

CHAPTER 6

The Supply Challenges of the Swedish Army during the Russo-Swedish War of 1741–1743

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The Russo-Swedish War of 1741–1743 is arguably the most disastrous war in Swedish military history. The war was mainly motivated by political reasons instead of military considerations. After the death of the Russian empress Anna in 1740, internal political strife in Russia offered an opportunity for the Swedish Realm to take advantage of the situation and try to restore the territories that had been lost in the Great Northern War (1700–1721). The Swedes decided to support the claimant to the throne, Princess Elizabeth, who was a daughter of Peter the Great. Their aim was, through a declaration of war, to help her into power and pressure Russia to give up areas. This course of action was strongly

How to cite this book chapter:

Hatakka, Sampsa (2021). The supply challenges of the Swedish army during the Russo-Swedish War of 1741–1743. In Petri Talvitie & Juha-Matti Granqvist (Eds.), *Civilians and military supply in early modern Finland* (pp. 177–202). Helsinki University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33134/HUP-10-6>

encouraged by France to prevent Russia taking part in the War of Austrian Succession (1740–1748). In addition to political support, France gave the Swedish Realm subsidies that were used to finance the war efforts.¹

Although the Swedes declared war at the end of July 1741, the Russians crossed the border first. In August, the Swedish army lost the battle of Lappeenranta and one of its two frontier fortresses to Russians. The battle was a significant but not decisive defeat, and the Russians retreated afterwards. The Swedes, however, could not make a counterattack during the following months. It was only in November that relatively few Swedish troops (6,450 men) crossed the border near Säkkijärvi. This was a late season for an offensive operation, and the army could not achieve much before it had to stop due to the muddy roads and maintenance problems. Nevertheless, the pressure helped Elizabeth to carry out a coup d'état in Saint Petersburg. When the new empress offered a truce, the Swedish high command agreed to it without any guarantees of later concessions.

Russia broke the truce in the following year, and the Swedish army retreated continuously until it had to surrender in Helsinki on 24 August 1742. In the aftermath, the Russians conquered the whole of Finland and occupied it until the Treaty of Turku (1743). The Swedish Realm had aimed to reconquer territories, but in the end it had to cede more land to Russia (see Figure 6.1).²

The reasons for the outcome of the war have acquired surprisingly little attention in Swedish or Finnish academic research. The most complete studies, based on archival materials, are from the 19th century.³ Contemporaries blamed the disaster on an incompetent war leadership, and many later scholars have adopted the same view. In addition, Swedish politicians and government have been blamed for irresponsible gambling and risk-taking with

¹ Jägerskiöld 1957, pp. 137–145; Winton 2018, pp. 230, 235–236, 240.

² Cederberg 1942, pp. 304–316; Alanen 1963, pp. 232–235, 238–239, 248–257, 276–277.

³ Tengberg 1857–1860; Lindeqvist 1889; Malmström 1897.

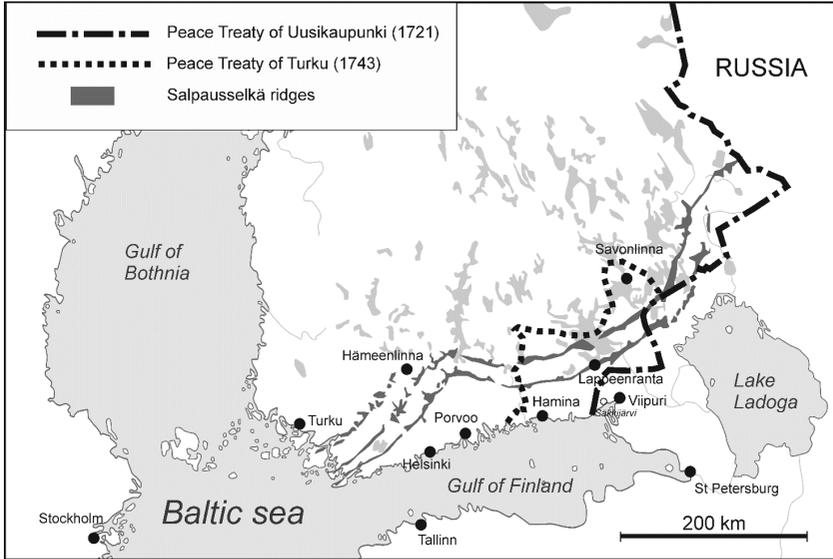


Figure 6.1: Swedish territorial losses in the Russo-Swedish War of 1741–1743, and the placenames mentioned in the chapter.

