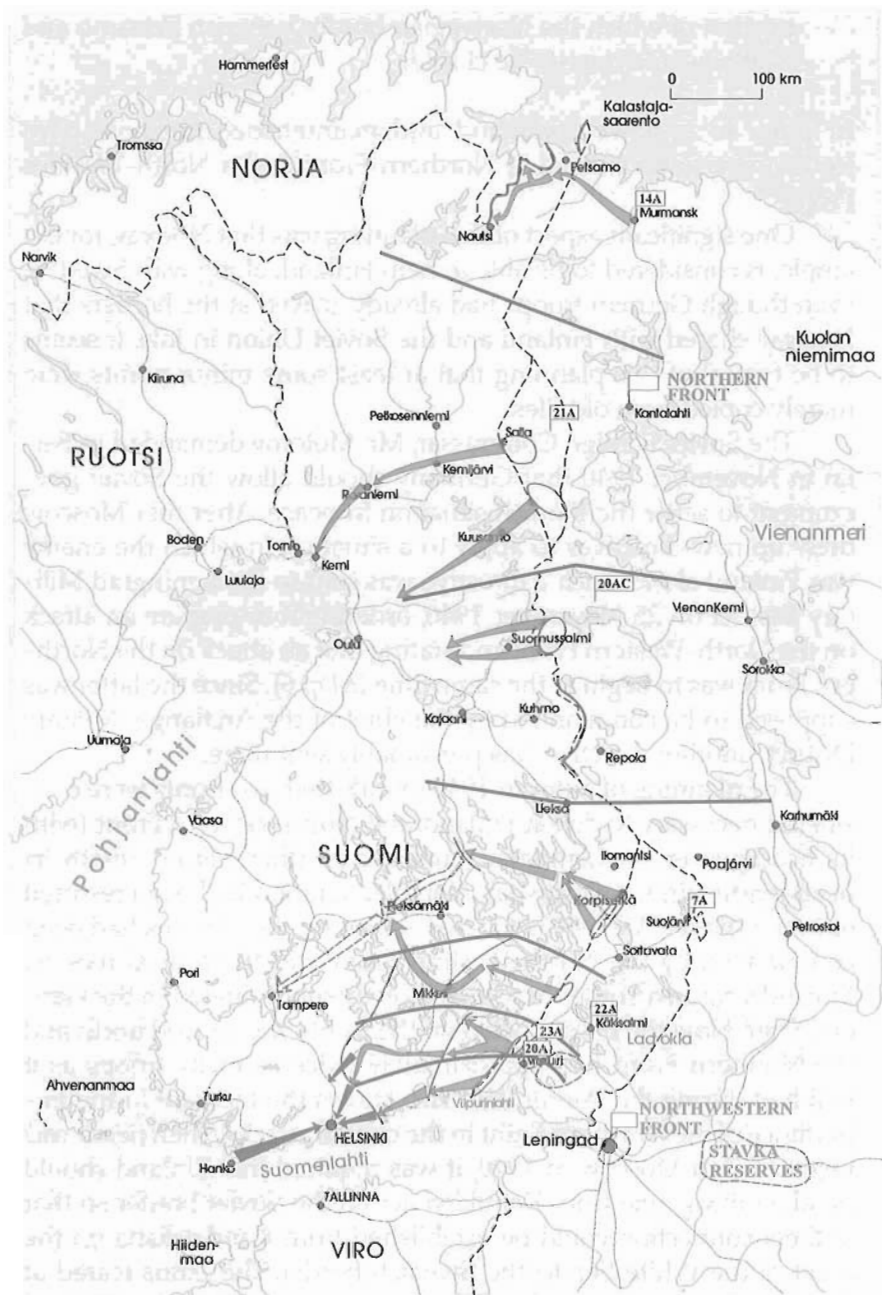
nection of which the Norwegian border between Petsamo and Nautsi would have to be closed.

In order to improve command and maintenance functions, two fronts were to be created: a Northern Front and a North-Western Front.⁵⁴

One significant aspect of this planning was that Norway, for example, is considered to be able to help Finland, along with Sweden, even though German troops had already arrived at the borders that Norway shared with Finland and the Soviet Union in July. It seems to be typical of this planning that at least some minor points were merely copied from old files.

The Soviet Foreign Commissar, Mr. Molotov demanded in Berlin in November 1940 that Germany should allow the Soviet government to settle the Finnish situation in peace. After that Moscow drew up new directives to apply to a situation in which the enemy was Finland alone. Such a directive was sent to the Leningrad Military District on 25 November 1940, ordering it to prepare an attack on the North-Western Front and stating that an attack on the Northern Front was to begin at the same time (*Map 6*). Since the latter was supposed to be commanded by the chief of the Archangel Military District, another directive was presumably sent there.

The planning of autumn 1940 reveals that two fronts were considered necessary to defeat Finland: the North-Western Front (with its headquarters in Leningrad) and the Northern Front (with its headquarters in Kandalaksha). A similar solution had been resorted to in the Winter War, when the two armies on the Isthmus had been commanded by the North-Western Front and the four armies on Finland's eastern border had been directly subordinated to the General Staff. Now the border between the fronts was moved north and the Northern Front had approximately twice as many troops as it had had during the Winter War. This shows the increase in the importance of the Northern Front in the overall attack. When peace was negotiated in Moscow in 1940, it was required that Finland should build a railway line from Kemijärvi across the Soviet border so that a direct connection could be established from Kandalaksha on the coast of the White Sea to the Swedish border. The Finns feared at the time that the purpose behind this was to make sure that Finland could be cut in two in the case of war, the Red Army having failed in this during the Winter War because of the difficult terrain and for other reasons.



Map 6. The idea of occupying Finland in 1940 – 1941

Cutting Finland in two was now considered a top priority, evidently on account of the increased German strength in northern Norway. A new army corps (the 42nd Corps) was established in the Kandalaksha Direction in March 1941. Even though the planning was clearly limited to the area of Finland, the idea that in the case of a war the Soviet Union would have wanted to penetrate through northern Sweden to the Atlantic coast of Norway, perhaps to the area of Narvik, or would have been obliged to do so, is not excluded.

As the Leningrad Military District was to finish its planning work by mid-February 1941, it can be assumed that the idea of a winter war had been given up at least for that year. The plan did include one ski brigade among the troops deployed in the Olonets area, however, because it was considered to be most useful there. Finland, at least, would have been in the danger zone in May 1941, if the Germans had turned their attention to the west or south.

The Red Army had gone off to the Winter War with only about twenty divisions, but now more troops were reserved for the attack from the outset.

– The Northern Front would have two armies and an independent army corps (altogether four army corps), i.e. 15 infantry divisions, one artillery regiment of the high command and 23 flight regiments,

– the North-Western Front would have 4 armies, 9 infantry Army Corps and one mechanized Army Corps, i.e. 29 infantry divisions, 2 armoured divisions, 1 motorized infantry division, 5 armoured brigades, 12 artillery regiments of the high command, 6 pontoon battalions, 7 engineer battalions and 55 flight regiments.

– Furthermore, the high command reserves had 3 infantry divisions in the area of Tikhvin, Volkhovstroi and Tshudovo. At least in September, it was planned that the reserves of the high command would have another 7 infantry divisions in the Western Military District and 7 infantry divisions in the Kiev Military District, i.e. a total of 14 divisions (in the rear of the districts) to be used in the Viipuri direction if needed.

It was calculated that the forces of the Leningrad Military District would be available 6-8 days after the mobilization order. On the other hand, the troops transported from other districts by train would be available in the north-western sector (in the directions of Petrozavodsk and Viipuri) 35 days after the start of mobilization and in the northern sector in 40-45 days. The Northern Front was to at-

tack 40 days after the start of mobilization, and the North-Western Front 5 days earlier.

Troops would be brought to the border in northern Finland from the districts of Moscow, Volga and the North Caucasus, whereas Olonets (Aunus) and the Karelian Isthmus would receive troops from the districts of Moscow, the Urals, Orel, Kharkov and the North Caucasus. Furthermore, the troops available to the commander of the North-Western Front would include an Army Corps in the special Baltic Military District in the area of Tallinn - Paldiski, one division of which was planned to be transported to Hanko to operate against Helsinki and another to be either similarly transported to Hanko or to land on the Åland Islands. There was also a separate infantry brigade available.

The tasks of the two fronts created to defeat Finland were:

– The Northern Front, together with the Northern Fleet, was to defend the capes of Kalastajasaarento (Rybatshyi) and the coasts of the Kola Peninsula, especially the harbour of Murmansk, to capture Petsamo Harbour, and to advance with land forces to the Norwegian border between Petsamo and Nautsi. 40 days after mobilization it was to move vigorously into the attack in the directions of Rovaniemi - Kemi and Oulu and reach the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, cutting off Finland's land connections with Sweden and Norway. It was to seize the Kemi - Oulu area on the 30th day of the operation.

– The North-Western Front was to destroy the Finnish armed forces, seize its entire area and reach the Gulf of Bothnia on the 40th day of the operation. For this purpose it would

- 1) protect the directions of Viipuri and Käkisalme during the concentration of troops, retain Viipuri under all conditions, and deny the enemy access to the shore of Lake Ladoga, and
- 2) begin a general attack on the 35th day after the concentration of troops, carry out the main attack in the general direction of Lappeenranta – Heinola - Hämeenlinna, with supporting attacks in the Korpiselkä - Kuopio and Savonlinna - Mikkeli directions, defeat the Finnish army's main forces in the Mikkeli - Heinola - Hamina area, capture Helsinki on the 25th day of the operation and reaches the line Kuopio – Jyväskylä – Hämeenlinna - Helsinki.

The southern border of the Northern Front's area of operations would have run from north of the Maaselkä station on the Murmansk rail-

way line to Kokkola on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. Altogether the front had 15 divisions at its disposal, one artillery regiment of the high command and 23 flight regiments.

The fact that two-thirds of the available air forces had been directly subordinated to the front headquarters suggests that the emphasis was clearly to be in the direction of Salla. Two divisions had been there at the end of the Winter War; and now the number of troops would be quadrupled.

The armies were given the following tasks:

On the Northern Front:

– The 14th Army, together with the Northern Fleet, was to defend the harbour of Murmansk, the coast of the Kola Peninsula and the capes of Rybatsyi (Kalastajasaarento), capture Petsamo harbour with at least two divisions in cooperation with the navy and the air forces of the army and the navy, and reach the Norwegian border in the sector Petsamo - Nautsi. The Northern Fleet was operatively subordinated to the 14th Army, but would be given long-distance tasks directly by the high command. The army would have three infantry divisions, one artillery regiment of the high command and four flight groups at its disposal.

– The 21st Army had three army corps, a total of nine divisions and four flight groups. Its main grouping (six infantry divisions) was to be in the area of the Salla railway, and the supporting group (three divisions) in the area of Sovajärvi - Pääjärvi east of Posio. It was to attack in the direction of Rovaniemi and Kemi, advance to the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia and seize the Kemi area. Later it was to prepare for action against Oulu. Thus the Soviet war plans relied very heavily on success in the direction of the Salla - Kandalaksha railway.

– At the latitude of Suomussalmi - Kuhmo the separate 20th Army Corps was to defend along the Lake Kamennoe - Tuulosjärvi front, preventing the Finnish troops from forcing their way into Soviet territory and protecting the Murmansk railway. The Army Corps was to attack in the Suomussalmi - Puolanka direction with two divisions, capture the Puolanka area and then advance to Oulu, while one division made its way towards Nurmes. The direction of emphasis of the planned advance to Oulu at the beginning of the Winter War had been through Kuhmo, but now - on account of lessons learned - no emphasis was placed on this direction.

On the North-Western Front:

– The 7th Army was to carry out the main attack (from the areas of Korpiselkä and Tojosvaara) in the Korpiselkä - Kuopio direction with at least four divisions, destroy the opposing parts of the Finnish army and capture the Joensuu area on the 15th day of the operation. On the 30th day it was to capture the Kuopio area, encircling the main concentration of enemy troops from the north. It was then to prepare to attack Jyväskylä.

– The 22nd Army was to protect the railway and deny the enemy access to the shore of Lake Ladoga. After grouping, the army was to carry out the main attack in the Virmuntjoki - Juva direction with four divisions, encircle and destroy the enemy in that area, and reach the line Savonranta – Juva - Kampila on the 15th day of the operation. Later, depending on the situation, it was to prepare to act together with the 23rd Army against Heinola or together with the 7th Army against Jyväskylä and later Tampere. It was to reach the line Kangasniemi – Leivonmäki - Lake Iloma - Kalkkinen on the 30th day of the operation.

– The 23rd Army was to carry out its main attack with at least four divisions in the Lappeenranta – Lahti - Riihimäki direction, destroy the enemy troops in its path and reach the line Savitaipale – Valkolainmäki - Taavetti station on the 15th day of the operation. Later, proceeding north around the strongest fortification area, it was to combine with the 20th Army to destroy the enemy in the Helsinki direction, and, was to reach the line Kalkkinen – Kärkölä - Mäntsälä on the 30th day of the operation. The aim was to include a mechanized Army Corps in the breakthrough after reaching the line Savitaipale - Taavetti station.

– The 20th Army, which had formed up along a line from Louki station to the coast of the Gulf of Finland, had the task of breaking the enemy's fortification area. It was to destroy the opposing troops, reach the line Taavetti station - Hamina on the 15th day of the operation, and advance to the line Mäntsälä - Porvoo by the 30th day. Later, on the 35th day, it was to capture the Helsinki area together with the 23rd Army and the 1st Mechanized Corps.

The task of the Air Force was defined on 25 November 1940 as follows:

1. to cooperate with ground forces by operating against the enemy's ground forces (troops grouped for battle and large groupings),

2. to destroy the enemy's aircraft,
3. to prevent military transportation on land and at sea,
4. to destroy the enemy's fleet, together with the navy air force and navy,
5. to act together with the navy to cut off Finland's imports across the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic Sea, and
6. to protect the transportation and unloading of troops on the Hanko peninsula, using also air power from the Baltic district.

The Northern Fleet was to:

1. retain Murmansk, and protect the coast of the Kola Peninsula and the capes of Kalastajasaarento, together with the 14th Army,
2. cooperate with the 14th Army, and
3. reconnoitre sea connections in the western part of Norway and the Kattegat.

The Baltic Fleet, being operatively subordinated to the North-Western Front, was to:

- act together with the air force to destroy the Finnish fleet (and that of Sweden, if the latter was to take part in the war),
 - operate along the coast of the Gulf of Finland and from the Hanko Peninsula together with the grouped troops, protect their flanks and destroy the Finnish coastal defences,
3. protect the transportation of two infantry divisions from the northern shore of the Estonian Soviet Republic to the Hanko Peninsula in the early days of the war, and also the transportation and unloading of a large landing force on the Åland Islands, and
 4. undertake operations using both submarines and aircraft to cut off sea connections between Finland and Sweden (if the latter was to take part in the war) in the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic Sea.

It is to be noted that the tasks of the fronts and armies as laid down in the directive are not quite synchronized. The North-Western Front is expected to capture Helsinki on the 25th day of the operation, whereas the 20th Army is expected to do so on the 35th day. Also, where optimistic estimates during the Winter War had envisaged an operation lasting a couple of weeks, a month was now reserved for

this, and at least preparations had been made for setbacks on a mental level by considering the inclusion of 14 additional divisions from the reserves stationed on the Western Front.

Taking the previous Soviet war experiences into account, the plans probably mean that the main northern attack was not to take place in the direction of Kuhmo as in December 1939. Experiences with the Mannerheim Line and knowledge of the circling of the Maginot Line during the successful German operation in France had evidently tempted the leadership to plan the main attack to take place north of the strongest zone in the new main Finnish defence line.

All and all, it must be noted that the planning was all the time limited by the geography of Finland and the country's lines of communication, but details were being polished. According to the preliminary instructions given in September, the 22nd Army was to capture Mikkeli, the 23rd Army was to capture Heinola (through Lemi), and in the first phase the 20th Army was to reach the line Kouvola - Kotka. It was planned that the 23rd and 20th Armies and the forces advancing from Hanko would attack Helsinki at the same time.

During autumn 1940 the plan was modified so that more time was reserved for breaking through the Finnish front line in November, the first objectives being drawn closer to the border. It was calculated that after this first effort the main forces of the Finnish army would be destroyed in the Mikkeli - Heinola - Hamina area, and armoured troops were to be brought in after the breakthrough to speed the process up. The final phase - the advance to Helsinki and the Gulf of Bothnia - would not take very long, and it would all be over in a month and a half.⁵⁵

A new, defensive plan, connected with the overall planning of the Red Army was drawn up in the Leningrad Military District in spring 1941 by the Chief of the Operative Division of the General Staff, Lieutenant General N.F. Vatutin and the chiefs-of-staff of the 14th and the 7th Armies. The basic idea was to prevent the enemy from advancing into Soviet territory, win time for grouping for a counter-offensive and move the war into enemy territory within two weeks.

The Red Army's overall plan for spring 1941 lacks as far as Finland is concerned, the concept of an offensive. A series of containing attacks was probably the most applicable option. Decisive superiority was not to be achieved. The following grouping was predicted for

the Finnish army:

1. Six infantry divisions supported by 3-4 German divisions along the front from the Gulf of Finland to Savonlinna.
2. Three infantry divisions along the Onkamo – Ilomantsi - Nurmes front to protect the Kuopio - Joensuu direction.
3. Two infantry divisions along the Kuhmo - Suomussalmi front to protect the Oulu direction.
4. Two infantry divisions in the area of Märkäjärvi.
5. Two infantry divisions in the area of Petsamo.

The Finnish army is expected to complete its ordered grouping in 20-25 days.

The likelihood that significant Finnish forces, supported here by German divisions, will be grouped in the Viipuri-Leningrad area points to the possibility of active measures in this direction.

It is not unlikely that supporting enemy attacks in this theatre of war will follow later on in the direction of Petrozavodsk and Kandalaksha."⁵⁶

Since the main military tasks - in addition to isolating Finland from Sweden - included securing supremacy in the Gulf of Finland, it was decided that when the war broke out, the entire northern coast of Estonia, including the troops stationed there, would be subordinated to the command of the Leningrad Military District. The border between the Northern and the North-Western Fronts was placed to the north-west through the mainland of Estonia, running west of Ostashkov and Ostrov, through Viru, west of Viljanti and east of Hidenmaa and Saarenmaa. Thus the southern border of the Northern Front would have closed off the entire area of Finland and the Gulf of Finland to be commanded from Leningrad, which was operationally logical even though it did not follow the border of the military administration. In addition to the Leningrad Military District, the planned area included the northern part of the Baltic district. This would have placed the area of the Gulf of Finland under the command of Leningrad. This seems operationally logical, but it did not follow the borders of the military districts. According to an order given by the Red Army General Staff on 14 May 1941, the northern coast of Estonia all the way to the straits between Matsalu and Worms would become the responsibility of the Leningrad Military District on the first day of mobilization. According to the general Soviet plan for the war against Germany, two divisions and the 4th Flight Division

were to be included on the Estonian coast to the Northern Front, to be directed against Finland, simply by moving the border between the fronts. Of these, at least the flight division had been ordered to support Hanko, but it did not have the opportunity to do so.⁵⁷

This general plan drawn up for a war against Germany entailed the deploying of 21 divisions belonging to the Northern Front against Finland. To balance the assumed 27 enemy divisions - 20 Finnish divisions, six German divisions and apparently one volunteer division - the Soviet Union had five divisions of the 14th Army at the latitudes of Kainuu and Lapland, four divisions of the 7th Army in Olonets (Aunus) and the Lake Ladoga area, nine divisions of the 23rd Army on the Isthmus - including three armoured divisions and one motorized infantry division - and three divisions west of Leningrad. The emphasis placed on the Salla railway in Soviet planning is shown by the fact that an Army Corps headquarters (the 42nd Army Corps headquarters) was established in this direction in winter 1941 (no later than 14 March 1941).⁵⁸ In June 1941, the planned area of the Northern Front began to take shape.

Finland's position was still threatened after the peace negotiated in Moscow, and it has been greatly debated to what extent the Soviet Union was actually preparing another attack. As already mentioned, a general characteristic to the Interim Peace seems to be that the Soviet Union's other directions of action occupied the Red Army's interests at times considered critical for Finland. The training of troops and improving of weaponry also took up a great deal of time and resources.

The operative journeys and war games connected with the Soviet war planning of 1941 were arranged under central control by the beginning of April. In this timetable it is possible to discern where the troops required on each front were to be obtained and tentatively also the priority given to each part of the plan. The first place, according to the planned succession of events in the General Staffs plan, was assigned to the Leningrad direction, second place being occupied by the Caucasus, involving representatives of the Caucasus, North Caucasus, Volga and Urals military districts, and the Baltic District, and after that the Ukrainian front, involving the Kiev, Kharkov, North Caucasus and Odessa military districts. On the other hand, the corresponding operative visit to the Belorussia front, concerning the Western, Moscow and North Caucasus military districts, was postponed until later in the autumn, to take place only after a

planning visit to the Far East. It is of course true that there may have been other reasons behind this order of priorities as well as the haste with which the plans had to be revised.

A field reconnaissance expedition led by the General Staff was held in the Leningrad military district on 1.-15.3.1941, involving representatives of the Leningrad, Orel and Urals military districts, i.e. the North-Western Front of a "Finnish war", personnel engaged in the offensive planned during the winter. (A corresponding reconnaissance expedition for the Northern Front of the "Finnish war" was to be held on 15.-30.8.1941 for representatives of the Arkhangelsk and Volga military districts and the 14th Army, but it was eventually prevented by the prior outbreak of war.) The next step was the arranging by the General Staff of an operative strategy war game for representatives of the Leningrad and Arkhangelsk military districts on 1.-15.5.1941. (Likewise, planning journeys by both the General Staff and the local military districts in an area extending from Murmansk to the Karelian Isthmus were on the programme for October.)

A field reconnaissance trip to the area controlled by the 7th Army and 14th Army (i.e. the Finnish east border) was planned to take place under the commander of the Leningrad military district on 15.-30.6.⁵⁹ It is not known whether this ever took place in the southern part of the area, but a journey of this kind was undertaken further north by Commander (General M.M. Popov) and the other leaders of the military district and the command of the 14th Army. Given the political situation prevailing at the time, the visit was followed by an order to transfer the 122nd Division immediately to the vicinity of the border in Salla, and correspondingly, movement of the 1st Tank Division from Pskov to Alakurtti in Salla began on 19.6. On the same date the General Staff confirmed, in accordance with existing plans, the southern border of the Northern Front (to be created as a result of the war) to run across Estonia and required the Arkhangelsk military district to form a front headquarters in accordance with the plans for a more extensive attack on Finland.

As is well known, the Soviet Union did not have the opportunity to direct the planned 49 divisions against Finland in June 1941, although the Leningrad Military District was still superior in strength to the estimate of 21 divisions for the Finnish army prior to the outbreak of the Continuation War in that month. The divisions in the Finnish direction had been reinforced to wartime strength in

May 1941 and the 23rd Army headquarters had been established for the troops on the Isthmus, and on 19 June the troops in the north assumed readiness for battle. This took place immediately after German troops "in transit" through Kemijärvi had turned towards the eastern border.

When Germany attacked on 22 June 1941, the Soviet mobilization trains also started out towards Finland, naturally according to the existing plans. We can note that the points of emphasis were in the area of Viipuri (a mechanized corps) and towards Kandalaksha, which points to attacks in the directions of the most important roads. By 25 June, two Soviet armoured divisions were already concentrated in the Viipuri area.⁶⁰ The strength of the German attack nevertheless contained the resources of the Leningrad Military District to the south-western part of its area.

