BATTLES ON THE ICE

The Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem - the Teutonic Order for folks who are into that whole brevity thing - is fascinating. The scourge of pagans (and other Christians) for centuries, they had a reputation as elite, fearsome, invincible warriors. That reputation has suffered over the last few hundred years. Today, they're primarily known for wearing funny hats. Their most famous military engagements - the ones that stand out in popular memory - are their most humiliating defeats, at Grunwald and Lake Peipus.

Grunwald, which we covered in the first game in this series (*The Grunwald Swords*), is a battle of central importance to Polish history and identity. But Lake Peipus, the famous "Battle on the Ice", might be more well-known, thanks in no small part to its exotic locale and to the immensely entertaining and kinetic (and more-or-less completely inaccurate) recreation in Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*. But here's what's interesting: Lake Peipus wasn't the only Battle on the Ice. In fact, Wikipedia very helpfully has a short, but very specific, "List of military operations on ice", which oddly *doesn't* include the Battle of Texel, history's only (and only successful) cavalry charge against a navy. But it gets crazier: Lake Peipus wasn't the only time that the Teutonic Knights were defeated on a frozen lake by a ragged band of peasants - there was also the Battle of Karuse about thirty years later. And the craziest part of it all is that, if you want to get pedantic, it wasn't the "actual" Teutonic Knights that fought in either of these battles - it was the Livonian Order.

The Livonian Brothers of the Sword were a separate German monastic military order, founded by Albert of Riga about twelve years after the Teutonic Order got its start. While the Teutonic Order was initially founded with the express purpose of building hospitals and aiding pilgrims heading to the Holy Land, with less emphasis on overt stabby-murder stuff, the Livonians were created specifically to convert pagans in the Baltic at sword-point, and also to take their stuff. They were initially very successful, forming the ecclesiastical state of Terra Mariana - the "Land of Mary" - in 1207. Mary-Land was divvied up into bishoprics, among them the Bishoprics of Dorpat and Osel-Wiek; remember those, they're on the test. In 1236, at the Battle of the Saule, the Brothers of the Sword suffered catastrophic, irrecoverable losses, including the death of their Master, Volkwin. The survivors were incorporated into the Teutonic Order as an autonomous branch - the Livonian Order.

By this time, the Teutonic Knights had shifted their focus from the Holy Land to Europe, laying the groundwork for their own ecclesiastical state with the conquest of Prussia. Their power and territory spread rapidly as they invaded, converted, and conquered neighboring pagans. But if there weren't any pagans on hand, the Eastern Orthodox Church would do in a pinch, as they were viewed as alien, heretical, and not really Christians. This prompted excursions by the Livonian Order further east, bringing them into conflict with, among others, the Republic of Novgorod, which shared a border with the Bishopric of Dorpat. Novgorod seemed like it'd be especially easy-pickings, having been considerably weakened by recent Mongol invasions.

A pseudo-democratic (really, oligarchic) medieval state within the Kievan Rus', Novgorod was technically ruled by a Prince, but he largely served at the pleasure of the aristocracy. These *boyars* dismissed rulers that didn't serve their interests, and selected new ones frequently and at will. Indeed, tensions with the boyars shortly before the Livonian invasion saw the current Prince, twenty-year-old Alexander Nevsky, in exile. The Livonians quickly conquered a number of cities that fell within Novgorod's sphere of influence, and were poised to take the City of Novgorod itself. Once the people of Novgorod saw those funky helmets, they quickly recalled their Prince.

Gathering an army, Nevsky drove the Livonians out of their recently acquired holdings in 1241. The following spring - a very snowy spring, but spring nonetheless - hostilities were renewed, culminating in the April 5 Battle on the Ice at Lake Peipus. Nevsky deployed his army, which mostly consisted of infantry, on the frozen lake, as that would negate the advantages of the Livonian heavy cavalry. The opposing commander, Prince-Bishop Hermann Buxhoeveden of Dorpat, consented to give battle, charging across the ice. Intense fighting followed. A timely deployment of fresh Novgorod troops, including horse archers, turned the tide of the battle decisively against the Livonians, resulting in rout and panic.