Source: Map drawn by Petri Talvitie.

the war. However, many scholars have also noted recurring supply problems that affected both the army and the navy. For example, there are reports that the crown had to give unground grain to the soldiers instead of bread. This is a clear indication that something was critically wrong in the supply system of the Swedish army.⁴

In the early modern period, bread constituted the most important part of the diet of soldiers. Because armies had thousands of mouths to feed, it took a great effort to continuously arrange enough bread for everyone. Large quantities of readily available bread were uncommon in towns or the countryside. Therefore, bread had to be specifically manufactured for the military needs. For a sizeable army, this was a large-scale operation, which required numerous mills and bakeries. When bread was ready, it

⁴ Juvelius 1919, pp. 206–207; Cederberg 1942, pp. 299–301, 312; Alanen 1963, pp. 221–226, 237–239, 250–252; Nikula 2011, p. 186; Kaukiainen 2012, pp. 301–305.

had to be transported to the location where soldiers were staying. This was a difficult task. Land transportation was slow and inefficient, while sea transportation was hazardous and depended on sailing season.⁵

In this chapter, I analyse how the Swedish Realm organised the manufacturing of bread and transport for the army during the war preparations and early part of the Russo-Swedish War of 1741–1743. The study examines some of the main supply problems the Swedish military leadership had to face and the reasons why these difficulties existed. The manufacturing of bread and organising transport involved both officials of the crown and civilians. These challenging undertakings required wide cooperation between different groups of people. Therefore, the chapter will also deal with the essential role of the civilians in the supply organisation of the army.

Earlier research has already demonstrated how difficult it was to provide food supplies for a large military force in Northern Europe. Jan Lindegren has described the numerous supply challenges Charles XII (Sw. Karl XII) had to overcome when the Swedes attacked Norway in 1718. Most of the supplies had to be transported from Sweden, contrary to the principle of utilising local resources, which was common in the early modern warfare.⁶ Christer Kuvaja has shown that Russians also had to import a large amount of their supplies when they invaded and occupied Finland in 1713–1721.⁷ The Swedish army encountered the same challenges as Russians when fighting took place in Finland. Even at

⁵ Perjés 1970, pp. 5–11; Lynn 1993, pp. 19–21; Lynn 1997, p. 108; Hatakka 2019a, pp. 168, 203–215.

⁶ Lindegren 1992, pp. 197–210; Van Creveld 1977, pp. 5–39. Van Creveld has argued that armies mainly gathered their supplies locally instead of transporting them from magazines. Lynn has criticized this argument and has stressed the importance of magazines in the early modern warfare. According to him, in addition to utilising the local resources, armies depended on magazines in general and not just in sieges or in other special conditions. See Lynn 1993, pp. 15–21.

⁷ Kuvaja 1999, pp. 276–277.

the time of the Finnish War (1808–1809) the Swedes had not fully resolved these problems, as can be seen from Martin Hårdstedt's in-depth study of the supply conditions of the Swedish army during the war. In addition, both Lindegren and Hårdstedt have emphasised how important the baking of bread and the organising of transport were for the war efforts.⁸

These studies, however, have not fully taken into consideration the significance of crisis preparedness and war preparations in the northern geographical conditions. Research of the Russo-Swedish War of 1741–1743 gives ample examples of how vital these were for the fate of the whole war. This chapter will also highlight the supply challenges that existed generally whenever wars were fought in the northernmost part of Europe.

The first few months of the war, from August to December 1741, constituted the most critical part of it. It was during this period when the Swedes had an opportunity to take advantage of political turmoil inside Russia by staging a surprise attack. In the following year, Elizabeth had already secured the power to herself, and the Russians were prepared to conclude the war. I will therefore concentrate on these crucial first months of the war. The questions are why the Swedes could not take the initiative in the war, and how the supply problems can explain this inactivity.

Supply Situation at the Beginning of the War

Although the Swedish army suffered from serious supply problems during the war, the Swedish Realm was not entirely unprepared for it. In fact, the war had been planned for many years, ever since the Hat Party, who rallied for military aggression against Russia, had risen to power at the Diet of 1738–1739. For this Diet, General Axel Löwen, who was a commander-in-chief in Finland from 1737 to 1739, made a comprehensive defence and attack plan.

⁸ Lindegren 2000, pp. 41–58; Hårdstedt 2002, pp. 21–22, 126–130, 139–146, 337–347.

In his plan, Löwen put a great emphasis on logistics. He argued that it was important to prepare for a war already during peacetime. Experiences of the Great Northern War had shown that, when the conflict took place in Finland, the ability to supply forces was more important than actual fighting. The Swedish army had had serious supply problems even at that time. There had been not enough magazines or foodstuffs stored in them, and the crown could only have provided unground grain for soldiers. Löwen also stated that, when the inhabitants of Finland heard of hostilities, they fled to the forests, and there was nothing anyone could do to force them to support the military forces.⁹

Löwen suggested many improvements to the supply organisation to prevent the misfortunes of the Great Northern War happening again. In the late 1730s, the whole of Finland had only three crown storage magazines (in Hamina, Lappeenranta and Hämeenlinna) and one crown bakery (in Hamina). The situation was even worse regarding the grinding of grain because there were no crown mills. Löwen wanted to establish new magazines in Helsinki, Turku, Savonlinna and Ristiina. All these places should also have mills and bakeries nearby. Löwen also recognised that there had to be an efficient way to transport bread to the troops. Therefore, he recommended acquiring bread carts for the army. These carts were intended to constantly move back and forth between magazines and troops during a war.¹⁰

Löwen's proposals were considered carefully at the Diet and they were mostly accepted in principle, but in practice the supply organisation did not change much before the war began in 1741. The Secret Committee of the Diet 1738–1739 argued that there were enough mills in Finland for the grinding of grain. Though this claim was later questioned by the Privy Council, new mills were neither built nor acquired. Regarding the baking of bread, the

⁹ Defence plan of Löwen, 3 April 1738 (published by Juva 1939, pp. 308–314).