Notes

- ⁵⁰ Poslednyi doklad narkoma oborony SSSR K.J. Voroshilova. VIZ 1/1991 p. 5-8; G.K. Zhukov, Vospominaniya i rasmysleniya (Moskva 1992) p. 289-290; Odesskii krasnoznamennyi p. 61. RGVA 25888 opis 3 delo 473 p. 20-35, 79-93; opis 15 delo 523 p. 95. RGAVMF Fond 92 opis 2 delo 672 p. 171-177. Vasilevskii p. 99-101, 106, 108, 112-113; Zaharov p. 213-225; Zhukov p. 349; Vladimir Karpov, Zhukov (Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil 5/1990) p. 67-68; Gotovil li SSSR preventivnyj udar? VIZ 1/1992 p. 24-29; Uprjamnye fakty natshala vojny. VIZ 2/1992 p. 14-22; Horkov, Grozovoj ijun (Moskva 1991) p. 86-97.- One of the most interesting sources related to the topic is Marshal Matvei Zakharov's book of memoirs Generalnyj Shtab v predvoennye gody (The General Staff in the Years before the War), which leans on documentary material. It was written in 1969, but because of the "secrets" it contained, it was not published until 1990.
- ⁵¹ Directives of General staff for the year 1940 in RGVA Fond 25888 opis 15 del 519, 521, 522. - About the place of Finland in the overall calculations see God 1941, 1 p. 83-89 (4.7.1940), p. 181-193 (19.8.1940). See Zaharov, passim. See also the instructions sent on 3 September to the 19th, 50th and 56th Army Corps concerning strengthening of the grouping at the border, the plan completed on 8 September concerning the fortification of the Finnish border and the memorandum sent to the Chief of the General Staff on 5 September on the defence of the Karelian Isthmus and the Petrozavodsk area.
- ⁵² RGAVMF Fond 92 opis 2 delo 660, delo 669.
- ⁵³ RGAVMF 92-2-681 p. 30 (Outcast for an operation from Hanko 9.8. 1940); 92-2-660; "Ottshet o boevykh dejstviakh VoЕННО-Morskoi bazy Hanko KBF 22.6.-2.12. 1941", TsVMA Fond 2 (1941) opis 1 delo 526.
- ⁵⁴ God 1941, 1 p. 253-260.
- ⁵⁵ God 1941, 1 p. 418-423. - Probably related to this directive was a planning map

drawn up by the Soviet General Staff in November 1940 which sketched out the grouping and attack plans of troops engaged in the Northern Front's operation against Finland. The map had been signed on 27 November 1941 [sic] by Lieutenant General Vatutin and Major General Vasilevskii of the operative department of the General Staff. Around this time, in 1940, Vasilevskii was also drafting general plans for the deployment of the Red Army. The year stated in the signature is clearly false, probably due to the fact that when the plans were made, eyes had already been turned to the future.

⁵⁶ Konets globalnoj lzhi VIZ 2/1996, p. 5-6, 6/1996 p. 3-7. Olejnikov p. 117-120. About the People's Commissariat for Defence directive 5.5. 1941 see RGASPI Fond 74 opis 2 delo 122 p. 6.

⁵⁷ God 1941, 1, p. 181-193 (19.8. 1940), p. 236-253 (18.9. 1940), 740-746 (11.3. 1941), 2 p. 215-220 (15.5. 1941), p. 282-288 (30.5.1941). All of Estonia had been included in the Leningrad district in the summer of 1940, cf. God 1941, 1. p. 83-89 (4.7. 1940), cf. Voенно-istorizheski zhurnal 4-5/1992, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Although when the troop concentration map belonging to this general plan was published in a Russian review of military history in 1992 (VIZ 2/1992 p. 64/65) the publisher stated that it had been drawn up in 1940, the grouping is to a large extent - but not entirely - the same as that which actually took place in June 1941, and it features mechanized corps, for example, that were not established until March 1941. If the year 1940 is in fact correct, the map was in all likelihood drawn after November 1940. -- Comparison of the November 1940 draft with the map accompanying the general plan - especially regarding the part that deals with Finland - shows that the number of troops assigned to the Northern Front was much smaller. Against the assumed 27 enemy divisions - 20 Finnish, 6 German and apparently one volunteer division - there are only 21 Soviet divisions. Also, where five divisions were deployed against Lapland and Kainuu, the special plan for the north had 15 divisions in the same area, i.e. three times more troops. - The calculations made on 13 June 1941 in the General Staff (God 1941, 2 p. 358-361) envisaged for the Northern front 22 divisions (16 infantry, 4 armoured and 2 motorized divisions) and one brigade. One more division of the Leningrad district was planned to be transported to the Central Russia.

⁵⁹ God 1941, 2. p.29-45.

⁶⁰ Karelskii front p. 23; God 1941, 2 p. 106 (23.4.1941). TsAMO Fond 217 opis 1221 delo 2 p. 6, 16, delo 6 p. 3-17, delo 60 p. 1-7; General Staff 24.6. 1941 to Arkhangel'sk District. Tankisty v srazhenii za Leningrad (1987) p. 54.

4. After the Barbarossa: Operations with limited goals in 1941-1943

After the German attack on the Soviet Union, general Vasilevskii, deputy chief of the General staff, issued orders on 22.6.1941 for execution of the protection plan to begin. This required that the armies in the north should exercise tight control over the national boundary. A Northern Front, comprising the whole of the Leningrad military district and Northern Estonia, was then created on 24.6. As planned, the North-Western Front (the Baltic military district) left some troops in Estonia for the Northern Front, although these included more recently formed troops than had been expected according to the plans laid down in November. This reduced their capacity for mounting an attack over the Gulf of Finland. The more experienced troops were moved to positions confronting Germany. This abandonment of the

General staff during the Great Patriotic War

Commander-in-Chief

S.K. Timoshenko 22.6. – 8.8. 1941
I.V. Stalin 8.8. 1941 - .

Chief of General Staff

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| G.K. Zhukov | 1.2.1941 - 30.7.41 |
| B.M. Shaposhnikov | 1.8.41 – 10.5.42 |
| A.M. Vasilevskii | (12.5.42 -)26.6.42 - 17.2.45 |
| A.I. Antonov | 19.2.45 – (1945). |

Chief of Operative directorate

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| V.M. Zlobin | (1941) – 1.8.41 |
| A.M. Vasilevskii | 1.8.41 - 24.4.42 |
| P.I. Bodin | (23.4. .. 26.6.42) |
| A.M. Bogoliubov | (10.8.-13.9.42) |
| V.D. Ivanov | (29.7. .. 21.10.42) |
| A.I. Antonov | 12.12.42 – 19.5.43 |
| S.M. Shtemenko | 20.5.43 – (1945) |

plan for enlarging the grouping of troops against Finland also meant that the staff of the Arkhangelsk military district was now ordered to form an army headquarters, that of the 28th Army, rather than a front headquarters.⁶¹

From the very beginning of the war the chief attention on the Northern Front came to be directed further towards the south-west. The Germans advanced rapidly, and the North-Western Front responsible for defending the southern boundaries of the Baltic region decided as early as 30.6. that it was impossible to defend even the line of the western River Dvina and that defences should be developed in the Pskov area and west of Narva and action should be taken to evacuate Saaremaa (Ösel) and Hiiumaa (Dagö). Although the supreme command was opposed to any abandonment of the River Dvina line, the situation developed of its own accord. It was in any case decided on 29.6. that the 1st Mechanized Corps of the Northern Front, which had been held in reserve, was subordinated to the North-Western Front (with the exception of the 1st Tank Division), and a few days later work began on constructing new defences on a line Pskov – Luga – Staraya. The district's remaining tank forces, the 1st Tank Division from Kandalaksha and the 10th Mechanized Corps from Antrea, with the exception of the 198th Motorized Division, were ordered to form a reserve in the Krasnogvardeisk – Pushkin area. There they were assigned to the North-Western Front on 9.7.

A headquarters for the North-Western Region was set up on 10.7.1941 as a common higher command for the Northern Front and North Western Front and placed under the command of one of Stalin's trusted military representatives, K.Ye. Voroshilov. The Baltic Fleet was also subordinated to this North-Western Region. All this meant that the possibilities for conducting operations on the Finnish front were reduced considerably, although admittedly the transfer of the 1st Tank Division was delayed until 14.7. by a Finnish offensive.⁶²

The Finns capture the Lake Ladoga region of Karelia

Although the Soviet Union was forced to progress from one emergency solution to another throughout the summer and autumn of 1941, plans were constantly being laid and targets set for new offensives, e.g. the plans for surrounding the troops at the head of

the rapidly advancing Finnish thrust into the Lake Ladoga region of Karelia in the Pitkäranta area in July by means of a pincer movement via Sortavala and Olonets, and the corresponding plans for cutting off the foremost Finnish attackers on the Karelian Isthmus in August. The troops intended for operations in Olonets in September, however, simply failed to arrive in time.

The advance of the Finnish Army into the area north of Lake Ladoga eventually took place on 10.7.1941 and was immediately highly successful. The Soviet 7th Army attempted to improve its battle command efficiency by organizational means, forming the Suojärvi operational group on 14.7. in response to the Finnish breakthrough, and slightly later, on 22.7., creating the Petrozavodsk Group, also known as the Antonyuk Group, and the Southern, or Tsvetayev Group. The Northern Front expected the Finns to assign one division each to the advances towards Petrozavodsk and Olonets, allowing one division to proceed towards Suojärvi and at the same time continuing the attack on the Soviet 168th Division in the Sortavala area with two divisions of their own. It was estimated that the new Suojärvi, Petrozavodsk and Olonets Groups would be able to destroy the motorized columns at the head of the Finnish invasions and then repel the principal Finnish thrusts to the east approximately at the level of Palalahti and Salmi. Since they did not believe that they had the strength to destroy the latter troops, the task of the 7th Army was defined as being that of containing the eastward advance of the main Finnish force by means of determined resistance and thereby to inflict as much damage on the enemy as possible, working actively on the flanks and rear of the invading force.

In order to destroy the Finnish troops moving towards Petrozavodsk and Olonets (and return to the old defence lines) it was necessary to reinforce the troops with two new divisions, which were to be grouped in the area of Petrozavodsk and the town of Olonets. There were no troops free in this part of the front to perform that function.

The Olonets group and the Southern Group began a counter-attack on 23.7. that was to last two days, whereas the Suojärvi Group was never able to establish itself properly and collapsed around 22.7. On the other hand, the Finnish offensive came to an end at the 1939 border, whereas the situation was expected to develop further in the Leningrad area.

At the beginning of August the Olonets Group and Southern

Group were ordered to undertake a new counter-offensive, with the aim of destroying the Finnish troops that were advancing towards Vitele by attacking from the area south-west of Sotjärvi and then advancing to Pitkäranta. It was at that point that assistance was obtained from the 272nd Division and the 3rd DNO (Division of People's volunteers), the two divisions that had been called for earlier.

The idea behind the operations on the Northern Front was that the Southern (Tsvetayev) Group should defend doggedly in the direction of the River Tuulos and that the Finnish Pitkäranta grouping should be encircled and destroyed, partly by an attack by the troops of the 23rd Army in the Sortavala area along the northern shore of Lake Ladoga and on as far as Lemetti and partly by an attack from the Antonyuk Group from the direction of Petrozavodsk.

The Soviet forces had at their disposal:

- the Tsvetayev Group, which was expected to be ready for the offensive by 1.8. and which comprised: one marine infantry brigade, the 7th Motor Cycle Regiment, the 452nd Infantry Regiment, a "destroyer" detachment composed of party members, and the 3rd Leningrad Volunteer Division (minus one regiment),
- the Antonyuk Group, consisting of the 24th Motorized Regiment, the 10th Reserve regiment, the 9th Anti-Tank Regiment (of the 9th Anti-Tank Brigade), the 2nd Tank Regiment and the 272nd Division, which would arrive in the concentration area by 7.8.
- the Bondarev Group in the Sortavala area, which would be prepared for action by 28.7. and which comprised the 450th Infantry Regiment (minus one battalion), the 2nd Battalion of Border Guards, the 367th regiment of the 71st Division and almost a regiment of artillery.
- The Ladoga Naval Squadron, with 6 gunboats and the 2nd Marine Landing Battalion.

The Soviet offensive had collapsed by 12.8., however, having achieved no more than a few temporary, local successes.⁶³

Retreat from the Karelian Isthmus

The situation rapidly turned against the Soviet Union by the time the Finns had advanced on the Karelian Isthmus as far as the shore of Lake Ladoga and had reached the River Vuoksi. Thus the command of the Northern Front proposed on 16.8.1941 that its troops of the 168th, 142nd and 198th Divisions that had been effectively cut off – and rendered more or less useless – in the area south-west of Sortavala should be transferred by ship to the Käkisalmi area, to join the 23th Army. The Stavka agreed to this on 17.8. and the transfer was carried through for the most part, although to a location somewhat closer to Leningrad.

The Stavka drew its own conclusions regarding the poor success achieved in the engagements with the Finns and issued an order on 23.8. under which the Northern Front was to be divided into the Leningrad Front, functioning chiefly in the area south of Leningrad, and the Karelian Front, extending from Lake Ladoga to the Arctic Ocean. The border was to run on a line Voskresenskoye – Radogoshch – Yeremina Gora – Sviritsa – Sortavala – Varkaus. The Leningrad Front was subordinated to the headquarters of the North-Western Region, while the Karelian Front was placed directly under the command of the Stavka. In order to reduce the number of subsidiary fronts, which were difficult to look after, the Leningrad Front deemed it essential (on 28.8.) to evacuate Saaremaa, Hiiumaa and Hanko as soon as the equipment was available for doing so. This was not achieved by any means at once, however, not even after the evacuation of Tallinn.

When the counter-attack by the 115th and 123rd Divisions of the 23rd Army on 24.8. failed to produce the desired result and no permanent resistance could be organized on the Salmenkaita line, the Leningrad Front (under the command of M.M.Popov) ordered its troops on 25.8.1941 to maintain a determined resistance. The commanders and commissars were to be held personally responsible under martial law for the slightest retreat that might take place in their sectors. In addition, a brief attack was to be made by the 123rd Division to capture the Heinjoki railway station and establish a line Lake Äyräpää – Lyykkylä. The River Taipaleenjoki – Lake Suvantojärvi – River Vuoksi defence line was to be held at all costs and every attempt by the enemy to cross these waterways was to be repelled. In spite of all this, however, the Finnish advance continued

uninterrupted, now taking effect in the direction of Viipuri as well, both by sea and overland.

By 28.8., however, the Leningrad Front had received permission from the Stavka to retreat from the Vyborg Line to a line further back on the Isthmus, but again the Stavka ordered that the troops were not under any conditions to abandon the new positions prepared on the Mannerheim Line. The 23rd Army had five divisions available at the end of the month, the 123rd, 115th, 43rd, 142nd and 198th (Motorized) Divisions, mostly in need of reinforcements or in the process of being transferred, together with a detachment from the naval schools of the Baltic Fleet (at the River Rokkalanjoki).

Again the supreme command was somewhat late in reacting, for the Finns had already encircled the major part of the Soviet Army's grouping at Viipuri, and it was necessary to retreat as far as the front line of the Karelian fortification area (south of the 1939 boundary). This order reached the 43rd, 115th and 123rd Divisions in a situation in which the majority of their troops were in the process of withdrawing into the Koivisto area, since their opponents were blocking the roads to Beloostrov and Sestoret'sk. The remnants of these divisions had assembled at Koivisto by the morning of 2.9. and were then transported across the Gulf of Finland, while the 142nd, 265th and 198th Divisions and one regiment of the 115th Division took possession of the front line in the Karelian Fortification area, the 291st Division and one regiment from the 1st Volunteer Division being brought up to protect their flanks. This meant that there were about eight divisions on the Isthmus, but most of them were small and were lacking in heavy weaponry. The Finns nevertheless stopped their advance immediately south of the 1939 boundary, for political and military reasons, and did not attempt to penetrate into the Fortification area.⁶⁴

Efforts were made to improve the defences of Leningrad by gathering all the available troops to form a new front and changing the commander. First Voroshilov, who had commanded the whole of their North-Western Region (cancelled on 29.8.), was appointed instead of Popov as Commander of the Leningrad Front, and then, on 11.9., the Stavka replaced him with Zhukov, who enjoyed the particular confidence of Stalin, at the suggestion of a commission under Molotov that had functioned in Leningrad at the end of August and beginning of September. The hostilities taking place around Moscow soon demanded the Stavka's principal attention, however, and

Zhukov was recalled to Moscow on 2.10. The next commander of the Leningrad Front was General I.I. Fedyuninsky, who had distinguished himself at the River Taipaleenjoki in 1939, to be followed by General M.S. Khozin, who had been in charge of the Leningrad military district in the 1930s, and the next year by General L.A. Govorov.

The Karelian Isthmus was a relatively peaceful area as far as the Leningrad Front was concerned. There were few open battles there and operations were carried out only on a local scale (up to 1944), in order to achieve adjustments in the front lines.

Counter-attack by the 14th Army

The Finnish and German troops in the north had recaptured Salla early in the war and had carried out forays towards the east that constituted a threat to the Murmansk railway line. This notwithstanding, the 1st Tank Division, which had been held in reserve as the main safeguard for the railway in the Salla-Kandalaksha area, had to be sent to south of Leningrad against the Germans. In order to ensure sufficient strength for defence, the 14th Army asked for the 88th Division which was then responsible for coastal defences in the Arkhangelsk region. Agreement was obtained for this, and the transfer of troops began on 9.8. Most of the division was transported to the Louhi and Boyarsk railway stations on 9.-15.8. and from there to the front. The predicament of the Soviet troops became more serious at this point, however, as the Grivnin Brigade, which had been holding the front, was forced to retreat further away, north-east of Kestenga, and thus as soon as it arrived, the 88th Division began an attack designed to eliminate the forces that had captured Kestenga and advance to the River Safyanga (Sohjana). The attack was arrested by "an unidentified Finnish battalion" on 18.8., however, and after nearly a month of attempting a breakthrough, the 88th Division and the Grivnin Brigade received orders on 12.9. to defend their existing positions for the time being. On 16.9. the Karelian Front was given new orders to regain the original defence line in the Murmansk and Kandalaksha directions, but they no longer had the strength to make any renewed efforts.⁶⁵

The headquarters of the 14th Army experienced difficulties in maintaining command over a front that extended from Murmansk to the latitude of Repola and contained numerous foci of action, and thus the Karelian Front proposed on 3.9. that an operative group

should be set up, comprising the 88th and 54th Divisions and the newly formed Repola Division, to function in the Kestenga – Uhtua – Repola area, with its headquarters at Kemi, and to be under the direct command of the Karelian Front. The supreme command, or the Stavka, indicated on 5.9. that it had no objection to the formation of a Kemi Operational Group, and a little later, on 5.10., when it was deemed appropriate to continue the reorganization of the chain of command, the Stavka also decided to divide the 14th Army into three operative groups, those of Murmansk, Kandalaksha and Kemi, with headquarters formed from that of the 42nd Corps. This change was delayed by hostilities, however, and was finally implemented on 20.10., when the 14th Army itself issued orders for the creation of the Murmansk and Kandalaksha Groups.⁶⁶

Engagements in Olonets

The Finns renewed their offensive eastwards along the north eastern coast of Lake Ladoga on 4.9., but the Red Army had prepared itself for this by strengthening its defences. An order was received on 27.8. to build a defence line in the rear of the 7th Army, although this was by no means ready by the time the Finns resumed their advance. A recently formed division (313th) was assigned to the 7th Army on 28.8., and when the Finnish troops had taken the town of Olonets and were threatening the railway line between Zvanka station and Lotinanpelto (Lodeinoe Pole), the destination of another division, the 314th, was switched from the Leningrad direction to the Oyat and Zaostrov stations on the Olonets Isthmus on 6.9. An anti-tank regiment was also assigned to the 7th Army on 5.9.⁶⁷

On behalf of the Stavka, Marshal Shaposhnikov instructed the commander of the 7th Army, General Gorelenko, on 8.9. to recapture or destroy the town of Olonets by means of air-raids and artillery fire; he should prevent cutting off the rail connection between Petrozavodsk and Volkhovstroi. Lodeynoe Pole was not to be abandoned. Gorelenko was of the opinion that an attack on Olonets should take place from the Podporozhe area, in collaboration with the Avakumov (or Petrozavodsk) Group, and that on both the Olonets and Petrozavodsk sectors one more infantry division was needed in order to defeat the enemy. Shaposhnikov was nevertheless adamant that the 314th and 313th Divisions that had already been allocated for this purpose should be sufficient. The chief of staff

for the North-Western Region, M.V.Zakharov, who had been chief of staff in the Leningrad military district prior to the Second World War, was supervising operations in the field at the time.

The proposal drawn up by the 7th Army for defeating the Finnish group in Olonets was approved by the General Staff on 15.9.1941, but the rate of advance was set in the final plans at no more than 6-7 km per day, so that the operation could be expected to last 11 days rather than the initially projected 7 days. It was also decided to reinforce the Tsvetayev Group with one further anti-tank regiment. In the end, however, this planned attack, like its predecessors, was thwarted by the Finnish advance.

When the Finns had crossed the River Svir, Marshal Kulik, a member of Stalin's inner circle who was in charge of the campaign in the area, staying in Volkhovstroi, attempted to bomb the railway bridge over the river and prevent the Finns from crossing at other points, too. To these ends, further forces were assigned to the 7th Army under orders issued on 18.9.-24.9., comprising the 21st and 32nd Divisions (from Siberia), which were placed under the direct command of the Stavka in the Volkhovstroi area, and the recently constituted 46th Tank Brigade. The new Onega Fleet, based in the eastern end of the river Svir, was also subordinated to the 7th Army.⁶⁸

In order to intensify its combat capacity in the Svir and Olonets areas, the Stavka issued a decree on 24.9. detaching the 7th Army from the Karelian Front and placing it directly under Stavka command, appointing the former head of the General Staff, Meretskov, as its new commander. The line from the railway station of Maa-selkä to Pielisjärvi was set as the northern limit for its operations. This also meant that Marshal Kulik lost his position as far as the Volkhov area was concerned. Meretskov's defence operation was nevertheless hampered by the fact that the Germans were advancing towards Tikhvin in his rear and the reserves that had been intended for his use had to be redirected against this threat. Finally, responsibility for operations in the Tikhvin area was also placed on his shoulders. He resigned his command of the 7th Army "temporarily" on 9.11.1941.⁶⁹

The situation in the Svir area was the more dangerous in the eyes of the Soviet leadership, and the reinforcements were moved there, which was in any case easier to accomplish. At the same time new troops had to be assembled in northern Olonets on a temporary

basis, although a new division from the reserves found its way there in September and another in October. Once the Finns had taken Petrozavodsk on 1.10.1941, the Stavka began to transfer the troops "released" from that theatre, 1-2 divisions, further south to Tsvetayev. It was evidently thought that the Finns' offensive would come to an end or slow down sufficiently in the uninhabited areas north of Petrozavodsk. The 114th Division was also ordered to transfer to the 7th Army at this point, whereas the Medvezhegorsk operative group was separated off from the 7th Army on 13.10. on account of command problems and placed under the Karelian Front, the border of its area being line Konosha - the southern shore of Lake Latsha - Muromsky - Priama.⁷⁰

East of Medvezhegorsk

When the Karelian Front received permission on 30.10.1941 to abandon its position at Kondupoga in order to establish stronger defences west of Medvezhegorsk and along the River Unitsa, it was noted that particular attention had to be paid to defending the road running east of Lake Onega to Vytegra. Responsibility for the defence of the eastern shore of the lake was divided between the Karelian Front and the 7th Army under an order issued on 12.11.⁷¹

Following the subsequent battles, the Karelian Front was already planning by 16.11. to abandon Medvezhegorsk, in which case the 37th, 313th and 71st Divisions would have been withdrawn to the eastern shore of the Bay of Poventsya to secure the Kargopol – Pudozh – Nyandoma and Pudozh – Vytegra roads. The 289th Division would then have been moved north from the Maaselkä district into the roadless area to protect the railway from the south. The problem with this plan, however, was that the Finns would have been able to advance to Sumsy Posad and cut the Obozerskaya – Belomorsk (Sorokka) railway line. A second alternative was to continue the battle for Medvezhegorsk, for which purpose at least one more division would have been needed from the high command to protect the Pudozh – Nyandoma and Pudozh – Vytegra roads. If the situation in Medvezhegorsk were to become unsustainable, the operational group would have to retreat towards Sumsy Posad to protect the railway line from the south. The Stavka regarded this second alternative as the better one, but ordered them to retain control of Medvezhegorsk.

Help was in any case at hand. The 263rd Division was due to arrive in Soroka (Belomorsk) from the defence of Arkhangelsk on 18.11. This division was not deployed for the defence of Medvezhegorsk, however, but fought divided near the stations of Velikaya Guba and Maaselkä. Somewhat later, around 25.11., a detachment of 6 to 7 ski battalions was sent to Nandoma as an emergency measure to defend Pudozh and the Pudozh – Nandoma and Pudozh – Vytegra roads on the eastern shore of Lake Onega. These ski troops had probably been intended for use in mobile operations on the flanks of the Finnish forces, as the Karelian Front was later criticised for using them for defence, on guard duties and as a reserve for the front.