There's a popular misconception that the ice broke up and a bunch of Teutonic Knights and their horses went for a swim. There's no basis for this in the historical record, and it appears to have its origin in Sergei Eisenstein's 1938 film *Alexander Nevsky*, which is justly famous for its Battle on the Ice sequence. (Really, it's one of the best medieval battle scenes in all of cinema, alongside Agincourt in Olivier's *Henry V* and Shrewsbury in Welles's *Chimes at Midnight*.)

As usual, there is some debate about how decisive the defeat really was, and trying to come up with reliable numbers and casualties is an exercise in futility. But the end result was that there were no further excursions into Novgorod, and Nevsky would eventually be canonized for his brilliant victory.

The Livonian Order turned its attention to Terra Mariana's other neighbors. One of the most stubbornly and fiercely resistant of these pagan tribes were the Semigallians. Every time the Teutonic Knights thought they had subjugated them, the Semigallians would whip themselves up into a fresh rebellion, often with tacit support from Lithuanian leaders. That was the story in the 1260s, prompting the Livonian Master, Otto von Lutterberg, to lead yet another campaign in Semigalia. For the better part of a year, von Lutterberg bolstered his forces with troops from Danish Estonia and the Bishoprics of Dorpat and Osel-Wiek, invading in early 1270.

Accompanying von Lutterberg was Prince-Bishop Friedrich of Dorpat, and the Bishop of Osel-Wiek, Hermann of Buxhoeveden. Nope, this isn't the same Hermann who was the earlier Prince-Bishop of Dorpat, just another member of the same Buxhoeveden family, which also included Albert of Riga, who you'll recall founded the Livonian Order nearly seventy years prior. (If you'll forgive a digression, another famous Buxhoeveden was the Baroness Sophie, lady-in-waiting to the last Tsarina, Alexandra. She escaped the fate of the Romanovs, and there's an

unsubstantiated story that this was because of her last name. The Bolsheviks mistook her for a foreign national, and being very careful neither to detain nor "disappear" foreign nationals for fear of foreign intervention, they released her from exile in Siberia, enabling her to eventually make her way to White Russian territory, and from there to England.)

Remember how I said that these sorts of revolts against Teutonic rule were often supported and encouraged by Lithuania? (In fact, it would be Lithuanian support for a rebellion among the Samogitians, who share cultural and linguistic ties with the Semigallians, that would be the *casus belli* for the war that led to the Battle of Grunwald in 1410.) Well, the current revolt in Semigalia was no different, having been encouraged by Traidenis, the new Grand Duke of Lithuania. When von Lutterberg heard that Traidenis was leading a large Lithuanian army in his direction, he retreated to Riga.

Left to their own devices, the Lithuanians marched over the frozen Baltic Sea and looted the surrounding territory, including the Livonian-held island of Saaremaa. Immediately von Lutterberg gathered up additional troops, intent on slaughtering the Lithuanians.

Near the village of Karuse, the two armies met on the frozen sea. Traidenis proved to be a shrewd tactician; according to our only real source, the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, "the Lithuanians cleverly drew their sleds up into a defensive position." These sleds were a formidable obstacle that negated the mobility and momentum of the charging Livonian cavalry. The Lithuanians waited until the knights were close, then pulled back behind the sleds to safety, using spears to unhorse them.

This was exacerbated by the tendency of the Livonian Brothers to charge impetuously ahead of the rest of the army, rather than advancing as a single force as von Lutterberg had planned. Several of the knights were killed in the battle, including their Master von Lutterberg, while the Bishop of Osel-Wiek was seriously wounded. The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle tells us that "There was a wild hacking and hewing on both sides, Christian and heathen, and the blood of men from both armies spilled onto the ice. It was a fierce battle in which many brave and excellent men on both sides were piteously struck down... The surviving brothers were hard pressed, for most of their horses had been killed, and they had to fight on foot. This encouraged the heathens, but those brothers who were still mounted performed heroic deeds... The brothers all fought as one and inflicted much damage upon the heathens there on the ice of the sea. Hungry for glory, they charged back and forth across the ice in many a bold band, and many of the heathens were slain."

