

THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF SWEDEN, 1810-1812

THE BRITISH-SWEDISH PAPER WAR

It might sound worse than it is, but the facts are clear: the British navy occupied at least 2.14 km² of Sweden between 1810 and 1812 during the British-Swedish War. The island of Hanö is located 4 km south-east of the Listerlandet peninsula in the Blekinge region in the south of Sweden. Traces from the British occupation can still be seen today, as there are fifteen British sailors buried in a small cemetery at the north end of the island.

During the Napoleonic Wars until 1810, Sweden and Great Britain were allies in the war against Napoleon; the Swedish king Gustav IV more or less hated the French revolution in general and Napoleon in particular. Due to this hostility, the Swedish king declared war on France in 1805 and sided with the British against Napoleon.

As a result of Sweden's defeat in the Finnish War (against Russia) and the Pomeranian War (against France), and the following Treaty of Paris, concluded on 6 January 1810, Sweden was forced to join the Continental System, a trade embargo against Great Britain. Since Great Britain was Sweden's biggest trade partner this caused economic difficulties, and trade continued to take place through smuggling. On 13 November 1810, France delivered an ultimatum to the Swedish government demanding that within five days Sweden should declare war against Great Britain, confiscate all British ships in Swedish ports, and seize all British products in Sweden.

France and its allies threatened to declare war against Sweden if it did not meet the French demands. On 17 November 1810, the Swedish government declared war against Great Britain. At the height of the wars with Napoleon, the Baltic was vital to British trade, and between 1810 and 1812 Admiral Saumarez established the base of his fleet on the small Swedish island of Hanö that was occupied by the British navy. With the Swedish government's silent approval, the British navy

stayed at Hanö and continued blockading the ports of northern Germany – under French control – and striking at Napoleon's forces wherever possible.

No acts of war occurred during the conflict, and Sweden did not try to hinder the occupation as it welcomed the continued trade. Nevertheless, fearing the possibility of a British invasion, the Swedish government began to conscript more farmers into military service. This led to the only bloodshed during the war, on 15 June 1811, when Major-General Hampus Mörner with 140 hussars acted to disperse a group of farmers in Klågerup in the region of Scania who objected to the conscription policy. In the Klågerup



Swedish close on the British position.



The British mobilise to the defence of the island.

Riots, Mörner's soldiers killed 30 Scanian farmers. The elected crown prince of Sweden, Danish prince Charles August, had died on 28 May 1810, and on 21 August 1810 the French Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte was elected crown prince of Sweden. Though Bernadotte was only the crown prince and technically subservient to the king, the former was de facto ruler of Sweden due to the deteriorating health and disinterest of King Charles XIII. Under Bernadotte's rule, Sweden's relationship with Napoleonic France deteriorated. When France occupied Swedish Pomerania and the island of Rügen in 1812, Sweden sought peace with Great Britain. After long negotiations, the Treaty of Örebro was signed on 18 July 1812. On the same day and at the same place, Britain and Russia signed a peace treaty bringing the Anglo-Russian War of 1807–1812 to an end.

There are undocumented rumors that French diplomats on several occasions tried to force Sweden to take action against the British naval base located on the island of Hanö; some even say that French spies tried to agitate Swedish farmers and soldiers in the area to take matters into their own hands and throw out the British occupants. There are no records of any true attempts to attack the British; instead it seems that the Swedes had a very good trading relationship with the British occupants of the island.

NOT A PAPER NAVAL ASSAULT – SHARP PRACTICE SCENARIO

Inspired by the history of the British occupation of the island of Hanö and the rumors of French agitators and

spies in the area, I have put together a “what-if” scenario. It is based on the assumption that French spies, with the help of pro-French Swedish officers and troops, make an unauthorized naval assault against the British naval base, with the goal being to capture the British coastal artillery places on the island, and through that to control the island and deny the British navy a safe harbor. For the French it doesn't really matter if it succeeds or not: the damage would by then be already done, as the Swedes and the British would have some serious diplomatic problems and might even go to real war for the incident. I have used the Sharp Practice rules for my scenario, but I'm sure you can adapt it for other rules with ease.

Introduction

In May 1811, the British fleet under Admiral Saumarez at HMS Victory has returned to the Baltic Sea to protect the Baltic trade routes. The Swedish governor of Karlskrona has sequestered ships of all nations at the port of Karlshamn and ordered their cargo to be discharged and convoyed up-country; the situation is very tense. Admiral Saumarez has also issued an order to occupy and establish a British naval base on the island of Hanö, which is close to both Karlskrona and Karlshamn. In this wargaming scenario the mission to establish the naval base is of course appointed to Commodore Hornblower of the HMS Nonsuch and his squadron of small crafts. The French agent Monsieur Ducos (who probably lured the Governor of Karlskrona to sequester the ships) has managed to stage a naval assault on the British base being constructed

on Hanö island with the help of the young and innocent pro-French Swedish officer Lieutenant CM Hultin and his troops. During the night they row forward to the closest beach at Bönsäcken ('Beanbag beach'); the British have started to build a redoubt but have not finished it yet. The Swedish attack starts in the early morning hours.