¹⁰ Löwen to the King, 1 December 1737 and Defence plan of Löwen, 3 April 1738 (published by Juva 1939, pp. 200, 308–314).

official aim was to establish as many bakeries as there were magazines. However, in the end, only the magazine of Hämeenlinna got funding for a bakery.¹¹ Hamina, Lappeenranta and Hämeenlinna remained the only towns with permanent storage magazines (Sw. *förråds magasin*), although four additional magazines were established before the war began. Two of these, the storage magazines of Turku and Savonlinna, were founded at the beginning of the year 1741. In addition to these, field magazines (Sw. *fält magasin*) were formed in Helsinki and Porvoo.¹²

In preparation for the right moment to declare war, 7,600 Swedish soldiers were transported across the Gulf of Bothnia in 1739. These troops had to be fed and supplied in Finland in the midst of a subsistence crisis, which was caused by poor harvests of 1739–1741.¹³ For this reason, the magazines were under hard pressure long before the war began. The stores dwindled because thousands of soldiers needed grain, flour and bread, while peasants were given grain as loans.¹⁴ Table 6.1 shows how much grain (rye and barley), flour and bread was stockpiled in storage magazines and field magazines in April 1741, which is the last date when comprehensive storage calculations are available.

Table 6.1 reveals that none of the magazines in Finland had large storages, and that two of the most important ones, in Hamina and Lappeenranta, were almost empty. They were situated nearest the border, and therefore military operations were dependent on them during wartime. Some grain had been bought in Turku, but it was not enough for the needs of a large military force. In addition, this grain had still to be ground into flour and baked into bread, which took a lot of time. Baking had already begun in

¹¹ Juvelius 1919, p. 164.

¹² Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Förslag 1741, Calculations of stores in the crown magazines in Finland 1739–1741; Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Buddenbrock to Supply Commission, 14 April 1741 (No. 304).

¹³ Juvelius 1919, pp. 182–185, 206–207; Cederberg 1942, pp. 299–303.

¹⁴ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Förslag 1741, Calculations of stores in the crown magazines in Finland 1739–1741.

Table 6.1: Rye, barley, flour, and bread in storage and field magazines in April 1741.

Magazine	Rye (barrels)	Barley (barrels)	Flour (<i>lispund</i>) ^a	Bread (<i>lispund</i>) ^b
Hamina	83	10	576	8,167
Lappeenranta	13	1,889	—	92
Hämeenlinna	464	158	5,484	—
Turku	4,060	70	—	—
Savonlinna	135	—	—	—
Helsinki	—	—	—	22,616
Porvoo	—	—	—	55,470
Total	4,755	2,127	6,060	86,345

1 barrel = 146,5 litres; 1 *lispund* = 8.5 kg

^a Some of the flour was informed in barrels. These have been converted to weight measurements (1 barrel = 12 *lispund*). On conversion ratio, see Hatakka 2019a, 306.

^b When a barrel of grain was baked into bread, one could usually get 11 *lispund* dried bread, although the exact amount varied. Hatakka 2019a, 307.

Sources: Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Förslag 1741, Calculations of stores in the crown magazines in Finland 1739–1741; Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Buddenbrock to Supply Commission 14.4.1741 (No. 304). Table by the author.

Porvoo, Helsinki and Hamina, where altogether 86,000 *lispund* of dried bread was ready and stored. Provision regulation (Sw. *fält stat*) stipulated that one soldier was entitled to have 2.25 *lispund* (19.1 kg) bread in a month. According to this regulation, the gathered amount of bread was enough to feed 10,000 soldiers for roughly four months.¹⁵

Thus, the supply situation looked bleak just four months before the declaration of war. Thousands of soldiers already commanded

¹⁵ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Förslag 1741, Proposition for a month's provision to infantry regiment according to regulation (*fält stat*) of 1740.

in Finland needed a continuous supply of food throughout the summer of 1741. More bread was needed but it was not an easy task to acquire it in the conditions that were prevalent in early modern Finland.

Possibilities of Grinding Grain and Baking Bread in Finland

The large-scale manufacturing of bread was always a challenging and laborious undertaking in the early modern period. Most of the available mills were small and inefficient, and thus their capacity was limited. Armies had often difficulties finding enough mills for military needs from the area where they operated. For this reason, G. Perjés has argued that, under normal circumstances, an army could get a satisfactory amount of flour only if it had been manufactured beforehand and stored in magazines. Other options to obtain flour were either to establish mills in the vicinity of the magazines or to form magazines in places with high-capacity mills.

