

This brochure was produced as part of the Eastern Lapland's Winter War History Unfolded and Continuation War Years in Eastern Lapland projects. The projects are funded by a rural development grant issued by the European Union to the local action group Northernmost Lapland Leader ry. The project is administered by the Federation of Municipalities in Eastern Lapland and supported by the following companies and associations:

Alaperän yhteismetsä
Asuste-Kenkä Pesonen
Ikihirsi Oy
Joutsijärven kyläyhdistys ry
Kaatuneiden Muistosäätiö
Kemijärven Apteekki
Kemijärven reservinupseerit ry
Kemijärven yhteismetsä
Koillis-Lapin Sähkö Oy
K-Supermarket Kauppapaikka
Lapin sotavainajien muiston
vaalimisyhdistys
LC-Kemijärvi

LC-Pelkosenniemi
Matkalle Sallaan ry
Mestarin Kievari Oy
Metsä Group
Pelkosenniemen Vesihuolto
osuuskunta
Rovaniemi-Napapiirin Rotaryklubi (ry)
Saijan kyläyhdistys ry
Sallan Osuuspankki
Sallan Reserviläiset ry
Savukosken kehittämisyhdistys ry
Sotavahinkosäätiö
Suvannon kyläyhdistys ry

This brochure is available in print from tourism information points, libraries and museums. It is also available in electronic format on municipality and tourist information websites (contact details can be found at the end of the brochure).

Text: Pentti Airio, Minna Hamara ja Kaisa Hytönen

Covers: Kaisa Hytönen

Layout: Kopio Niini Oy

Printing: Pohjolan Painotuote POPA Oy

Itä-Lapin kuntayhtymä
The Local Federation of East Lapland

Kuumaniemeinkatu 2 A
98100 KEMIJÄRVI

+358 (0) 40 593 2835
italappi.lappi.fi

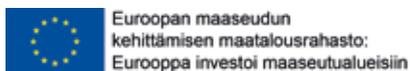


Table of contents

TO THE READER	3
THE WINTER WAR	5
The first days of the Winter War in Eastern Lapland	6
Events at Märkäjärvi	6
From Salla towards Savukoski.....	7
The Battle of Pelkosenniemi	7
From Märkäjärvi towards Kemijärvi	10
The Battle of Joutsijärvi and Mäntyvaara	10
The situation stabilises in Saija and Paikanselkä.....	12
Svenska Frivilligkåren (Swedish Volunteer Corps).....	12
On the structure of the troops.....	14
INTERIM PEACE	15
The harsh terms of the peace treaty.....	15
Mobilisation and cooperation with Germany	16
CONTINUATION WAR	18
Offensive towards Vanha Salla	18
The road of the Finnish Wilderness Jaegers	19
Occupation of Alakurtti and advance towards the River Verman	21
End of trench warfare	22
German retreat from the River Verman and Eastern Lapland	23
On the structure of the troops	26
HISTORIC WAR ATTRACTIONS IN THE EASTERN LAPLAND AREA	27
Salla.....	27
Kemijärvi	33
Pelkosenniemi	38
Savukoski	40
Attractions on the Russian side of the border	44
HISTORIC WAR ATTRACTIONS IN THE EASTERN LAPLAND ON THE MAP	50
FURTHER INFORMATION ON TOURISM SERVICES IN THE AREA ...	52

TO THE READER

This brochure details the war history of Eastern Lapland between the years 1939–1945. During those years, decisive battles were fought and long evacuation journeys were made. The period of war left its mark on the area - not only on the town of Kemijärvi, but also on the municipalities of Salla, Pelkosenniemi and Savukoski. It also left its mark on the people in the area, who had to leave their homes up to three times in some places because of the Winter War, partisan danger and the Lapland War.

As the Winter War broke out, the aim of Soviet troops was to cut Finland in half at its narrowest point in the north. In Salla, the overwhelmingly larger enemy advanced from the old border to Pelkosenniemi and to Joutsijärvi. Battles decisive for northern Finland and the entire country were fought in these areas.

Once peace had been established in 1940, the municipality of Salla had lost around half of its surface area to the Soviet Union. Those who had lost their homes had to start a new life elsewhere. The reconstruction of areas destroyed by war demanded hard work and endurance. In addition to the cession of territory, the provisions of the peace treaty also required the construction of a railway line from Kemijärvi to Kellosoelkä. The construction of this Salla line employed people during the period of interim peace, as did the construction of new defence fortifications and garrisons. The threat of a new war hung in the air. The northernmost concrete bunkers along the Salpa defence line were constructed to Joutsijärvi in Kemijärvi and tank barriers were built in Salla and Savukoski.

The arrival of the Germans in Eastern Lapland at the start of the Continuation War has left the area with a unique war history. Together, Finland and Germany launched an offensive on the Soviet Union from the direction of Salla in summer 1941. The offensive was meant to progress to Kandalaksha (Kantalahti), but stopped for three years at the Verman River. The following period of trench warfare ended when the German troops, attacked by the Soviets, retreated back to Finland and towards northern Norway in autumn 1944. The German influence in Eastern Lapland and throughout the whole of northern Finland was significant in many ways. The Germans both constructed and destroyed Eastern Lapland. The reconstruction period following the war is a chapter of its own in the history of Eastern Lapland.

This brochure contains a concise information package on the battles fought during the Winter War and Continuation War in Eastern Lapland and on the

Soviet Union's side of the border right up to the Verma River. You can learn about the military history of Eastern Lapland in more detail by visiting museums in the area, reading municipal veteran registers and military history literature, and also by visiting the areas where the events themselves took place. The most important historic war attractions in the Eastern Lapland area dating from the Winter War and Continuation War are grouped by municipality in this brochure. Most sites have signs or information boards which explain the events which took place in the area and give some background context. The battlegrounds of the Continuation War are located on the Russian side of the border. Please note that it is not permitted to visit sites located in the Russian border zone without a separate access permit issued by the border authorities.

You can also learn more about the military history in Eastern Lapland through documentary films. The films Eastern Lapland Winter War and Continuation War Years in Eastern Lapland are available in libraries, museums and tourism information points in the area (contact details can be found at the end of this brochure). You can also order the films from the Federation of Municipalities in Eastern Lapland. You can also find out more about historic military sites at the address www.ita-lapinsotanahtavyudet.fi.

In familiarising ourselves with history, we can also understand the present. The aim of this brochure is to detail the history of the area and to pass on information. The valuable work carried out by the inhabitants of Eastern Lapland on behalf of their country and home region must not be forgotten.

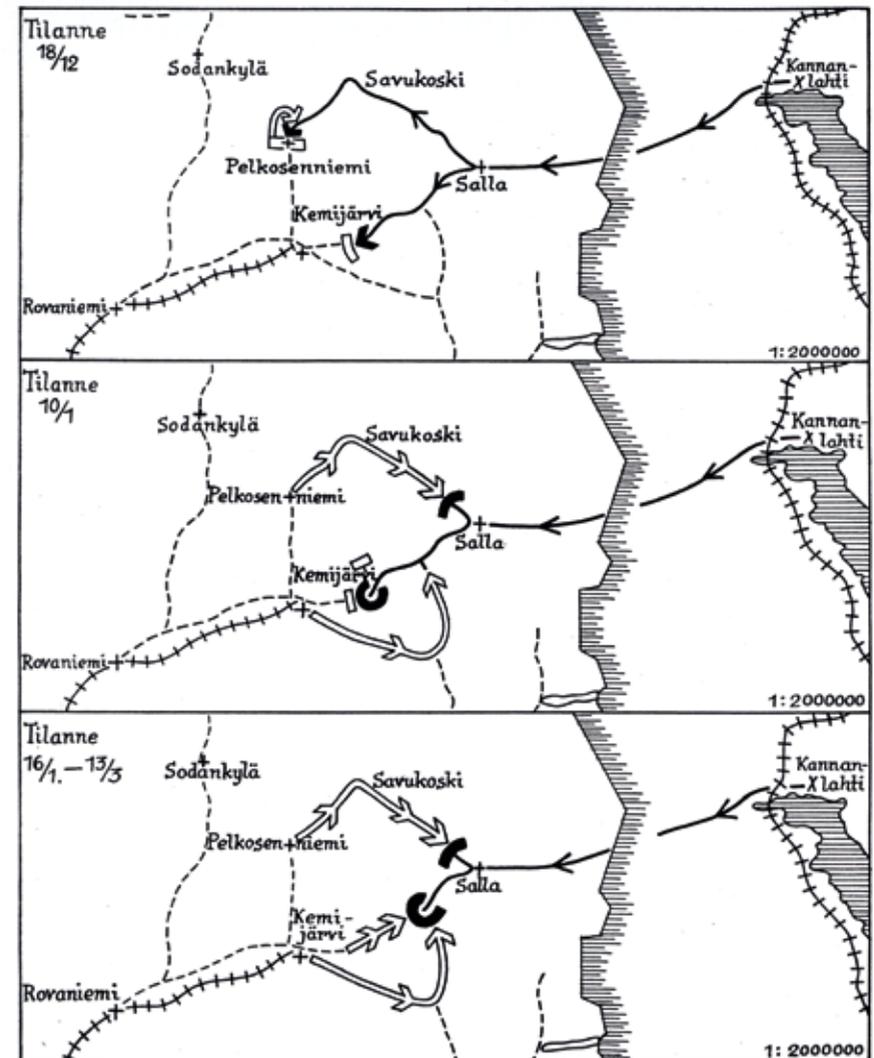
Feel free to learn more about the military history of Eastern Lapland!