Another instruction, issued on 19.11.1941, was aimed at tightening the Soviet defences and required the systematic mining of the ice on Lake Onega and of the Medvezhegorsk – Pudozh - Vytegra and Pudozh – Kargopol – Nandoma station roads. A separate operative engineering group was set up for this purpose.⁷²

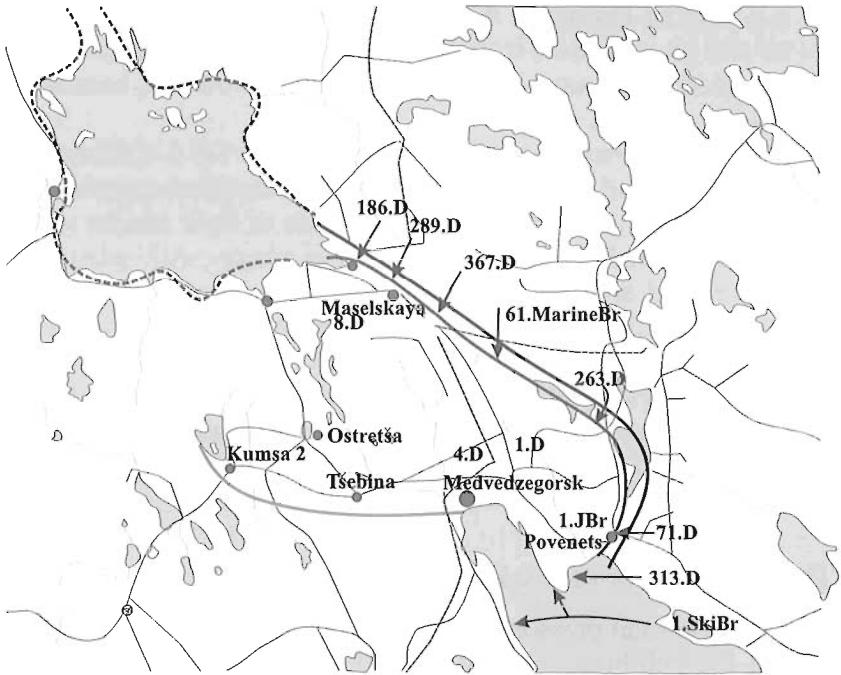
The Soviet leadership also had to make sure throughout that there was a certain reserve of troops further back, in the Arkhangelsk district, in order to defend the northern coast and to be available should the Finns succeed in crossing the Murmansk railway line. Attempts had been made since the very beginning of the war to keep one division in reserve there at all times. Under the orders allowing for the formation of the 58th Reserve Army, on 2.11. and 5.11., this army was to be responsible for protecting the shore of Lake Onega and the River Vytegra from 1.12. onwards. The grouping of the 58th Army was nevertheless adjusted at the beginning of December, on 4.12., so that there would be only one division in the western part of the area, the 368th Division. Various so called marine sniper brigades - based on men transferred from naval detachments - began to arrive in the Karelia area in December.⁷³

The loss of Medvezhegorsk to the Finns on 6.12.1941 was a severe setback for the Red Army, and the Stavka immediately ordered the restoration of the previous situation in that area and along the railway line from Medvezhegorsk to Maaselkä. This led the War Soviet of the Karelian Front to issue a directive on 17.12.1941 to the effect that the left wing of the front was to attack in the direction of Medvezhegorsk – in spite of the fact that they would be facing Finnish troops that were much better accustomed to winter conditions – while the 14th Army on the right was to exhaust the enemy's manpower and armaments by attacks on positions in that area and by

capturing the high ground that gave control over the whole terrain. More efficient use of the ski battalions was sought by combining them into two brigades. Preparations for the offensive were to begin on 26.12. and the operation itself on 10.1.1942.

The idea behind the main offensive (Map 7) was that the Maaselkä Group (three divisions, two brigades and a tank company) would attack Medvezhegorsk from the north and the Medvezhegorsk Group (two divisions and a ski brigade) from the south, encircling and destroying the Finnish grouping in the area.

– The Maaselkä Group was to occupy the Velikaya Guba – Lake Pettel- Shchukozero level on the first day, while a motorized detachment (one company of ten tanks and a marine infantry brigade with transport vehicles) should capture the settlement of Maaselkä itself and attack southwards to the west of Medvezhegorsk. (One marine infantry brigade intended for this operation had been mainly included in the front’s reserves.)



Map 7. The idea of retaking Medvezhegorsk in January 1942

– A separate division subordinate to the front, the 263rd Division, would engage the Finnish troops in the centre of the settlement.

– The Medvezhegorsk Group should also engage in a battle of attrition with the Finns and attack Poventsya on the morning of the second day. Half of the ski brigade should cross the Bay of Poventsya and intercept the Finnish lines of communication with Medvezhegorsk from the south.

Stalin ratified the plan for the Medvezhegorsk operation on 29.12.1941, during teleprinter discussions which the front's Chief of Staff, Svirsky, held with the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Vasilevskii. In view of the difficult situation in the Leningrad area, however, the Stavka decided to cut the preparation time down to 4 days, even though Vasilevskii had admitted in the discussions that this was a tight schedule and given permission for the commencement of the attack to be postponed from 30th December to 1st or 2nd January if necessary.

Just before the beginning of the attack on Medvezhegorsk on 3.1., the Kemi Operational Group was given the task of attacking on 7.1. in order to engage the troops opposing them in the Repola sector and prevent these from being transferred to Medvezhegorsk. This support manoeuvre had to be abandoned, however, because of a shortage of troops.

The Stavka issued a reminder to the fronts on 10.1.1942 that the strength of the Red Army was insufficient to maintain a superior balance of forces everywhere and that the style of their attacks would have to be altered, deploying small striking forces with substantial fire-power and artillery attacks (i.e. the systematic use of concentrated artillery fire in advance of an infantry attack). The problem for the Soviet troops was that they were unable to amass a superior fire-power, being restricted to superior manpower at the points where they achieved a breakthrough. As it was, the attack on Medvezhegorsk fizzled out and was repelled almost as soon as it had begun, so that the Stavka issued orders for its abandonment on 11.1.⁷⁴

The general plan for winter 1942

Once the German pressure on Moscow had died down, a joint session of the Politburo and Stavka held at the Kremlin on 5.1.1942 revised the plans for future hostilities during the winter of 1942. The

proposal put forward by Shaposhnikov contained removal of the threats to Leningrad, Moscow and the Caucasus and – more generally in connection with this – the defeat of Germany and its allies in the course of the coming year. Stalin was nevertheless of the opinion that they should move onto the attack at once, while the Germans were paralysed by their defeat in Moscow and were poorly prepared for the ravages of winter. Any delay of the Soviet counter-offensive until the spring would only be to the Germans' advantage, as they would gain time for re-grouping. The Germans should not be allowed to rest, but should be driven relentlessly westwards until spring, by which time the huge new intake of Soviet reserves would be properly organized and trained, whereas there would be little left of the Germans' reserves. In this way "Hitler's men" could be destroyed in the space of a year. An effort should be made to mount an attack on all nine fronts between Lake Ladoga and the Black Sea. Thrusts should be made by the Leningrad, Volkhov and North-Western fronts, for example, in order to break the siege of Leningrad and advance some 300 - 400 km by the summer.

The weak point in Stalin's idea was that the Red Army did not have sufficient forces at the beginning of the winter to create the necessary superiority in strength on all fronts at once. Zhukov believed that they should be satisfied with strengthening their position in the west and should concentrate on defence elsewhere, i.e. in the north and south, but the meeting, chaired by Stalin, expressed little support for this opinion.

It became apparent in the course of the late winter and early spring, however, that the Red Army was indeed unable to raise sufficient strength for any of its offensives. Thus Stalin was inclined fairly early in the winter to prepare for another German incursion towards Moscow, although, against the advice of Shaposhnikov, he still wished to mount an attack in the Leningrad area. In practice, the attacks launched by the Volkhov Front in February – April 1942 failed to drive the Germans out of the area east of Leningrad, even though this front was, temporarily, combined with the Leningrad Front under a single command. Likewise, little success was achieved as far as the Leningrad area was concerned by either the operation mounted in May – July 1942 to release the 2nd Strike Army or the Sinyavin operation in August – October. The Finnish Army had halted close to the 1939 boundary on the Karelian Isthmus, and the Red Army was able to reduce its forces in that direction. Thus the 23rd Army, which

had been fighting on the Isthmus, received nothing more than defensive orders from the Leningrad Front.

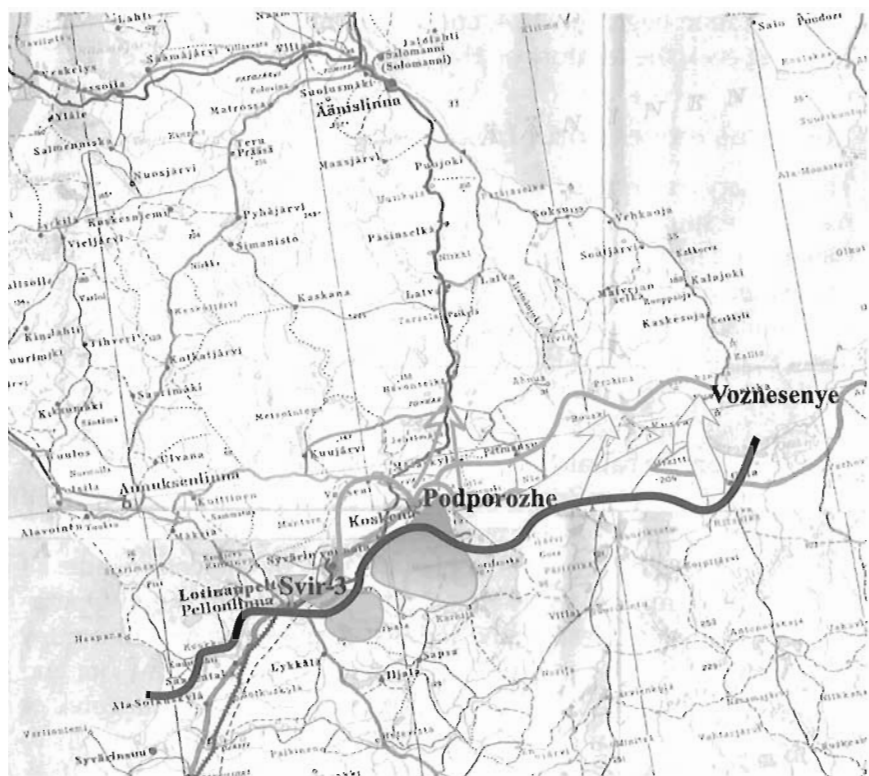
Addressing a joint meeting of the Main Defence Committee and the Stavka at the end of March 1942 at which Voroshilov, Timoshenko, Shaposhnikov, Zhukov and Vasilevskii were also present, Stalin continued to stress that the Germans were not to be handed the initiative. A few days later he decided that an attack to the south-west would be made in May, while elsewhere the accent would be on defence with only sporadic forays with limited objectives. Later an offensive could be mounted on all fronts from the Baltic to the Black Sea with the intention of regaining the western boundary of the Soviet Union (i.e. the 1940 boundary in the case of Finland). Actual plans were laid at that time for the period from April to June; everything else was merely considered in outline. The aim was to fill out this part of the plan in the course of the spring, but the military situation was such that the plan remained at the general map stage until the end of the year.⁷⁵

An attempt to regain Svir

Although the Karelian Front and the Svir area did not form part of Stalin's plans for offensives in January 1942, the persistent threat to the Murmansk railway on the Finnish front led to preparations for an attack. Troops belonging to the new 58th Reserve Army was moved to the Arkhangelsk region in February, and one of its divisions, the 152nd Division, was transferred to the Karelian Front, with two divisions held in the rear areas east of Karelia.

It was important as far as the plans of the 7th Army were concerned to eliminate the danger of a German and Finnish attack southwards from south of Svir, and this created a necessity for advancing as far as Svir, or even to the area north of it. The 7th Army thus proposed (*Map 8*) to invade the area of Pid'mozero – Vachozero – Svir station, with the intention of proceeding north from Podporozhe over the River Svir without taking control of the southern bank between Voznesenie and Podporozhe.

The Stavka was critical of the plan when considering it on 11.3.1942, claiming that the army did not have the forces required to achieve these goals and, as the assailants, would find themselves in an unfavourable position. It therefore issued the following instructions: 1) It was necessary first to disperse the enemy grouping in the



Map 8. The idea of pushing the Finns back from the River Svir in April 1942

Kakovichi – Demidovskaya – Podporozhe area, to occupy the area between Podporozhe and Svir 3, advancing to Svir, and then to secure a point at which to cross the River Svir. 2) It would then be possible to move an attack force further east and join with the Tsvetayev Group to destroy the Finns’ 7th Division before advancing to Svir on a front Voznesenie – Podporozhe. The army would not receive any reinforcements or reserves other than those already agreed on.

The Stavka later improved the attacking power of the 7th Army on 27.3.1942 by changing the command of its operational group (replacing Tsvetayev with Zaitsev) and assigning one division of new troops to it, the 368th Division, which had arrived from the Arkhangelsk region. It was also due to receive a tank battalion of 51 tanks, two artillery regiments (by 10.4.) and a flight group (by 6.4.), and it is possible that some of these promises were kept. In any case, the

Svir operation began on 11.4. and was terminated on 23.4. without reaching even the territory on the southern bank of the river.⁷⁶

The focus moves north from Medvezhegorsk

The primary concern of the general staff of the Karelian Front was to restore the situation on its southern flank, in the area north of Lake Onega, and no very far-reaching goals were laid down. The planning of the Medvezhegorsk Operative Group in the interval 4.2. – 3.3.1942 was similarly limited in its objectives, being centred on re-capturing a strategically located village. The plan that the Karelian Front had for the Kemi Operative Group, on the other hand, included an attack on 19.2.1942 directed at an old pre-war defence line, employing the 27th Division, six battalions of the Northern Ski Brigade and also the 67th Marine Infantry Brigade and the Southern Ski Brigade, which they were to receive for this purpose.

In its developed form this plan devised by the commander of the Karelian Front was completed on 13.3.1942. The Kemi Operative Group was to destroy the Finnish Repola Group and occupy an area extending up to the line Rugozero – Andronova Gora and prevent the Finns from moving their reserves to Medvezhegorsk or north from there. An offensive in the Medvezhegorsk area was to begin at the same time. The reinforcements needed for the attack towards Repola would amount to one division, one marine infantry brigade, two cannon regiments and one howitzer regiment from the supreme command, one M-8 rocket launcher regiment and one M-30 rocket launcher battalion. There was already one light rocket launcher regiment and a tank battalion at the front that could be used in this operation.

The idea was to attack the main road leading to Lake Rugozero and trap the Finnish troops to one side of it, advance to the lake itself and surround and destroy the Finnish troops in the Repola area. Some of the troops could then be sent on westwards and could reach a point west of Andronova Gora. At the same time the border troops and partisans, backed up by systematic air raids, could be used to close off the Rugozero – Padany – Maaselkä road during the operation.

The deployment of the forces was planned in such a way that one division would attack the River Onda from the point at which the breakthrough was made and advance via Lake Pizma to the ter-

rain around the road junction, where it would prevent the passage of the Finnish troops along the Kochkoma – Repola road from the south. A second division would advance along the main Kochkoma – Rugozero road to the eastern bank of the River Onda and set up its defences there. One brigade, presumably of ski troops, would attack the Finns' flank and rear and one brigade would be held in reserve.⁷⁷

The Karelian Front nevertheless wished to strengthen its command organization for the purposes of this offensive, and Stalin did indeed approve on 2.3.1942 of the amalgamation of the Maaselkä and Medvezhegorsk Groups by 10.3. to form the 32nd Army and of the provision of reinforcements for this new unit.⁷⁸

When the Karelian Front put its proposal for an offensive before the Stavka, Stalin replied, according to the memoirs of the front's commander General Frolov, "Of course Petrozavodsk and the whole of Karelia must be liberated, but our chief enemy at moment is the Germans, and that means that the troops of the Karelian Front in the north must concentrate on attacking the fascist German troops." The Stavka evidently thought that the Finns would in any case not mount an attack, and also that under winter conditions they might be more difficult to defeat than the Germans.⁷⁹

Thus the Stavka ordered the Karelian Front on 27.3.1942 to prepare for an offensive against the Germans in the Murmansk, Kandalaksha and Kestenga sectors, with the aim of protecting the harbour at Murmansk and the Murmansk and Obozersk railway lines. The main attack would be made by the 14th Army close to the sea, backed up by simultaneous attacks by the 19th Army in the Kandalaksha sector and in the Kestenga sector by the 26th Army (two divisions, two marine infantry brigades and one ski brigade). The Northern Fleet, which possessed marine infantrymen from the Murmansk area, was ordered to cooperate with the Karelian Front.

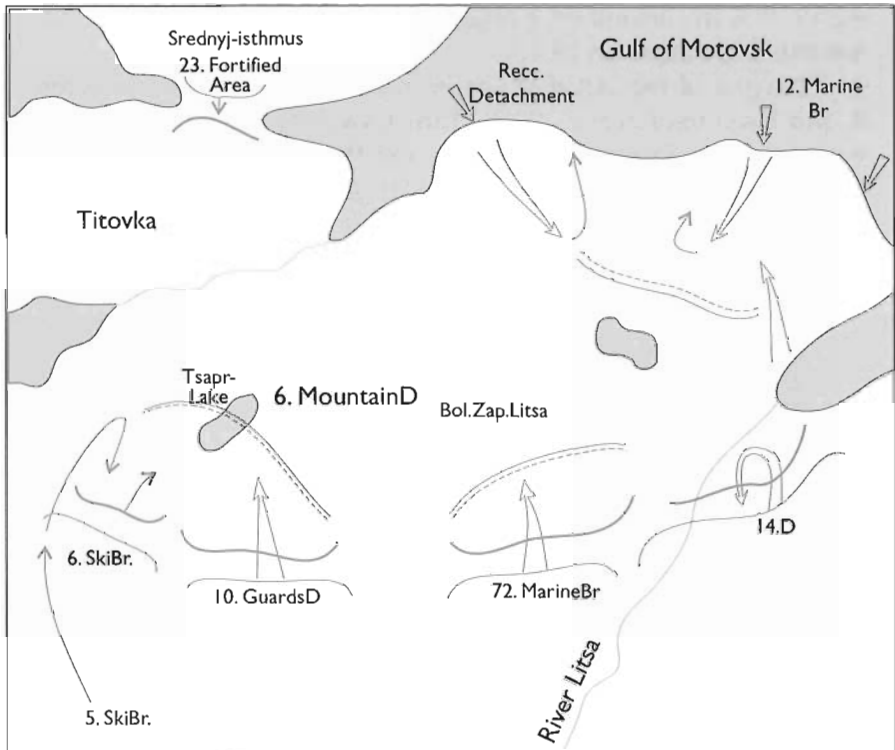
The Stavka took further action to reinforce the Karelian Front in a second directive, issued on 27.3., designed to strengthen its command structure and – in theory – give it greater fire-power. The Kandalaksha Group was to form a 19th Army and the Kemi Group a 26th Army, and the headquarters of both of these were to be functioning by 5.4. The ski battalions were to be combined to form two ski brigades, which were to be armed with light mortars and 45 mm anti-tank guns. Meanwhile the Air Force was to create new flight detachments in the Soroka (Belomorsk), Kandalaksha and Louhi areas

(by 12.4.), and the various armies were to be strengthened with 1 – 2 artillery regiments each (4 altogether), three armies, the 19th, 26th and 32nd, were each to receive a M-8 rocket launcher regiment and the 14th Army a M-13 rocket launcher regiment (by 15.4.), in addition to which a total of four tank battalions, each of 25 tanks, were to be transferred to the front by 13.4. This was to ensure that full readiness for an offensive was achieved by the middle of April.⁸⁰

The objective of the operation was to advance as far as the national boundary. The commander of the Karelian Front specified the duties of the various armies in his directive of 4.4.1942 as follows. The 14th Army was to be ready by 15.4. to destroy the enemy forces in its path and advance to the national boundary, the 19th Army was to be ready on 25.4. to attack in the Alakurtti sector, push the enemy back as far as Lake Kuolajärvi and dig itself in on a line defined by the lakes Kuolajärvi – Anajärvi – Vuorijärvi, and the 26th Army was to be prepared by 23.4. to destroy the enemy troops in front of it, push them back to the River Sofyanga and entrench itself there.

The 19th Army, for instance, was required according to the plan drawn up on 14.4.1942 to break through the enemy lines in the area of Upper Lake Verman – the river mouth of the Lower Lake Verman – River Voyta and advance to the above-mentioned line Kuolajärvi – Anajärvi – Vuorijärvi. The main group of the 26th Army (the 23rd Guards Division to the south of the Lower Lake Chernoye and the 263rd Division along the main Louhi – Kestenga road, with the 80th Marine Infantry Brigade in reserve) was to first to attack Kestenga, with the 8th Ski Brigade providing protection on its northern flank and the 67th Marine Infantry Brigade carrying out a supporting attack in the Lohivaara area to the south.

The 14th Army (*Map 9*) was to break through the German front south of Lake Chapr and circle its right-hand flank with an assault group comprising the 72nd Marine Infantry Brigade, the 10th Guards Division and the 6th Ski Brigade, at the same time as the 12th Marine Infantry Brigade from the Northern Fleet would make its landing in the coast, including a decoy landing. The aim was to surround and eliminate the German 6th Mountain Division west of the Western River Litsa, continue the attack on the enemy's rear-guard on the neck of the Sredny headland, destroy the enemy troops that had been trapped there and advance to a boundary line running from Malaya Volokovaya inlet to Lake Chapr. The enemy would also be engaged simultaneously by attacks from the 14th Division, one



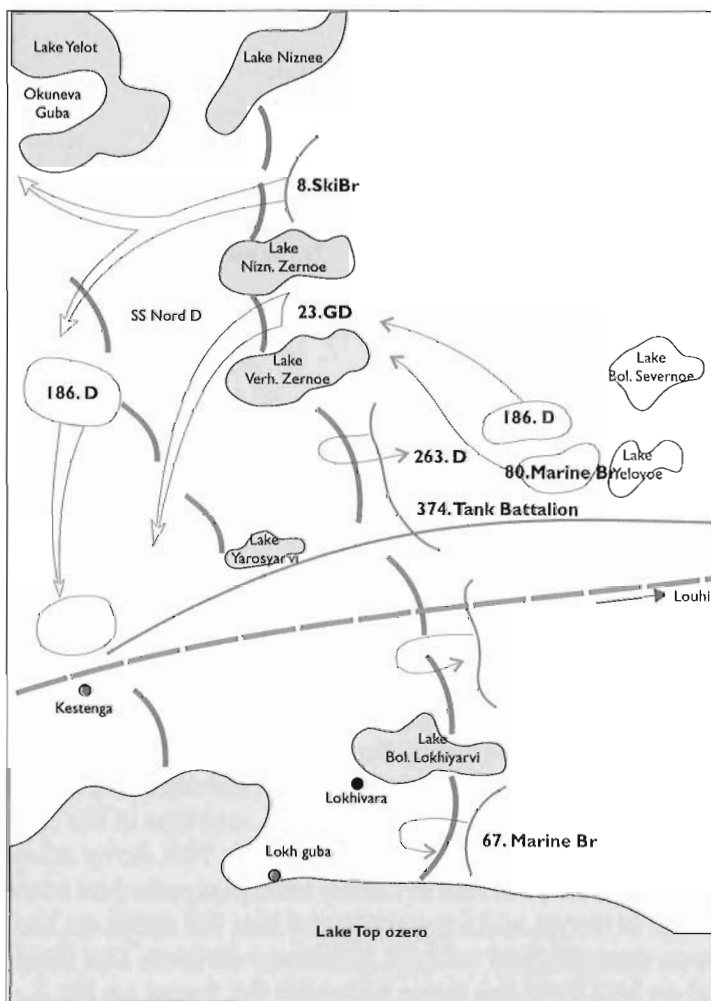
Map 9. The idea of pushing the Germans back to Petsamo in April - May 1942

Marine Infantry Battalion and the troops from the 23rd Fortification Area, with the 5th Ski Brigade and the 152nd Division, which had recently arrived in the area, held in reserve.

The Karelian Front nevertheless announced on the same day, 14.4.1942, that although the troops were indeed grouped in the required manner in the Kestenga and Murmansk areas, the support fire detachments promised by the Stavka had not arrived. If sufficient fire-power could be obtained in time, the offensive in the Murmansk direction could begin on 18. – 20.4. and that in the Kestenga direction on 25.4. It should be noted that the 19th Army advance in the Kandalaksha sector had evidently been postponed on account of a shortage of troops and fire-power and that the attack on Kestenga had been strengthened with an additional division. The Stavka approved on 16.4.1942 the times by which the forces on the Karelian Front should be prepared for action and issued confirmation on 24.

– 25.4. that the assault on Kestenga should begin on 24.4. and that towards Murmansk on 28.4.⁸¹

In spite of the fact that not even the 26th Army had received its promised reinforcements, the thrust towards Kestenga (*Map 10*) began on 24.4. Progress was made, and the 8th Ski Brigade on the right flank reached Okuneva Guba by 30.4., being then assigned the task of attacking towards the south and cutting off the road that passed north of Kestenga. At the same time the front commander ordered the forces to be re-grouped and the second echelon to be



Map 10. The idea of retaking Kestenga in April 1942

transferred behind the 186th Division and the 80th Marine Infantry Brigade in the main direction of attack, beside the 23rd Guards Division. The two regiments of the 263rd Division that had suffered the worst losses were withdrawn to the reserves. As late as 24.4. the Stavka had urged the front to maintain an energetic attack and called for tanks from other parts of the front to be subordinated to it. It also gave orders on 26.4. for an M-8 rocket launcher regiment to be sent to Soroka (Belomorsk) by 3.5., but these reinforcements similarly never arrived.⁸²

The Murmansk offensive began on 28.4. and both the main attack and the landing were initially successful. The Germans succeeded in defeating the main force of the 6th Ski Brigade on 30.4., however, and the balance of power altered, bringing the Soviet attack to an almost complete halt. The 5th Ski Brigade was rushed up from the reserves to join the battle, but the 152nd Division failed to reach the scene of combat because of stormy weather.