The baking of bread was equally challenging task. For the requirements of a large army, baking was only possible if there were enough ovens available. It took hundreds of bricks to build one oven and the total material requirements could rise to tens of thousands of bricks. Once the bricks and other building materials were ready, they had to be transported to the construction sites. Finally, the bakeries also had to be built.¹⁶

These challenges concerning grinding and baking were not only similar in Finland but also more pronounced than in many other places. Mills needed water, wind, animals or men as a power source. Watermills were the most efficient ones, but they could only be built in suitable places along rivers. The problem in Finland, however, was that most of the rivers were small, and the majority of the mills could only operate during spring or autumn. During summers most of the rivers did not have enough water,

¹⁶ Perjés 1970, pp. 7–10.

and during winters rivers were frozen. Only a few mills could operate throughout the year.

Finnish mills were also rather simple and outdated. They rarely had more than one or two pairs of millstones, and these stones were without furrows. Furrows, which helped the grinding of grains, were already common in Sweden but not in Finland, where they were not regarded as vital as in the western part of the realm. In Finland, grain was practically always dried in a building called *riihi*, and this made it much easier to grind than moist grain. Even older types of millstones could handle dried grain relatively well. For example, the mills of Vanhakaupunki near the town of Helsinki and Forsby in Pernaja could grind 30 barrels (4,400 l) of dried rye but only 6 barrels (880 l) of undried grain per day.¹⁷

The inefficiency of Finnish mills was not the only problem that affected grinding. Most of the mills were scattered across the countryside and located in places where they were impractical to use for military purposes. Land transport was particularly burdensome because of long distances, bad or non-existent roads, and scarcity of horses and carriages. The best mills were therefore the ones that were accessible by waterways. In theory, this was an advantage in Finland, the land of a thousand lakes, but in practice most of the large lakes could not be utilised for the transportation that supplying of armies required.

Wars were mainly fought in southern Finland because it was the most populated part of the land. However, the Finnish lake district is situated inland, geographically separated from the southern coastal area by the Salpausselkä ridges (see Figure 6.1). In addition, the southern rivers were not only small but full of rapids, which largely prevented any meaningful transport of goods. Along the coast there were only a few mills accessible by ships, and because they were in private ownership and locally important, the crown could not use them freely. For these reasons, military provisioning was dependent on many small mills in a wide

¹⁷ Hatakka 2019a, pp. 178–179; Hatakka 2019b, pp. 21–23. Regarding the difficulties of grinding moist grain, see also Kaplan 1984, p. 50.

coastal area reaching all the way from Turku to Hamina.¹⁸ Utilising these mills required a lot of ships and workforce. Because these were difficult to obtain during the war in 1741, the crown had to settle for using only the mills closest to the magazines.¹⁹

Baking was easier to manage than grinding because bakeries did not require specific places to operate, unlike mills. Baking, however, demanded different kinds of resources: ovens and proficient bakers. At the beginning of the war the crown bakery of Hamina had only six small ovens, three of which were reserved for the needs of the garrison. The remaining three ovens could only handle 60–70 barrels (8,800 l–10,300 l) of flour per month. This amount of flour produced around 700 *lispund* (6,000 kg) of dried bread. According to the provision regulation of 1740, this bread would have been enough for the rations of 300 soldiers for a month. Clearly, an army could not rely on the production capacity of the small bakery of Hamina.²⁰ To supplement the capacity of this bakery, the crown had to utilise the baking obligation of burghers and peasants.

In many parts of Europe, bread for armies was baked in towns because they had proficient bakers and better means to bake bread than in the countryside. Also, the Swedish Realm had a long tradition of utilising the civilian population in baking. For example, during the Great Northern War, the bakers of Stockholm and Tallinn manufactured large amounts of bread for the Swedish army.²¹ However, in Finland, baking in towns was inevitably small-scale because the towns were so modest. The population of Helsinki was only 1,500 in the middle of the 18th century. The

¹⁸ Hatakka 2019a, pp. 175–180, 207–208.

¹⁹ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 1 October 1741 (No. 389).

²⁰ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Buddenbrock to Supply Commission, 19 May 1741 (No. 310). Conversion ratio (flour to bread) is presented in Hatakka 2019a, p. 307.

²¹ Korkiakangas 1974, pp. 176–182.

number of burghers was 100–150 and there was only one baker. Still, even with such a small population, Helsinki was one of the larger towns in Finland. Burghers confronted many difficulties when they tried to fill their baking quotas. Some of them did not have the means to transport grain to mills; others did not have ovens suitable for baking. In addition, most of the ovens were so small that they could only produce a small amount of bread.²²

For the above-mentioned reasons, most of the bread had to be baked in the countryside. In a land with a low population density, this practice was expensive for the crown and cumbersome for the peasants, who had to transport grain, flour and bread long distances between magazines, mills and their homes. Because of the sparse population, many of the peasants lived far away from the towns and the magazines, and thus decentralised baking required a wide area.²³ The officials of the crown had to overcome these problems concerning grinding and baking if they wanted to succeed in provisioning an army.