The Local Federation of East Lapland



Kemijärvi, Salla, Savukoski and Pelkosenniemi

THE WINTER WAR



How battles advanced in the Eastern Lapland area during the Winter War

The first days of the Winter War in Eastern Lapland

The Winter War took place between Finland and the Soviet Union from 30 November 1939 to 13 March 1940. It began without a declaration of war when the Soviets attacked in the Salla direction; the troops of the 122nd Soviet Division crossed the border on 30 November 1939 at Hanhivaara, with few Finnish border guards resisting them.

The Soviet troops aimed to cut Finland in half at its slimmest point and to advance from the Salla direction to Rovaniemi via Kemijärvi in two weeks and to continue further to Tornio from there. Finland did not want to provoke its eastern neighbour by locating troops close to the border, so the Soviet soldiers who had crossed the border advanced quickly, thanks to their superior manpower. The battle in Kelsinkäinen (Kieristelemävaara) began in the evening of 2 December, and the position was surrendered as ordered on the following morning. The 17 Detached Battalion (Er.P 17), "the Salla Battalion", received a baptism of fire and survived it well. The battalion had been formed as additional manoeuvres began in mid-October in the premises of the Border Guard Salla company. The border guards formed the core of the troops.

The next battles took place in the Kairala and Mikkola areas on the western side of the lake. The 25th Detached Battalion (Er.P 25) had transferred there as reinforcements from Rovaniemi, and it assumed responsibility for the front on Independence Day, allowing Er.P 17 to rest for a while. The two battalions were formed into Contingent Roininen with Major Vilho Roininen as its Commander-in-Chief. Withdrawal from the Kairala bottleneck was inevitable when four Soviet battalions attacked simultaneously on 7 December. The problem for the Finns was that they had no anti-tank defence weaponry. The troops were undermanned and had to burn down their own homes, continue the delay and slow down the Soviet troops by trying to actively counter-attack, break through them and cause destruction.

The enemy's battalion, reinforced with a tank company, entered the Salla parish village in the small hours of 9 December as it was burning. Earlier attacks by the infantry had been beaten off with rifles and machine guns. Eleven tanks crossed the Sallajoki River, causing the Finnish troops to surrender their position and withdraw, as they had no proper anti-tank equipment available.

Events at Märkäjärvi

The Finnish defenders withdrew on 9 December to the Ruuhijärvi isthmus, east of Märkäjärvi (today, the Salla parish village). A dozen tanks managed to break

this defence line and break through to the rear, causing damage to the supply troops. The enemy's simultaneous blockading attack from the south caused panic. Er.P 17 maintained its position on the northern side of the road, but the area had to be surrendered as Er.P 25 withdrew from its position without permission.

The Soviet troops had advanced over 100 kilometres on Finnish soil in 10 days. After the old Salla parish village was lost, Er.P 26 and Intelligence Departments TO 9 and TO 10 were sent to the Salla direction from Rovaniemi. TO 9 (Contingent Luoto) contained approximately 50 men and its task was to stall the enemy in the direction of the road to Savukoski. To support it, Repulse Detachment Gräsbäck was quickly formed from the civil guard boys in Savukoski and Pelkosenniemi, the Martin vartio border guards and air surveillance troops. As its weaponry, the repulse detachment used military rifles, hunting weapons and small-bore rifles. The situation was critical. In order to clarify the chain of command in Northern Finland, the headquarters decided on 12 December 1939 on the formation of the Lapland Group; Major General K. M. Wallenius, specialist in the prevailing conditions of Lapland, was appointed Commander-in-Chief.

From Salla towards Savukoski

Infantry Regiment 273, reinforced with an intelligence battalion, a field artillery battery and a tank company was a stronger opponent than anticipated. The regiment started to advance from the Salla parish village toward the road to Savukoski. TO 9 and Repulse Detachment Gräsbäck were not able to stop the partially armoured invaders.

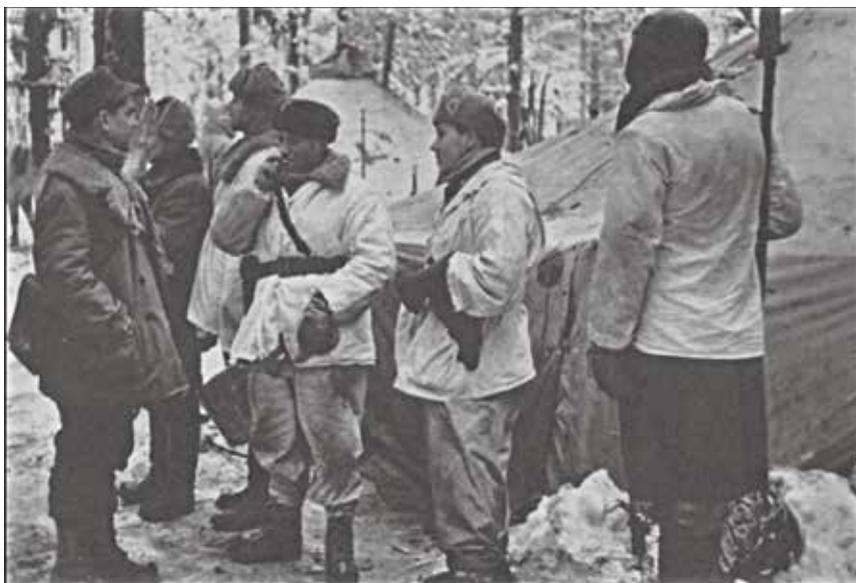
One Er.P 26 company (1./Er.P 26) was dispatched as a reinforcement, and three days later, the poorly equipped 8th battalion of the field reinforcement brigade (VIII/KT-Pr), formed in Heinola, was also dispatched there. With its superior weaponry, the Red Army advanced regardless of the defender's resistance. The Finnish troops withdrew from Savukoski on 14 December, and ended up on the ferryboat banks of Pelkosenniemi as early as 16 December. The scattered Finnish troops were rallied at the Pelkosenniemi parish village.

The Battle of Pelkosenniemi

The Red Army's reinforced Infantry Regiment 273 advanced from the centre of Salla to Pelkosenniemi via Savukoski in around a week. The few Finnish forces stationed in the area were unable to stop the advancing regiment. The 8th battalion of the field reinforcement brigade (VIII/Field Reinforcement Brigade), formed in Heinola, was also unable to stop the offensive and instead, withdrew

to the Pelkosenniemi ferryboat banks. Major General Wallenius, commander of the Lapland Group, decided to direct the reinforcement infantry regiment JR 40 to Pelkosenniemi, as the enemy could use Pelkosenniemi to advance to Kemijärvi and encircle the troops that were fighting east of the parish village in Joutsijärvi. Commanded by Major Armas Perksalo, the regiment arrived in Kemijärvi between 14 and 16 December and had been fully transferred to Pelkosenniemi by 17 December.

Dispatched on its first mission and gathered from older age groups, the reinforcement regiment was assigned a tough mission. It was to destroy the enemy that had advanced to Pelkosenniemi. The under-equipped troops had no means of communication, anti-tank weaponry, artillery or accommodation equipment.



Major Perksalo with his troops. (Photo: Finnish Army)

According to the battle plan, a blockading attack by two battalions was supposed to begin in the small hours of 18 December. At the same time, an attack front was to move towards the ferryboat banks of Pelkosenniemi. The battalions had difficulties getting organised on the church hill in the dark and slushy conditions. In the meanwhile, parts of the Soviet troops had begun their blockading attack on the northern side of the ferryboat banks. The leading Finn-

ish battalion entered the battle north-east of the village. Captain Hugo Einar Suoranta's battalion headed more towards the west in order to avoid contact with the enemy.

As the morning dawned, the defence of the Finnish troops in the road direction broke and heated battles took place in chaotic circumstances over the control over the parish village during the day. Combat was still ongoing as darkness descended. In Pelkosenniemi Soviet tanks caused panic among the Finns. The situation calmed down when information was received that an anti-tank artillery platoon (2.PstJ) had arrived in the area.

The situation was so critical that Lieutenant Colonel Oiva Willamo had requested permission from Rovaniemi to burn down the Pelkosenniemi parish village. Luckily, the police who had been assigned the task of burning down the village did not rush in but watched the situation advance. The supply base located in Kemijärvi had been ordered to prepare for moving towards Rovaniemi.

The battle in Pelkosenniemi seemed to be turning in the Soviet troops' favour. Led by Captain Suoranta, I/JR 40 had been able to circle behind the Soviet troops via the confluence of Kitinen and Luiro during the day. The battalion attacked the Soviet supply base and the emplacement of the battalion supporting the regiment between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., approximately a kilometer north-east of the ferryboat. At the same time, II/JR 40 had set in motion a counter-attack in the direction of the parish village hospital. At night, the temperature had fallen to nearly -20°C, and the soldiers were fighting here and there. Soviet soldiers withdrew in turmoil when they heard the noise of combat behind them.

Battle contact with the withdrawing enemy ceased. The defenders of Pelkosenniemi were exhausted and confused after the battle. Men were wandering in the woods and some had got badly frozen as the weather changed from wet snow to more than 20 degrees of frost. Men still kept on showing up at their companies the next day. The losses of the Finnish side in the battle of Pelkosenniemi were 117 fallen, 103 wounded and 50 missing. The Soviets left behind a significant amount of equipment when escaping towards Savukoski. They lost approximately 200–400 men, 40 cars, 8 tanks, 3 field pieces, 200 horses and horse loads of handguns and cartridges.