In its assessment of the situation on 3.5. the Stavka decided to maintain the targets of the Karelian Front and 7th Army spring offensive in force and confirmed the task of the 7th Army as being to capture Podporozhe during May, reach the southern bank of the Svir in the area Voznesenie – Svir 3, entrench itself in the general area of Svir between Lakes Onega and Ladoga and seek bridgeheads at Podporozhe and Svir 3. The army could not expect any reinforcements or additional weapons, and thus the enemy was to be destroyed bit by bit, focusing the attack consecutively on different points. On the left wing, in the area between Lake Segezhskey and Gumbetsa, the emphasis was to be on defence. Having reached the River Svir, the army was to leave two divisions in reserve south of Podporozhe and adopt as its principal task that of providing protection in the directions of Vytegra and Volkhov. It was no longer possible to mount an attack, however, and the General Staff issued a reminder on 22.5. that the main duty of the Ladoga Fleet was to secure the transport route to Leningrad.

The Stavka ordered the Karelian Front on 3.5. to advance in accordance with the original plan in the course of the month of May, so that, before establishing their defences, they would have reached the national boundary in the directions of Murmansk (the area from the Bay of Malo Volokovoy to Lake Chapr) and Kestenga (the eastern bank of the River Sofyanga) and the line Kuolajärvi – Anajärvi – Vuorijärvi in the Kandalaksha direction. A General Staff pronouncement

on the following day nevertheless regarded the attaining of these goals as an obligation only for the 14th and 26th Armies. The means by which this was to be done was again defined as the creation of local superiority in manpower and fire-power. The 14th Army received a definition of the goals from the Front on 4.5. that implied that they were to be achieved by 18.5.⁸³

The 26th Army recommenced its attack on 3.5., but this time the opposition succeeded in encircling the Russians' right flank and the strength of the second echelon was expended entirely on the resolution of this situation. The 26th Army then partially regrouped on 7.5., on the orders of the front commander, and was reinforced with a border guard regiment, and also the 80th Marine Infantry Brigade as its reserve. The General Staff criticized the Karelian Front for its lack of communications and ordered it to move troops from further south (the 32nd Army) into the Kestenga area. The front was ready for a new offensive on 10.5.

The Stavka nevertheless ordered them on 10.5. to move over to defending their existing positions in both the Murmansk and Kestenga directions, on account of bad weather and the poor state of the roads as the frost in the ground was melting. The Karelian Front was to inform the Stavka when it would be possible to begin fully prepared attacks in these directions. The front commander nevertheless regarded preparations for the assault on Kestenga as being so advanced that any interruption at that stage would be detrimental to the operation. The attack by the 23rd Guards Division to the east of Lake Yarosh (aiming to reach the Louhi – Kestenga road) proceeded slowly, however, and the following day the Stavka issued a new order for a halt. The troops were to be strengthened, a re-grouping was to be performed, rapid preparations were to be made for a new attack, and the prospects for commencement were to be communicated by 15.5. at the latest. When the front reported on these prospects, the Stavka concluded that it was not possible to mount an attack under those conditions and gave the requested orders for an organized withdrawal of the right flank. As far as the Murmansk offensive was concerned, the Stavka gave fresh entrenchment orders on 11.5. and required one marine infantry brigade to be held in reserve in the Ura Guba – Ara Guba area. The 12th Marine Infantry Brigade was also withdrawn from the landing shore at this point, on 13.5.⁸⁴

For Better Positions (1942 - 1943)

The offensive mounted by the Germans in summer 1942 that extended deep into the Caucasus had the effect of turning the Red Army's attention towards the south. No new resources were allocated to the Karelian Front, and four divisions with combat experience were transferred from the region to the focus of hostilities during the battle of Stalingrad at the end of 1942 and beginning of 1943.

There were plans, of course. The General Staff encouraged the creation of a reserve with the strength of a division in the Murmansk sector on 1.7.1942, this being essential both for an attack and for successful defence, and the front did indeed envisage such an attack in the Murmansk sector in September 1942, in order to destroy the German 2nd Mountain Division and advance to the River Titovka. With Kestenga in mind, it also considered an offensive in the direction of Uhtua in 1942-43.

The 7th Army drew up a plan in August 1942 with the object of capturing the southern bank of the River Svir between Voznesenie and Svir 3, but the General Staff regarded it as unrealistic (on 3.9.1942), as the army did not have the necessary strength. The objective would have to be achieved in stages, attacking first the stretch Kiselovo – Svir 3 and gaining a bridgehead on the north side of the river if possible. This operation would require 4 divisions and one brigade, together with 2/3 of all the available supporting units. This plan was similarly never put into effect.

By the following summer the situation had altered to the extent that the German army had had to retreat on the southern front from the positions it had achieved the previous year. This still did not mean that the Soviet forces had the necessary superiority in numbers and fire-power in the north, but a new flurry of plans began to emerge on the Karelian Front.

In August 1943 the front commander, General Frolov, endorsed a plan for an attack towards Medvezhegorsk. It was calculated that 30 days would be needed for preparations and 10 days for the advance of 28 – 30 km.

- 1) A breakthrough with two divisions to a depth of 6 – 8 km would take 2 – 3 days. The divisions assigned to the supporting attack would contain the enemy in their own areas of operations on the northern flank.

- 2) The right-hand division would then extend its attack towards north and north-west aiming at the enemy's flank and rear. The other divisions – including the second echelon – would continue the thrust towards the west and seize the enemy's artillery positions. The aim was to reach the Maaselkä – Chebino – Medvezhegorsk road and occupy the Chebino – Ostraye – Kumsa 2 – Medvezhegorsk area. While the breakthrough troops were taking the railway, the marine sniper brigade would be brought into action, establishing itself at the level of the lakes Kommunarov and Uchma in order to secure the right flank of the main force and working in cooperation with the division that was attacking towards the north and north-west. The divisions responsible for the supporting directions of attack would continue to expand their operations towards the flanks and towards greater depth. This phase would last 4 days, entailing an advance of 22 – 24 km.
- 3) At the pursuit stage the whole force of main and supporting assault troops would advance to the line Maaselkä – Medvezhegorsk and tightly protect the Chebino – Ostreche – Kumsa 2 – Pokrovskoye area. This phase would last 3 days.

The commander of the Karelian Front also devised a corresponding plan for the Kandalaksha area in September 1943, for the purpose of destroying the enemy's Kandalaksha Group, occupying the Alakurtti area and creating suitable circumstances for a later attack on Kairala. Preparations would take at least 30 days. The main offensive would be in a sector extending from the southern shore of Upper Lake Verman to the northern shore of Lower Lake Verman, and the strength of the force would be two divisions in the first echelon and two in the second. Substantial pressure would be maintained over the whole front, with at least a division located south of Lower Lake Verman and at least a brigade north of Upper Lake Verman. At least a brigade would be held in reserve. Once a breakthrough in the opposing defences had been achieved in the principal direction of attack, the hills of Lysaya and Voita would be taken, requiring 4 days. The next step would be to develop attacks on the enemy's flanks, encircling and destroying one unit at a time and maintaining defences in the north and south, so as to prevent the enemy from retreating from the River Shunsha (Tuntsa). This would take a further 5 days. At the same time the western offensive would be maintained, with the

aim of capturing Alakurtti and crossing the River Tuntsa, requiring 6 days, by which time the force would have advanced 25 km from the original front line.

Following instructions from the Red Army supreme command, work on training and re-organizing the forces on the Karelian Front continued throughout the period of trench warfare, although no substantial increase in resources was forthcoming until spring 1944.⁸⁵

Notes

- ⁶¹ TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 2 p. 6, 16, delo 6 p. 3-17, delo 60 p. 1-7; Generalnyi shtab 24.6. 1941 to Arkhangel'sk District.
- ⁶² Stavka directives 1941, *passim* (30.6.-14.7.1941).
- ⁶³ TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 6 p. 39-45; RGASPI Fond 74 opis 2 delo 122 pp. 110, 114. Karelskii front p. 39-43.
- ⁶⁴ TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 183 (oper. reports 22.6.-26.8., delo 185 (oper. reports 27.8.-17.9.1941), delo 2 (directives), delo 3 (directives), delo 6 (directives). Oleinikov p. 64-100. Oborona Leningrada 1941 g. VIZ 4-5 and 6-7/1992. - On 20.8. stavka gave permission to withdraw to line Rantakylä – northern shore of Pyhäjärvi – southern shore of Vuoksi – Kääntymä – Karisalmi station – Juustila – Kintere – Vanhakylä – Repola (on west coast of Gulf of Viipuri). Stavka 1941 p. 170.
- ⁶⁵ Karelskii front p. 36-37. Generalnyi shtab p. 116 (9.8.), 121 (15.8.), 124 (18.8.), 167 (20.9. 1941) to Karelian Front. Stavka p. 186 (16.9.1941).
- ⁶⁶ Karelskii front p. 46-50. Stavka p. 164 (5.9.), p. 370 (3.9.1941), Generalnyi shtab p. 192 (5.10.).
- ⁶⁷ RGASPI f. 74 opis 2 delo 122 p. 115; Generalnyi shtab p. 134 (27.8., 28.8.), p. 145 (5.9., 6.9.1941). - Marshall Shaposhnikov had on 3.9. warned the Karelian Front Staff pointing to the threat to the Kirov railroad. Stavka p. 139.
- ⁶⁸ Stavka p. 169 (8.9.), 152 (14.9.), 160 (17.9.1941). Generalnyi shtab p. 153 (15.9.), 169 (21.9.), 170 (22.9.), 173 (24.9.1941).
- ⁶⁹ Stavka p. 201 (24.9.1941).
- ⁷⁰ Stavka p. 243 (13.10.1941). Generalnyi shtab p. 189 (2.10.1941, the choice was made from the 313th, 37th and 272nd Divisions), 378 (2.10.)
- ⁷¹ Generalnyi shtab p. 230 (30.10.). Stavka p. 287 (12.11.1941).
- ⁷² Stavka p. 397 (16.11.), 298 (17.11.), 301 (19.11.), 303 (19.11.), Generalnyi shtab p. 247 (18.11.1941), 8.3.1942.
- ⁷³ Stavka p. 270 (2.11.), Generalnyi shtab p. 234 (5.11.), 274-279 (11.12.1941). The General Staff sent (11th December) the 12th Brigade to Vologda.
- ⁷⁴ Karelskii front p. 58-62, 66. TsAMO Fond 264 opis 1552 delo 18 p. 2-17; Stavka directives 10.1. and 11.1. 1942 (p. 33, 38), Report of the Karelian front 11.1.1942 (Stavka 1942 p. 483). - During the preparations for this operation, the staff of Karelian front was allowed to form two ski brigades from eight ski battalions, Stavka 29.12.1941 (p.348).

- ⁷⁵ Stavka 1942 p. 8-13.
- ⁷⁶ Stavka directive p. 125 (11.3. 1942), 144 (27.3. 1942). Karelskii front p. 83.
- ⁷⁷ TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 116 p. 1-12 (13.3.1942), delo 146 p.2 (26.2.1942).
- ⁷⁸ Stavka directives 1942 p. 112, 124.
- ⁷⁹ Karelskii front p. 70.
- ⁸⁰ Karelskii front p. 69. Stavka directives 27.3. 1942 (p. 143); TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 92 p. 1-4.
- ⁸¹ Karelskii front p. 66, 70-72, 78, 80-81; TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 92, delo 125, opis 1452 delo 10 p. 17; Stavka directives 16.4. 1942 (p. 168), appendix 14.4. 1942 (p. 511).
- ⁸² Karelskii front p. 71, 73, 84, 89. Stavka directives 24.4. and 26.4. 1944 (p. 179, 184).
- ⁸³ Karelskii front p. 77-78, 83. Stavka directive 28.4. 1942 (p. 183), Stavka directives 3.5. 1942 (p. 191, 192); Generalnyi Shtab 4.5., 22.5. (p. 135), 25.5.1942 (p.138). – For the purpose of allowing the 7th Army to concentrate its attack forces, in a new situation, the General Staff decided to give to it first one (28.3.1942, p. 69), and then another (20.5.1942, p. 133) fortification area (equivalent to a division) for defence purposes..
- ⁸⁴ Karelskii front p. 75-76, 83. Generalnyi shtab 8.5. 1942 (p. 121). Stavka directives 10.5. (p. 199), 11.5. (p. 200), 20.5. 1942 (p. 211).
- ⁸⁵ Generalnyi shtab 1.7. 1942 (p. 200), 3.9. 1942 (p. 319); TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 del 118, 476; delo 548 p. 27-30, delo 550 p. 1-2..

Order of battle of the Red Army in the Finnish theatre of war 22.6.1941- 19.9.1944

Leningrad front (and troops in Karelian Isthmus)

Northern front – Commander general lieutenant M.M. Popov 24.6.-26.8.41; member of War council korpkom N.N. Klementev; chief of staff General major M.V. Nikishev 24.6.- 22.8.41, colonel N.V. Gorodetskii 22.8. – 26.8.41.

Leningrad front - Commander general lieutenant M.M. Popov 23.8.-5.9.41, marshal of Soviet Union K.Y. Voroshilov 5.-12.9.41, army general G.K. Zhukov 12.9.-10.10.41, general major I.I. Fedyuninskii 10.10.-26.10.41, general lieutenant M.S. Hozin 26.10.42 – 9.6.42, general lieutenant, 15.1.43- general colonel, 18.11.43 army general, 18.6.44- marshal of Soviet Union L.A.Govorov 9.6.42 - ; member of War council korpkom N.N. Klementev 23.8.-4.9.41, 12.2.43- general lieutenant, 18.6.44- general colonel A.A. Zhdanov 4.9.41- ; chief of staff colonel General major M.V. Nikishev 24.6.-22.8.41, colonel N.V. Gorodetskii 23.8. – 4.9., 6.9.- 12.9.41, general lieutenant M.M. Popov 4.- 6.9.41, general lieutenant M.S. Hozin 12.9.-9.10.41, general major, 3.5.42- general lieutenant D.N. Gusev 9.10.41 – 28.4.44, army general M.M. Popov 28.4.44-.

21.Army - Commander General lieutenant D.N. Gusev. – In Karelian Isthmus 6.-9.44. – Included 30. Guards Corps 3.-15.6.44, 25.6.-5.7.44, 94.Corps 8.7.-17./27.9.44, 97.Corps (8.6.)-10.6, 16.6.-9.44, 98.Corps 15.7.-4.9.44, 108.Corps 11.6.- 31.7.44, 109.Corps 2.-26.6.44, 3.-15.7.44, 110.Corps 12.6.-5.7. 44.

23.Army – Commander General lieutenant P.S. Pshennikov –4.8.1941, general lieutenant M.N. Gerasimov 4.8.-8.9. 1941, general lieutenant A.N. Tsherepanov 8.9.41-2.7.44, general lieutenant V.I. Shvetsov 2.7.44 –. - Karelian Isthmus 1941-1944. – Included 10. Mechanized Corps 6.-7.41, 19.Corps 6.-9.41, 50.Corps 6.-8.41; 6.Corps 18.6. 44, 97.Corps 11-12.6.44, 98.Corps c. 19.4.-6.5.44 (in 23.Army reserve), 12.6.-14.7.44, 4.9.44-- , 108.Corps 19.4.- (6.5.)44, 115.Corps 2.-22.6.44, 29.6.44 --.

59.Army – Commander General major, 11.11.1942- general lieutenant I.T. Korovnikov. - In Karelian Isthmus 6.-11.44. – Included 43.Corps 2.7.44--17./27.9. 44, 97.Corps 9.44--.

6.Corps – Commander General major I. I. Fadejev. - Into Karelian Isthmus 18.6. 44, in 23.Army. -- Included 13.D, 142.D, 177.D, 327.D, 382.D.

10. Mechanized Corps - Commander armoured troops general major I.G. Lazarev 11.3.-20.7.41. - In 23.Army 6.-7.41. -- Included 21.Armed Division, 24.Armed Division, 198. Motorized Division.

19.Corps – Commander General lieutenant M.N. Gerasimov --5.8.41, general major F.N. Starikov 6.8.-22.9.41. - In 23.Army 6.-9.41. -- Included 142.D, 168.D, 198.D, 265.D, 115.D.

- 22.**Corps** – Commander General major A.S. Ksenofontov 3.6.-22.9.41. - In Northern front 22.-30.6.41. -- Included 16.D, 180.D, 182.D, 191.D.
30. **Guards Corps** – Commander General lieutenant N. P. Simoniak. – In 21.Army, 3.-15.6.44, in front reserve 16-24.6., in 21.Army 25.6.-5.7. In front reserve 5.7.- moved from Karelian Isthmus, elsewhere 29.7.44. -- Included 45.GuardsD, 63.GuardsD, 64.GuardsD.
- 43.**Corps** - Commander General major A. I. Andreiev. - In 59.Army 2.7.44--17./27.9.44. -- Included 13.D, 80.D, 124.D, 224.D
- 50.**Corps** - Commander General major V.I. Shtsherbakov --4.8.41. - In 23.Army 6.-8.41. -- Included 43.D, 115.D, 123.D.
- 94.**Corps** - Commander General major I. I. Popov. – In Karelian front in 7.Army 15.6.-22.6.44. Under stavka since 22.6.44, into Leningrad front 26.6.44. From front reserve in 21.Army 8.7.-17./27.9.44. -- Included 135.D, 221.D, 286.D, 327.D.
- 97.**Corps** - Commander General major M. M. Busarov 23.4.44-9.5.45. - From stavka reserve 28.4.44 to Leningrad front. In 21.Army (8.6.)-10.6., in 23.Army 11.6., in front reserve 12.6., in 21.Army 16.6.-. In 59.Army since September 44. -- Included 90.D , 178.D, 358.D, 372.D, 381.D.
- 98.**Corps** - Commander General lieutenant G. I. Anisimov. - In 23.Army reserve n. 19.4.-6.5.44. From Leningrad front reserve in 23.Army (12.6.), in 21.Army 14/15.7.-, in 23.Army 4.9.44-. -- Included 92.D, 177.D, 281.D, 372.D, 381.D.
- 108.**Corps** - Commander General lieutenant M. F. Tihonov 3.1.-2.8.44. - In 23.Army reserve c. 19.4.- 31.5. 44. In front reserve 31.5.-10.6., in 21.Army 11.6.- 31.7., moved from Karelian Isthmus 4.8. In front reserve in Pulkovo already 7.8. -- Included 46.D, 90.D, 178.D, 268.D, 314.D, 372.D.
- 109.**Corps** - Commander General lieutenant I. P. Alferov 6.1.44-9.5.45. – In 21.Army 2.6.44-, in front reserve 26.6.-, in 21.Army 3.7.-, in front reserve 15.7.- and moved from Karelian Isthmus. Elsewhere 25.7.44. -- Included 13.D, 72.D, 109.D, 125.D, 265.D, 286.D.
- 110.**Corps** - Commander General major A. S. Grjaznov 15.4.44-9.5.45. - In 21.Army 12.6.-5.7.44. In front reserve 5.7.- and moved from Karelian Isthmus. -- Included 109.D, 168.D, 265.D, 268.D.
- 115.**Corps** – Commander General major S. B. Kozatshek 20.11.43-9.5.45. – In 23.Army February 1944- (12.4.44); in 23.Army (12.6.44)-, under front staff 22.6.-29.6., in 23.Army 29.6.-. -- Included 10.D, 92.D, 142.D, 382.D, 17.Fortification Area.

1.Division of People’s volunteers - Leningrad volunteers. On regiment in Karelian Isthmus in 23.Army c. 1.9. - c.15.10.41.

1.D NKVD - see 46.D.

10.D - In 23.Army 18.3.42- (1.5.44)- and sen 115.Corps (10.6.--31.8.1944).

13.D - Was Leningradin 4. Division of People’s volunteers 27.7.41-- , 5. Guards Division of People’s volunteers c. 25.8. - 13.9.41. In Leningrad front reserve (10.-13.6.44), in 21.Army 15.6.-, in its 109.Corps 17.-18.6., 6.Corps 18.6.-2.7., 13.7.-31.8.44; in front reserve (10.7.44). To 23.Army 13.7. In 59.Army 43.Corps moved away 12.12.44.

16.D - 22.Corps in Estonia 22.6.-30.6.41.

20. **Infantry Division NKVD** - see 92.D.
- 23.D **NKVD** - Troops for protecting the railways. In summer 1941.
- 43.D - In 23.Army 50.Corps 6.41 - 4.8.1941, in 23.Army (still October) 1941.
45. **GuardsD** - Was 70.D up to 16.10.42. In 23.Army 22.6.- 4.7. 1941. From front reserve in 30.Guards Corps to Karelian Isthmus, in 21.Army 3.6.44-. In front reserve 5.7.44-, and sent elsewhere.
- 46.D - Was 1.NKVD-Division up to 9.8. 1942, formed in Leningrad district from 3., 7., 33. and 102. Border detachments in August 1941. In 23. Army a short period in July 1942. In 23.Army s. 19.4.-31.5, in front reserve 31.5.44-, 21.Army 11.6.-44-, in 108.Corps (30.4.)-27.6. 44 and 1.7.- (9.44), in 97.Corps 28-30.6.44, in front reserve 15.7.-(7.8.)44, and sent elsewhere.
63. **GuardsD** - Was 136D up to 19.1.43. In 23.Army 2.42-12.8.42. From front reserve in 30.Guards Corps to Karelian Isthmus, in 21.Army 3.6.44-. In front reserve 5.7.44-, and sent elsewhere.
64. **GuardsD** - Was 327.D up to 19.1.43. From front reserve in 30.Guards Corps to Karelian Isthmus, in 21.Army 3.6.44-. In front reserve 5.7.44-, and sent elsewhere..
- 70.D - see 45.GuardsD.
- 71.D - see Karelian front.
- 72.D - Was 7. Marine Infantry Brigade up to 15.12.41 (formed c. 15.9.41 in Leningrad for 23.Army). In 23.Army 115.Corps (30.4.1944)-, in 23.Army reserve (1.5.44), in 109.Corps 2.6.-, in front reserve (109.Corps) 15.7.44-, and sent elsewhere.
- 80.D - Was 1. Leningrad Guards Division of People's volunteers up to 24.9.41 (formed 18.7.41). In June 1944 into Karelian Isthmus. In 59.Army 43.Corps 2.7.-(16.8.), in 97.Corps (27.9. 1944).
- 90.D - In 23.Army 108.Corps (30.4.44)-20.6., 23.6. - (September 44), in 97.Corps 21.-23.6.44. 21.Army reserve (108.Corps) 15.7.-. In front reserve 7.8.44-, 8.44 moved into Estonia.
- 92.D - Was 20. NKVD-Division up to 16.8.42 (formed 8.9.41 from 56. NKVD Brigade). In Karelian Isthmus in 23.Army 23.2.42.-, in 115.Corps (30.4.44) - 14.6, 20.6, 23.6.-1.7, in 98.Corps 15-16.6., 21.-23.6., 1.-9.7., in 115.Corps 10.7.-(10.9.).
- 109.D - Was 21. NKVD-Division up to 1.8. 42 (formed 6.41). In 21.Army 109. Corps (3.6.44)-September 1944, (possibly 110.Corps 24.-25.6.). In front reserve 15.7.44-, sent to Kerstovo area 19.7.
- 115.D - In 23.Army 6.41-5.9.41; moved 5.9.1941 into 48.Army.
- 123.D - In 23.Army (50.Corps -4.8.41) - 1. 43..
- 124.D - Formed in Schlüsselburg 19.4.43 from 56., 102 and 138. Infantry Brigades. In 59.Army at the end of June 1944, in 43.Corps 2.7.44 - September 1944.
- 125.D - In front reserve from March 1944 - (6.7.44), in 21.Army 109.Corps 7.7.-15.7. 1944, front reserve (109.Corps) 15.7.44. in 59.Army 9.-10.44.
- 135.D - From Ukrainassa in 94.Corps. In Karelian front c. 15.6.44, then to Karelian Isthmus, there in 21.Army 94.Corps 8.7.-(17.8.) 1944, in 43.Corps (27.9.44).
- 136.D - see 63.GuardsD.
- 142.D - In 23. Army 6.41-19.1.43, in 19.Corps -22.9.41, again in 23.Army 15.3.43-, in its 98.Corps (30.4.44), 115.Corps (1.6.44)-14.7., 6.Corps 14-16.7., 115.Corps 16.7.-(10.9.) 44.
163. **Motorized Division** - In Northern front -(30.6.41) in 1. Mechanized Corps, moved 24.6.41 to Rakvere area. Transformed into infantry division 9.41.