Attempts to Build Bakeries in Finland

The lack of mills and bakeries in Finland was not immediately evident for the officials who had been assigned to take care of the war preparations. In March 1741, a commission was established in Stockholm to manage war expenditures and to ensure that military forces in Finland got enough supplies.²⁴ This Supply Commission (Sw. Utrdeningskommissionen) also supervised, together

²² Hatakka 2019a, 50, pp. 170–171. On the number of burghers in Helsinki, see Granqvist 2016, p. 257.

²³ Hatakka 2019a, pp. 171–174.

²⁴ Winton 2018, p. 236. Winton has translated Utrdeningskommissionen to procurement commission, which describes the Commission's main task well: acquiring supplies for the army. However, in the context of this study the term Supply Commission is better because, in addition to procurement, the Commission was also involved with other matters concerning military supply, which included, for example, building bakeries.

with the commander-in-chief, the work of the War Commissariat, which governed the supply organisation locally in Finland. If necessary, the Supply Commission had power to command the War Commissariat to take action.²⁵

The War Commissariat was led by Commissary General (Sw. *generalkrigskommissarie*) Fabian Wrede. When he was appointed to this position in April 1741, the Supply Commission asked his thoughts about the situation of mills and bakeries in Finland. At that time, Wrede was still residing in Stockholm, and he could only give vague answers. He told the Commission that there were around 20 pairs of millstones on the coast of the province of Uusimaa. However, he did not know how many of them could be used for grinding. Wrede also presumed that there were crown bakeries available, but he could not give any further information about them.²⁶ This was the level of the knowledge of the supply situation in Stockholm in spring 1741 when the war preparations began.

Soon it became clear that there were not enough mills or bakeries for the army. The lack of bakeries in particular was a severe problem that was hard to solve during the coming summer and autumn.

Although the war began at the end of July 1741, the commander-in-chief, General Charles Emil Lewenhaupt, arrived in Finland as late as September. While he was in Stockholm, the supreme command was entrusted to General Henrik Magnus von Buddenbrock.²⁷ Von Buddenbrock was also the Supply Commission's main contact in Finland before Wrede arrived from Sweden and got his instructions.

In May, von Buddenbrock informed Stockholm that, in addition to Hamina, the best places to establish bakeries were Helsinki,

²⁵ See, for example, Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, *Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741* vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 12 April 1741 (No. 302), and 7 September 1741 (No. 377).

²⁶ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, *Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741* vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 12 April 1741 (No. 302).

²⁷ Cederberg 1942, pp. 297–299.

Turku and Porvoo. However, nothing had yet been done to begin building these bakeries because there were neither bricks nor other building materials available. Only the construction work of the bakery of Hämeenlinna had been started, but the same lack of bricks had prevented finishing it. Furthermore, this bakery was less useful for the war efforts since it was located deep inland, on the other side of the Salpausselkä ridges, and all supplies from there had to be transported by road. All other proposed places were accessible by ships.²⁸

The Supply Commission was eager to get the planned bakeries built as soon as possible and tried to pressure the War Commissariat to finish them, but the obstacles caused by the lack of building materials were hard to surpass. Acquiring bricks and lime were the first problems that were tackled. Wrede wrote to the Supply Commission that enough bricks could be acquired only if they were brought from Sweden. Hence, the Commission tried to help the Commissariat by arranging for both bricks and lime to be brought from Stockholm to Finland.

The War Commissariat also tried to obtain bricks locally from Finland, but it was not an easy task. The best situation was in Hämeenlinna, where von Buddenbrock had himself founded a brickworks to ease the construction work. According to him, it was the only way to finish the bakery during the autumn. In other places, the lack of bricks continued throughout the summer. Finally, at the end of August, the Commissariat could inform Stockholm that it had been able to secure with great effort 100,000 bricks and 100 *läst* (245,000 kg) lime.²⁹

²⁸ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Buddenbrock to Supply Commission, 19 May 1741 (No. 310 and 311) and 26 May 1741 (No. 312).

²⁹ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 9 June 1741 (No. 319), 14 July 1741 (No. 347), 21 July 1741 (No. 409), 24 August 1741 (No. 419), and 27 August 1741 (No. 422), Buddenbrock to Supply Commission, 20 August 1741 (No. 366), and 31 August 1741 (No. 368).