The Finnish troops went after the withdrawing Soviets on the evening of 19 December. After minor skirmishes, the Finns arrived in the Savukoski parish village on 21 December. Saija was reached after minor combat during 23 December and Contingent Suoranta (I/JR40, VIII/KT-Pr., 1./Er.P 26, TO 9, Krh.K/JR 40, 2.PstJ) was stationed there for defence purposes. The front line was at the north-west end of Lake Mukkanjärvi and Mukkala village.

From Märkäjärvi towards Kemijärvi

In the direction of the road leading to Kemijärvi, stations on the north-east slope of the Märkäjärvi village had to be given up during 11 December and troops withdrew to Salmijärvi via Paikanselkä. Er.P 26, which had no combat experience but was ordered as a reinforcement to the contingent, arrived in Kursu on 12 December. In its first battle, the battalion was not able to fulfil the order assigned to it, which was to preserve the village of Kursu.

The battle of Varpuoja began on the morning of 14 December as a Soviet battalion attacked with support from 16 tanks. The Finnish troops had on the same morning received their first anti-tank artillery pieces; two tanks were destroyed and two were damaged. Arrayed in the Valtanen area, the 9th Battalion of the field reinforcement brigade (IX/KT-pr, Pori) assumed responsibility for the front in the small hours of 15 December. The battalion experienced its first battle and was not able to fend off the enemy's attack. Despite their efforts, the forces of four battalions available to Contingent Roininen were not enough to recapture Kursu. The Soviet division had nine battalions, three batteries, a tank battalion and strong fire support from the artillery and air forces.

Joutsijärvi and the Battle of Mäntyvaara

Those on working duty had spent a week fortifying the narrow passage of the Joutsijärvi waterway. Er.P 17 grouped itself for defence on both sides of the road on 16 December 1939 and Er.P 25 more to the south, on the western shore of Joutsijärvi. IX/KT-Pr withdrew from Valtanen in the afternoon and transferred to the reserve in Pietarivaara, whereas Er.P 26 withdrew from Vuosamonselkä to Isokylä. The reinforcement company Er.K Kojonen of the Salla Battalion received supplies in Mäntyvaara. As additional reinforcement, another anti-tank platoon and a battery equipped with four 105 mm artillery pieces arrived on 18 December. Four mountain howitzers and four anti-tank guns had been acquired from Sweden and provided important reinforcement to the troops that had been fighting for three weeks without artillery weaponry.

Contingent Roininen's duty was to maintain its position in Joutsijärvi. The Soviet troops aimed to break the Finnish defence with a two-regiment frontal attack. The Finns were able to beat off the strikes and the invader shifted its focus from the road direction towards the flanks. Er.P 25 carried out a successful flank attack in the Ahoniemi direction and took out a Soviet company. Er.P 17 was withdrawn from the front on 19 December and was allowed to rest in the Mäntyvaara and Pietarinselkä areas. For a few days, IX/KT-Pr assumed responsibility for the front in the direction of the main road.

One Soviet battalion (1./596. JR) had been directed to outflank the Finns deep in their own terrain via Outojärvi. The battalion occupied the top of Mäntyvaara hill late in the evening of 19 December, aiming to cut off the road on the night between 20 and 21 December as a birthday present to "Father Stalin". Observations had been made of Soviet troops moving behind, and the troops resting in the area were informed about the enemy.

A volley between the troops began at noon on 20 December and the Finns immediately launched a spontaneous counter-attack. Resting at the time, the 1st company formed from men in Salla and the 2nd company formed from men in Pelkosenniemi and Savukoski launched an attack directly across the road and towards the top of Mäntyvaara. The 3rd company, formed of Kemijärvi-based men in Pietarinselkä, left after receiving the alarm and came around the back of the Soviet troops from the north. The battle lasted for hours and partially involved hand-to-hand fighting with knives and bayonets before turning in the Finns' favour. Before midnight, the hilltop was controlled by the Finns. In the battle, over 300 enemy troops and 17 Finnish soldiers fell and 29 Finns were wounded.

Luckily for the Finns, the enemy attacked the troops that were in reserve in the area instead of, for example, Contingent Roininen's headquarters nearby. Mäntyvaara was the bravest battle of the Salla Battalion and has few equals in Finland's war history.

After the battle of Mäntyvaara, military operations declined for a few days and mainly included stationary confrontations on both sides of Joutsijärvi. Right after Christmas, guerrilla actions were launched and directed behind the Soviet troops from the direction of the Hautajärvi village and Saija. Guerrilla actions by Er. K Kojonen and TO 10 in the Hautajärvi direction produced results and occupied a significant amount of Soviet troops who had to try to secure their rearward access. The "Salla Battalion" also sent ski patrols, half a platoon in strength, behind the enemy.

Finns carried out attacks in Joutsijärvi on 3 and 4 January 1940 in order to occupy Kursu, but possessed insufficient force. After maintenance and equipping on 13 January 1940, Er.P 17 was transferred in vehicles to Kallunki via Hautajärvi. From Kallunki, the Finns started to advance toward Märkäjärvi from the south on the following day. At the same time, the frontal situation in Joutsijärvi changed. The severe winter, the effective guerrilla action by Finns behind the Soviets, the threat from the flank in the Hautajärvi direction and the lack of supplies had taken their toll. The Belorussian 122.D received an order on 12 January to withdraw, and did so on 15 January from Joutsijärvi without a fight, transferring to Märkäjärvi.

The situation stabilises in Saija and Paikanselkä

Contingent Suoranta had grouped to defend the Saija area and tried to beat the opposing enemy with an attack launched on 2 January. The attacks were beaten off by the enemy's defensive fire, however. The situation in Saija stabilised for a long time. Finns were against an opponent who was much stronger and had more firepower. The Soviet troops carried out two attacks before the war ended. On 31 January, the Finnish combatants in the Saija direction were able to beat off attacks by six different battalions in a single day. Another forceful attack took place on 13 March when several battalions attacked Contingent Roininen's back in River Tenniöjoki's ferryboat area. Finnish troops were able to encircle one of the enemy's battalions through resolute action. The Soviet battalion was saved from destruction when peace was declared.

Combat took place in Paikanselkä and north of Märkäjärvi village between 16 and 17 January 1940. The Finns were able to assume control of Paikanselkä, but they were too exhausted to occupy the village and the road intersection area. The attack came to a halt on 19 January in front of the Soviet station in Paikanselkä, approximately 4 km before Märkäjärvi village. The Soviets had fortified their defence posts in advance, and it would have taken strong artillery to break them. Typically for extended defensive action, the battle included attacks by commandos and combat patrols, the repulsion of attacks, intelligence and the use of indirect fire. The 88th Soviet Division, whose headquarters was in the parish village area of Vanha Salla, was reinforced by a platoon formed of border guards and a separate ski battalion at the end of January. It fought effectively against Finnish guerrillas.

The fact that the war ended on 13 March, just before a major Soviet attack was scheduled to begin, probably saved Northern Finland. At the end of February and beginning of March, some three divisions of new Soviet troops had been transported to the area, with two divisions already there. The order had been given for the attack to be launched with operations between 15 and 17 March.

Svenska Frivilligkåren (Swedish Volunteer Corps)

A group of Swedish and Norwegian volunteers participated in the battles of Salla during the Winter War and formed the Svenska Frivilligkåren combat force. Its Commander-in-Chief was Swedish Lieutenant General Ernst Linder, who was also the Commander-in-Chief of the entire Lapland Group. The total number of volunteers exceeded 8,000 men by the time the war ended. There were some 700 Norwegian volunteers. Training took a long time, however, and only two combat contingents actually served actively before the end of the war, while the third one was still in training.

The Swedish air regiment F 19 arrived in Finland during the first half of January. The first combat flight took place on 12 January 1940, when the aircraft bombarded the Märkäjärvi defence area and ice airfield.

Stridsgruppen SFK took over responsibility for the front in the Salla direction from JR 40 in Paikanselkä in Salla on 28 February 1940. JR 40 was transferred to battles in Vyborg Bay. The Salla Battalion was seconded to the Swedes in order to secure the southern flank. Contingent Pennanen, having battled in the Petsamo direction, was also subordinated to Lieutenant General Linder. Most of Contingent Roininen was transferred to Saija, where it assumed responsibility for the front from Contingent Suoranta, which was in turn sent to Säkkijärvi by train. The Finnish troops operated under Swedish command, with Lieutenant Colonel Willamo as their superior.

At this stage, the battles in the area were conducted through stationary warfare. Artillery fire was fought with artillery, and infantry fire with infantry fire. On the morning of the last day of Winter War, the Soviet troops directed heavy fire at the Swedish defence posts, using aircraft, artillery and infantry weapons. It was in this attack that the Swedish suffered their greatest losses with 10 men fallen and 30 wounded. The Swedish front endured the Soviet attacks until 13 March 1940, when the Winter War ended with the Moscow Peace Treaty after 105 days of combat. Of the Swedish volunteers, more than 30 men fell, some 50 were wounded and 130 frost-bitten. The air regiment lost six aircraft.



The troops of Swedish Volunteer Corps (Photo: Finnish Army).

Field Marshal Mannerheim visited Märkjärvi personally and thanked the volunteer troops on 24 March 1940.

On the structure of the troops

In the early phase of the Winter War, a Finnish battalion was up against a Soviet Union Infantry Division. The division comprised over 17,700 men, armed with 45 tanks, over 100 different kinds of cannon, 200 machine guns and 450 light machine guns. The strength of a battalion in the Finnish armed forces was a little over one thousand men. They were armed with 12 machine guns, 12 light machine guns and two light mortars. There were no anti-tank weapons. The size of a Swedish combat unit on the other hand was around 2,000 men, comprising infantry battalions and weapon units, such as an artillery battery and truck company. They also had anti-tank weapons and granade launchers.