- 168.D - In 7.Army 6.1941, moved into 23.Army 21.7.41, in its 19.Corps -27.8.41. In 21.Army 110.Corps (12.6.)-(21.6.44), (27.6.)-(5.7.)44., in 109.Corps (23.6.44), in front reserve 5.7.44.
- 177.D - In Northern front reserve in 6.1941- 8.7.41. In 23.Army reserve (16.6.44), in 98.Corps (1.6.)-(13.6.) and 17-20.6.44, in 6.Corps 21.6.-9.7., 98.Corps 10.7.-(17.8.44); in 43.Corps (27.9.44).
- 178.D - In 97.Corps (in 21.Army, 11.6.- 23.Army) and 16.6.- 21.Army) 1.-28.6.44, in 21.Army 108.Corps 2.-17.7.44, in 21.Army reserve 18.7.-11.8., in 97.Corps 12.8.-(27.9.44).
- 180.D - Estonian Division, in Northern front (up to 30.6.41).
- 182.D - Estonian Division, in Northern front (up to 30.6.41).
- 191.D - In Northern front (up to 30.6.41). In 22.6.41 in 22.Corps, sent to Luga group 8.7.41.
- 198.D - Was 198. Motorized D up to 17.9.41. In 10. Mechanized Corps, in 23.Army 25.6.-28.11.41.
- 201.D - Formed 6.43, in 23.Army (10.6.)-(31.7.)43.
- 221.D - Formed in June 1943 from 79. Infantry Brigade. From Ukraine. In 94.Corps in Karelian front c. 15.6.1944-. Into Karelian Isthmus, in Leningrad front reserve (7.7.), in 94.Corps 8.7.-(17.9.44).
- 224.D - In 23.Army (10.2.)-(10.3.43). From Estonia by sea 28.6.44 to 59.Army, in 43.Corps 16.7. -(16.8.) 44-, in 59.Army detached (27.9.44).
- 265.D - From Moscow district. In 23.Army 7.8. - (31.10.41). In 21.Army 109.Corps 22.6.-25.6., 5-6.7.44, in 110.Corps (12.6.)-21.6., 26.6.-4.7.44, 7.7.44- and moved elsewhere.
- 268.D - Formed from NKVD people in 1941. In 23.Army 1.4.--(10.5.43). In 21.Army 108.Corps 18.6.- 21.6.44, in 109.Corps 22.-25.6., in 110.Corps 12.-17.6, 26.6-(5.7.44) and moved elsewhere.
- 281.D - In 23.Army 98.Corps (1.6.44) - (17.8.44--).
- 286.D - In 23.Army (1.4.44, not 30.4.44), in 21.Army 109.Corps (5.6.)-14.7., detached 14.7., in 94.Corps 15.7.-(23.8.44-), in 43.Corps (27.9.44).
- 291.D - From Moscow district. Moved into 14.8.1941 Volkhovstroi as reserve for Olo-nets direction, to the south of Leningrad 17.8.41-, in 23.Army 1.9.41- 15.2.43.
- 314.D - In 7.Army 6.9.-16.9.41. Again in 7.Army in 1942. In 23.Army 115.Corps area as front reserve (12.4.44)-31.5. in 108.Corps as front reserve 31.5.44-, in 23.Army 115.Corps (9.6.)-20.6.44, in 21.Army 97.Corps (5.7.--12.8.44-)
- 327.D - In Karelian front c. 15.6.-, in Leningrad front c. 26.6.-, in 94.Corps c. 15.6.-8.7.44, in Leningrad front reserve, in 23.Army reserve 9-10.7.and in 6.Corps 10.7.-(10.9.44)-.
- 358.D - In 97.Corps (1.6.) - (5.9.1944).
- 372.D - In 23.Army 115.Corps (12.4.44), 98.Corps (30.4.44), in 108.Corps (1.6.44), in 98.Corps (10.6.)-12.6.44, in 21.Army 16.6., in 97.Corps 12.6.-(21.6.), in 108.Corps (23.6.) and 7.7.-, 17.7.-(7.8.), in 97.Corps (4.7.)-7.7., 14-16.7.44, in 6.Corps (10.7.44). Sent elsewhere in 108.Corps.
- 381.D - In 23.Army 97.Corps (1.6.)-11.6.44, in 98.Corps 12.6.-16.6., 20.6.- (16.8.)44-.
- 382.D - From front reserve to 23.Army 15.6.44, in 115.Corps 15-16.6., in army reserve 17.6., in 6.Corps 18.6. -14.7., in 115.Corps 14.-16.7., in 6.Corps 16.7.- (10.9.44)-.

- 1. Marine Brigade** - In Gulf of Finland area - 12.11.41.
- 2. Marine Brigade** - In Leningrad area 15.7.41-2.43.
- 5. Marine Brigade** - Formed in the Baltic fleet 21.8. 1941. In 23.Army 28.8. - 30.9.41. Renamed 25.8.42 to 71. Detached Marine Infantry Brigade. Attached to Leningrad front 2.9. 1942.
- 7. Marine Brigade** - see 72.D.
- 8. Brigade** - In Hanko 6-12.1941, in 23.Army still 21-28.2.42, renamed 136.D.
- 13. Infantry Brigade** - In 23.Army (31.5.1943). Probably attached in June 1943 to 201.D.
- 22. Infantry Brigade** - In Karelian Isthmus in 23.Army (1.3.44)-(1.4.44).
- 27. Infantry Brigade** - In 23.Army as border guards 19-21.9.41 and as detached Border guards Brigade 22.9.41-7.42, renamed 27 Infantry Brigade (already 1.8.42)-(still 1.6.43). Attached in June 1943 to the new 201.D.
- 260. Marine Brigade** - Formed in Baltic fleet 24.7. 42. In Kronstadt coast defence area 24.12.42-. In Koivisto area 21-27.6. 44.
- Detached Border Brigade** - see 27. Infantry Brigade.
- Detached Brigade of Navy Schools or VMUZ** - In 23.Army 5.7.-4.9.41.
- 16. Fortification Area** - Formed 2.8.1942 in Leningrad front. In 59.Army c. 18.7. (-27.9.44-).
- 17. Fortification Area** - Formed 29.7.1942 in Leningrad front, in 23.Army (already 10.11.42)-(10.9.44).
- 22. Fortification Area** - In Leningrad oblast since 1928. In 23.Army (31.10.41)-(1.6.44). Under front staff (17.8. 44).
- 27. Fortification Area** - Formed 7.6.41 in Käkisalmi, up to August 1941.
- 28. Fortification Area** - Formed 12.4. 1941 in Viipuri, in 23.Army (still 1.10.41).
- 29. Fortification Area** - Formed 12.4.1941 in Hanko, disbanded in 12.1941.
- 3. Armoured Division** - In 1. Mechanized Corps -7.41.
- 21. Armoured Division** - In 10. Mechanized Corps, in 23.Army 6.41- 11.7.41.
- 24. Armoured Division** - In 10. Mechanized Corps , in 23.Army 23.6.- 5.7. 41.
- 1. Guards Armoured Brigade** - In 21.Army 12.6.-(15.6.) 44. In front reserve. in July.
- 30. Guards Armoured Brigade** - Was 61. Armoured Brigade up to 2.43. 1944 in front reserve, in 21.Army (11.6.)-14.7.44. In Front reserve 14.7.44, and sent elsewhere.
- 152. Armoured Brigade** - In 23.Army (already 25.6.42)- 15.12.42, in front reserve in 23.Army area (12.4.44), in 23.Army (30.4.)-(1.6.44), in 21.Army (15.6.)- (19.6.). In front reserve in July.
- 220. Armoured Brigade** - In front reserve 1944, in 21.Army (19.6.). In front reserve. in July.
- 222. Armoured Brigade** - In 23.Army (31.1.43), (1.4.)-(1.5.43). - Renamed 222. Armoured Regiment in June 1943.

Karelian front (and troops between Ladoga and Arctic Ocean)

- Karelian front** – Commander General lieutenant, 24.8.43- General colonel V.A. Frolov 1.9.41 – 21.2. 44; member of War council korpkom A.S. Zheltov 1.9.41 – 4.7.42, brigkom, 7.10.42- divkom G.N. Kuprianov 1.9.41 – 11.11.42, divkom, 6.12.42 General major P.K. Batrakov 11.11.42 – 21.2.44, General lieutenant T.F. Shtykov; chief of staff colonel, 11.11.42- General major L.S. Skvirskii 1.9.42 – 18.5.43, general major, 17.10.43- General lieutenant B.A. Pigarevitch 18.5.43-.
- 7.Army** – Commander General lieutenant F.D. Gorelenko 6.41 – 24.9.41, 3.11.41-1.7.42, Army general K.A. Meretskov 24.9.-9.11.41, general major S.G. Trofimenko 4.7.42-29.1.43, general major A.N. Krutikov 29.1.-17.8.44, general lieutenant V.A. Gluzdivskij 27.8.-7.12.44. - Included Petrozavodsk Operative Group 7. - 8.41, Southern group and 1. Operative Group 7.41 – 6.42, 4.Corps 4.4.1942 - (10.9.44), 37. Guards Corps 9.6.-8.8.44, 99.Corps 9.6.-10.8.44, 94.Corps 15.6.-22.6.44, 127. Light MountainCorps 2.7.-4.8.44.
- 14.Army** – Commander General lieutenant V.A. Frolov 6.41 – 23.8.41, general major P.I. Panin 23.8.41 – 27.3.42, general major, 28.4.43- general lieutenant V.I. Shtsherbakov 28.3.42 – 9.7.45. - Included 42.Corps 6.-10.1941, Kandalaksha group 10.41 – 4.42, Kemi Operative Group 9.- 10.41, Murmansk group 10.-12.41. 99.Corps 10.9.44--, 126. Light MountainCorps 3.44-9.44, 127. Light MountainCorps 1.9.44 --, 131.Corps 10.9.44-.
- 19.Army** – Commander General major S.I. Morozov 28.3.42 – 21.5.43, general major, 12.2.43- general lieutenant G.K. Kozlov 23.5.43-6.3.45. - Included 127. Light MountainCorps 3.44 – 15.6.44, 133.Corps 9.44 --, 134.Corps 9.44 --.
- 26.Army** – Commander General major N.N. Nikishin 28.3.42-17.5.43, general major, 26.8.44- general lieutenant L.S. Skvirskij 17.5.43-18.1.45. - Included 31.Corps 19.8. 43 -- 9.44, Corps 9.44 --.
- 32.Army** – Commander General major, 13.6.42- general lieutenant S.G. Trofimenko 3.3.42-4.7.42, general lieutenant F.D. Gorelenko 4.7.42 -. - Included 127. Light MountainCorps 7.8. -- 1.9.44, 131.Corps 23.8. -- 10.9.44, 135.Corps 9.44 --.
- 1.Mechanized Corps** – Commander Armoured troops general major M.L. Zhernjavskij 21.1.-23.8.41. - In Northern front –23.8.41. -- Included 1.Armoured Division, 3.Armoured Division, 163.Motorized D.
- 4.Corps** - Commander General major P.A. Zajtsev 4.4.42-27.11.43, general major P.V. Gnedin 8.12.43-14.11.44. - Formed 4.4.1942. in 7.Army 1942 - (10.9.44). – Included (1942:) 114.D, 272.D, 3.Marine Brigade.
- 31.Corps** - Commander General major V.A. Solovev 25.5.-18.8.43, general major K.F. Skorobogatkin 19.8. 43-20.9.45. - Formed 5.6.1943, in 26.Army 1943-(10.9.44). - Included 83.D, 205.D.
- 37. Guards Corps** - Commander General lieutenant P.V. Mironov. - Formed 19.1. 1944. In Karelian front , in 7.Army 9.6. - 8.8.44. - Included 98.GuardsD, 99.GuardsD, 100.GuardsD, 29.Armoured Brigade.
- 42.Corps** - Commander General major R. I Panin 14.3.41-23.8.41, S.N. Morozov 1941. - In 14.Army. 6.-10.1941.

- 94.Corps** - see Leningrad front.
- 99.Corps** – Commander General lieutenant S.P. Mikulskij 3.6.-29.12.44. - Formed 4.10.43. In Karelian front, in 7.Army 9.6. - (10.8.), under the front staff c. 1.9.44, in front reserve (11.9.44), in 14.Army (c. 10.9.-). - Included 18.D, 65.D, 114.D, 310.D.
- 126. Light Mountain Corps** - Commander Colonel V.N. Solovjev 27.2.44-. - Formed as 1.Light Corps 27.2.44, renamed 8.3.44. In 14.Army (20.6.)-(11.9.44).
- 127. Light Mountain Corps** – Commander General major G.V. Golovanov - 12.7.44, general major Z.N. Aleksejev 13.7.44-3.9.45 – Formed as 2.Light Corps in 27.2.44, renamed 8.3.44. In 19.Army (1.6.44), in front reserve (15.6.), in 7.Army 2.7.44-, in front reserve 4.8., in 32.Army c. 7-10.8., in 14.Army since c. 1.9.44.
- 131.Corps** – Commander General major M.A. Absaljamov 23.8.-28.9.44, general major Z.N Alekseev 29.9.-23.10.44, general major F.F. Korotkov 24.10.-4.11.44 - Formed 23.8. 44. In 32.Army (10.9.44), then in 14.Army. - Included 14.D, 10.GuardsD.
- 132.Corps** - Commander General major S.P. Perkov 23.8.-27.9.44, general major F F. Korotkov 4.11.44-9.5.45 - Formed 23.8. 44 in Kemi. In 26.Army (already 10.9.44). - Included 27.D, 54.D.
- 133.Corps** - Commander General major Z.N. Aleksejev 3.9.-28.9.44, general major P.A. Artjushenko 29.9.44-9.5.45 - Formed 3.9. 44 in 19.Army (already 10.9.44).
- 134.Corps** - Commander Colonel G.E. Guardslinovskij 3.9.-20.9.44, general major K.F. Skorobogatkin 21.9.44-23.3.45. - Formed 3.9.44 in 19.Army (already 10.9.44).
- 135.Corps** - Commander General major P.V Gnedin 11.11.44-9.5.45. - Formed 5.9. 44 in 32.Army.
- 7.Army Petrozavodsk Operative Group** - Commander General lieutenant M.A. Antonjuk. – Operated 21.7.41 – (August) 41. – Included 24.Motorized regiment, 9.Motocycle regiment, 10.reserve regiment, 2. tank regiment.
- 7.Army Southern Group and 1. Operative Group** - Commander General lieutenant V.D. Tsvetaev 21.7.41-27.3.42; Zaitsev 27.3.-20.6.42. – Operated 1941- 1942. Transformed in 20.6.42 into 4.Corps. – Included (originally) 3.Marine Brigade., 451. regiment, 719. regiment, 7. regiment; (in 1942) 114, 272, 67. D, 69, 70, 73. Marine Infantry Brigade.
- Kandalaksha Group** - Commander General major S.N. Morozov (17.9.41)-1942, general major Shevtshenko. – Former staff of 42.Corps. In 14.Army 14.10.41-4.4.42. -- Included 104, 122.D, (c. 31.3.42-) 77.Marine Infantry Brigade and 4. Ski Brigade.
- Medvezhegorsk Operative Group** - Commander General major Knjazev 16.10.-29.12.41, general major S.G. Trofimenko 29.12.41-3.3.42. - Operated 14.10.41-3.3.42. -- Included 37, 71, 313.D, 2. Light Infantry Brigade, 1. Ski Brigade.
- Kemi Operative Group** - Commander General major N.N. Nikishin (10.11.41). - Operated 12.9.41-4.4.42.Originally in 14.Army, and directly under Karelian front staff 14.10.41-- -- Included 14., 88., 27., 54.D, 67. and 80. Marine Infantry Brigade.
- Maasselkä Operative Group** - Commander General major G.A. Veshtshezerskij 26.12.41-9.3.42. - Operated 16.11.41 – 9.3.42. -- Included 289, 367 D.
- Murmansk Group** - 14.Army (already 20.10.)-(20.12.41).

- Repola Operative Group** - Commander Colonel G.K. Kozlov. – Formed 29.7.41-, renamed 10.8.41 into 27.D.
- Northern Defence area** - Commander Coastal defence general lieutenant S.I. Kabanov 42-43, general major J.T. Dubovtsev (15.10.44). - Formed 12.7. 1942 in Northern fleet.
- 3.D of People's volunteers** - Leningrad volunteers, formed 1-15.7.41. In 7.Army (minus one regiment) 24.7.41-, detached, then in Southern group 9.8. - n.3.10.41.
- 10.GuardsD** – Was 52.D up to 26.12.41. In 14.Army 6.41-11.44, Murmansk group (20.10.41).
- 14.D** - In 14.Army 6.-12.41, in Murmansk group (20.10.41), in Kemi Operative Group (31.12.41)-10.1.42, in 14.Army (31.1.42)—1. 1945. Later 101.GuardsD.
- 18.D** - In 7.Army 99.Corps c. 15.6.-(31.8.44), in 7.Army (11.9.44).
- 21.D NKVD** - Formed 6.1941, from NKVD troops, in Petrozavodsk area and Karelian Isthmus. See later 109.D.
- 21.D** - From the Far Eastern front. In 7.Army 25.9.41 –3.44, in 19.Army 3.44-(10.9.44).
- 23.GuardsD** - Was 88.D up to 17.3.42. Transported from Arkhangelsk area 10.8. 41, in 14.Army 11.8.41-. In Kemi Operative Group 15.9. 41-, in 26.Army 4.42 - (30.9.42). From Louhi 18.10.42 to South Western front.
- 27.D** - Was Rebola D up to 24.9.41 (formed by order 10.8. 41). In Kemi Operative Group and in 26.Army (30.9.41)-(1.1.44, 31.Corps), in 32.Army probably from March 44 - (31.8.44), in 26.Army (10.9.44).
- 37.D** - Was Petrozavodsk D up to 24.9.1941. In 7.Army, under Karelian front staff 15.10.41-, in Medvezhegorsk group 14.10.-(30.11.41); in Maaselkä Group and in 32.Army (26.12.41)-- 2. 43.
- 45. D** - Formed in Louhi (order 16.4.43) from 67. Marine Infantry Brigade. In 26.Army 15.5.1943 – (10.9.44), 31.Corps – 21.7.44 and 18.9.44-, then in 14.Army.
- 52.D** - see 10.GuardsD.
- 54.D** - 42.Corps 6.41-. In Kemi Operative Group and in 26.Army (12.9.1941) – 11. 1944, in its 31.Corps (1.1.44)-.
- 65.D** - In 7.Army 99.Corps c. 15.6.44 - (31.8.44), in 14.Army (already 1.9.44)-11.44. Since 29.12.44 102. GuardsD.
- 67.D** - Up to 18.10.41 Olonets division, which had been formed on Svir 24.9.41. In 7.Army 1941-2.44. In 19.Army from March 1944 -11.44. In 14.Army –9.45.
- 71.D** - In 7.Army 6.41 – 15.10. 41, temporarily in 23.Army (1.8.41). In Medvezhegorsk Operative Group and 32.Army 14.10.41--(30.9.42). To Volkhov front 10.42.
- 83.D** - Formed near Louhi in January 1944 from 61. and 85. Marine Infantry Brigades. In 26.Army 1.44-(10.9.44), in its 31.Corps (18.9.44) and (25.9.44). In 14.Army 10-11.44.
- 88.D** see 23.GuardsD.
- 98.GuardsD** – Up to 19.1.44 named 13. Guards Air landing division, which had been formed in Moscow area. In Karelian front, in 7.Army (20.6.)- August 44.
- 99.GuardsD** - Up to 19.1.44 named 14. Guards Air landing division, which had been formed in Moscow area. In Karelian front. in 7.Army (20.6.)- August 44.

- 100.GuardsD** - Up to 19.1.44 named 15. Guards Air landing division, which had been formed in Moscow area. In Karelian front, in 7.Army (20.6.) – August 1944.
- 104.D** - In 14.Army 42.Corps 6.41-(14.10.41), in Kandalaksha Operative Group and in 19.Army (20.10.41) - 11.44.
- 114.D** - In 7.Army 8./9.10.41-, 4.Corps (1.6.)—(31.8.44); to 14.Army c. 10.9.44.
- 122. D** - In 14.Army 42.Corps 6.41-, in Kandalaksha group and 19.Army (30.9.41)-(10.9.44).
- 152.D** - In Karelian front, its 26.Army (April 42), in 14.Army (1.8.1942)-25.1.43. Left for Harkov.
- 168.D** - See Leningrad front.
- 176.D** - Formed from 65. and 80. Marine Infantry Brigades in Maaselkä 20.2. 44. In 32.Army 2.-11.44.
- 186.D** - Was PoljarnojeD up to 28.9.41, and 205.D since 26.6.43. Formed in Murmansk from Border troops in summer 1941. In 14.Army (30.9.)-(31.10.41), in Murmansk group (20.10.41). In Kemi Operative Group (30.11.)-10.12.41, under Karelian front staff 10-31.12.41, in Maaselkä Operative Group and in 32.Army (31.1.) - (31.3.42), in 26.Army (30.4.)-25.5.42, in 32.Army 25.5.- (1.7.)42, in 26.Army 1.8.42-11.44, 31.Corps.
- 205.D** - See 186.D.
- 237.D** - Formed in 5. 1941 in Karhu station. In 7.Army, Petrozavodsk 23.6.41-, in Loimola 27.6.-7.7.41. Moved away 7.7.41.
- 263.D** - Formed 7.41. From Vologda 9.8.41 to Arkhangelsk area. Into Karelian front 23.11.41. In front reserve 25-30.11.41, 10-20.12.41, (31.1.)-15.2.1942, in 32.Army 15-28.2.42, in 26.Army (30.4.42)-22.1.43. Sent away from Louhi.
- 272.D** - In 7.Army Petrozavodsk group 1-5.8.41, in 7.Army (16.9.41). Fought against Getrmans in Tikhvin area, but again in 7.Army 1941-, in its 4.Corps (10.3.)-(10.9.) 44.
- 289.D** - Formed 15.10.41 in Medvezhegorsk from 5. Brigade. In Medvezhegorsk group (20.10.)-(30.11.41), under front staff (31.12.41), in Maaselkä Group and in 32.Army (31.1.42)--(10.9.) 44.
- 310.D** - In 7.A:n 4.Corps (c. 15.6.44)-, in 99.Corps (20.6.)-(10.9.44).
- 313.D** - In 7.Army 28.8.41-(10.41). In Medvezhegorsk group and in 32.Army (20.10.41)-- 11. 44.
- 314.D** - see Leningrad front.
- 341.D** - Formed from 77. Marine Infantry Brigade 3.6.44. In 19.A 3.6.-(10.9.44).
- 367.D** - In Karelian front as detached 10-20.12.41. In Maaselkä Group (31.1.)-(28.2.1942).“Destroyde in 6-7.2.42”. In front reserve (31.3.)-(30.4.42). Reformed in Kemi c. 1.5.42. In 32.Army (1.6.42)-(1.1.44), in 26.Army probably from March 44 --(31.8.44); 132.Corps.
- 368.D** - In 7.Army 3.42 –, in its 4.Corps (10.3.)- 10.7.44, in 32.Army 11.7. -(31.8.44); in 14.Army (c. 10.9.44-).
- Olonets Division** - see 67.D.
- Polyarnoye Division** - see 186.D.
- Rebola Division** - see 27.D.
- Petrozavodsk Division** - see 37.D.