Another problem was the shortage of workers for the construction sites. In an ordinary situation, the crown would have used soldiers as workforce. However, after the war was declared in July, nearly every soldier had been commanded to the front. Remaining soldiers had their hands full with other duties. For example, in Helsinki there were so few soldiers available that even unloading the arriving provision ships was difficult. The Supply Commission also tried to solve this problem by sending workers from Stockholm. In addition, it sent designs for the bakery buildings.³⁰

Despite all these efforts, the bakeries could not be built during the autumn 1741. The crucial problem was lack of timber, as unbelievable as it may sound in Finland, a land covered mostly by pristine forests. The War Commissariat already suspected in July that bakeries could not be built during the rest of the year because timber could not be acquired before wintertime. When autumn came and the war had begun, the peasants were overburdened with harvests, autumn sowing and military transport. They had no time to fell trees and transport logs to the building sites. Moreover, transporting goods overland was much easier in Finland during winter, when it was possible to use sleighs, and therefore most of the heavy transport in Finland was carried out during snowy winter months when ice-covered lakes and rivers could be used as winter roads.³¹

There were also other challenges regarding the availability of timber. Wrede tried to explain these in detail to the Supply Commission in late August. The bakery buildings needed special timber, e.g. for sleepers, that had to be ordered one year in advance.

³⁰ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Buddenbrock to Supply Commission, 20 August 1741 (No. 366), Wrede to Supply Commission, 24 August 1741 (No. 419), 27 August 1741 (No. 422), and 21 September 1741 (No. 383).

³¹ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 14 July 1741 (No. 347), 24 August 1741 (No. 419), 31 August 1741 (No. 367), 7 September 1741 (No. 377), and 21 September 1741 (No. 383). For the challenges of transports by road, see Hatakka 2019a, pp. 203–208.

These large timbers could only be transported when the roads were fit for sleighing. The bottom boards also had to be ordered in advance because none of the nearby sawmills manufactured them. Even ordinary timber had to be acquired beforehand since felling trees and hewing timber were time-consuming work.³²

The Supply Commission was noticeably beginning to lose patience with the War Commissariat. It did not believe the excuses given and doubted that it was impossible to find suitable timber for the bakeries.³³ The Commissariat defended itself by putting the blame on former officials who had not purchased timber when there was still time.³⁴

When it was clear that new bakeries were badly delayed, the War Commissariat had no other option than to oblige peasants and burghers to bake bread for the crown. The baking was concentrated in houses that had suitable ovens for the task. To help with the baking efforts, the Commissariat requested that two master bakers should be sent to Helsinki and Porvoo. Consequently, the bakery of Hamina remained the only crown bakery in Finland during the early part of the Russo-Swedish War, although its ovens were considered inapt for large-scale baking. In an effort to increase its productivity, two new ovens were built in the old bakery building. Their construction began as soon as masons had arrived from Stockholm, which happened on 28 September, but they were not finished before late October. The existing stores of bread had to be preserved as long as possible.³⁵

³² Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 27 August 1741 (No. 422).

³³ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Protokoll 1741 II, Minutes, 4 September 1741 (pp. 1084–1087).

³⁴ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 3 September 1741 (No. 373).

³⁵ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 21 July 1741 (No. 409), 24 August 1741 (No. 419), 3 September 1741 (No. 373),

Hence, the deficiency of bread production was one of the main reasons why soldiers were given unground grain instead of bread whenever feasible. This procedure was problematic because, even if soldiers could grind their grain with hand mills, they had still difficulties with baking.³⁶

Acquiring Flour and Bread from Sweden

The Supply Commission was worried about production of bread even before it became evident that the building of new bakeries had failed. In a meeting in August, the members of the Commission acknowledged that required bread could not be obtained from Finland. To overcome the problem, the Commission decided to transport flour and bread from Sweden, but there was only limited time for this. When the Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland froze, no ship could arrive in Finnish harbours. During the winter, troops in Finland had to survive without help from outside.

The grinding and baking took place in Stockholm, Norrköping, Nyköping and Östana (mills of Loo). Altogether, the storage magazine of Stockholm delivered 22,800 barrels (3.3 million litres) of rye for grinding and baking during the year 1741. Additional grain was obtained from the magazines of Norrköping and Nyköping. The produced and bought amount of flour and bread is shown in Table 6.2.³⁷

Table 6.2 reveals that nearly 190,000 *lispund* (1.6 million kilograms) of bread was manufactured in Stockholm. Practically all the flour acquired from there was used for baking. This achievement was only possible because of the combined efforts of the baker's guild and the crown bakery of Stockholm. The bakers of

21 September 1741 (No. 383), 28 September 1741 (No. 386), and 15 October 1741 (No. 405).

³⁶ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Wrede to Supply Commission, 24 August 1741 (No. 419) and 31 August 1741 (No. 371).

³⁷ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Protokoll 1741 II, Minutes, 12 August 1741 (pp. 352–359). See also the sources of Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Flour and bread acquired from Stockholm, Norrköping, Nyköping and Östanå in 1741.

Place	Produced flour (<i>lispund</i>)	Bought flour (<i>lispund</i>)	Produced bread (<i>lispund</i>)
Stockholm	207,053	12,540	189,646
Norrköping	40,777	—	—
Nyköping	23,428	—	—
Östanå (mills of Loo)	10,824 ^a	—	—

^a This is an estimate because there are no accounts from mills of Loo. It is based on the knowledge of amount of used grain (902 barrels) and an approximate conversion ratio (1 rye barrel = 12 *lispund* flour).