Nationally, the success of the defensive combat in the Salla direction carried great significance. The Soviet divisions failed to cut Finland in half and to isolate Finland's land connections to Sweden. In addition to the power relations balancing out, the most significant factors behind the Finns' defensive victory in the Salla direction were good morale, tactical creativity, activeness and the ability of the troops to survive the harsh conditions in Lapland.

The Salla Battalion and the Detached Company Kojonen had been gathered from the men in the area. These soldiers, accustomed to wilderness conditions through forestry and reindeer management, achieved much. The men from Eastern Lapland fought on the soil of their own home parishes. After receiving combat experience, all other troops transferred to the area also distinguished themselves.

There were no easy victories, however. The Finns suffered great losses in the Salla direction, a total of approximately 1,100 men, which meant some 20% of the overall battle strength. Of those, fallen soldiers made up 650 men. It is estimated that the Soviet troops reinforced during the battles lost about 4,000 soldiers in total in the battles in the Salla direction.

INTERIM PEACE

The harsh terms of the peace treaty

The Moscow Peace Treaty signed at the end of the Winter War stipulated that Finland had to surrender approximately half of the Salla municipality area to the Soviet Union. Residents of the Salla parish and its eastern areas had to leave their home districts permanently. The building stock in Eastern Lapland had suffered in the war, and reconstruction and the resettlement of people from the lost areas were set in motion.

During the era after the Winter War the Soviet Union put diplomatic pressure on Finland and spread discord amongst the people. As such, the interim peace period was a difficult, insecure and unsafe period of time for Finland. One of the articles of the peace treaty stipulated that Finland was to build a railway from Kemijärvi to the new border in the east.



The construction of a railway line from Kemijärvi to Salla was one of the provisions of the Moscow Peace Treaty. Above is a picture of the construction site in Kemijärvi, 1941. (Photo: Finnish Army)

Mobilisation and cooperation with Germany

During the interim peace, Finland reinforced its own defences by constructing a line of fortifications along almost the entire length of the eastern border. In 1944 this line of defences became known as the Salpa Line. Its northernmost fortifications were built in Joutsijärvi and Saija, and in the parish villages of Savukoski and Märkäjärvi (now Salla).



Excavation of rock for barriers along the Salpa Line fortifications in summer 1940. (Photo: Finnish Army)

New garrisons, training centres and border guard stations were established in Eastern Lapland in Hanhikoski, Saunakangas, Märkäjärvi, Karhujärvi, Joutsijärvi and Saija. A new military county, Perä-Pohjolan sotilasläänä, led by Colonel Verner Viikla was established in connection with the overhaul of the Finnish defence forces' regional system. The 11th Division in northern Finland was changed in mid-August to the 12th Brigade (12. Pr). At first, Colonel August Mäkinen led the brigade, but from 11.9 it was led by Lieutenant Colonel Albert Puroma.

The outbreak of the Continuation War was preceded by the closing of relations between Germany and Finland and the arrival of German soldiers in Lapland. According to Operation Silver Fox (Silberfuchs), a sub-operation of the Germans' Barbarossa plan, the Germans would launch an offensive towards Kandalaksha (Kantalahti) from the direction of Salla with three divisions and from there towards Murmansk along the railway line. At the same time, troops in northern Norway would capture the Petsamo area and continue on towards Murmansk.

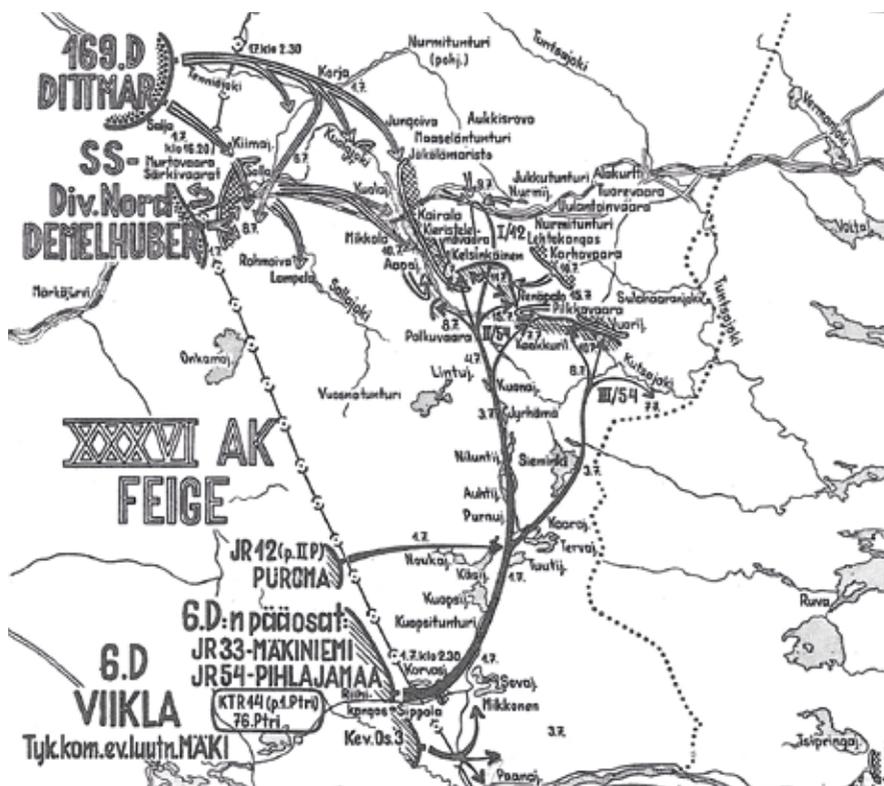


Insignia of German divisions in Eastern Lapland during the Continuation War. The coats of arms of the 163rd Division (left), the 169th Division (centre) and SS Division Nord (Right).

The border dividing the areas for which the Finns and Germans were responsible for largely followed the Oulujoki waterway. The Germans were to be responsible for operations in the Lapland area and the Finnish troops established in northern Finland were to be subordinate to the German command and service. The concentration of troops from the Norwegian side into Finland began in early summer. A motorised SS corps arrived on a motorised march along the Jäämerentie road to Rovaniemi and from there to Märkäjärvi via Ranua. Disguised as relief troops, the 169th Infantry Division from Hesse and Thuringia arrived north of Rovaniemi from Germany and from there advanced to Savukoski a little later than the SS regiment established in the Berlin area. In July, the 163rd Infantry Division from Brandenburg was transferred by train across Sweden to Tornio and then mainly north of Ladoga. When the Finns removed their own 6th Division from the command of the Germans, the 163rd Division was moved in to replace the Finns. The Germans established their air bases in Eastern Lapland in Hanhikoski in Kemijärvi and, during the war, in Alakurtti. All in all, around 200,000 German soldiers arrived in Lapland during the Continuation war, of which 50,000–60,000 were stationed in Eastern Lapland.

On 10.6.1941 at 1:00pm, Colonel Verner Viikla, Commander of the Perä-Pohjola military county, gave the order for the mobilisation of protective units in the Perä-Pohjola military county. The 12th Brigade, which had been in training structure, had to achieve war-time strength. The secret code for the initiation of operations was: "Päämajan yleishankinnat alkavat keskiviikkona 11.6" (Headquarter acquisitions will begin on Wednesday 11th June). On 17.6.1941 the concentration of protective troops, which had reorganised into a regiment, began on the Eastern border.

CONTINUATION WAR



The directions of offensives during the Continuation War from Eastern Lapland towards Kandalaksha (Kantalahti) 1.7.1941.

Offensive towards Vanha Salla (i.e., Old Salla)

Germany attacked the Soviet Union on the Central European front on 22.6.1941. The Soviet Union began to bomb Finland on the 25th June because it considered Finland to be cooperating with Germany. The bombing of Kemi-järvi resulted in two fatalities and two injured soldiers. Finland was once again embroiled in war with the Soviet Union. A three-pronged offensive was commenced on the Soviet Union from the Northern Finnish front. At first, the focus was on the direction of Kandalaksha. The attack troops were led by the German

XXXVI Army Corps staff, with the Finnish 6th Division under their command. According to the plan, the SS Division, reinforced with a tank battalion, would be the Army Corps' driving force in the offensive on the road towards Kandalaksha. It would be supported by the 169th Division further north, attacking from the direction of Salla, and by the 6th Division which was outflanking further south.

There were strong Soviet forces on the eastern side of the border. The command staff was the 42nd Army Corps staff and its troops were the 122nd Division, which had gained experience on the front from battles in the Salla area during the Winter War and the 104th Division which had fought near Petsamo. The 1st Panzer Division provided force. The two border guard detachments in the area (101st Border Guard and 72nd Border Guard) were also under the command of the Army Corps. The troops were ready either to attack Finland or defend themselves from strong positions built by fortification troops and prisoners, known as the "Salla fell fort", by the Germans.

The Germans commenced an offensive in the direction of the road to Kandalaksha in the afternoon of 1.7.1941. The Finnish division headed into the terrain in the early hours of the morning. The attack on the front was preceded by an hour of dive bombing and preparatory artillery fire. SS-D. Nord's attack however, stalled right from the start due to the troops' poor training, clear lack of focus and heavy fire from the enemy. Success was achieved through outflanking from the north and south. The 169th Division reached the centre of Kuolajärvi supported by dive bombers a week after heavy fighting. The area could once again be handed over to the Finns. The Red Army had left almost an entire division's artillery at Salla. The assault resulted in heavy losses on both sides. The German troops especially, who received their baptism of fire in these battles, experienced significant losses.