1. **Light Infantry Brigade** - In 7.Army (24.9. 41) in Petrozavodsk, in Medvezhegorsk 9-10.41.
1. **Partisan Brigade** - Formed in Puutois 6.12.41, disbanded 10.1942.
1. **Ski Infantry Brigade** - Also 1. Light Ski Brigade (31.1.)-(31.3.42), 1. Ski Brigade (30.4.), 1. Infantry Brigade (1.6.)-(9.42). In Medvezhegorsk group and 32.Army (31.12.41)-(9.42). Attached to 33. Ski Brigade/Guards/atiin (already 30.9.42).
2. **Light Infantry Brigade** - Formed in Petrozavodsk 26.9.41, in 7.Army. Under Karelian front 15.10.41-, in Medvezhegorsk group (20.10.)-12.12.1941, disbanded.
2. **Ski Brigade** - Also 2. Infantry Brigade 14.5.42-, in 32.Army (31.3.) - (9.42). Disbanded in Sekehe 9.42, attached to 33. Ski Brigade.
3. **Ski Brigade** or "Tunkua Ski Brigade" - Also 3. Infantry Brigade. Formed near Novosibirsk, to Belomorsk (Sorokka) 30.1.-15.2.42, in 26.Army 25.3.-(1.6.42); attached in 9.42 to 32.Ski Brigade. - Note: In Kemi Operative Group there was (19.2.42) a Northern Ski Brigade and a Southern Ski Brigade and later (28.2.42) Kemi Ski Brigade.
3. **Marine Brigade** - Formed in the Baltic fleet 18.7. 41, transferred into RedArmy 10.10.42. In 7.Army (18.4.42), 4.Corps (1.6.)-(28.7.44), 32.Army (5.8.)-(31.8.44), to 14.Army c. 10.9.44. Since 15.11.44 3.Mountain Brigade.
4. **Ski Brigade** - In Kandalaksha group of the 14.Army and in 19.Army (2.)--9.42.
4. **Marine Brigade** - Formed in the Baltic fleet 18.7.41. In the islands of Ladoga 24.7.-14.9.41. Transferred to fight Germans 15.11.41. In Olonets direction in the summer 1942. Disbanded 24.7.42.
5. **Brigade** see Murmansk Brigade.
5. **Reindeer Brigade** - Also 5. Ski Brigade. Formed in Onega 3. 1942, In 14.Army 12.3.-20.9. 1942 Attached to 31. Ski Brigade.
6. **Ski Brigade** - Also 6. Reindeer Brigade. Formed in Molotovsk, in 14.Army (31.3.)-- 9.1942. Attached to 31. Ski Brigade.
7. **Ski Brigade** - In 7.Army (11.4.42).
7. **Ski Brigade** - In 32.Army 3.4.-7.5.42.
8. **Ski Brigade** - Also 8. Reindeer Brigade. Formed in Louhi area 2.1942-, in 26.Army (31.3.)-- 9. 1942. Attached to 32.Ski Brigade.
9. **Ski Brigade** - Formed in Jaroslav. In the beginning of February 1942 to Majguba and 9.3. 42 to Ontajärvi. Disappears at the end of March 1942. The rank and file moved in 5.42 into direction of Moscow.
12. **Marine Brigade** - Formed in the Northern fleet in autumn 1941. Sent from Arkhangelsk 7.9.41 to Kandalakscha. In Murmansk group of the 14.Army 16.12.41 -. In Karelian front (31.1.42). In the Northern defence area 7. 42, in Murmansk area 9.42 ... (1.1.45). Since 30.4.1943 12. Marine Infantry Brigade.
30. **Ski Brigade** - Formed in 3.44. In 19.Army (1.6.44), in front reserve (20.6.44), in 7.Army 127.Corps (30.6.), moved in 4.8.44 into 99.Corps, still in the 7.Army in 10.9.44.
31. **Ski Brigade** - Formerly 5. and 6. Ski Brigades. 14.Army 20.9.42-(1.1.43), and its 126.Corps (-1. 6.44) - 10.9.44.
32. **Ski Brigade** - Formerly 3. and 8. Ski Brigades. In 26.Army (9.42), in 19.Army probably from March 44 - (1.6. 44), in 7.Army 127.Corps (30.6.)-(16.7.), moved in 4.8. to 99.Corps, still in the 7.Army 10.9.44.

33. **Ski Brigade** - Formerly 1. and 2. Brigades (order of 7.9.42). In 32. A (30.9.42)-(1943), in 19.Army probably from March 44 - (1.6. 44), in front reserve (20.6.)-(10.7.), in 7.Army 127.Corps (16.7.), moved in 4.8. to front reserve, in 32.Army (7.8.) - (31.8.44). To 14.Army c. 10.9.44.
61. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Formed in the Pacific fleet. In Maaselkä group 27.12.41/1.1.42-(28.2.42), in 32.Army 13.3.-22.7.42, in front reserve 22.7.-13.8.42, in 26.Army 19.8.42 - (1.1.44). Attached to 83.D.
63. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Formed in the Pacific fleet. In Arkhangel in the Northern fleet 1.7.42--. In 14.Army 6.1942-, In Northern defence area 12.7.42-(1944). Since 30.3.1943 63. Marine Brigade.
65. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Formed in the Pacific fleet. In Maaselkä Group 27.12.41- (28.2.42), in 32.Army (13.3.42 - (1.1.43), possibly during the summer 1942 in 26.Army (9. 1942), in 32.Army 1943, attached to 176.D in 2. 1944.
66. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Formed in the Pacific and Amur fleet. Into Karelian front 9.12.41. In Maaselkä group 27.12.41 (actually 13.1.42)- (28.2.1942), to Medvezhegorsk 18.3.1942, in 32.Army (31.3.)-(1.6.42). Left in 19.6.42 for Northern Caucasus.
67. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Formed in the Pacific fleet. Into Karelian front 2.1.1942, in Kemi Operative Group and in 26.Army 15.1.42-15.5.43. Attached to 45.D.
69. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Formed in the Pacific and Black Sea fleet. In 7.Army 10.1.42-(29.7.44), in 32.Army (5.8.)-(31.8.44), to 14.Army c. 10.9.44.
70. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Into Karelian front 30.12.41. In 7.Army 4.1.42-(9.42). To Volkhov front 3.1. 43. In 7.Army (1.6.44), in 32.Army, to 14.Army c. 10.9.44.
72. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - To Murmansk 28.12.41. Into Karelian front 6.2.42. In 14.Army (14.2.42)-(10.9.44).
73. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - In 7.Army (order of 12.41) 6.1.42-. Into Volkhov front 21.9.42. Disbanded 8.43.
77. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Into Karelian front 5.1.42, in 14.Army 2.1.-(31.1.42), In Kandalaksha Operative Group and in 19.Army (28.2.42)-3.6.44. Attached to 341.D.
80. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Into Karelian front 12.1.42, in Kemi Operative Group and in 26.Army 22.2.42-(1.1.43), in 32.Army (already 1943) - 2. 1944. Attached to 176.D.
82. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - To Northern fleet, and there 28.6.42- in Murmansk Fortification Area. In the coastal defence of the Polyarnyi base 7.9.42-. Disbanded 10.2.43.
85. **Marine Infantry Brigade** - Arrived 27.12. 41. Into Karelian front reserve 12.1.42 -. In Maaselkä Group, first part 26.2..42-, then all of it in 32.Army (31.3.)-(30.4.42). in 26.Army 7.5.42-1.44. Attached to 83.D.
254. **Brigade** - Formed 31.7.42. in the Northern fleet (in the Northern defence area). In front line since the beginning of 1943.
- Murmansk Brigade** - Formed in Murmansk in the beginning of August 1941. In Kestenga/Louhi direction 12.8. 41-9.41, In Kemi Operative Group (31.8.41). Renamed 5.Brigade in 16.9.41-(30.9.41). In 10.41 transformed into 289.D in 15.10.41.
- Kemi Ski Brigade** - In Kemi Operative Group (28.2.42). Then possibly 3. Ski Brigade.

- 2. Fortification Area** - in 14.Army (1.6.)-(31.8.44), actually 2. Defence area.
- 23. Fortification Area** - Formed 1.6.41 in Murmansk, in 14.Army (31.8.41)-(1.7.42).
- 150. Fortification Area** - Ordered already 28.3.42 to be given to 7.Army. In Karelian front from March 1944, in 7.Army (10.3.--11.9.44), in its 37.GuardsCorps (29.7.44) and in 4.Corps (4.8.)-(31.8.44).
- 162. Fortification Area** - Ordered 20.5.42 to be given to 7.Army. In 7.Army 1942- (11.9.44) and in its 4.Corps (10.3.)-(31.8.44).
- 1. Armoured Division** - Sent from Pskov to Kandalakscha 19.-24.6., to Petrozavodsk 15.7., part of it went 20-22.7. to Gatchina, part was (10.8.) in Kandalaksha-Kuolajärvi direction. Rest of the Division was moved from Petrozavodsk area to "Russia" by 3.9. 1941.
- 7. Guards Armoured Brigade** - Was up to 16.2.42 the 46. Armoured Brigade. In 7.Army 27.9. - 10.11.41. Again in 7.Army (20.6.)-(31.8.44), in 26.Army 10.9.44-.
- 29. Armoured Brigade** - In Karelian front 6.6.44 and in 7.Army (20.6.) - (29.7.), in 32.Army (3.8.)-(11.9.) 44.
- 38. Guards Armoured Regiment or Brigade** - In 19.Army (1.6. --10.9.44).
- 46. Armoured Brigade** - see 7.Guards Armoured Brigade.

Sources

- TsAMO: Northern front, Leningrad front, Karelian front and 7.Army operative and loss reports.
- Finnish military archives (SArk), booty and prisoner documents.
- German Bundes archiv - Militär archiv: Intelligence reports.
- Red Army - internet site (www.rkka.ru).
- Soviet historical books and memoirs.

5. The strategic operations against Finland in the summer of 1944

The great shock of the mass attack mounted by the Soviet Union against Finland in 1944 has been described by many authors and this shock has given rise to much heated discussion. The fundamental sources of the decision to attack have not yet been analysed. The decision was made by Stalin, of course, and his papers, in the Kremlin archives, are still closed to historians. There is a great deal of material on the planning of the attack available in the Soviet archives and literature, however. The first phases were successful, which is not something that can be said about all Soviet operations in the direction of Finland. Furthermore, the operations in Svir, Vitele, Viipur Bay, and Vuosalmi were interesting examples of art of war, as they included amphibious crossings and naval activity, which were otherwise quite rare in that war.

The memoirs of S.M. Shtemenko, published in 1968-1973, provide a colourful description of the course of events from the viewpoint of the General Staff. Likewise K.A. Meretskov has recounted his activities as commander of the Karelian Front. Meretskov's view was apparently narrower than Shtemenko's, but then Shtemenko's main attention in spring 1944 was directed not at Finland but elsewhere. He did acquaint himself with the Finnish issue from a political viewpoint as well, however, when he was Molotov's assistant in late March, at the time when J.K. Paasikivi and Carl Enckell were in Moscow exploring the possibilities for peace.

The descriptions of Shtemenko and Meretskov differ somewhat, and it is apparent that much more archive material was available when Shtemenko's memoirs were being prepared than when Meretskov was going through the same process. Also, Shtemenko emphasizes, somewhat critically, that directions and limitations were constantly needed with regard to Meretskov's decisions and actions.

The overall image of the mass attack is quite clear as far as its general lines are concerned. The Red Army had numerical superiority in both men and weapons at the time, and this could be best exploited by developing massive attacks one after another in different areas. Success achieved in one area would make the enemy concen-

trate its reserves there, and the front would consequently be weakened at some other point, where the next attack could take place.⁸⁶

Choosing the attack direction

The great Soviet strikes of the early winter of 1944 had been directed at breaking the siege of Leningrad in January-February and at liberating the Ukraine in December-April. The Soviet high command confirmed on 12th April that the most important task for the coming summer season would be to crush the German concentration in Belorussia. As preparations were being made for this main operation, operations would be carried out along other parts of the front to divert German attention and forces away from Belorussia.

When confirming the programme for the summer season, the Soviet high command also decided that the first summer attack would have to be carried out on the Karelian Isthmus and in Olonets. The time of the attack and its echelons were also affected by natural circumstances, i.e. the recovery of the roads from the melting of the ground frost.

There were several reasons for choosing the Karelian Isthmus - Olonets operation plan:

- 1) Trends in Finnish domestic policy seemed to point to a continuous strengthening of those in favour of peace. Although the government had rejected the terms offered for peace, it had nevertheless shown a great longing for peace. Defeating the country's armed forces would naturally resolve the situation. Severe casualties might also be an adequate incentive for surrender, or even for the acceptance of harsh terms of peace. When the mass attack began, Stalin explained to Averell Harriman, representing the United States, that the Finns were "remarkably stubborn and slow-witted people" and that "sense had to be beaten into their heads with a hammer."
- 2) Stalin wanted to observe whether the landing of the western powers in France in June 1944 would really prove to be an operation to be taken seriously, and decided to use the waiting period to his advantage by dealing with the enemy in the north-west. Leaving Finland to continue her resistance even for a short period after the fall of Germany would have been politically inappropriate in Stalin's opinion, because the western powers could have influenced the situation in Finland's favour.

- 3) The attack on Finland would divert German attention away from Belorussia, the direction of the Soviet Union's main offensive.
- 4) The large pouch in the Soviet front extending to Lake Onega could be straightened. The front would become still significantly shorter if the enemy could be removed from Finland.
- 5) The Murmansk railway and the canal leading to the White Sea could be taken into use again. As the capacity of the alternative route, the Belomorsk (Sorokka)-Arkhangelsk branch line, was small, personnel and logistic transport for the operation against the Germans in the north could be improved in this way, and the capacity for transporting vital materials from the west would increase decisively.
- 6) The enemy troops could be removed from the area north of Leningrad. The Finnish decision not to attack, which had held good since 1941, was well known, but there was still a hidden threat, e.g. by the German V-weapons. After the resolution of the Leningrad situation, troops in the area could be used in the direction of Central Europe if the Finnish army no longer posed a threat to Leningrad. On the other hand, this was the first opportunity for an attack on Finland, and the troop concentrations that it required had not been possible until now, when the transport routes to Leningrad and the Isthmus were again in use. If the troops were taken to Central Europe in between, they would have to be brought back to capture Finland, and this would take rather a long time and require considerable transportation capacity.
- 7) It was thought that the Finnish army had been debilitated by the long period of trench warfare. Its training and weaponry were poorer than those of the German army, so that a powerful attack could be expected to have a swift impact and the troops would not be contained on this subsidiary front for long. On the other hand, the troops in the Petsamo-Salla direction would face a long period of containment. German resistance might prove effective and exhausting, and the process of moving the attack force to the north would be arduous and slow due to the poor condition of the road network. By comparison, the Finns could be defeated in a relatively short time.

Attacking Finland was not an alien thought for the Soviet leadership even during the Continuation War. An attack in this direction had already been included in the plans of the Soviet General Staff in 1943. The question was whether it was rational to carry out such an attack and when. It had not been at all obvious that this attack would be carried out on the Karelian Isthmus and in Olonets, however. It is worth noting that General N.N. Voronov of the artillery, who was the representative of the high command of the Soviet Union during the operation to break the siege of Leningrad, wrote on 2.2.1944 to comrade Ivanov (i.e. Stalin) proposing to limit the area of the Leningrad front to the direction of Finland by excluding the Estonian direction. He also included thoughts on subduing Finland in his communication. According to the proposal, the command of the Leningrad front would consist of the troops protecting the coast of the Gulf of Finland, the army on the Isthmus and the 7th Army (now working independently in the direction of Svir). Furthermore, "The army on the Isthmus must be strengthened, especially with artillery. The task of the front is to prepare in two or two and a half months an operation to break the Finnish front on the Karelian Isthmus and penetrate into Finland. In my view, a decision like this may be advantageous to us in all circumstances. Merely the preparations for prompt action may be successful in forcing the Finns to accept our terms. If the Stavka accepts my proposal, I will add to it what kind of grouping of the artillery would be useful and what would be the possibilities for executing such a mission. The artillery formation deployed on the Karelian Isthmus will practice, but if the need arises, it can be used on other fronts."

Thus Voronov estimated that April would bring a suitable time for attacking Finland and that it would be useful to concentrate the troops then (since they could be transported through Leningrad and would be released from the area east of Leningrad). Stalin still believed at that point, however, that Finland would accept his conditions for peace without preparations for an offensive of this kind. The work of developing the idea was therefore laid to rest until April.

Pressure was exerted on the Finns during February by means of bombings, and Stalin also wanted to advance rapidly into Estonia, so that the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland could be taken into use in order to apply more pressure on Finland. In a directive issued on 14 February, he emphasized that Narva was to be captured by 17 February. "Both the political and the military situation" de-

manded this. Nevertheless, the Narva front managed to stay strong. On 22 February the Stavka approved a plan for an attack towards Riga, and on 4 March 1944 the commander of the front, Govorov, made a proposal to the chief of the General Staff that they should attack through through Pskov instead of through Narva. This meant advancing past Tallinn and operating via Tartu area.

On 19 February the Stavka gave instructions that – contrary to Voronov’s proposal - the 7th Army in Svir would on 25 February be added to the Karelian Front; a small battle command headquarters would be located in the Kantalahti area and the re-organized headquarters of the Karelian Front would commence activities on 1 March.⁸⁷

Towards Rovaniemi: The ideas of Meretskov in 1944

General K.A. Meretskov, who had led the attack on the Isthmus during the Winter War, now became commander of the Karelian Front. He began the planning work enthusiastically, preparing first, from mid-February onwards, an attack against the Germans at the level of Kantalahti (Kandalaksha) - according to Stalin’s orders - and then, on 12 March, 1944 a plan for the Front to destroy the Finnish 1st Division in the area of the 32nd Army. In connection with this the area Karelian Maaselkä – Sayozero - point 175.0 - the south-eastern shore of Lake Kommunarov was to be captured. Thus it would be a typical front-line operation with short-range goals.

It was curtly pointed out to Meretskov on 23 March that “no attacks in the area of the Karelian Front are being considered for the time being, not against the Finns nor against the Germans”.⁸⁸

Planning was by no means stopped, however. In April Meretskov outlined an attack on Finnish territory by the 32nd Army, directed at the line Korpiselkä - Värtsilä. This plan, completed by Gorolenko of the 32nd Army on 4-5 April 1944, consisted of two options, one designed to be carried out with existing troops and the other with reinforcements.

The depth of the operation was 270-405 km and the duration was 30 days under the first option and 27 under the second. The night before D-day one reconnaissance detachment, no stronger than a reinforced battalion, would be in operation for each division of the attack group.

The main attack group would strike between Krivozero - Van-

zhzero over a width of 7 km. The supporting attack would take place in the direction of Derevna No. 5 - Derevna No. 4 at a width of 2 km with one division (less one regiment). The rest of the front would engage in defence with one division, two regiments, two border regiments, one border battalion and the army's machine gun battalion.

The depth of the first phase would be 25 km and its duration 6 days (D - D+5). The task was to break through the enemy's tactical depth, develop an attack, destroy the Finnish Maaselkä Group, capture Medvezhegorsk and advance to the line Ostreche - Kalddovary - Chebino - Medvezhegorsk. In the second option the task of the first phase would be the same (defined by the line Maaselkä - Ostreche - Chebino - Medvezhegorsk) and the speed would be 4 km / day at first and 12-13 km / day in the second and third phases.

The task in the second phase of the first option, depth 165-260 km, duration 15-17 days (D+6 - D+22), was to advance to the line Suojärvi - Suojärvi station, cut off the enemy's railway connection Petrozavodsk - Suojärvi station - Värtsilä, and capture Suojärvi. The task in the second option was the same, but the duration was 12-14 days (D+6 - D+19).

The reinforcements needed for the second option of General Gorelenko (on 5 April 1944).

| | to be acquired | | |
|--|----------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| | already in existence | | needed by the attack group |
| infantry division | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| heavy artillery regiment of the high command | | 3 | 3 |
| armoured battalion | 1 | | 1 |
| mortar regiment | 1 | 4 (120 mm) | 5 |
| rocket launcher regiment (M-8) | 1 | | 1 |
| rocket launcher regiment (M-13) | | 2 | 2 |
| rocket launcher regiment (M-31) | | 2 | 2 |
| engineer brigade | | 1 | 1 |
| engineer battalion | 1 | | |
| air defence battalion | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| flame-thrower company | 2 | | 2 |
| mixed air division | 1 | | 1 |

The third phase, depth 90-120 km, was aimed at capturing the line Korpiselkä - Värtsilä. The duration of the prepared attack would be 3-4 days, and the total duration of the third phase would be 7 days (in the first option D+23 - D+29 and in the second D+20 - D+26).

In the first option an (376th) armoured battalion would be assigned to the 289th Division and the 47th Armoured Train Battery would support one regiment of the 176th Division, covering the Velikaya Guba - Maaselkä - Raz. 14 road and operating 2 km north-west of Maaselkä.⁸⁹

Even though Meretskov's main attention was focused on the north, this did not mean that preparations for an attack in the southern area would be neglected. On the contrary, in accordance with his instructions of 29 March, an attack plan for the 7th Army, operating in the area of Svir was already completed by 19 April. The basic idea – a hard strike parallel to the coast of Lake Ladoga towards Sortavala – was the same as was taken in June.⁹⁰

By March 1944 the Soviet leadership had noticed that if the Finns were to withdraw from the war, the Germans would try to fight in Finland, especially in the southern parts of the country and on the Åland Islands. In that case battles would be fought on Finnish territory. In this context the two main enemy defence lines were defined as "1. The bay of Virolahti - Järvelä - Hurtala - Parkkala - Ylijärvi - Möttö - Nuppola - Lappeenranta. 2. Rakila - Kouvola station". These lines were of importance when evaluating the chances of the Germans continuing to fight in Finland. This is evident from the instructions received by the commander of the Baltic Fleet, Admiral Tributs from Admiral Kuznetsov on 31 March, reminding him that the Germans could significantly increase their naval strength in the Gulf of Finland and that operating in the Finnish archipelago as the Red Army advanced would be difficult and would require careful planning. The operational area and depth of the Baltic Fleet would increase.

At the same time the Northern Fleet was given the task of preparing (by 15 April) for the capture of the German bases in Varangfjord in summer as the Red Army advanced to the west.⁹¹

The planning for the Viipuri and the Sortavala operations

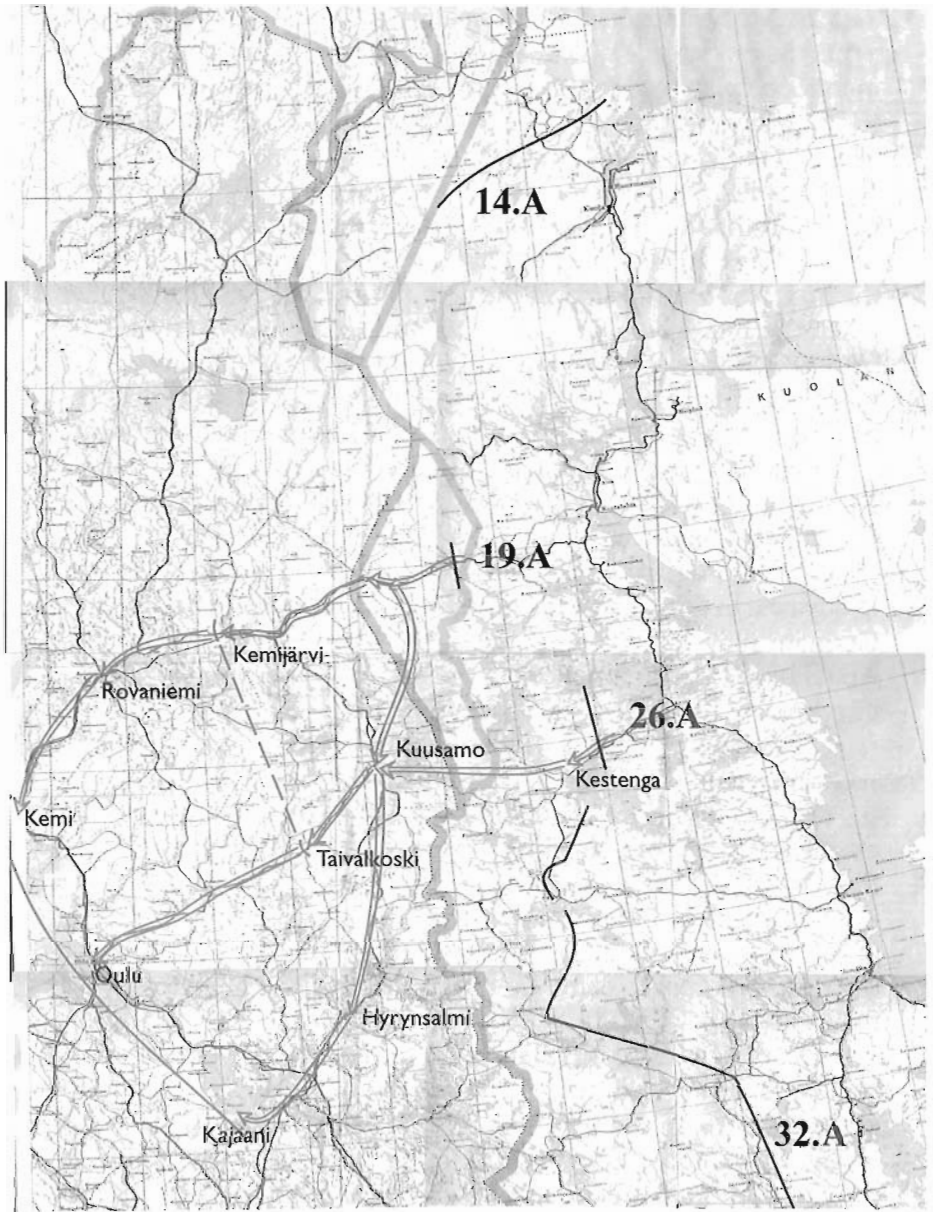
It was not until the tentative peace talks with Finland became more protracted and finally broke down that the direction of the attack was

turned against the Finns instead of the Germans, the decision in this respect being made on 19-20 April. The General Staff justified such a solution with the fact that it would be easier to beat the Finns than the Germans and that defeating the Finns would open up the German flank. Their possibilities of withdrawing from Finland through Oulu, Kemi and Tornio by sea and to Norway over land would have weakened. It may be that the idea was to advance through the western arm of Finland to Norway and attack the German rear.

