



U.S. ARMY

# THE ASC HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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## Critical Lessons Learned

### FROM THE ARCHIVES



Shown above, a photo of the Soviet bombardment of the Finnish lines on the Karelian Peninsula 30 November 1939.

### MONTHLY TRIVIA

- 1 What nation ended a war with more tanks than it started with?
- 2 What was the luxury that the Finnish considered essential?
- 3 What foreign Nation provided the most military support?

#### ANSWERS FOR PREVIOUS QUESTIONS

- 1 Who was Rock Island Arsenal's first historian and the author of the oldest history of the island?  
➤ MAJ Daniel Webster Flagler, compiled a history of RIA in 1877.
- 2 Who can conduct oral histories?  
➤ Anyone, the ASC history office is happy to assist. Simply collect the history,
- 3 How can the ASC History Office provide you and your team CLP?  
➤ Through the reading program, holding LPD's, Staff Rides or historical classes.

Select all images with Finnish snipers

🔄 🎧 ⓘ

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An obvious more recent joke/ meme but points out the story of resistance of the Finnish people and a sniper named Simo Hayha better known as the “white death.”

Building upon the March edition regarding the application of historical lessons learned to present day scenarios. We wanted to give a brief snip-it of one that we cited to see if it sounded familiar. On 6 December 1917 the Finnish senate (officially a state of Imperial Russia) declared independence following the start of the Russian revolution. From that date a number of attempts were made by communist political movements to influence Finland to rejoin the now Soviet Union. General Secretary Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, increasingly felt it was an embarrassment to have let the state become independent during a time of weakness. Pressure was put upon Finland through the late 1930's by displaying the Finish leaders as a "vicious and reactionary fascist clique."

After Stalin gained absolute power following the “Great Purge” of 1938, where he eliminated perceived political enemies to the scale of 700,000 to 1.2 million executed, he focused on righting past wrongs. Negotiations began in April 1938 between the Soviet Union and Finland to discuss preparations to defend against a potential German invasion. The Soviets demanded Finland cede or lease some islands in the Gulf of Finland along the seaward approaches to Leningrad as a defensive measure. Finland politely declined and stated the Nations intent to remain neutral. The negotiations continued until 13 November 1939 along with increasing Soviet military mobilization maneuvers along the Finnish border. Without a deal the Soviet and Finnish Government representative left the negotiations, the Finn's believing there would be future meetings and that war was not imminent. The Soviet Army in the Leningrad district numbered approximately 500,000 and the entire Finnish Army numbered 280,000 with Reserve Soldiers.

On 26 November 1939 the Soviet village of Mainila (next to the Finnish border) was shelled by an unknown party killing four and wounding nine Soviet border guards. The shelling was a false flag operation as Marshal Carl Mannerheim, Finnish Army Commander, had previously moved all of his artillery away from the border to avoid the appearance that they had the capability to fire on the Soviet positions. Additionally, Soviet war games held in March 1938 and 1939 had been based on a scenario in which border incidents taking place at the village of Mainila would spark the war.

What followed for the next 105 days was a war that Soviet Union claimed had started out of its own self defense. The Finnish Army and people would put up a vigorous defense along an 830 mile border with a smaller, initially, well trained army with outdated weapons and an ammunition stockpile expected to last 90 days. Western Allies provided some aid but many of the supplies arrived after the war had already ended. Stories of Finnish “Sisu” or fighting spirit as well as their use of “Motti” or unconventional tactics highlighted the accounts of the war. The war ended on 13 March 1940 with the Finnish government successfully holding off more than 800,000 Soviet Soldiers. The ensuing Moscow Peace Treaty would result in a loss, for Finland, of approximately 11% of its land and 69,461 killed or wounded. While the Soviets considered the invasion a victory it created a dangerous image of the Soviet Army's inability to destroy a smaller and weaker army. They would sustain official losses of approximately 467,000 killed or wounded. Along with 3,179 tanks. For more contact the ASC History Office.



### ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

During Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the Department of Defense pays tribute to the remarkable contributions of individuals like Florence Finch, Bruce Lee, Ellison Onizuka, and Kurt Chew-Een Lee, whose stories embody the resilience, courage, and diversity of these vibrant communities. Florence Finch, a Filipino American, emerged as a symbol of hope and defiance during the Japanese occupation in World War II. She aided the Filipino resistance in efforts to repel the enemy by passing valuable intelligence to the Allies, and risking her life to sabotage enemy operations. Bruce Lee's legacy transcends martial arts, inspiring generations with his philosophy of self-expression and cultural pride. As an iconic figure in popular culture, he challenged stereotypes and advocated for representation, paving the way for greater diversity in film and beyond.

Ellison Onizuka's journey from Kealahou, Hawaii to the stars embodies the boundless aspirations of Pacific Islanders. As NASA's first Asian American astronaut, he exemplified the spirit of exploration and discovery, inspiring countless dreamers to reach for outer space. The amazing stories of Florence Finch, Bruce Lee, Ellison Onizuka, and Kurt Chew-Een Lee showcase the ingenuity, bravery, and creativity of AANHPI leaders in our Nation. Whether it's in the fields of technology, entertainment, or in the military, these Americans should be memorialized and celebrated for their innovations. During this month of celebration and reflection, we honor their legacies and recognize their enduring impact on history and their invaluable contributions to the American culture. Their stories inspire us to embrace our diversity, uphold our shared values, and strive for a more inclusive and equitable future for all.



*H i s t o r y   i s   m a d e   e v e r y d a y   i n   t h i s   C o m m a n d*

Cover Photo: Finnish troops pictures on 23 February 1940 after successfully ambushing a Soviet armored column,

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