



Ariel view of Helsinki and the Fortress of Sveaborg during the Crimean War

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Panoramic View of the Fortress of Sveaborg, Commanding the Entrance to the Town and Harbour of Helsingfors in the Gulf of Finland. The Fortress of Sveaborg is built on seven rocky islands, through which lies the only channel for shipping. They mount upwards of 2000 guns, most of which can be brought to bear upon vessels entering the harbour. The islands are connected by means of wooden bridges & most of the batteries are bomb proof. The harbour & town of Helsingfors are the great commercial depôt of the trade & commerce of Northern Russia. Projected from illuminated charts & Imperial Russian surveys recently published at St Petersburg.

London, Stannard & Dixon, 1855. Tinted lithograph, printed area 485 x 690mm.

£800

A map-view (not to scale) looking down on the heavily-fortified Russian fortress, built to defend the approaches to Helsinki. It was issued to illustrate the actions of the Baltic Fleet in 1854, during the Crimean War. Under Sir Charles Napier, an Anglo-French force blockaded the Gulf of Finland, preventing Russia's North Fleet leaving St Petersburg, Russia's only northern port open all year around. However Napier refused to Sveaborg, considering it too well defended. The British press pilloried Napier for his lack of action, causing the Admiralty to terminate his command at the end of the year. In 1855 a better-equipped fleet bombarded Sveaborg for nearly two days, but failed to knock out the Russian batteries before withdrawing.



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Stock ID :14080