Deployment points

Each side rolls a D6 to see which of their two possible entry points they use for their primary deployment point, with an even chance of either.

The British defender places their medium naval artillery unit with its crew behind the barricade, in the center of the table. All other troops arrive as usual.

Force support

Force support is already included in the Order Of Battle below. But if you use different troops you can roll 1D6 for each force; on 1-3 add 4 points, and on 4-6 add 6 points to the force.

Objective

The Swedish main objective is to capture the British naval gun. The British objective is of course to stop the Swedish from capturing the redoubt, and to throw them back into the sea. The side with the most victory points is the winner.

Swedish victory points:

- If they capture the British naval gun +4
- If they capture Commodore Hornblower +2

British victory points:

- If they are still in possession of the naval gun +4
- If they capture Monsieur Ducos +2

Terrain & minor characters

Hanö island is a fairly rugged place with gravel beaches, lots of bushes and wind thorn trees. In the center of the table, the British have started to build a redoubt for a naval gun, that is already in place; as the redoubt isn't finished, it counts as a barricade at the moment and provides light cover. No minor characters are present as the small Hanö community is located further to the east. Play the scenario on a 120 x 120 cm table.

Order of battle

Here I present the order of battle that I and my mate Matias (www.northern-wargaming.blogspot.se) used during our playtest of the scenario. You are completely free to alter the forces or use entirely different ones, but try to keep the points if possible as that gives quite a balanced game.

For the Swedes I used the Swedish army list I presented in WSS issue 86, and for the British I used the British Pen-



Map of the battlefield, with deployment points for both sides.

insular War list from the Sharp Practice 2 rulebook as a base. I have included the units stats for the troops below, as some of them are a bit altered from the original lists.

Sweden

Leader status III – Lieutenant CM Hultin

Three units of line infantry, muskets

Monsieur Ducos (French spy) – Use the rules for “Holy man”

Leader status III – Second Lieutenant PG Strand

Three units of line infantry, muskets

Leader status I – Second Lieutenant SS Storm

One gunyale with heavy artillery

Point Value: 65

Force specific characteristics

This force has the following specific characteristics:

- **Gå På!:** This reflects the aggressive Swedish tactic of firing a volley at close range and then charging home with the bayonet. This is the old Swedish way of attacking that still was in use. When two Command Cards are used with a leader’s activation, a group or formation of Swedish infantry that is at close musket range of the enemy may charge with two actions of movement and count as Aggressive in fistcuffs.
- **Ancien Régime:** Trained in the drill of a bygone age, the Swedes cannot form attack columns.
- **Gunyale:** For ease we use the ordinary artillery rules for the gunyale in this scenario; it will take two actions to turn the gunyale around and into position to fire.
- **Longboats:** The Swedish line infantry are deployed in two longboats, three units in each. The longboats activate on the leader’s card and move as infantry. If shot at they count as one formation; any hits are divided between the three units but any chock affects the movement of the longboat. Only one of the three units may shoot from the longboats in any turn. Each of the units has to spend two actions to unload from the longboats when they reach the beach.

Swedish Line Infantry 1810-12							TYPE: Regulars
Points value: 6		Weapon: Musket			Size: 8		
FO	FF	COV	CRV	SO	D	Char.	
Always	Yes	First only	2	3	3	Gå På!	

Swedish Gunyale Artillery 1805-14							TYPE: Artillery
Points value: 7		Weapon: Heavy Gun			Size: 5		
FO	FF	COV	CRV	SO	D	Char.	
No	No	No	2	2	-	-	

FO - Formation; FF - First Fire; COV - Controlled Volley; CRV - Crashing Volley; SO - Step Out; D - Drilled.



The British give the invaders a whiff of grapeshot.

Great Britain

Leader, status III - Commodore Hornblower

Two groups of British light company skirmishers, muskets (marines)

Leader, status II - Captain Bush

Two groups of skirmishers, mixed weapons, count as single shot pistols (sailors)

Leader, status II - Boatswain Styles

One unit of medium naval artillery behind a barricade
One unit of skirmishers, mixed weapons, count as single shot pistols (sailors)

Point Value: 63

British Light Company Skirmisher							TYPE: Light Infantry
Points value: 8		Weapon: Musket			Size: 6		
FO	FF	COV	CRV	SO	D	Char.	
Always	Yes	No	-	2	-	Sharp Practice	

British Sailors							TYPE: Light Infantry
Points value: 6		Weapon: Single Shot Pistols			Size: 6		
FO	FF	COV	CRV	SO	D	Char.	
Always	No	No	-	2	-	Aggressive	

British Artillery							TYPE: Artillery
Points value: 7		Weapon: Medium Gun			Size: 5		
FO	FF	COV	CRV	SO	D	Char.	
No	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Sharp Practice	

FO - Formation; FF - First Fire; COV - Controlled Volley; CRV - Crashing Volley; SO - Step Out; D - Drilled.

Force specific characteristics

This force has the following specific characteristics:

- **Naval Gun:** This reflects the immobility of the British naval gun. The naval gun may not be moved during the scenario, only slightly pivoted with a move action.
- **All Hands on Deck:** If any gun crew is killed by shooting, the casualty may be removed from any other sailor unit that is within 6” of the naval gun.