



# Sunwheels and Siegrunen: Wiking, Nordland, Nederland and the Germanic Waffen-SS in Photographs: Volume 1

By Marc Rikmenspoel

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Western European collaboration with the Germans is still misunderstood, nearly 70 years after the end of World War II. On the one hand, the countries involved have usually played down the number of volunteers they provided, while on the other, German propaganda often overstated the participation of foreigners, especially in the Waffen-SS. The reality was that tens of thousands of volunteers from the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland served in the Waffen-SS and the Legions it sponsored. They fought alongside other volunteers and conscripts from Estonia and Latvia in battles that are rarely mentioned in English-language literature, yet were often of decisive importance and vast scale. Following on from his previous work on the Germanic Waffen-SS, respected Waffen-SS historian Marc Rikmenspoel now gives the subject his full attention in the first of two lavish volumes of photographs. The unprecedented coverage begins in this volume with the founding of the Germania Regiment in 1935, and continues with the forming of the famous Wiking Division in late 1940. Wiking is followed across Ukraine in 1941, and to the Caucasus the next year. The Dutch and Flemish Legions are shown in the hellish fighting along the Volkhov River, and the coverage extends to the Norwegian Legion that took part in the siege of Leningrad, and the Danish volunteers that were flown into the notorious Demyansk pocket. Even the little-known Norwegian ski company is portrayed during its time near the Arctic Circle in northern Russia. The photos include personalities, rare insignia, uniform details, and many vehicle shots, along with highly detailed captions.

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## **Sunwheels and Siegrunen: Wiking, Nordland, Nederland and the Germanic Waffen-SS in Photographs: Volume 1** By Marc Rikmenspoel Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #719931 in Books
- Published on: 2015-09-19
- Released on: 2015-10-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 13.20" h x 1.16" w x 7.93" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 432 pages

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#### Review

In fact, Rikmenspoel's years of industrious work in the field mean he holds such a vast collection of wartime images and data that Sunwheels and Siegrunen has been separated into two volumes, with the second thick tome in preparation at Helion and tentatively scheduled for publication in 2017. Packed with everyday photos and arresting images, volume one is a carefully assembled, thoughtfully presented, polished production that's certain to find much favor among aficionados of photographic collections as well as anyone interested in Germanic volunteers in the Waffen-SS. It certainly stands on its own. But for everyone who wants even more pictures of daily life of troops on the Russian Front?and there will be plenty of eager buyers?volume two promises a hearty second helping with more of the same. Well done, Mr. Rikmenspoel. (*Stone & Stone Second World War Books*)

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#### About the Author

Marc Rikmenspoel is the author of several previous books about the Waffen-SS. He wishes current scanning and information-sharing processes were available when he first began writing on this topic over 15 years ago! After many years of living in Colorado, he recently moved to the New York City area.

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