The Chronicle puts the Lithuanian losses at 1,600 and the Order's losses at 600, but that's completely bonkers. While these kinds of lopsided numbers are common in medieval sources, it's almost always the loser who takes the catastrophic losses (with most of these inflicted after the "real" fighting is done, while the losing side is trying to get away). For the winners to sustain nearly three times as many deaths as the losers in a hack-and-slash battle stretches incredulity. But the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle is, after all, written (in apparently excruciatingly clumsy rhyming poetry)

by a member of the Livonian Order for the Livonian Order about how totally awesome the Livonian Order is. At any rate, after assuring us that they basically secretly totally actually won, the chronicler tells us that the Livonian Order "rode away, and the heathens rejoiced, for they had held the icy field and thus won the victory."

Both of these battles were humiliating defeats for the Livonian Branch, and the unusual locale is enough to make them stick out in the public consciousness (Peipus more than the semi-obscure Karuse). But just as Grunwald didn't really "break" the power and prestige of the Teutonic Order, which limped on for another hundred years or so before secularizing its lands during the Reformation, these two engagements didn't really alter the destiny of the Livonian Order.

In fact, they outlasted their Teutonic cousins by about thirty years. In 1560, they were crushed by the Russians at Ergeme. With total annihilation all but imminent, they sought the protection of the Polish King (and Grand Duke of Lithuania) Sigismund II Augustus, resulting in the 1561 Treaty of Vilnius. The order was secularized. A chunk of the Livonian territory became the Duchy of Livonia, ruled by the Polish crown. Another chunk became the Duchy of Courland and Semigalia, a vassal state subject to Lithuanian suzerainty. The last of the Livonian Masters, Gotthard von Kettler, became the first Duke of Courland and Semigalia; von Kettler also administrated the Duchy of Livonia in Sigismund's name. By this time, Denmark and Sweden had already claimed much of the northern territory; Terra Mariana was no more.

Lake Peipus 1242

The Novgorod Player's Edge of the map is the one that is home to the Surprise Track; his forces will set up between that edge and the Set-Up Line, while the Livonian Player will set up between the opposite edge and the Set-Up Line. The Novgorod Player places the *Surprise Marker* on the "0" space of the Surprise Track.

Novgorod Player (First Set-Up, Initiative)

Red (*Druzhina*), within two hexes of Set-Up Line
- ⊕ All 8 Units.

Pink (Alexander), within two hexes of Set-Up Line
- ⊕ 13 Units; place all 16 Units in a cup, and randomly draw 3 to put back into the box.
- ⊕ All Units must be placed within five hexes of a Red Unit.

Green (Andrey II), within two hexes of Set-Up Line
- ⊕ 13 Units; place all 16 Units in a cup, and randomly draw 3 to put back into the box.
- ⊕ All Units must be placed within five hexes of a Red Unit.

Gold (Horse Archers), six hexes from Set-Up Line
- ⊕ 12 Units; place all 15 Units in a cup, and randomly draw 3 to put back into the box.

The Novgorod Player uses the four Green Command Markers. He may issue a total of four commands on each turn: two to one Wing, and two to a second Wing.

Livonian Player (First Turn)

White (Horse), six hexes from Set-Up Line

✦ 12 Units; set aside the two "AA" Units, which will always be used; place the remaining 14 Units in a cup, and randomly draw 4 to put back into the box.

Light Gray (Foot), ten hexes from Set-Up Line

✦ 13 Units; place all 16 Units in a cup, and randomly draw 3 to put back into the box.

The Livonian Player uses the three Blue Command Markers. He may issue two commands to one of his two Wings on each turn.

Victory Conditions

Each player scores Victory Points for Eliminating Units:

✦ 2 VP for Horse and Veteran Units
✦ 1 VP for Infantry and Levies
✦ +2 VP for Crown Units per Series Rule 13.1

The Novgorod Player also scores VP per the *Surprise* special rule.