Sources: Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Förslag 1741, Accounts from the magazines of Nyköping, Stockholm and Norrköping. Table by the author.

the city took rye from the storage magazine, ground it to flour, and baked it to bread. When the baking took place in the crown bakery, the grinding of grain had to be organised first. The crown gave this task to those burghers of Stockholm who owned watermills. In addition to production of rye flour, barley was ground to hulled barley.³⁸

In Nyköping and Norrköping, contrary to the plan of the Supply Commission, no bread was produced in 1741. The reason for this was probably lack of time. Grain was shipped from Stockholm to these towns in August and September, which allowed little time for both grinding and baking. Even in Stockholm, due to the shortage of time, not all bread was ready at the end of the year. Nearly 38,000 *lispund* of the total amount was still to be delivered back to the magazine.³⁹ Nevertheless, the amount of readily available bread, roughly 150,000 *lispund*, was so sizeable that it would have sufficed for almost seven months for 10,000 soldiers or for over three months for 20,000 soldiers. This meant that there was bread for the army, but the problem was that it was

³⁸ Sources of Table 6.2.

³⁹ Sources of Table 6.2.

not in the right place. Bread had to be still transported to Finland before it was any use for the soldiers.

Transport of Grain, Flour and Bread to Finland

According to General Buddenbrock and the War Commissariat, the only locations in Finland where supply transport could be received were Helsinki, Porvoo and Hamina. After the supplies were unloaded from ships in these towns, they could be transported overland wherever soldiers needed them. The crown's intention was to avoid as far as possible this transport by road. Land transport was not only difficult but also expensive, for peasants were paid eight silver öre for a mile as a transport fee. Hamina was, therefore, the best place to unload the supplies during war-time because it was situated nearest the border. One of the main reasons that transport had to be also directed to other towns was that there were not enough storerooms in Hamina.⁴⁰

As favourable as the sea transport was, it also had specific problems. Ships could be destroyed by storms, and warm weather could damage cargos during summer. For example, the crown lost nearly two thousand barrels of rye because of a shipwreck in summer 1741. In time of war there was also a possibility that the enemy could intercept transports. In that regard, it was safest to use sea routes that passed through the widespread archipelago of southern coast of Finland. However, it was not the easiest route because many areas in the archipelago were too shallow for sailing.

When ships arrived in harbours, they had to be unloaded, which required numerous longshoremen or soldiers as a labour force. This especially related to Hamina, where ships could not come to the quay with full cargo. Supplies had to be unloaded from ships

⁴⁰ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741 vol. 5, Buddenbrock to Supply Commission 12 May 1741 (No. 308), 19 May 1741 (No. 310), 31 August 1741 (No. 370), Wrede to Supply Commission, 6 July 1741 (No. 342) and 21 September 1741 (No. 384).

to small boats off the coast and only then transported to the town. The War Commissariat complained that it had neither boats nor workers for this purpose.⁴¹

The first ships that brought supplies for the army came from Wismar and Stralsund, which were the last major possessions of the Swedish Realm in northern Germany. These transports were already organised in April, and the ships arrived in Finland from May to June, bringing thousands of barrels of rye and barley with them. Some supplies were also brought from Karlskrona.⁴² More transports followed in summer, but they intensified only in July, as can be seen from Table 6.3. Rye and bread were transported from Stockholm, while flour came from Nyköping.

During autumn, shipped supplies constituted increasingly of flour and bread, but the amount of grain also stayed high. Rye and barley were the most important types of cereals for the needs of the army. Rye was baked to dried rye bread, whereas barley was mainly intended to be ground to hulled barley. In addition to these two cereals, mixed grain (5,097 barrels), hulled barley (1,543 barrels) and oats (7,341 barrels) were also transported from Sweden to Finland. Oats were primarily needed for horses. Most of the rye was destined to Turku, while flour and bread were brought to Helsinki, Porvoo and Hamina.⁴³

Table 6.3 reveals that the crown could only import to Finland approximately half of the bread that was produced in Sweden in

⁴¹ Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, *Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741* vol. 5, Buddenbrock to Supply Commission 31 August 1741 (No. 370), Wrede to Supply Commission, 31 August 1741 (No. 371), 14 September 1741 (No. 380), and 28 September 1741 (No. 386). Of the difficulties of sea transport, see also Hatakka 2019a, pp. 212–215, 230–231.

⁴² Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, *Diverse inkommande handlingar 1741* vol. 5, Buddenbrock to Supply Commission 14 April 1741 (No. 303), 24 April 1741 (No. 305), and 26 May 1741 (No. 312), Wrede to Supply Commission, 9 June 1741 (No. 317) and 16 June 1741 (No. 329).

⁴³ Sources of Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Transport of rye, barley, flour and bread from Stockholm, Norrköping and Nyköping to Finland in 1741 (from May to December).