The General Staff thus around 17-20 April proposed a mass attack on Finland and Stalin accepted the proposal (put actually forward by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, A.I. Antonov). Shtemenko's account would seem to suggest that Stalin was already considering a solution of this kind in late March, at least for the Karelian Front. In his memoirs, Zhukov placed the decision - to regard the Isthmus and Petrozavodsk as the first phases of the summer plan - in the period 22-28 April, perhaps 24-26 April.

There are nevertheless indications that preparations for the attack had commenced earlier. In accordance with a proposal made in March, the area of responsibility of the commander of the Leningrad Front, General Govorov, was narrowed down in the south on 18 April so that he could concentrate on the directions of Narva and Finland. The decision gained its incentive from the preparations for an operation in the Baltic direction. When instructing the Leningrad Front on 19 April - still about defence - the Stavka ordered defences on the Isthmus in particular to be strengthened. The 23rd Army would receive two divisions as reserves, and a few days later, on 21 April, Leningrad was notified that the headquarters and troops of the 23rd Artillery Division would be moved to the area, in addition to other artillery troops. On 28th April the staff of the 21st Army was given to the Leningrad front.⁹²

The final instructions to the front commands regarding the direction of the attack were given on 27 May and 1 June. Meretskov had (*Map 11*) considered that - as the Finnish defence relied on the Germans - the Germans should be attacked and that, the attack should be directed against the northern part of Finland, between Kantalahti and Kestenga, proceeding through Rovaniemi to the Kemi-Oulu area. Only after the German 20th Army had been dispersed would the Finns be attacked again. The Red Army did not have the strength to fight both at the same time, he said. If the Finns were attacked first, the emphasis would have to be directed at the



Map 11. The proposed operation to separate the German and Finnish armies (March 1944)

area of Medvezhegorsk (Karhumäki) (while elsewhere the focus would be on defence). Clearly the idea was based on the previously mentioned plan made in early April. Thus Meretskov was suggesting to Stalin in vain that the strengthening of the front should take place in the Medvezhegorsk direction.

Meretskov's memoirs give the impression that it was not until this point that he was told of the change that moved the emphasis on the Karelian Front to the south, against the Finns. Furthermore, the front was only to support the operation on the Karelian Isthmus, where the attack would begin on 10 June, to be followed by another on Svir two weeks later. A reason for this order of importance was that the roads in Olonets were expected to recover from the frost later than those on the Isthmus, so that transportation of the assault troops would be completed later. Roads, railways and water transport could be used more effectively on the Isthmus, where a powerful attack was expected to break the Finns' defensive will and remove the Finnish army from Eastern Karelia, so that it would be possible to advance to Olonets with a relatively smaller body of troops. If the Germans moved troops from the north to assist the Finns, an attack would have to be commenced in the north as well - mainly from the directions of Kantalahti and Kestenga.⁹³

The attack plan for the Leningrad Front was almost completed - Govorov's directive had already been completed on 3 May - but the decision for the Karelian Front was not made until 11 June. Meretskov was still presenting his plans in Moscow when 20 shots were fired with 224 cannons to celebrate the capture of Terijoki, the "capital" of Finland during the Winter War. Now, despite the opposition of the General Staff, Stalin promised him one more army corps (the 94th Army Corps) to continue the attack after the breakthrough in the Svir Area.

Despite the approval Stalin gave to the attack to be carried out on both sides of Lake Ladoga, it is evident that he was still keeping a close eye on the situation in Lapland in particular. Meretskov received repeated orders (in March, May and June) not to weaken the northern flank of the front that was facing the Germans. The readiness of the armies there would have to be maintained and the Germans must be attacked if they tried to move their troops southwards. As late as 18 June, when the attack on Svir was beginning, Stalin gave a direct order to increase activity in the direction of Rukajärvi (Rugozero) as well. This was a deviation from the plan. On

20 June Meretskov ordered the 32nd Army to take the 27th Division into action as well.⁹⁴

Concealment and surprise

The most puzzling of the ifs and buts in the Finnish discussion about the events of summer 1944 have been concerned with whether the Finns expected a mass attack on the Isthmus and why troops were not moved from East Karelia to the Isthmus in readiness for this. In all likelihood it would not have been possible to gain any very early warning of the plan, definitely not in March or April. The transportation of the attack troops actually commenced quite late, the artillery being brought to the Isthmus mostly on 25th May – 3rd June, and the three army corps on 5-7th June – some by rail and most by sea.⁹⁵

Time table of the preparations in the Karelian Isthmus

| | Order | In effect |
|--|---------------|-----------------|
| Deception plan | 20.4. | |
| Demonstrative landing via Ladoga | 10.6. | 11.6.) |
| Informing the commanders | 3.5 and 13.5. | |
| Battle reconnaissance | 28.5. | 6.6. |
| Aerial photographs | | 30.5.,5.-8.6 |
| Gathering the forces | 28.5. | |
| Arrival of the 3rd Artillery Corps | – | 10.5.- |
| 98. and 108.Corps to be kept behind the lines | 3.5. | |
| 97.Corps by rail | | 4.-8.6. |
| 30. Guards Corps and 109.Corps over the sea | | 4.-8.6. |
| 110. Corps included | 1.6. | |
| Regrouping of the supporting artillery | 28.5. | - 3.6. |
| Bringing the artillery of infantry divisions | 28.5. | 2.-5.6. |
| Bringing the artillery of the regiments | 28.5. | 5.-8.6. |
| Bringing the rear troops | 28.5. | 5.-8.6. |
| Moving into 2nd line | 3.6. | --8.6. |
| Moving into starting positions | 3.6. | [9.6.] |
| Readiness for landing on the southern coast of Isthmus (224.D) | 3.6. | |
| Readiness for transporting a division by sea | 23.5. | (30.5.) |
| Air support | | |
| Bomber divisions | ..., 6.6. | 4-5.6.,9.-10.6. |
| Sturmoviks | 5.6. | 14.6. |

When the decision to attack had been made in principle - in late April -, the Soviet army also began a determined deception campaign to give the impression that the attack would be directed towards Petsamo. On 20 April the Stavka instructed the Karelian Front to spread misinformation that an attack on Petsamo and Kirkenes (including a landing at Berlevåg) was being prepared. Similar misinformation concerning the Baltic region was also put about on 20 April.⁹⁶

Thus it may be said that it would have been possible for the Finns to detect the beginning of an attack early enough to change their sporting gear for fighting gear – as it is said that they were holding sports competitions at the time when the attack began – but no advance warning could have been obtained that would have enabled the Finnish army to have shifted the emphasis of its deployment decisively to the Isthmus.

The objectives of the offensive

The minimum goal of the mass attacks on the Isthmus and in Svir can be deduced from the fact that the defined annual objective of the Soviet military command for the year 1944 was to repel the enemy forces from Soviet territory. In Finland's case this meant that the Soviet Union could stop at the 1940 borders while saving face. Furthermore, the goal was not, at least in military documents, to incorporate Finland into the Soviet Union. The objective was to ensure the Red Navy of free passage out of the Gulf of Finland and enable the Red Army to attack the Germans' flank in the north.

According to the Soviet literature, the aim of the Leningrad Front was to destroy the main Finnish forces with an attack in the general direction of Valkeasaari - Viipuri - Lappeenranta and to create a "real threat" directed at the most important population centres of southern Finland from the north-western and western sides of Viipuri. The task of the Svir - Petrozavodsk operation was to carry out its main attack roughly parallel to the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga, disperse the main forces of the Finnish Aunus (Olonets) group, capture South Karelia (which probably meant the parts of Karelia around Lake Ladoga) and create preconditions for a later attack on the inner parts of Finland. The wording was "expose to an attack" and "create a threat". These terms as used in the literature had probably been inspected by the post-war political censorship,

but it is nevertheless likely that they appeared in the original text as well. This claim is supported by the fact that the battle report of the Karelian Front, drawn up in 1944, contains a similar expression: the offensive was intended to advance to the line Tiiksjärvi - Ilomantsi - Värtsilä - Sortavala and "create preconditions for expanding the attack into the inner parts of Finland".

The words "create preconditions" show that the Soviet leadership expected to bring Finland under control without any serious resistance, at least in the latter stages. It is understandable that Stalin did not want to use too large a proportion of his forces to defeat Finland, as they were desperately needed elsewhere. He is reported to have said to Meretskov in June that the Finns would give up when the troops of the Karelian Front arrived at Loimola, and he undoubtedly believed that Finland's defence and political resistance would collapse once its army had been crushed in the field.⁹⁷

By 30 May 1944 the operative thoughts of the Soviet supreme command had turned to the "Map relating to plan No. 4081", a large map drawn up by the General Staff in its final form, to a scale of 1:1 million, on which the goals of all the operations planned to take place (in phases) in European Russia in 1944 were marked. On this map the goal of the Leningrad Front was to advance to the line Kotka - Kouvola, while that of the Karelian Front was the line Tiiksjärvi - Ilomantsi - Sortavala, and from there by the shortest route to the level of Värtsilä-Parikkala.

The line defined by the River Kymi was naturally a carefully considered goal. Since it was a waterway, it was a natural place to stop and assume a defensive position if needed. If the line were reached, the Finns' defence line built in 1940-1944, which was referred to in 1944 as Suomen salpa (i.e. the Bolt of Finland) or Salpa line (i.e. the Bolt Line), would also have been broken and its southern part would be in the hands of the Soviet troops. The River Kymi - as we have seen - was also considered as a possible line of defence for the Germans if Finland would leave the war.

There were three intermediate lines to be achieved in both directions. On the Isthmus the Finns' front position (past Raivola) was to be broken first up to the former Mannerheim-line in the western part of the Isthmus, followed by an advance to the area north of Viipuri and Heinjoki, and then to the level of Virolahti-Imatra, and after that through the Salpa line all the way to the River Kymi. In the same way the 7th Army was to break the Finnish front position in Olonets,



Map 12. The idea of retaking Viipuri in June 1944

pass the town of the same name and then advance to the line Pitkäranta-Petrozavodsk. The task of the 32nd Army, advancing from Medvezhegorsk was far more modest (but so was its strength).

The intermediate border between the Karelian and Leningrad fronts was on the Stavka's orders defined to pass along the southern and western shores of Lake Ladoga and then to the north of a line Tervus - Elisenvaara - Tainionkoski - Lappeenranta - Lahti. It is significant that nothing was planned for the area north of Salpausselkä (the lake district of Finland). The importance of covering the right flank of the main attack direction was recalled at least by the Viipuri phase, for the Winter War at the latest had drawn the attention of the Soviet leadership to the problems related to this lake area as combat terrain.

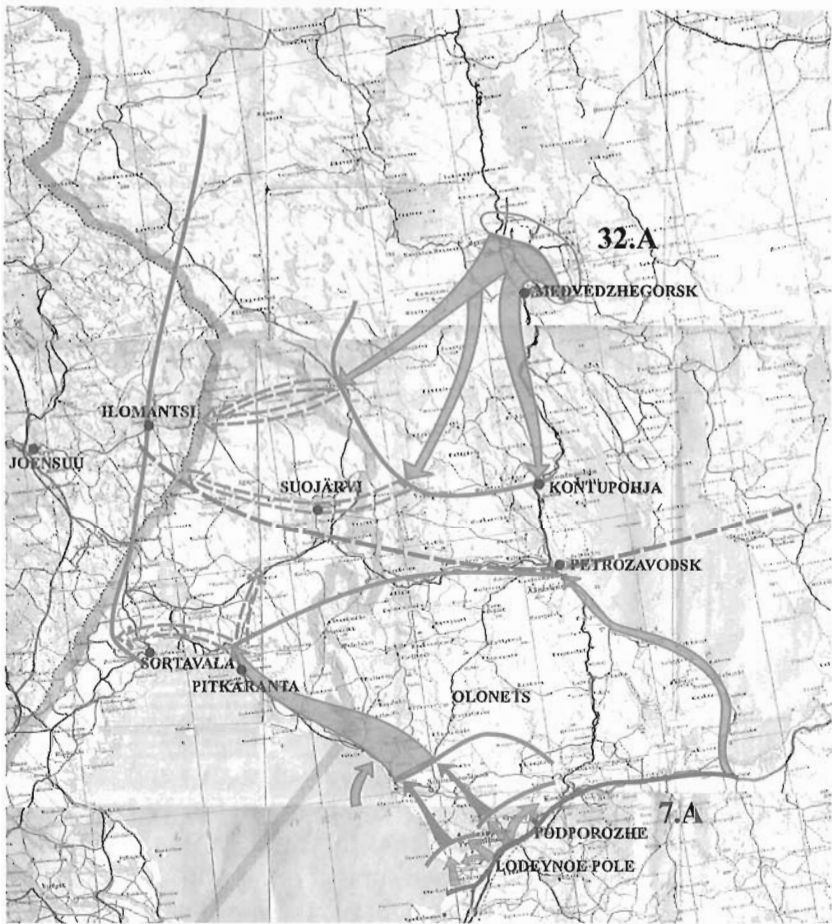
The goal of the main force of the strike (*Map 12*) on the Leningrad Front (the 21st Army) was to capture Viipuri, because this intersection of roads and railways was estimated to be central to the Finnish defences. Viipuri had to be reached on 18-20 June. After crossing the Mannerheim Line, the 23rd Army fighting in the eastern part of the Isthmus was to concentrate a significant part of its forces on its left flank, towards Viipuri. The 21st Army had in its ranks in the beginning 9 divisions which were supported by 12 artillery brigades, 14 artillery regiments, 5 tank regiments and 3 assault gun regiments, and the 23rd Army had 6 divisions, which were supported by one artillery brigade, 3 artillery regiments, one tank regiment and one assault gun regiment. In the next phase three more divisions and more artillery and tanks were to be given to the 23rd Army.⁹⁸

The mass attack begins

The first phase of the attack took place very much at the planned speed, but the Finnish army could not be defeated and its defences had not fallen at once. The situation had to be re-evaluated. As early as 17 June the 23rd Army received an order to advance towards Viipuri on the western bank of the River Vuoksi, with emphasis on the left flank. It would have to attack to the village Repola and advance around Viipuri on the northern side, just as at the end of the Winter War. Immediately before the capture of Viipuri, in the early morning of 20 June, the war council of the Leningrad Front gave the 21st Army the task of advancing from the area Kämärä hovi – Säiniö – Sommee to the line Kavantsaari-Juustila-Tienhaara by 21 June and the 23rd Army orders to advance at the same time from the Kyläpaakkola-Heinjoki area towards north-west to the line Kuukauppi-Kavantsaari station.⁹⁹

We are told that Stalin paid special attention to the Finnish front on 18-19 June. The attack from Svir was ordered to begin on 20/21 June, five days earlier than originally planned (*Map 13*). The Svir attack would contain the Finnish troops in Eastern Karelia and ensure that they would not reach the Käkisalme area and penetrate to the flank of the Soviet troops beyond Viipuri. On 18 June Stalin told Meretskov that he expected that the right flank and centre of the front would not be weakened, and the later, in turn, gave an order to the Ladoga naval detachment on 18 June 1944 for a landing in the Finnish rear.¹⁰⁰

The mass attack on the Isthmus did not end after the capture of Viipuri, either, and the supreme command of the Red Army decided to continue the attack. On 21 June it moved its objective (as defined in an earlier general order) to the line of River Kymi. During the first phase, the troops had to force their way to the level of Virojoki - Lappeenranta - Imatra in one week and in the direction of Elisenvaara - Käkisalmi on the north side of the Vuoksi, in order to clear the north-eastern part of the Isthmus. Then the main forces would advance to the west and north-west to reach the level of Kotka - Kouvola. The northern flank had to be secured in the direction of Lappeenranta. As the front line was expected to lengthen considerably, a new army



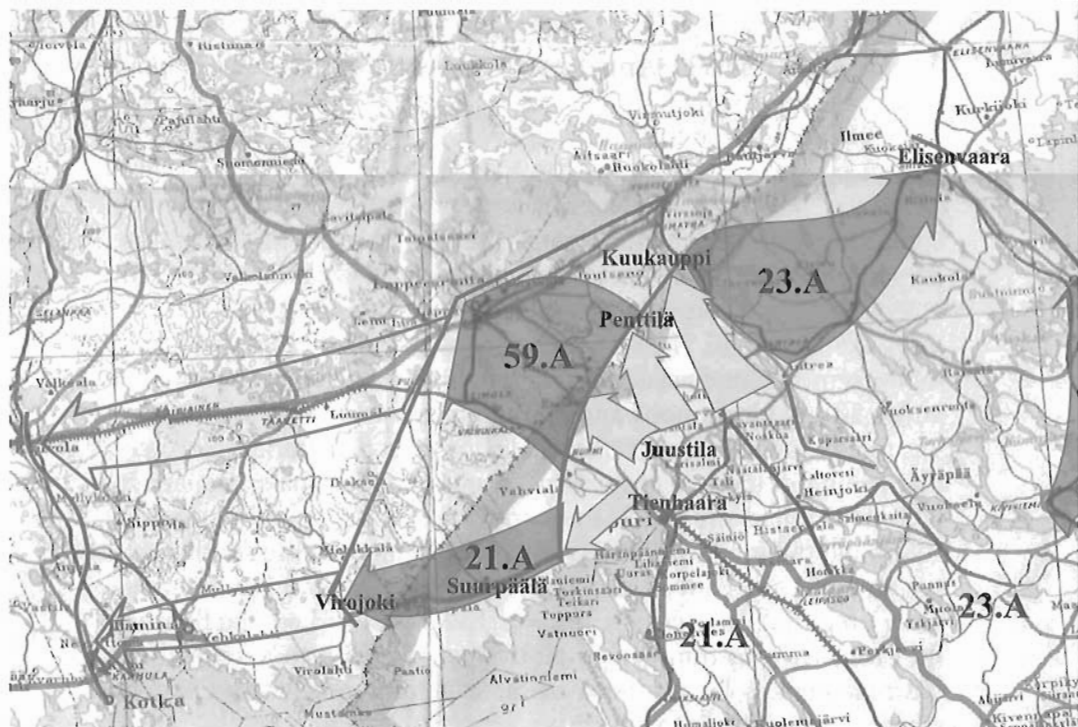
Map 13. The idea of the Svir – Sortavala operation in June 1944

headquarters (the 59th Army) was made available to the Leningrad Front.

The decision of the war council of the Leningrad Front on 21 June calculated that five army corps should reach the level Nisalahti - Lainela - Nuijamaa - Enso by 24 June and that the attack would be continued to Imatra, Lappeenranta and Suurpäälä with eight army corps from three armies, and also north-west to Hiitola and, with a separate army corps, in the direction of Käkisalmi, crossing the Vuoksi at Kiviniemi. The war council considered it necessary to have reinforcements, and asked for two army corps and special troops, 30 tanks, 30 assault cannons and enough trucks to service the increasing maintenance connections. Stalin promised material reinforcements but not the two army corps. The front would have to manage with what it had already. At the same time (on 22 June) the supreme command retained the 94th Army Corps located on the south-eastern side of Lake Ladoga as a reserve for the Karelian Front, apparently preparing to use it on the west side of Lake Ladoga. Because the Finns were withdrawing their troops from Eastern Karelia, there did not seem to be any need to direct reinforcements to Olonets, where it was difficult to advance.

The order given to the 21st Army (*Map 14*) required the creation of a bridgehead immediately on 21 June and continuation of the attack westwards from Viipuri. The army took Lappeenranta as its main direction, and the western direction along the coastal road to Helsinki seems to have been a minor one. The objectives of the three army corps destined to continue the attack were defined on 22 June as follows: Närvi for the 109th Army Corps, Nuijamaa for the 97th Army Corps and Lappeenranta for the 108th Army Corps. The 23rd Army was now supposed to attack Antrea in the direction of Vuoksi and then proceed through Kavantsaari to the north-west. In order to reach Antrea, the army sought to achieve the line of the road on the eastern side of the Vuoksi.

By the end of June the Red Army on the Isthmus had given up trying to cross the Saimaa canal at Viipuri and the goal was now to try to cross it further north. An even larger concentration was now located at Tali-Ihantala, and another wedge of the attack was concentrated further south for the crossing of Viipuri Bay. The attempt of the 23rd Army at crossing a destroyed bridge at Kiviniemi ended on 26 June, after which the army corps in the area was concentrated at Vuosalmi to attempt another crossing.¹⁰¹



Map 14. The idea of continuing the attack to the River Kymi in June 1944

The changing ideas in July 1944

Once the advance had slowed down, the higher headquarters were forced to send more troops to the Isthmus. Six divisions were withdrawn from the Isthmus on 5-7 July and another six on 14-15 July. The first withdrawal did not actually mean the end of the attack, but merely a rotation. During the period 15 June – 4 July, while the attack was still going on, five divisions had been added to the armies in the Isthmus, and four more divisions had already been brought to the area by 8-9 July, when the Leningrad Front was re-organizing its attack. In June-July the troops there were strengthened by the arrival of the 94th Army Corps (three divisions) from the Stavka's reserves and the 43rd Corps headquarters brought in from the Leningrad Front south of the Gulf of Finland, as well as four divisions. The area of operation of the 59th Army headquarters, which had been brought to the Isthmus, had to be changed, and it was this body of troops that received the task of crossing Viipuri Bay. The map exercise it had

played out on 25-27 June had been directed at the Lappeenranta area, but the assignment it received on 2 July required the capture of islands of Gulf of Viipuri, then the area Tervajoki – Peltola - Nisalahti, and finally to Tienhaara (to the west of Viipuri). Fierce battles were fought over the islands on 4-5 July.

On 6 July the command at the front ordered the Baltic Fleet to prepare for a landing of two divisions on 12 July on the western bank of Viipuri Bay and for the transfer of a third division across the bay a few days later. The crossing began on 9 July, but was held up by the Finnish resistance. As late as 8 July the 21st Army fighting in Ihantala received an order to begin a new attack on 10 July. The army's goal had been set at the level of Antrea- Kananaja-Tienhaara, more modestly than before, but the achieving of this line would have provided better conditions for continuing the attack than the front formed during the battle.

During the same phase the 23rd Army was diverted to Vuosalmi. The emphasis defined earlier by the front - first to north and north-west and then to the north-east - had shifted at least temporarily to the area east of the River Vuoksi. The crossing of the Vuoksi and establishing of a bridgehead took place on 9 July, after two weeks of battles following the dispatch of the 115th Army Corps to the area from the south.

The first half of July was a decisive culmination phase for the attack on the Isthmus. The heavy losses suffered by the Red Army in Ihantala, Viipuri Bay and Vuosalmi showed that immediate results were not to be expected. The losses were at their greatest on 27 June – 3 July, a total of 19 000 men, 18 000 men in the Tali-Ihantala area, 900 men in that of Vuosalmi and approximately 250 men in Viipuri Bay, and the situation did not improve during the following week, as the losses of the Red Army on 4-10 July amounted to 14 800 men, 8 700 in the Vuosalmi area, 3 900 in that of Ihantala and 2 200 in Viipuri Bay.

The forces were now too exhausted to fight, and on 9 July the headquarters of the 21st Army received an order to give up the planned attack for the time being. A separate order for its recommencement would be issued later. A similar order was sent to the 59th Army in Viipuri Bay on 10 July, to stop the landing for the moment and defend the islands in the bay.¹⁰²

After the first week of July the Stavka's faith in the abilities of the commander of the Leningrad Front, L. Govorov, to continue the

attack faded rapidly. Attacks in various directions were cancelled, and in the early hours of 12 July Lieutenant General Gryzlov wrote in a memo that Marshal Govorov had received at midnight on 11 July "a personal order from Comrade Stalin during the session of the Stavka to assume the defensive on the Isthmus". It appears that Govorov had tried even in Moscow to offer explanations for his desire to continue the attack, but the answer had been a clear "no". A month was enough.

Govorov was allowed to strengthen the Vuosalmi bridgehead, however, to expand the bridgehead in Vuosalmi area, and the 6th Army Corps, which had previously been sent to the north-west, was brought back to the Äyräpää area on 10-14 July. On 13 July Govorov gave an order to the 23rd Army to destroy the Finnish formations fighting to the south and west of Myllyoja, bring (13 – 14th July) another corps (6th) over Vuoksi river and begin there a general attack in the morning of 15th July and to advance to a line on Vuoksi from Noisniemi to the mouth of Rapaoja stream and then Rapaoja – Kivijärvi – Hernemaa – Korpilahti – Salo-Kekkelä. In the next phase an area to the line Räisälä – Inkilä – Antrea should be seized. For this operation six divisions, four artillery brigades, three artillery regiments, four anti tank artillery regiments, one mortar brigade, two rocket launcher regiments, three tank regiments and three assault gun regiments were available.