The road of the Finnish Wilderness Jaegers

Viikla's 6th Division crossed the border on the 1st of June to the east of Hautajärvi and Käylä. They were to outflank by a distance of 100 kilometres to Alakurtti. During the trek through the wilderness, Infantry Regiment 12 (JR 12) received the nickname "Wilderness Jaegers". Its commander was Colonel Albert Puroma. In the wilderness, the Sunkku fleet carried Finnish supplies from Tuutijärvi Lake via a waterway line formed by lakes from the beginning of July. The pioneers and fortification troops worked hard for a month and a half and were able to construct a supply route on the west of the lake line and the Germans had constructed a road from Lampela to the road to Vuorikyli before mid-August.



Long lakes, such as Tuutijärvi, were used as supply routes for the wilderness Jaegers. (Photo: Finnish Army)

Infantry Regiment 12's task was to cut off the road leading to Vuorikylä in the area between Killuntaivaara and Kaakkurilampi. On the 7th of July, Soviet troops launched a counteroffensive from the Mikola area in the northwest. The counteroffensive was warded off with the help of the German dive-bombers. After the Germans had faced tough resistance from the start in their attempts to capture the "fell fort", the 6th Division's task was changed to cut off the railway line and road in Kelsinkäinen as fast as possible and not to advance directly through terrain to Alakurtti. The 169th

Division had orders to assist the Finns in their offensive to be carried out on the road which passes Kuolajärvi to the north and leads to Alakurtti.

Led by Puroma, the troops headed towards Kelsinkäinen in the early night of the 8th of June. In the early hours of the following morning, the double-battalioned Infantry Regiment 12, reinforced with Light Detachment 3 and three pioneer battalion squads, captured Kieristelmävaara which dominated the area, cut off the railway to the north of Kieristelmävaara and occupied the rock battle stations piled up by the Soviet troops. Due to a counteroffensive launched by the Red Army that morning, the Finns were unable to continue the offensive and instead had to regroup for defence. The Red Army's counteroffensive commenced fairly quickly, as the Red Army's 104th Division staff were present near the fell.

By midday, the situation was already so tense that Puroma requested rapid dive-bomber support, as the pressure put on the troops by the Soviets was high and the Soviets continually received additional forces from the east and west. The ammunition situation began to weaken and there wasn't time to evacuate all

the wounded back. German airplanes dropped food and the 6th Division provided ammunition supplies, but German reinforcements were nowhere to be seen.

The reinforcements had not been able to transport artillery, anti-tank defences and supplies through the terrain and as such, had only what they could carry. With only handheld weapons and machine guns, defence battles were unsuccessful. The Red Army was able to move more troops into the combat area from near both Kairala and Alakurtti, and could shoot towards the fell area with several artillery batteries. Once Puroma had passed on information on the drastic situation in Kelsinkäinen to the high command, he received permission to pull back from the area during the following night. In the early hours, the injured and hungry regiment withdrew back to its area of departure at Nenäpalo, though not all wounded and fallen soldiers could be evacuated. Finnish losses in the Kieristelmävaara battles from 8th -10th July were just short of 200 fallen soldiers and a similar amount of wounded men. The majority of the wilderness jaegers had only started their military service just a few months previously.

Occupation of Alakurtti and advance towards the Verma River

When the Kelsinkäinen battles were at their height, the German divisions aimed to cross or go around the Kairala waterway via the north. Soviet Union troops had blown up the Kairala bottleneck bridges and stationed themselves in good defence stations on the opposite shore. As the offensive had not progressed as planned, Colonel General von Falkenhorst moved the focus of the main attack in the direction of III Corps led by Major General Siilasvuo in Kiestinki, hoping to reach the Murmansk railway line quickly in that direction. On the 19th of July, the bulk of the motorised SS division received the order to move south. The XXXVI Corps' task was once again to advance to Kandalaksha. General Feige had only two divisions left at his disposal. The operation plan was simple: the German 169th Division would outflank via the north and the Finnish 6th Division would outflank via the south towards Kandalaksha.

An offensive directed at Alakurtti was commenced in mid-August. This time the focus was on the direction of the Finns and the main forces' offensive was carried out under the leadership of Colonel Viikla. The German Infantry Regiment 324 and Rifle Battalion 13 were placed under the command of the Finns. On the very next day the offensive advanced to the road between Kairala and Alakurtti. The opposing Red Army's 104th Division and part of the 122nd Division was experiencing a blockade in the area between Kairala and Uulantoinvaara. The men succeeded in pulling back, but the division's artillery and around 50 tanks remained behind as loot.

After the battles of Nurmitunturi and Uulantoinvaara, which lasted around a week, there were still a couple of lines of fortified positions in the direction of

the main road and railway line before Alakurtti. Alakurtti was captured at the end of August, after which the troops crossed the Tuntsa River. Construction troops raced against the clock to get the road and railway line in a usable condition so that supplies for the assault troops could be organised.

After the capture of Alakurtti, the German 169th Division continued on in the lead and suffered severe losses in places like the Voyta River. The offensive stopped at the Verman River on 19th September 1941. To the east of the Verman River would have been newer, stronger defence and battle fortifications, and the Soviet Union was capable of flexibly transferring troops and supplies via railway lines. The German air force was unable to cut off railway traffic beyond occasional stoppages. Many Red Army defence lines had been broken, but there were still several lines of action stations before Kandalaksha. Neither Germany nor Finland had an additional division to detach in order to continue the attack. The Germans had severely underestimated the combat skills of the three Soviet divisions they were up against.

For the period of trench warfare, of the Finnish troops only the Border Jaegar Battalion 7 in the wilderness and Light Detachment 3 off to the south remained under German command at the River Verman. A field guard of around 30 men was established in the wilderness for guarding. The field guard had observation posts and foot patrols to detect any possible demolition units intruding from the rear. Air raid protection troops were responsible for guarding the rear. The Finns maintained this system until midway through 1943. After this time the Germans had gained practice in working in the wilderness conditions.

End of trench warfare

The Red Army crushed the siege of Leningrad in the middle of January 1944 and this had a significant effect on the whole of Finland and events on the Soviet Union front. The Germans had no choice but to withdraw to the western side of the Narva River. Stalin had approved a series of massive offensives for 1944 with the aim of removing Finland from the war and capturing the nickel mines in Petsamo, among others. The Soviet forces' massive offensive on the Karelian Isthmus began on the 10th of June. On the northern side of Ladoga, the Finns began to withdraw after mid-June, as a significant amount of combat troops had been sent to the isthmus as reinforcement. The fastest to arrive were overloaded additional forces from Lapland. The 3rd Brigade, reserve troops for the Germans at Kuolajärvi, had already received the order to move on the 10th of June and its first transportation batches arrived at Veshchevo station on the 13th of June. The movement of troops to the north side of Ladoga continued right up to the battle of Tali-Ihantala. At the last minute, on June

1st, the 6th Division led by Major General Vihma made it to the Ihantala church hill and Pyöräkangas to group for defence. The mass attack by the Red Army rebounded and the wilderness jaegers played a strong role.

Finland had begun sounding for peace negotiations as early as in spring 1943, which worried Germany. In late June 1944, threatening to cease supplies of munitions and food, Germany's foreign minister von Ribbentrop demanded that Finland sign a pact to continue fighting on the German front. If Finland refused to comply, the existing weapons deliveries would cease. Commander-in-Chief Mannerheim urged the president of the republic, Risto Ryti, to sign von Ribbentrop's pact in order to prevent the cessation of military aid. Ryti signed the cleverly-worded document and simultaneously sealed his harsh fate on 26th June 1944. The signing of the pact was seen as a serious crime when some of the country's leading politicians were prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment in the so-called war-responsibility trials.

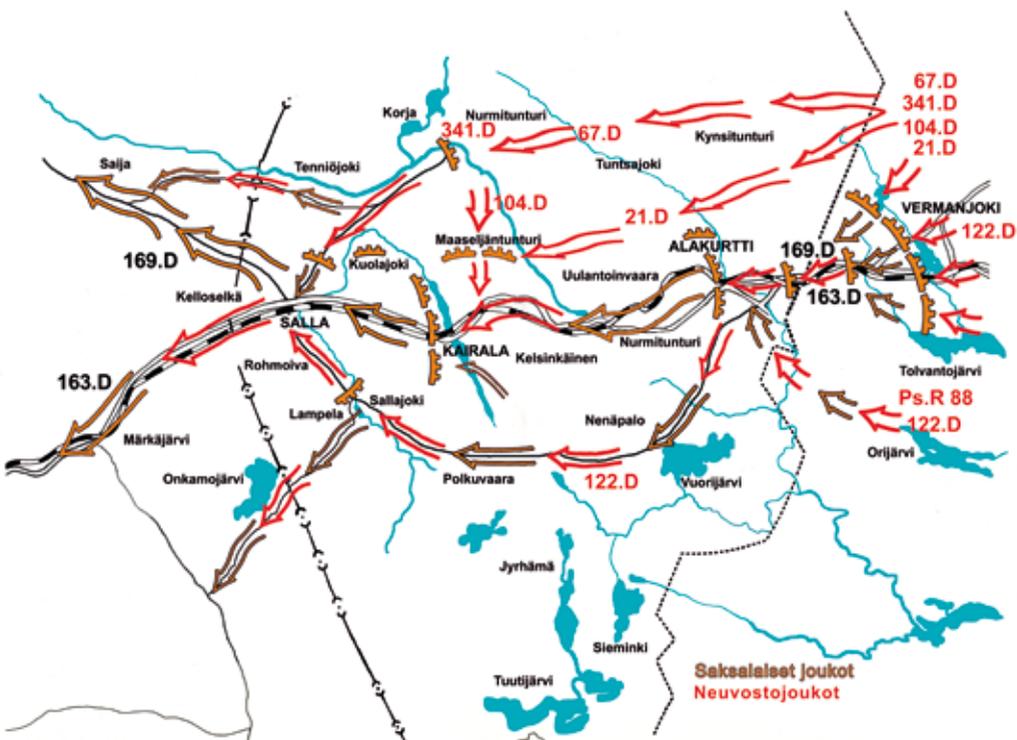
The focus of World War II combat had now shifted to Berlin, where all available forces were concentrated. In mid-July, even some Red Army troops were removed from the Finnish fronts.

