



A Warrior Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of Sweden as a Military Superpower, 1611-1721

By Henrik O. Lunde

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This book examines the meteoric rise of Sweden as the pre-eminent military power in Europe during the Thirty Years War during the 1600's, and then follows its line of warrior kings into the next century until the Swedes finally meet their demise, in an overreach into the vastness of Russia.

A small Scandinavian nation, with at most one and a half million people and scant internal resources of its own, there was small logic to how Sweden could become the dominant power on the Continent. That Sweden achieved this was due to its leadership?a case-study in history when pure military skill, and that alone, could override the demographic and economic factors which have in modern times been termed so pre-eminent.

Once Protestantism emerged, via Martin Luther, the most devastating war in European history ensued, as the Holy Roman Empire sought to reassert its authority by force. Into this bloody maelstrom stepped Gustav Adolf of Sweden, a brilliant tactician and strategist, who with his finely honed Swedish legions proceeded to establish a new authority in northern Europe. Gustav, as brave as he was brilliant, was finally killed while leading a cavalry charge at the Battle of Lützen.

He had innovated, however, tactics and weaponry that put his successors in good stead, as Sweden remained a great power, rivaled only by France and Spain in terms of territory in Europe.

And then one of his successors, Karl XII, turned out to be just as great a military genius as Gustav himself, and as the year 1700 arrived, Swedish armies once more burst out in all directions. Karl, like Gustav, assumed the throne while still a teenager, but immediately displayed so much acumen, daring and skill that chroniclers could only compare him, like Gustav, to Alexander the Great.

This book examines thoroughly, yet in highly readable fashion, the century during which Swedish military power set an example for all Europe. While the Continent was most visibly divided along religious lines?Catholic versus

Protestant?geopolitical motives always underlined the conflicts. Sweden's reliance on its military skill was especially noteworthy, as it veritably founded the modern concept of making wars pay through conquest.

Karl XII finally let his ambitions lead him too far, as did Napoleon and Hitler in following centuries, into the vastness of the nascent Russian Empire, where he was finally defeated, at Poltava in Ukraine. Thus the period of Swedish supremacy in Europe came to a close, albeit not without leaving important lessons behind. In this work, by renowned author Henrik O. Lunde, these are clearly to be seen.

About the author:

HENRIK?O. LUNDE, born in Norway, moved to America as a child and thence rose in the U.S. Army to become a Colonel in Special Forces. Highly decorated for bravery in Vietnam, he proceeded to gain advance degrees and assume strategic posts, his last being in the Plans and Policy Branch of Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe.

After retirement from the Army he turned to writing, with a focus on his native North, and given his combination of personal tactical knowledge plus objective strategic grasp has authored several groundbreaking works. These include Hitler's Pre-Emptive War, about Norway 1940, Finland's War of Choice, and Hitler's Wave-Breaking Concept, which analyzes the controversial retreat of Germany's Army Group North from the Leningrad front in WWII.

In A Warrior Dynasty he reexamines the potential of pure military skill in global affairs. His next, long-awaited work, will examine how America itself has fared in this regard during the last 50 years.

REVIEWS

"delivers insights such as how Sweden's reliance on its military skill was notable because it established the modern concept of making wars pay through conquest. The author also shows how important lessons can be learned from Sweden's ascent to superpower and downfall"

Toy Soldier and Model Figure Magazine

The idea that Sweden has played a key role in shaping European history at first seems unlikely. But by telling that history from an entirely Swedish perspective, Lunde demonstrates how his country both broke the Holy Roman Empire, and then woke Russia from sleeping-giant status. An intriguing read: file under "surprisingly insightful".

History of War Magazine (UK)



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Editorial Review

About the Author

Henrik Lunde, US Army (ret.) was born in Norway and came to the United States as a child following World War II. After graduating from the University of California he accepted a US Army commission, and in addition to earning a degree in international relations from the University of Syracuse, he is a graduate of the Army's Airborne, Ranger, and Pathfinder courses as well as the Command and General Staff College and the US Army War College. Much of Colonel Lunde's troop assignments were in airborne divisions or in Special Forces. Highly decorated on the battlefield, he served three combat tours in Vietnam, and afterward in the Plans and Policy Branch of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. His last Army assignment was Director of National and International Security Studies at the US Army War College. Lunde currently lives in Florida.

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