On the other hand, the 59th Army, preparing for crossing of the Gulf of Viipuri, was on 13 July ordered to abandon its offensive and prepare for another one. This army included three divisions, one artillery brigade, one artillery regiment, one anti tank brigade, one mortar brigade and one tank battalion. Even the 21st Army was ordered to stand down and to settle "temporarily" down to defend the lines. It still had 12 divisions, nine artillery brigades, three artillery regiments, one anti tank regiment, four mortar regiments, one battalion of rocket launchers, three heavy artillery battalions, three tank regiments and two assault gun regiments. The front staff had in reserve one more infantry corps in the Karelian Isthmus.

When the new attack began on 14 July in Vuosalmi area, an order was given to shift the border between the 21st and the 23rd Armies eastwards so that almost the entire strength of the 23rd Army was in the Vuosalmi area. Fortification troops remained at the fronts in Taipale and Suvanto. So the battles in that area continued for two three days, partly with fresh troops. The losses of the Red Army on

the Isthmus on 11-17 July were a further 8 200 men, of whom 6 400 fell in the Vuosalmi area, but the situation calmed down after that. The 23rd Army grouped for defence on 16 July.¹⁰³

The attack dies down

In summer 1944 the Red Army used a total of 54 divisions, 11 infantry brigades and 7 fortification areas on the Finnish front, i.e. 72 all-arms formations. Theoretically the number was much greater than that at the end of the Winter War, but since the size of a division had decreased throughout the Continuation War, the overall strength of the Soviet troops at the start of the attack - 605 000 men - was actually less than the one million men in action there in February 1940. On the other hand, the firepower of the infantry was now on a completely new level compared with the Winter War.

It is possible to follow the weakening of the attack force and the resulting defeats from the war journals and the daily reports of the armies, army corps and divisions that fought on the Finnish front. The information has not been verified, of course, but it undoubtedly points in the right direction. The Red Army lost approximately 25 000 men on the Isthmus in early July, during the battles of Tali - Ihantala and Vuosalmi, i.e. the strength of three divisions and the remaining strength of a fourth division. Clear indications of the end of the mass attack were the withdrawals of troops from the front.

The objective of the Karelian Front was still far from having been achieved, and the attempt was continued in that direction. On 12 July, after reaching the Finns' U position, Meretskov ordered the 7th Army to reach the line Sortavala - Matkaselkä on 25 July and the 32nd Army to be at the line Koitere - Ilomantsi - Tuupovaara on 20 July. The next day, 13 July, his appetite grew, and he demanded that the Matkaselkä - Sortavala line should be reached by 20 July and the Ilomantsi - Korpiselkä line by 16 July. The 37th Guards Corps was to speed up the pursuit of the Finns, so that they would not have time to settle down in a temporary position. The idea was that the 32nd Army would turn its attack towards Värtsilä from Korpiselkä and from there to the south, to the rear of the Finnish grouping in Sortavala. While carrying out this idea, two Soviet divisions ended up by being encircled in Ilomantsi.

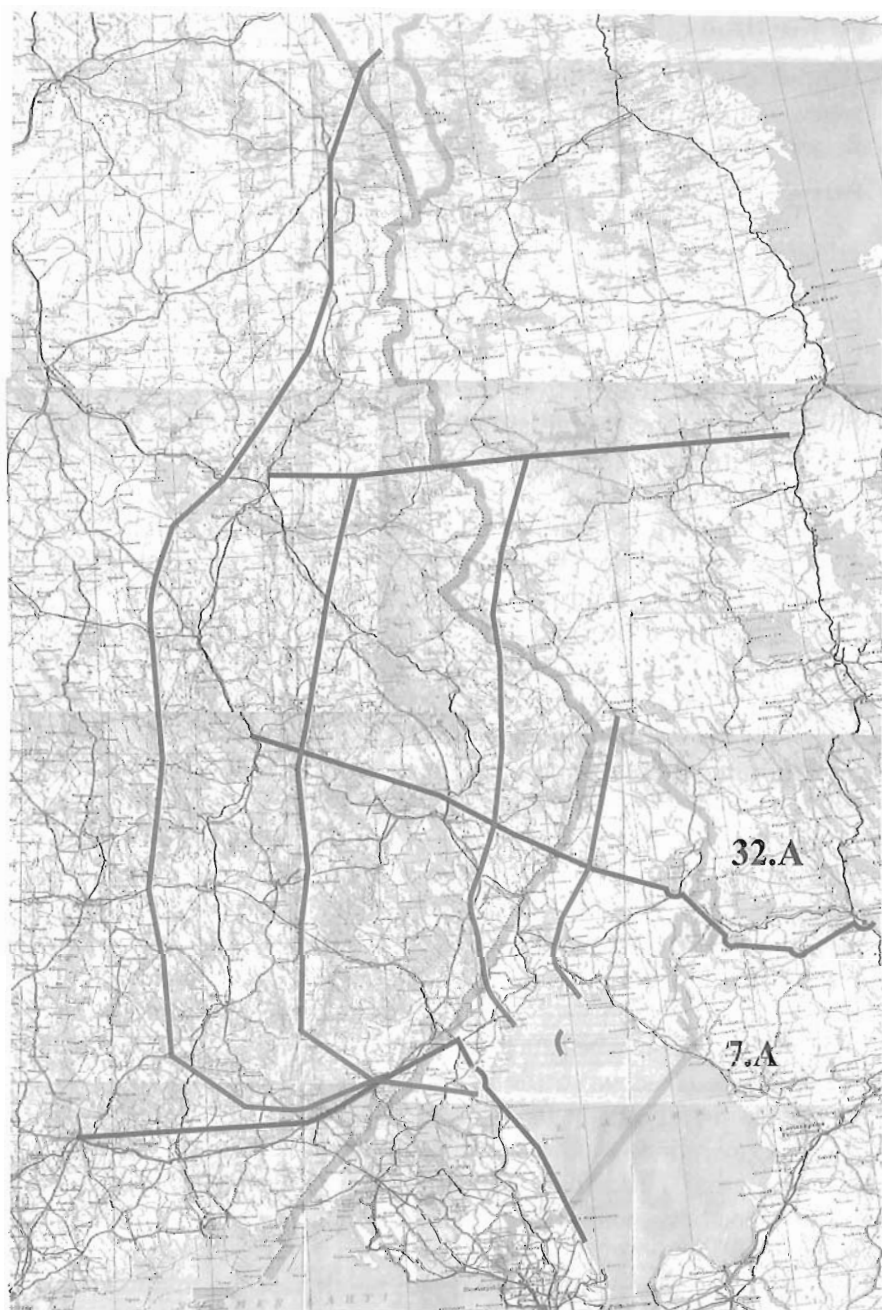
There was an attempt to speed up the attack by means of an order issued on 13 July, which insisted that the 127th Light Army

Corps that had been attached to the 7th Army from the front reserve should capture Matkaselkä on 18-19 July. The Finns fended off these attempts with the battles that culminated in Nietjärvi, for example. Here the Karelian Front defined much more modest objectives that were limited to the level Uuksujärvi - Kitelä. The attack continued until 30 July, but by that time all the forces that the 7th Army could spare had to be sent in the direction of Ilomantsi to stabilize the Soviet front.

In the operative calculations of the Karelian Front the duration of the operation was to have been 35-45 days,¹⁰⁴ and the operation really did last 45 days. It is evident that logistics had not been reserved for any longer operation. In the Karelian front staff a new operative idea was put on the paper on 10 July for an operation through the area of the Great Finnish lakes. According to this calculation (*Map 15*), objectives to the west of Mikkeli would have been reached by 28 August, in another seven weeks.¹⁰⁵

It must be remembered that the primary question was not Finland's future position as a state, but the elimination of the Finnish army from the war so that the Red Army's forces could be concentrated against the Germans in Belorussia and in Lapland. When the situation could not be resolved, the Soviet high command abandoned their Finnish front to manage as well as it could, without sending it any further reinforcements and withdrawing from it in mid-July and early August the troops that were needed to broaden the main attack. The attack ended on 15 July on the Isthmus, on 4 August in the Lake Ladoga area and a few days later in Ilomantsi. The orders which took the guards corps and an important part of artillery away from the Karelian front were given on 1.-2.8.

The plans made by Karelian front were as yet not taken into consideration by the General Staff, because not enough attention had been given to crushing the Finns in the Rugozero (Rukajärvi) – Andronova Gora direction and to the stabilization of the Ilomantsi direction. Then, following the orders of the high command given on 10 August, the troops of the Karelian Front that had participated in the main attack were grouped for defence along the line Paatene - Kudom Guba – Kuolismaa - Pitkäranta. This was confirmed by an order of Stavka on 29 August, just two days after some arrangements had been made in the staff of the Karelian front, including the sack- ing of the chief of staff and the chief of operation department.¹⁰⁶



Map 15. The idea of continuing the attack westwards from Pitkäranta – Ilomantsi area in July 1944

At the time of the armistice

Finnish devotees of military history have contemplated at length whether the Finnish troops in August 1944 would have been sufficient for a counter-attack to push the Soviet forces further away, perhaps even to the 1939 borders.

Despite the losses it had suffered, the Red Army was not powerless on the Isthmus. There were 150 000 men there from mid-July onwards, and 240 000 men along the eastern border of Finland. The Soviet divisions that had been worn down by the attacks on the Isthmus - 18 divisions remained in addition to the three fortification areas - were moved away from the front to rest and to be replenished during July.¹⁰⁷ The overall strength of the Finns and the Germans exceeded the Soviet strength along Finland's borders, but in all likelihood the Red Army had more firepower.

Under no circumstances did the Red Army let itself believe that the threat coming from the Finnish direction was negligible. An extensive order to defend was given to the troops on the Isthmus in mid-August, and fortification work was carefully supervised. On 23 August the 115th Army Corps in Vuoksi received an order to prepare for a counter-attack, and they were preparing to counter a surprise attack on the north-eastern shore of Lake Ladoga as well. The 7th Army located there was prepared in late August to fend off a landing on the coast between Pitkäranta and Svir.¹⁰⁸ Even though the orders do not reveal the actual readiness of the troops, it can be said that it would not have been easy for the Finns to achieve any element of surprise.

Just before the agreed moment of armistice the Red Army made preparations for a situation where the Finns had ceased hostilities but there was no armistice according to the Soviet government. Late at night on 4 September the war council of the Leningrad Front sent an operative directive to the commanders of the armies operating in the Finnish direction (the 23rd, the 21st and 59th Armies) stating that operations on the Isthmus would not be stopped without a separate order. The armies would continue the determined defence of their positions, and prepare to move onto the attack if the Finns started withdrawing.

As soon as the Finns withdrew they had to be followed with vanguards prepared for the task (5 September). The main forces of the three armies mentioned above were to move onto the attack.

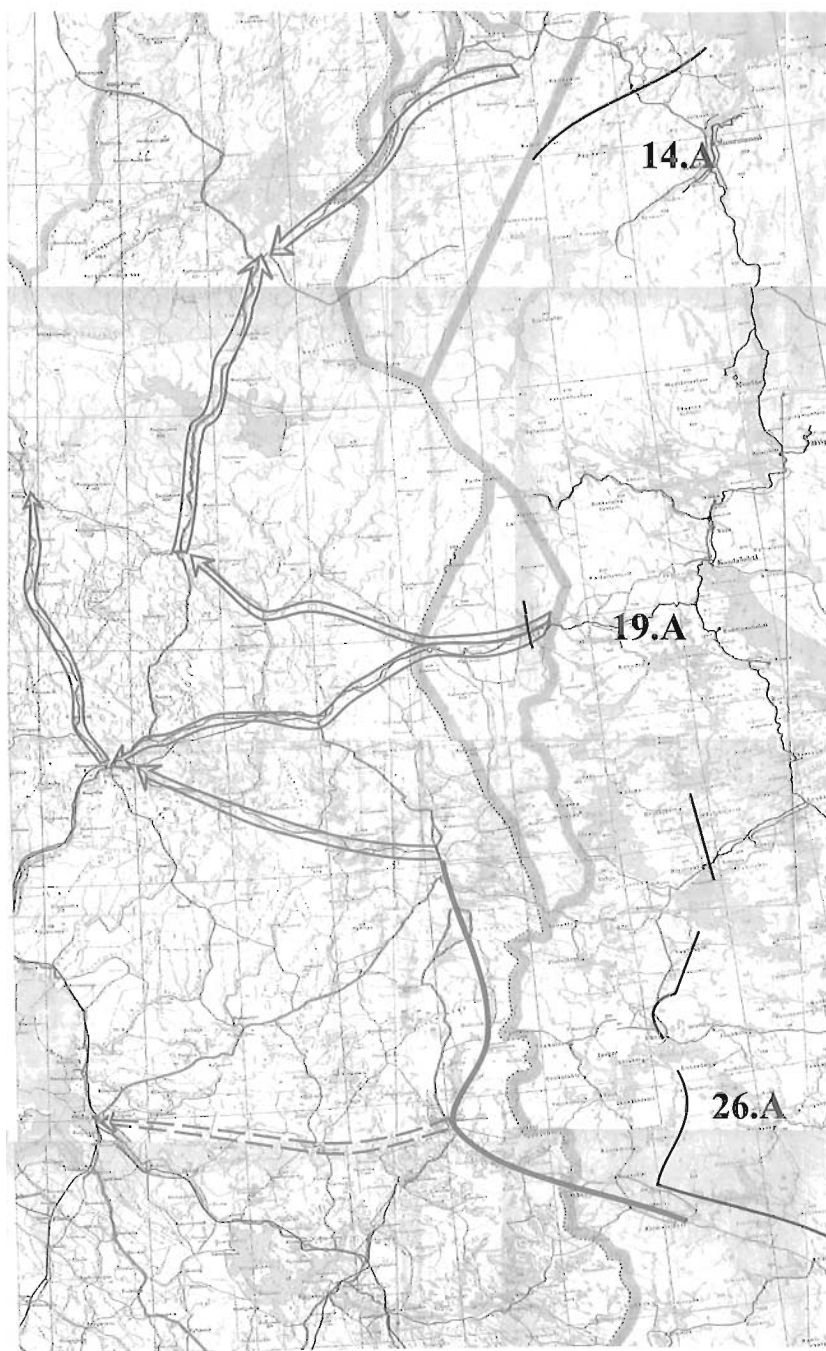
The 23rd Army would attack with two army corps in the directions of Kiviniemi, Käkisalmi, Elisenvaara and Vuosalmi and then advance to the 1940 border along the line Tervajärvi - Vuoksi. Until the completion of the defences on the border, the 17th Fortification Area had to be left along the line Taipaleenjoki - Suvantojärvi - Vuoksi and one infantry division had to be present to defend the bridgehead at Vuoksi (i.e. Vuosalmi).

The 21st Army was to attack with the strength of three army corps in the directions of Joutseno - Lappeenranta, the Viipuri - Simola railway and Tienhaara - Säkkijärvi - Salojärvi, and to advance to the 1940 state border along the line Enso (excl.) - the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland (including the islands in the area of Pajsaari). Each army corps had to leave one division to defend the current front area until the border defences were complete. Their task was to secure the main direction of the front (from the left) Repola - Tali - Viipuri.

The vanguards of the 59th Army were to capture Tervajoki, Nisalahti and Vilajoki and hold them until the 21st Army arrived. The main forces of the 59th army would be grouped (under a separate order) in the area south of Viipuri to prepare to move along the shore on the Gulf of Finland, following the 21st Army. One division and two machinegun -- artillery battalions (subordinated to the army corps, but belonging to the fortification troops) would be left to defend the islands in Viipuri Bay.

On arriving at the state border, the troops were to organize their defence, and the border should not be crossed until a separate order was given. No more troops would be available on the Finnish front and ahead of them was the "Bolt Line", which was known to be strong. The leaving of troops at existing defence lines suggests that Marshal Govorov was not quite convinced of the success of the attack if the Finns were to show some activity. (In practice, the Finnish decision-makers had not even thought of any action under the circumstances, although the headquarters had considered attacking the flank and rear of the Soviet troops across the Vuoksi from the Eastern Isthmus.)

The solution had in principle to be ready by the morning of 5 September 1944, but the situation had changed by then.¹⁰⁹ The Soviet leadership considered that it had received the full response that it required from Finland and the armistice was effective. The purpose of the directive issued on 4 September had actually been to act as a



Map 16. *The idea of occupying Northern Finland in September 1944*

temporary solution and replace the armistice and peace agreement. The Soviets expected the Finns to withdraw to the level of the Treaty of Moscow in any case.

The Finns had thought in spring 1944 that the Soviet Union was not interested in attacking, and that Finland could remain on the sidelines, standing "at ease" and waiting for peace (in which case the word of the western nations might have carried more weight than in the presence of hostilities). The decision made by Govorov on 4 September suggests that a similar thought of standing "at ease" had been in his mind as well, although the act of moving the 59th Army to the second echelon showed that he was nevertheless prepared to advance across state borders. It is very possible that this operation plan would have been the actual idea of an offensive plan, should one been needed in September 1944.

The emphasis in the planning of the Karelian front at the end of August 1944 shifted to the north, and plans for occupying Lapland (*Map 16*) and attacking through Petsamo to Norway¹¹⁰ were in process when the hostilities ceased on 5 September 1944.

Notes

- ⁸⁶ S.M. Shtemenko, *Generalnyj shtab v gody vojny 1-2*. Moskva 1989; K.A. Meretskov, *Na sluzhbe narodu*. Moskva 1984. Pertti Alanen, *Neuvostoliiton suurhyökkäys Suomeen kesällä 1944, passim*; Ohto Manninen, *Suomi toisessa maailmansodassa* (1987).
- ⁸⁷ Voronov's letter 2.2.1944 to Stalin, RGASPI Fond. 71 opis 2 delo 13318. Stavka directive 19.2.1944 (p.49).
- ⁸⁸ Meretskov p. 363, 369, Shtemenko p. 486-7. TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 1541 p. 75-86. Stavka directive 23.3.1944 (p. 61).
- ⁸⁹ TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 1541, p. 26-70.
- ⁹⁰ Operative plans of the 7. Army, TsAMO Fond 214 opis 1437 delo 1482 p. 57.
- ⁹¹ Kuznetsov c. 31.3.1944 to Tributs, RGASPI Fond 71 opis 25 del 10571-10572; Stavka directives 31.3.1944 to Northern fleet and Baltic fleet (p. 64, 66).
- ⁹² Shtemenko p. 175, 200, 489. Stavka directives 18.4. (p. 75), 19.4.1944 (p.77); Generalnyi shtab 27.7. 1944 (p. 169).
- ⁹³ Memos of Meretskov 31.5.1944, RGASPI Fond 71 opis 25 del 12171, 12179. Meretskov p. 371-2, Shtemenko p. 489-490. The relation of the Karelian front staff on Svir-Sortavala operation, TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 3050 p. 12.
- ⁹⁴ *Bitva za Leningrad* p. 428, Meretskov p. 372-374. Shtemenko p.492-494. TSA-MO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 1340 p. 38. Meretskov's proposal 31.5. 1944 to Stalin, Operative papers of the commander of the Karelian front F. 214 opis 1437 delo 1340 p. 1. – The orders to transport additional troops for Karelian front were given 1.6.-5.6. 1944 (Generalnyi shtab p. 236, 240, 242, 247). – Another army

- corps (110.) was added to the Leningrad front, too, 1.6.1944 (Generalnyi shtab p. 235). - See the directive of Generalnyi shtab of 18.6.1941 (p. 259) pointing out that the northern flank and the centre of the front were not to be weakened any more.
- ⁹⁵ Bitva za Leningrad 1941-1944. Moskva 1964, p. 443. The first units of the 3. Leningrad Artillery Corps arrived already 10.-11.5. TsAMO Fond 9604 opis 1 delo 45 p. 205-206. Govorov's instructions 3.5. and 13.5.1944, RGASPI Fond 71 opis 25 delo 13230.
- ⁹⁶ Shtemenko p. 489. Generalnyi shtab 20.4.1944 (p. 152).
- ⁹⁷ Istorija Ordena Lenina Leningradskogo voennogo okruga, 3.p. Moskva 1988, p. 298-299. Shtemenko p. 489. The relation of the Karelian front staff on Svir-Sortavala operation, TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 3050 p. 11-12. Karelskii front p. 189.
- ⁹⁸ TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 3891 p. 193-201. Operative orders 3.6. (nr 64), 10.6. (nr 67) and 12.6.1944 (nr 68), TsAMO Fond 217 opis 1221 delo 3994. The map of 30.5.1944, RGASPI Fond 71 opis 25 delo 17742. - Since the dimensioning of the tasks assigned to the fronts followed the "normal pattern", the targets for the Karelian Front could not be located any further away. In the operative design of the mass attack on Belorussia planned for June-July, each front was calculated to advance 250 km. According to the Stavka map of late May, the 1st Baltic Front was to advance first to the Isthmus and then to Jelgava (and Riga) and on to Königsberg (Kaliningrad), the 3rd Belorussian Front to Grodno, the 2nd Belorussian Front to Bialystok and then to Allenstein (Olsztyn) in East Prussia, the 1st Belorussian Front first to Brest and then to Warsaw, and the 1st Ukrainian Front initially to Lvov and then to Tomaszów Mazowieck and Cracow.
- ⁹⁹ The operative directives of Leningrad front 17.6. (nr 69-70) and 20.6.1944 (nr. 073). TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 3944 p. 140-152. Bitva za Leningrad p. 429-430.
- ¹⁰⁰ Shtemenko p. 494, Meretskov's order 18.6. 1944, TsAMO F.214 o. 1437 d. 1340 p. 28.
- ¹⁰¹ Bitva za Leningrad p. 473-475. Stavka directives of 21.6. (at 02.15) and 22.6. (at 02.00) and the memo of Leningrad front 21.6. 1944 (at 19.30), Stavka 1944 p. 97-98, 286. The War Diary of the 21. Army on 21.6. 1944, TsAMO F. 375 opis 6675 delo 383.
- ¹⁰² See the Order of Battle 1941-1944. The War Diary of the 21. Army on 21-30.6., 8.7.1944, TsAMO Fond 375 opis 6675 delo 388. The War Diary of the 59. Army for June 1944, TsAMO F. 416 opis 10437 delo 788. Generalnyi shtab 26.6.1944 (p. 265). Bitva za Leningrad p. 478-484.
- ¹⁰³ TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 3891, p. 247-254, 263-267, delo 4840 (Oper. reports of the Leningrad front for July 1944). Manninen, Taistelu paljasti ..., Bitva za Leningrad p. 484. The War Diary of the 59. Army 10-11.7.1944, TsAMO Fond 416 opis 10437 delo 790. The War Diary of the 21. Army 9.7. 1944, TsAMO Fond 375 opis 6675 delo 388., TsAMO Fond 217 opis 1221 delo 4840. Memo 12.7.1944, RGASPI Fond 71 opis 25 delo 9492. Ohto Manninen, Taistelu paljasti hyök-kääjän voimat kesällä 1944, Sotilas aikakauslehti 9/1991 p. 640-644, Ari Raunio-

- Ohto Manninen-Jari Leskinen, "Jatkosodan ja Lapin sodan hinta" in *Jatkosodan historia* 6, Porvoo 1994, p. 487-506, *Grif sekretnosti snjat*, p.201-202.
- ¹⁰⁴ Operative papers of the commander of the Karelian front, TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 1340. TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 3050 p. 12.
- ¹⁰⁵ Friendly information of professor Yuri Kilin (Petrozavodsk university), 23.9.2002.
- ¹⁰⁶ Generalnyi shtab 9.8.1944 (p. 346); Stavka directives 27.8. (p. 131) and 29.8.1944 (p. 135). P.V. Terehov p. 111. *Karelskii front* p. 222
- ¹⁰⁷ Operative reports of the Leningrad front, TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 4840.
- ¹⁰⁸ Operative directives of the 21. Army, TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 3994 p. 209. Operative plans of the 7. Army, TsAMO F. 214 opis 1437 delo 1482 p. 140, 166.
- ¹⁰⁹ TsAMO F. 217 opis 1221 delo 3891 p. 345. It is possible that the Soviet troops considered an attack by the Finns likely, for even on the day of the armistice, the 59th Army in the Viipuri area - according to official Army history - received a warning to start preparing for a surprise attack by the Finns. See I.T. Korovnikov-P.S. Lebedev-J.G. Poljakov, *Na treh frontah*, Moskva 1974.
- ¹¹⁰ Stavka directives 1944 (p. 143, 147, 149, 299, 300), *Karelskii front* p. 228-236.

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