German retreat from the Verman River and Eastern Lapland

As Finland first tested the waters for peace with the Soviet Union in spring 1943, the Germans began to plan the withdrawal of their troops to protect the Petsamo nickel mines and access routes in northern Norway. The Finnish attempts at peace were becoming ever clearer to the Germans. Commander-in-Chief Mannerheim's Order of the day No. 131/44 on the cessation of comradeship-in-arms in August 1944 came as no surprise to the Germans.

The German's plan for withdrawal received the cover name "Birke". The central defence stations were the Schutzwall south of Ivalo and Sturmbock, which ran across the region known as the Käsivarsi, or "Arm of Finland". Rovaniemi was a place where many roads converged and a fortification named Ringwall was planned around the area to secure possible routes along which to retreat. The Ringwall extended from Ylimaa in Ranua to Auttikylä in Rovaniemi and to Kemijärvi.

Work on the fortifications on the western shore of Kemijärvi had already begun in 1944 at the same time as the Finnish 3rd Brigade was moved to Salla as reserve troops for the Germans. The area around Savukoski road had already been fortified during the interim peace period. The Germans suspected that the Soviets would advance through the wilderness from Korja or Kovdor to the Jäämerentie road and so plans were made to fortify the Martti and Tanhua areas.



German retreat from stations along the River Verman in autumn 1944.

The Germans were convinced that the Soviet Union would occupy Finland. In September, Germany's forces could no longer sustain an attempt at takeover in Finland, with retreat from Lapland being the only option available. Stalin ordered the Finns to engage the German troops in the battles of Northern Finland so that the Soviet Union could remove some of its troops from near Petsamo and move them to offensives on Berlin.

The Germans and Soviets fought bitter battles around the roads leading from Alakurtti to Salla and from Korja to Salla. There were five divisions in the Red Army's assault troops. The troops began to withdraw from the River Verman on the 10th of September. The Soviet Union bombed marching units and outflanked through terrain behind the Germans, cutting off the road to the east of the Kairala bottleneck. The Germans were almost encircled, but the road constructed from Alakurtti to Vuorikylä and then on via Lampela to the parish of Salla saved the troops and their ordnance. By mid-September the Germans had withdrawn to the parish of Salla. The Kairala bottleneck line was under German control until 24th September. The bulk of the troops, the Army Corps troops, 163rd D. and 169th D's heavy artillery ordnance and baggage were transferred

via Kemijärvi to Vikajärvi and from there to the north via the Jäämerentie road. 169th D's troops took a short cut on foot along a cart track from Savukoski via Tanhua to Sodankylä, thereby protecting the north side.

Inhabitants in Eastern Lapland were ordered to evacuate before the German retreat began. In the early stages, the Germans helped to evacuate people in the area, but tension increased as armed conflict began between the Germans and Finns towards the end of September. Prior to this, Eastern Lapland had not really experienced armed conflict between the Germans and Finns.

At the start of the Lapland War, troops totalled nine divisions, 7-12 months of ordnance and an estimated 200,000 soldiers or workers in the north. The German Rifle Battalion 4 had been moved to the west shore of Kemijärvi in March 1944 to secure the rear and to carry out fortification work. The battalion constructed Ringwall stations in the villages of Tohmo and Leväranta in the Kemijärvi area, among other places. At the same time, new air raid defence shelters were completed on the east of Kemijoki. The Germans held the waterway passage until mid-October. When the railway bridge crossing over Kemijoki was no longer needed, it was blown up at several sites. The Hanhikoski air base was destroyed and the barracks burnt.

Around a third of buildings in the centre of Kemijärvi were destroyed. The church and railway station were among the buildings burnt. All barracks in garrison areas, service centres and hospitals were also set alight.

The XXXVI Mountain Corps withdrew via Kemijärvi and Savukoski to Sodankylä and from there to Schutzwall trenches in Ivalo. The Red Army attempted to trap the retreating Germans. The final fierce battle took place at the start of October on the road between Korja and Keinuvaara. At the end of September, Stalin gave the strict command to stop advancing and to leave Northern Finland unoccupied. Soviet troops stopped in Märkjärvi and Naruska. They also entered Finland in Kuusamo and Ivalo.

The first serious battles between the German and Finnish troops began in Pudasjärvi on 28th September. Before this, the troops had been engaged in a "fake war" as set out in an earlier agreement. The invasion of Tornio at the start of October transformed the nature of the Lapland War irrevocably. There was no longer any comradeship-in-arms between the two. After the nature of the war had changed, almost total destruction broke out. In the Salla area, the villages of Kursu and Salmivaara were spared. Villages to the east of the Kemijoki River were spared, but on the west shore only the village of Suvanto and individual buildings in Tohmo and Leväranta, Tapionniemi, Vuostimo and Saunavaara survived. Savukoski was completely destroyed with Pelkosenniemi also suffering heavy damage.

In the Lapland War, the 6th Division, relieved from battles in the isthmus, were directed towards Rovaniemi and the Border Guard Brigade was sent towards Kemijärvi. On 18th June at 6:00pm, the 2nd Company of Border Guard Jaeger Battalion 7, established by Eastern Lapland men in 1941, arrived in Kemijärvi centre. The staff arrived in the parish a couple of days later, establishing itself at the coeducational school. The battalion's companies were ordered to establish field guards with the 1st Company, itself established in Joutsijärvi (formerly the 16th Border Company) which would depart towards Märkäjärvi and establish field guards in Kelloselkä and Onkamo. The 2nd Company (formerly the 26th Border Company) established in Savukoski, was given the order to advance to Savukoski via Pelkosenniemi, setting up a field guard in Kuosku and sending a patrol to Martti. The 3rd Company (46th Border Company) established in Karhujärvi was ordered to establish a field guard in Karhujärvi. The terrain facing the Border Jaegers was desolate, with complete destruction prevalent, especially along roads. Mines had been laid in all possible places. The pioneers began to remove the mines. Soon, however, the order was received that mines were not to be removed until further notice. There was still fear that the Soviet troops, who had been ordered to stop, would set off again.

On 6th October, Major General Hölter of the 20th Mountain Corps bade farewell to the Finnish liaison officers in Rovaniemi. He said: "At this moment the situation appears to be that the Russians will occupy Northern Finland to at least the Kuusamo - Kemi line... We Germans will leave a destroyed, barren wilderness for the Russians, as you Finns would do and have already done several times in earlier wars ... despite all recent events I wish the Finnish nation the courage and perseverance to pave the way for a happy future despite all resistance."

On the structure of the troops

At the start of the Continuation War, the Finnish, German and Soviet divisions were all roughly the same strength with regard to manpower. Each had three infantry regiments. The difference between them lay mainly in the numbers of heavy artillery, such as field and anti-tank artillery and vehicles. The Finnish division had the least amount of heavy artillery and motorised vehicles.

As the war progressed, the Finnish infantry division was reduced by one infantry regiment, whereupon the division's tactical strategies were weakened. The number of the Red Army's units remained the same, but the number of men was reduced to less than half of its original amount. The structure of the German infantry divisions remained the same, but especially towards the end of the war, the units had suffered losses, reducing manpower to as little as a tenth of the original.

HISTORIC WAR ATTRACTIONS IN THE EASTERN LAPLAND AREA

SALLA

Regional history

The municipality of Salla was previously known as Kuolajärvi. The name of the municipality and parish was changed to Salla in 1936 after an initiative by Erkki Koivisto. The centre of the former municipality was located at the foot of Sal-latunturi Fell on both sides of River Sallajoki. The name 'Kuolajärvi' is derived from the Sámi word Guollejaur, which means a lake rich in fish.

There is a water system in Vanha Salla by the name of Kuolajärvi, from which the Kuolajoki River branches off, empties westward and finally joins the Teniöjoki River in Saija. Before the wars, Kuolajärvi was a municipality spanning almost 12,000 square kilometres with approximately 5,500 inhabitants.

During the Winter War, and again after the Continuation War, Salla lost around 6,000 square kilometres to the Soviet Union. The war destroyed an estimated 80% of Salla's building stock. The reconstruction of the area continued until the 1960s.

The population of Salla was at its highest in the early 1960s with approximately 11,000 residents. Heavy migration to Sweden and Southern Finland has greatly decreased its population, which now in 2013 numbers approximately 3,900.

Historical military sites in Salla

Paikanselkä War Memorial Area

The Memorial for the End of the Winter War was erected in Paikanselkä in 1971, and the Memorial for the Knights of the Mannerheim Cross in 1992. Knight of the Mannerheim Cross Olli Remes worked for the Salla Border Guards. Olavi "Olli" Remes battled on different fronts and especially earned credit for his guerrilla activities. Before the wars, he was one of the best Finnish winter sportsmen. Another excellent fighter and 'sissi' in the Border Guard was Olavi Alakulppi, a Knight of the Mannerheim Cross.