Month	Rye (barrels)	Barley (barrels)	Flour (<i>lispund</i>)	Bread (<i>lispund</i>)
May	—	3,593	—	—
June	400	1,610	4,046	—
July	7,658	—	4,176	40,123
August	6,809	—	—	1,216
September	5,670	509	26,430	17,812
October	5,271	4,231	26,717	16,386
November	—	392	—	24,038
Total	25,808	10,335	61,369	99,575

Sources: Krigsarkivet, Utredningskommissionen 1741, Förslag 1741, Accounts from the magazines of Nyköping, Stockholm and Norrköping. Table by the author.

1741. The reason for this was that there was no time to ship more bread before winter and frozen sea made it impossible to continue transports. In Table 6.3, lack of time is implied by the fact that last ships filled with bread arrived in Finland as late as November. As mentioned in the last section, not all the bread baked in Sweden was ready at the end of the year. Baking was still going on when the last ships sailed to Finland.

If the total amount of transported grain is compared with the total amount of transported flour and bread, one can see that grain was prevalent. In modern weight measurement, 36,000 barrels of grain equals 4,900,000 kg and 161,000 *lispund* of flour and bread equals 1,370,000 kg.⁴⁴ This indicates that, although Finland had serious problems with milling and baking, the officials failed to bring enough flour and bread to the army. This was especially true in the early part of the war, when grinding and baking had not

⁴⁴ Barrels can be converted to weight measurement, when we know that 1 *lästi* (2,450 kg) is 18 barrels of grain. Hatakka 2019a, p. 306.

yet begun in large scale in Sweden, and when ships were mostly loaded with grain.

Conclusions

Sweden began war against Russia under problematic circumstances in 1741. The logistical situation was difficult because of the poor harvests and the supply needs of thousands of soldiers who were stationed in Finland years before the declaration of war. Stores of grain, gathered in preceding years, were mostly used by the time the hostilities began.

Even if there had been larger stores of grain available, it would have been challenging to use them. There were only a few mills situated in such places where large-scale and efficient grinding of grain was possible. Baking was likewise challenging. Hamina was the only place with a real bakery, but it was both small and inefficient. Therefore, if the crown needed a large amount of bread, it had no other option than to oblige peasants and burghers to bake it. This was not an optimal way to produce bread. Towns in Finland were small, and the countryside was sparsely populated. Developing centralised baking would have been better choice, but it was not an easy task to establish new bakeries because it took time and resources.

The officials of the crown did not realise all these difficulties until it was too late. After the declaration of war, the Supply Commission in Stockholm did everything it could to improve the supply situation. When the War Commissariat in Finland complained about the difficulties of building bakeries, the Commission arranged bricks, lime, workers, and designs for the bakeries. However, this was not enough because suitable timber was not available at short notice. The Commission also organised production of bread in Sweden as soon as it realised that bakeries in Finland would not be ready anytime soon. Although grinding and baking was easier in the Swedish part of the realm, it nonetheless took time to produce large amounts of bread. At the end of the year, the baking operation was still unfinished, and the supply transports to Finnish harbours had to be stopped because of the coming winter. The attempts of the Swedish officials to produce bread can be, therefore, described as a fight against time.

Time is an essential factor to be considered in the context of the Russo-Swedish War of 1741–1743. The Swedes began the war with high hopes of gaining advantage by attacking Russia in a moment when it was crippled by internal political strife. This required resolute and quick action to pressure Russia into concessions and ceding areas. But the reality was quite different from what had been planned. Instead of attacking, the Swedes tried to figure out how to supply the troops required for the offensive. During the valuable first months of the war, the officials and the military leadership were occupied with getting building materials for bakeries, arranging baking in Sweden, and hurrying with the transports before winter isolated Finland. The war was more about efforts of supplying troops in time than it was about fighting the Russians.

Although the Supply Commission and the War Commissariat were active and did as much as they could, it did not change the fact that a period of a few autumn months was a short time to correct all the neglect of the previous years. For this reason, the failure in war preparations was one of the main reasons why the Swedish army was in such a trouble in the early part of the war. The politicians and military leadership clearly underestimated all the difficulties that were caused by the sparse population and the cold northern climate of Finland.

After the war, in an attempt to strengthen the defence of Finland, the Swedish Realm implemented many of the reforms General Axel Löwen had already suggested in the early 18th century. In the late 1740s and 1750s the crown established new magazines, bakeries and mills on the southern coast of Finland in the towns of Helsinki and Loviisa. These towns were also fortified by building the sea fortresses of Sveaborg and Svartholma, so that they could offer secure bases for both the army and the navy and all their supplies. Politicians and officials frequently referred to experiences and lessons of the past war when they realised these plans and organised the provisioning of the thousands of soldiers who built the fortresses.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Hatakka 2015, pp. 95–110; Hatakka 2019, pp. 42, 71–72, 143, 246–247, 290.

In addition to baking, milling and transportation, there were also many other supply challenges that the Swedes had to overcome in the Russo-Swedish War of 1741–1743. Thus, the question remains why the upcoming difficulties were not grasped in time. As it stands, further studies are needed to understand the path to the supply disaster of the Swedish army during the war.

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