Objects of the Battle of Tampere

The Whites captured the city of Tampere, which was important to the Reds, at the end of March and beginning of April in 1918. The battle for Näsilinna took place on April 3-4, 1918. Immediately afterward, while fighting was still ongoing elsewhere in the city, the director of the Häme Museum, artist Gabriel Engberg, rushed to the battlefield and was horrified by the traces of war. However, he understood the uniqueness of the events and their historical significance and began to collect objects for the museum's collections.

Your task is to help Gabriel Engberg search for and document items from the Civil War. There are 20 items located throughout the building. Blue arrows indicate the route to the next room, and the white ball allows you to explore the item. The white arrow lets you return from the item. Will you find all the items?

*Background: Who was Gabriel Engberg?*Born into a family of craftsmen, Gabriel Engberg (1872–1953) was one of the first professional artists in Tampere. In 1908, he became the curator of the Häme Museum, which had begun its operations in Tampere. Engberg contributed in many ways to the development of the city's art scene. During the Civil War, the Häme Museum, located in Näsilinna, became a battlefield, and its collections suffered significant material damage. Amidst the destruction, Engberg recognized the importance of the events and independently began searching for materials related to the battles in Näsilinna and its surroundings. In early May, the Senate officially instructed Engberg to collect materials for the collections of the National Museum and the Häme Museum. The unique collection of the Häme Museum accumulated hundreds of items, including weapons, clothing, footwear, and grenade fragments. The restoration of the damages at Näsilinna took two years before the museum was reopened to the public on April 4, 1920. Later, Engberg vigorously advocated for an art museum in Tampere, and in 1931, he was appointed as the first curator of the art museum.

**Empire Room**

1) How many items can be found in the room?
Three items can be found in the room: Maija doll, snuff box, spirit bottle, playing cards, and a coin from red Finland.

2) Find Maija the doll. What were the hiding places for civilians during the battles of Tampere?
Maija the doll lost its legs when a grenade struck the window of a residential building located at Hallituskatu 25. As the Whites advanced towards the city center, the residents of the outskirts had to move to the city center for safety in churches, other stone buildings, and cellars from artillery fire.

3) What explained Melin's company's surprise attack on Näsilinna?
Museum curator Gabriel Engberg heard that the Reds stationed in Näsilinna had found denatured spirit in both his and the janitor's apartments on the evening of April 2nd and had consumed it heavily. As a result, their sleep would have been very deep when Melin's company attacked the palace in the early morning of April 3rd. Melin's troops managed to surprise the Reds thoroughly.

**Upper Hall**

4) Both sides of the Civil War received military aid from abroad, from whom?
The Russian Bolsheviks supplied rifles to the Reds from Petersburg and Tallinn, and the Reds also received them from Russian garrisons in Finland. The Whites relied on arms purchases from Germany.

**Prehistoric Exhibition**

5) What aspects can be inferred about the backgrounds of the Reds fighting in Tampere?
Typical rural items found after the battle around Näsilinna, such as a birch bark container, a butter box, and a knife, tell about the backgrounds of the Red Guards who fought in Tampere and the civilian equipment used by the soldiers. Many Red Guards came to defend Tampere from the rural areas of Pirkanmaa as well as from Varsinais-Suomi and Satakunta.

6) What factors indicate that the Finnish Civil War was a war of amateurs?
The Finnish Civil War was a war of amateurs. The majority of the Finnish participants had no prior military training or proper equipment. The Red Guards were mainly composed of workers from cities and industrial centers and the landless population from the countryside. It was quite common in the Red Guards to send men with basic military training to the front just a few days after joining the guard. Men who had received quick training often did not even know how to handle a rifle properly.

7) What characteristics made the armoured train such an effective weapon?
The trains had an armoured locomotive in the middle, with armoured cars armed with quick-firing guns and machine guns on both sides. Additionally, a railcar often ran in front of the armoured train, tasked with repairing the track damaged by the enemy.

**Lower Hall**

8) What did Gabriel Engberg mean when he said: "The Swedish men of the Svenska brigade were peculiar masters at acquiring themselves 'memories'."? Who belonged to the Swedish brigade?
Gabriel Engberg, the curator of the Häme Museum, wrote that after the battles, the men of the Swedish brigade looted Näsilinna. The Swedish brigade included idealists who dreamed of the reunification of Finland and Sweden, professional officers who had gained combat experience, adventurers, and even criminals.

**Vestibule**

9) From what time is the guard duty roster, and to whom is it likely to have belonged?
On the guard duty roster of the Red stronghold at Näsilinna during the night of April 2-3, 1918, just before the attack by the White Melin's company, there are eight names. This is likely the guard duty roster of the Red artillerymen.

**Outside**

10) Women also joined the Red Guards. What backgrounds and motivations did they mostly have?
During the Civil War, the Reds established women's guards in the largest cities and industrial areas. The initiative to establish them came from the women themselves. The guards mainly consisted of young unmarried working-class women who served in support, guarding, and militia roles, but also participated in battles. The motivations of women to join the Red Guards were diverse: enthusiasm for the labor movement and the revolutionary cause, a desire for independent status in society, the example of family and comrades, as well as unemployment and the good pay of the guards. Women in the guards often wore trousers and other men's clothing, defying the norms of the time.

11) The troops went to the Civil War in poor equipment. What caused the most concern regarding clothing?
The biggest concern among both sides in the war was the footwear situation, which led to the looting of boots from the dead.

12) What happened to Oskar Nordling?
Elementary school teacher Oskar Vilhelm Nordling (born 1890) was from Uusikaarlepyy. He joined the Markby home guard in the fall of 1917. In March 1918, Nordling joined the conscript Melin's company in Vaasa, which was heading to Tampere and the battle of Näsilinna. Nordling was injured in a southeast corner room on the second floor when a white grenade came through the wall. Severely wounded, Nordling's leg was only attached to his body by a thin strip of leather, and a comrade cut it off completely. The boot with the leg was thrown out of the window. The boot and leg were later found on the northern wall of the palace and ended up in the horse cemetery. In the upstairs hallway, the wounded Nordling leaned against the Saint George and the Dragon sculpture, and his blood soaked into the oak floor. Nordling died from his wounds in Näsilinna.

13) Why did people join the Red Guards? Mention two reasons. What was the benefit of the Red Guards membership cards after the battle of Näsilinna?
The Red Guards were mostly members of labor organizations, from whom joining the guard could even be expected. Social pressure to join also came from relatives, neighbours, and coworkers who had previously been involved in the movement. Economic reasons also played a role: the pay for Red Guards corresponded to that of a skilled worker. Towards the end of the civil war, men were even forcibly recruited into the Red Guards. This membership card was found in the southern hall of the lower floor of Näsilinna, and it helped to identify the deceased individuals.