The memorial area also features a restored dugout. There are remains of two wedish dugouts, four unfinished dugout excavations as well as several foxholes

in the area. Looking closely, you can even see a lookout pine tree from the Winter War period in the direction of the road toward the River Salmijoki canyon.

A Swedish group of volunteers, Svenska Frivilligkåren (SFK), assumed responsibility for the front in Salla on 28 February 1940 and remained in Paikanselkä until the Winter War ended on 13 March 1940. Marshal Mannerheim gave a speech of thanks to the Swedish volunteers in Paikanselkä after the Winter War had ended. Of the volunteers who battled in the Salla direction, 38 men fell. Two of them were Norwegian.

1952 in Paikanselkä by the 1. group of the Swedish volunteers and there are the names of the six killed in action on the stone. The second memorial stone of the Swedish volunteers was unveiled 9.6.1990 near the old memorial stone and there are the names of the 32 killed in action on the stone. The association of the Swedish volunteer forces donated a Bofors 37 mm anti-tank gun to be placed in Paikanselkä in 1995. During the war, the Swedes used a similar weapon to destroy a Soviet tank in Paikanselkä. The Dyrssen Memorial was erected in Paikanselkä in 1949 at the site where Lieutenant Colonel Magnus Dyrssen, the commander of the Swedish forces, fell on 1 March 1940.

Salpa Line in Salla

The defence line constructed along the eastern border of Finland, built in 1940, 1941 and 1944 and extending for approximately 1,200 kilometres, is called the



Salpa Line. The construction of the Salpa Line of Salla lasted from the autumn of 1940 until the summer of 1941. In addition to rock obstacles, the defence line included barbed wire fences, machine gun and artillery nests, dugouts and trenches. Some remains of the Salpa Line can be seen at the Salla municipal centre, on the right side of the road when heading to Kuusamo and on the left when taking the road to Kemijärvi. In addition, when heading east some 2 km from the parish village towards Ruuhijärvi, there are signs north of the road. In the land south of the road, there is a machine-gun nest and an artillery station. Dating back to the Finnish Civil War, you can also find the Murhamänty pine tree in the terrain with related signposts.

Salpa Line fortifications can also be found in southern Salla. An anti-tank barrier that is part of the line can be found in the village of Aholanvaara, and a fortified company base is located in Kukasviita, near Tuohilampi. A strong defence unit was located in the village of Särkelä in northern Salla and tasked with blocking the Saija Road. South of the Saija cemetery was a strong base the construction of which was already started during the Winter War. In the terrain along the Savukoski Road, rock barriers and the remains of stations belonging to the Salpa Line can be seen.

Cellar of Sotka

In the 1910s, Heikki Sotkajärvi established the Sotka Croft together with his family. The croft became a resting place for travellers on their journey between Hautajärvi and Märkäjärvi. The Soviets destroyed the Sotka buildings in the Winter War, but the cellar survived. During the Winter War, four Finnish soldiers were using the cellar to keep warm when a Soviet patrol crept up on them. One Finn was fatally wounded in the skirmish while trying to escape from the cellar. The rest of the Finns locked themselves in it and the Soviets tried to kill them using hand grenades, but the Finns blocked the ventilation pipe with their backpacks so that the grenades exploded inside the wall structures instead of injuring them. The Cellar of Sotka was restored in 1996, and is situated near Sallatunturi Fell, approximately 10 km along the main road to Kuusamo on the left.

Memorial to the Wilderness Jaegers

The memorial to the Jaeger Regiment, or JR 12, is located in Hautajärvi, approximately 44 km towards Kuusamo from Salla. The memorial, designed by Professor Ensio Seppänen, was unveiled in 1977. The JR 12 were called the Wilderness Jaegers because they were used to operating in wilderness conditions. Colonel Albert "six-shooter" Puroma commanded the Wilderness Jaegers during attacks.

Kiviaapa Memorial for the Victims of Partisans

The partisans killed five civilians who were making hay in Kiviaapa on 15 July 1943. This memorial was erected for the civilian victims at the site where the victims were captured. Herman Hautajärvi, a relative of the victims, took the initiative to erect the memorial. It is situated in Kiviaava, approximately 10 km from Hautakylä along the Niitselys road toward Pahtovaara. From the road to Kiviaava, there is a 2-kilometre walk along a path and footbridges, and the site is signposted from Hautajärvi.

Memorial to Those Who Lost Their Lives in Post-War Mine

Explosions This memorial is located in Särkelä. It was designed and made by artist Kari Tiukuvaara, and commissioned by the Kotala Village Committee. The memorial, unveiled in 1997, was erected to commemorate the seven civilians killed by uncleared mines in the Kotala and Mukkala areas between 1945 and 1949.

Memorial for Two Boys from Helsinki

In Salmivaara, south of the level crossing on the main road, there is a memorial for Helsinki-based pupils Lauri Matti Hämäläinen and Eino Osvald Ekegren. The boys had been assigned working duty in Salla and were killed when a Soviet aerial bomb, a suspected dud, suddenly exploded. The memorial was erected by the boys' relatives in 1944.

Salla Museum of War and Reconstruction

The basic exhibition of the museum takes you back in time, through the history of Kuolajärvi, or Salla today, from the beginning of the 1900s until the 1960s. The first part showcases life in Kuolajärvi at the beginning of the 20th century. The second part pertains to wartime. When the Winter War broke out, life in Salla changed fundamentally. People had to leave their homes and the region once and for all. Due to the war, the area of the parish was reduced by half. The third part of the exhibition, a museum residence, displays the reconstruction period. After much hard work, Salla became one of the country's largest milk producing municipalities in the 1960s. Address: Savukoskentie 12.

Salla Station and railway

The construction of the railway between Kemijärvi and Salla began after the Winter War. In the Moscow Peace Treaty, the Soviet Union required that Finland construct a connecting railway between Kemijärvi and Kantalahti on the Finnish side in 1940.

The Soviet Union had made a start on the railway in 1939 before the Winter War broke out. Finland constructed the railway from Kemijärvi to Kellosoelkä, and its location was planned so that it would be as close to the Kemijärvi–Salla road as possible. The Soviet Union completed the railway from Kantalahti to the national border on 25 February 1941 and the rails on the Finnish side were completed on 15 May 1941.

When the Soviet troops withdrew during the Continuation War, they destroyed railways in order to hinder the enemy's troop transports and supplies. Subsequent work was performed on the railway until autumn 1944, when it came to a halt. During the Lapland War in late 1944, the Germans destroyed the completed railway while withdrawing, and it was only re-opened to traffic in 1947. Traffic on the railway line was regular until 1963 when local trains were significantly reduced. Passenger train traffic between Kemijärvi and Salla was cancelled in May 1968.

In the Salla Station area, there are several buildings built at the end of the 1940s. The buildings in the track area are mainly situated in the parish village centre between Savukoskentie and the track. You can explore the track area from the outside, and some of the buildings are in residential use. The station area is one of Salla's cultural locations and also marked in the town plan as a significant area for village landscape. The buildings in the area are owned by the Municipality of Salla. At Salmivaara Station is an old pine tree that was used by the constructors of the Salla railway as a point of reference when preparing the railway route between 1940 and 1941. The pine tree was placed under protection in 1991. Salmivaara village is situated approximately 11 km from Salla towards Kemijärvi. The pine tree is on the right-hand side of the main road when coming from Salla.



The stations along the Salla line during the Continuation War. The Karhu station was the last station used by the Germans. The Kutsa station is also known as the Nurmi station. Drawing Eljas Pöhlö.

Church of Salla

The present Church of Salla was built between 1948 and 1950 and inaugurated on 2 July 1950. The church was designed by architects Eero Eerikäinen and Osmo Sipari. The parish hall next to the church was designed by architect Matti Leiber and completed in 1980. The statue in front of the building, 'A Moment's Rest', is dedicated to war evacuees and was sculpted by Honorary Professor of Art Ensio Seppänen in 1986. The Salla War Hero Monument is situated at the present-day Salla municipal centre next to the church. There are no soldier's graves in the Finnish part of Salla, only this monument. The monument, "Hauta etulinjassa" ("Grave at the front line") was sculpted by Aimo Tukiainen and unveiled in 1953. A service is held at the church on Sundays at 11 a.m. The church also serves as a venue for concerts and music events. Salla parish also hosts a border area church in Hautajärvi and a village church in Kursu.

Monument for the Soviet soldiers fallen in Salla

This monument was made by Osmo Rautiainen and erected in 1946. The monument is located in the parish village amidst a residential area at Tapulintie. The monument was erected by Finns.

Grave of Soviet prisoners of war

Soviet soldiers fallen in the Winter War were also buried in this grave. It is situated approximately 7 kilometres from Salla along the road to Hautaniemi on the right. Drive towards Hautaniemi for approx. 1.4 km, and you can then park at the fork in the road. The memorial is in the forest on the left side of the road in the direction in which you came, at a distance of approx. 100 m.