Each Player checks for Victory at the end of his opponent's Player Turn (*before* that Player has the chance to Declare Initiative).

The Novgorod Player wins if

✦ He has scored 25 VP, and 5 more than the Livonian Player; OR
✦ He has scored 30 VP.

The Livonian Player wins if

✦ He has scored 25 VP; OR
✦ He has eliminated all 8 Red Units.

The *Druzhina*

The elite bodyguard for Prince Alexander Nevsky and his brother Andrey II, the *Druzhina* are the best Units the Novgorod Player has at his disposal. As the Pink and Green Wings have no Veteran or Horse Units, they can use proximity to a Red Unit to fulfill the conditions of Wing Integrity. Furthermore, Pink and Green Units that are within five hexes of a Red Unit fight at +1CC.

Horse Archers

The Gold (Horse Archers) Wing cannot receive Commands until one of two things happens: (1) the Novgorod Player Declares Initiative (see *Surprise & Initiative* below), or (2) a Livonian Unit moves adjacent to a Horse Archer Unit. As soon as one of these things occurs, the Novgorod Player may issue Commands to the Gold Wing normally. As Light Horse (LH) type Units, they act as a LH would normally, and as Units with a Fire Factor, they may also perform Fire during a Fire Phase. Additionally, the Horse Archers may also perform Fire during a Horse Phase (after resolving Movement for the Units, but before resolving Charge; as you can never fire when adjacent to enemy Units, naturally a Unit cannot both Fire and Charge in this phase).

Surprise & Initiative

If the Novgorod Player holds the Initiative Marker but does not Declare it, at the end of each Novgorod Player Turn he will advance the *Surprise Marker* one space along the Surprise Track. On the turn that he Declares Initiative, the *Surprise Marker* stops advancing (he must Declare Initiative if there are no spaces remaining on the Surprise Track). He immediately scores VP equal to the number printed on the current space of the Surprise Track. He is now able to issue Commands to his Gold Wing, and is required to do so on his Player Turn immediately following.

If a Livonian Unit moves adjacent to a Gold Wing Unit *before* the Novgorod Player has Declared Initiative, **remove** the *Surprise Marker* from the Surprise Track. The Novgorod Player scores no VP for Surprise. He may still Declare Initiative on a subsequent Turn.

KARUSE 1270

The Lithuanian Player's Edge of the map is the one that is home to the Surprise Track (though that Track has no purpose in this Battle); he sets up between that edge and the Set-Up Line, while the Livonian Player will set up between the opposite edge and the Set-Up Line.

Lithuanian Player (First Set-Up)

Pink (First Echelon), adjacent to Set-Up Line

✦ All 16 Units

Green (Second Echelon), five hexes from Set-Up Line

✦ All 16 Units

Barricade: place all 16 Suppression Markers, Suppression side-up, three hexes from Set-Up Line

The Lithuanian Player uses the four Green Command Markers. He may issue two commands to one of his Wings each Turn.

Livonian Player (First Turn, Initiative)

All Horse Units deploy six hexes from the Set-Up Line; all other Units, seven hexes.

Dark Blue (Right; Seivereith)

✦ All 6 Horse Units
✦ 6 Infantry/Levy Units; place all 10 Units in a cup and randomly draw 4 to put back in the box.

Dark Gray (Center; von Lutterburg)

✦ All 8 Horse Units
✦ All 8 Veteran/Infantry Units

Light Blue (Left; Buxhoeveden)

✦ All 6 Horse Units
✦ 6 Infantry/Levy Units; place all 10 Units in a cup and randomly draw 4 to put back in the box.

The Livonian Player uses the three Blue Command Markers. He may issue two commands to one of his Wings each Turn (but see *Bold Brothers* and *Unhorsed & Dismounted Units* below).

Victory Conditions

Each player scores Victory Points for Eliminating Units:

- 2 VP for Horse and Veteran Units
- 4 VP for Unhorsed Veteran Units
- 1 VP for Infantry and Levies
- +2 VP for Crown Units per Series Rule 13.1

Wing Integrity is key in this battle.

Each Player checks for Victory at the end of his opponent's Player Turn (*before* that Player has the chance to Declare Initiative).

The Lithuanian Player wins if

- He has scored 30 VP, and 15 more than the Livonian Player; OR
- He has scored 35 VP.

The Livonian Player wins if

- He has scored 20 VP.

Barricades

The Lithuanian Barricades may be passed through freely by Lithuanian Units. A Lithuanian Unit may not however end its movement in a Barricade hex.

Livonian Units must stop the instant that they move adjacent to a Barricade, just as if it had a Zone of Control. Barricades that are still on their Suppression Marker side are flipped over when the Livonian Unit becomes adjacent; if multiple Barricades are adjacent to a Unit, the Livonian Player chooses which one is revealed.

At the end of any Livonian Move Phase (or the Move segment of a Horse Phase) or Advance After Combat in which a Livonian Horse Unit *moved* adjacent to a Barricade, an Unhorsing Roll (see below) is made, applying the number printed on the Barricade counter as a modifier to the die roll. If multiple Barricades are adjacent to the Unit, the Livonian Player chooses which modifier to apply.

Livonian Units may Withdraw from a Barricade's "ZOC" as they would normally, and Horse Units that begin the Horse Phase adjacent to a Barricade may move away from them. Barricades cannot be moved through by the Livonians, but they *can* be Destroyed. To attempt to Destroy a Barricade, a Horse Unit must Attack it during the Charge segment of a Horse Phase. This counts as that Unit's Attack, and the Attack may be supported by Participating Units as normal. As a Barricade is not a Unit, there is no UTMM DRM, but the printed number on the Barricade counter is used as a DRM to the die roll. The Barricade is treated as being in Shield Wall. A **DL** or **EX** result will destroy the Barricade (removing the counter), with an **EX** result also causing a Step Loss for the Charging Horse Unit. **DR** results are ignored entirely; **AL** and **AE** results still have their normal effects.

Finally, Lithuanian Units that are adjacent to a Barricade that is itself adjacent to a Livonian Unit that they themselves are not adjacent to (say that five times fast), may Attack those Livonian Units. Basically, they are using the Barricade for

cover to lurch forward, attack, and then withdraw back to safety. When a Lithuanian Unit does this, it does not suffer any Step Losses, Eliminations, or Retreats. These attacks cannot be Supported by other Lithuanian Units. Lithuanian Units that are in EZOC cannot make this kind of attack.

Bold Brothers

The Livonian Player is normally limited to activating one Wing per Turn. However, as long as he holds Initiative, he may choose to activate all Horse Units (for all three Wings) as a single "Wing", issuing them one command and one command only: a single Horse Phase. During the Charge segment of the Horse Phase, these Units may only participate in Attacks made by Units belonging to their "original" Wing.

Unhorsed & Dismounted Units

Livonian Units may become Unhorsed as the result of an Unhorsing Roll. Two events trigger an Unhorsing Roll: (1) a Livonian Horse Unit moves adjacent to a Barricade, and (2) a full-strength Livonian Horse Unit suffers a Step-Loss as the result of a DL or AL (not EX) combat result.

When either of these events occur, the Lithuanian Player rolls one die, adding the Barricade DRM in the first case. If the modified die result is 6 or more, the Horse Unit is Unhorsed; replace it with an Unhorsed Veteran Unit counter. Note that Unhorsed Units that are Eliminated are worth double VP, which isn't great for the Livonian Player, naturally.

The Livonian Player has the option of Dismounting his Horse Units to prevent them from being Unhorsed. To do so, at the beginning of a Horse Phase (before the Move segment), he simply removes the full-strength Horse Unit and replaces it with a Dismounted Veteran Unit. (As it is no longer a Horse Unit, it cannot Move or Charge during the Horse Phase.)

Dismounted and Unhorsed Units form a separate, new Wing. They can receive Commands normally.