Saija

Many remnants of defence stations built by Finns can be found in Saija. South of the Saija cemetery was a strong base, on which construction began during the Winter War. The Saija pirtti area was first home to the staff of the Suoranta Detachment during the Winter War, and then to the Roininen Detachment staff from late February 1940. The building itself was constructed by villagers during the reconstruction period and served as a village hall. Soviet soldiers fallen in Salla during the Winter War were buried in a grave for fallen prisoners of war in the Saija cemetery. The town of Kovdor erected a memorial there in 1995. During the Continuation War, Saija was home to a German barracks. At the start of the Continuation War, on 1.7.1941, the German 169th Division left the area as three separate combat units to carry out an offensive in the direction of Kandalaksha (Kantalahti) on the road between Salla and Kairala. A road lined with logs was constructed to service the division extended from the village of Raatikka to the border.

Sites from the Reconstruction Period

During the Interim Peace between the Winter and Continuation Wars, some Salla residents succeeded in returning to their home region and starting reconstruction. At the end of the Continuation War, Salla was again destroyed, however. When peace came, the conditions for reconstruction and resettlement were stipulated in the Kuusamo–Salla Land Acquisition Act. Nine new residential areas were set up, one of which was Vallovaara village. Resettlement plots were scattered along spur roads, which can be seen in the road network of the area even today. Most of these plots were farms, and by 1950, about 11,000 hectares of swampland had been drained and turned into farmland.

The resettlement plots contain houses constructed in a standardised manner, which is why the houses with gabled roofs along the village roads in Salla are very similar. A typical house built for veterans is a wooden house with a gable roof, one chimney and a terrace. The courtyard area often also featured a sauna and a cowshed.

The site from the reconstruction period is also Suoltijoki Logging Site Camp. Area was built in Naruska in the 1950s, situated approximately 68 kilometres from Salla. It was protected by the Act on the Protection of Building. The Suoltijoki logging site was formed in order to pay the war indemnity and to reconstruct the parts of Lapland burned down during the wars. Another remnant of the logging history of the area during the reconstruction period is the Riutukka Log Rafting Area. It is located near Suomutunturi Fell in Kemijärvi (in Tonkopuro, approx. 8 km east of Suomu), and features a restored log chute and signposts for visitors.

KEMIJÄRVI

Regional history

Based on ancient findings, it is known that Kemijärvi was inhabited as early as the Stone Age. When the first Finns moved to Kemijärvi in the early 1600s, Sámis were no longer living in the area. The area was border land between Lapland and Lanta, which Sámis visited to fish. New settlers set up houses and began farming and keeping cattle in the fertile Kemijoki delta. Fishing and hunting were important sources of income.

Kemijärvi's location provided good connections to the Gulf of Bothnia in the west, the White Sea in the east and further to Lake Ladoga, and the Arctic Ocean in the north. At the intersection of waterways, Kemijärvi developed into an active marketplace as early as the 1600s. The most important commodity as dried pike, a valuable fish in its time. The road from Rovaniemi to Kemijärvi

was completed in 1853, and the railway was opened in the 1930s. Both were important steps in the settlement of the parish village. The population centre grew on this cape surrounded by water, amidst fells and hills, on the shores of Lake Kemijärvi, Lake Pöyliöjärvi and River Kemijoki.

Crucial battles took place in the Kemijärvi area during the Winter War. The enemy was stopped from advancing from the eastern border towards Kemijärvi at the village of Joutsijärvi and in Mäntyvaara. During the Continuation War, there were German supply bases and prisoner camps in the area, in Rovajärvi, at the Ketola airfield and in Joutsijärvi. There was also a Finnish prisoner of war camp in Kemijärvi. In the wars between 1939 and 1945, 70% of the buildings in the area were destroyed.

The post-war reconstruction work and power plant construction lasted for a decade. It employed people and brought prosperity to Kemijärvi. Kemijärvi became a market town in 1957 and its population was over 16,000 at its peak. The pulp factory Veitsiluoto Oy (Stora Enso) was built in the mid-1960s, and the Seitakorva power plant was also commissioned roughly at the same time. The regulation of Lake Kemijärvi began. The market town and rural district merged in 1973 and formed the town of Kemijärvi. In 2013 approximately 8,000 people live there.

Historical military sites in Kemijärvi

Joutsijärvi

Joutsijärvi is a village of some 150 residents along Route 5 and Highway 82, approximately 40 kilometres from Salla and 25 kilometres from Kemijärvi. In the village are memorials commemorating the battle of Mäntyvaara and the Swedish volunteers in the Winter War as well as structures from the Salpa Line built during the Interim Peace. In the Joutsijärvi village area, battles took place during the Winter War and Finns carried out guerrilla strikes behind the enemy, disrupting the supplies of the enemy troops. On 15 January 1940, the Soviet troops withdrew for 45 kilometres without a fight from Joutsijärvi to Märkäjärvi (today, the Salla parish village). The attack by the Finnish troops came to an end on 19 January 1940 in Paikanselkä, where the lines were supplied until the Winter War ended on 13 March 1940.

Mäntyvaara

The Memorial for the Battle of Mäntyvaara on 20 December 1939 is situated in Joutsijärvi along Route 5 approximately 20 km from Kemijärvi. The memorial,

made by Vilho Aalto, was erected in 1960. The Soviet 596th Infantry Regiment Battalion aimed to cut off the road between Salla and Kemijärvi, and to do so in Mäntyvaara. It came behind the Finnish troops through the wilderness on 19 December. The Finnish Detached Battalion Er.P 17, also known as "the Salla Battalion", was in reserve resting along the road at the foot of the hill. When the troops spotted the enemy, they started a battle west of the location of the current memorial. Amidst the battle, troops from both sides were mixed in close engagement on the slopes of the hill. After heavy fighting in the dark, the Finnish troops managed to occupy the hill and the rest of the Soviet troops fled.

Finland lost 17 men at the battle of Mäntyvaara, but the Soviet troops lost over 300. This is how the menacing advance of the Soviet battalion was frustrated only about 20 kilometres from Kemijärvi. The fallen Soviet soldiers are buried in three mass graves on the peak of Mäntyvaara. There is also a commemorative rock in the area. On the north-western slope of Mäntyvaara is also a mass grave marked with a red cone; 380 Soviet prisoners of war from the Continuation War period are buried there.

Salpa Line Concrete Bunker

This concrete bunker is located in Joutsijärvi. The defence line constructed along the eastern border of Finland, built in 1940, 1941 and 1944 and extending for approximately 1,200 kilometres, is called the Salpa Line. The fortified battle stations in Joutsijärvi form the northernmost bunker area of the Salpa Line. In the middle of the village, on the shores of the small Hunajalampi lake is a restored bunker of the Finnish Salpa Line. The bunker is open to the public year round, but the best time to visit is the summer. The Bunker Museum features, for example, a photography exhibition on the construction of the Salpa Line, and wartime items found in the area. The museum is maintained by the Joutsijärvi village residents.



Tasasenvaara

The rearmost Finnish defence line during the Winter War was constructed in Tasasenvaara. Remains of the line structures can be seen in the terrain. Puikkola The headquarters of the Swedish volunteers was situated in the Törmänen House in the village of Puikkola during the Winter War. A grave for diseased people from the prisoner of war camp is situated in the village near the railway, marked with a red cone. The mass grave dates back to the Continuation War; the prisoners were working on the railway.

Ketola/Hanhikoski

The garrison area in Hanhikoski (Ketola) was established in the summer of 1940 in connection with the reorganisation of the army. The garrison acted as a training centre during the interim peace period and Continuation War. Construction work on the airfield had begun before the Winter War and the field was completed in summer 1941. The staff of the 12th Brigade, the First Battalion, Artillery Company and Mortar Company as well as Signal Company, the 40th Truck Company and brigade supply facilities operated in the area.

Hanhikoski was the largest of the garrisons established in Eastern Lapland. It was divided into a residential area for staff, barracks and an airfield. There were around 30 family homes for officers and almost 70 for Non-Commissioned Officers. The barrack area contained accommodation for the men, warehouses and service facilities. All in all there were around 200 buildings in the area. During the Continuation War a German air base and supply centre operated in the area. The Finns used the western part of the area as a training site and supply base. The Germans burnt all but a few buildings down in the autumn of 1944. Nowadays the area is home to an airport and the Sarriöjärvi shooting camp area.

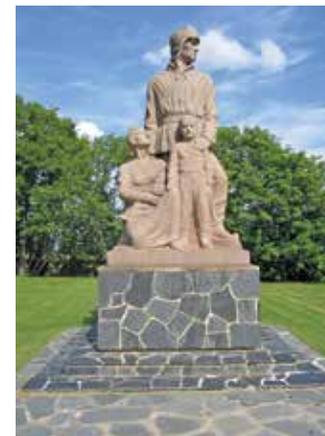
German defence stations

German defence stations which were part of the Ringwall defences constructed in 1944 to protect Rovaniemi can be found in Tohmo and Leväranta. The defences were constructed to secure the German withdrawal towards northern Norway and Ivalo. The Ringwall defence line was constructed along roads leading from Ranua, Posio and Kemijärvi towards Rovaniemi.

Kemijärvi Church and Churchyard

The current church of Kemijärvi is the fourth one of its kind, inaugurated at Midsummer 1951. The church was designed by architect Bertil Liljeqvist. The church seats 850 people and features an organ with 41 stops built by Gerhard

Schmid in 1984. The altarpiece was painted by artist Aale Hakava, assisted by artist Uno Särkelä. The third church in Kemijärvi was built between 1831 and 1832. This cruciform wooden church was destroyed during the Lapland War when the Germans withdrew from Kemijärvi. Dating back to 1774, the Bell Tower survived the ravages of the wars. It was built based on a design by Ylikiiiminki-based Heikki Väänänen.



The Monument to the Finnish Civil War is situated across from the main entrance of the church. It was made by Emil Wikstöm and dates back to 1925. The stone used in the monument was physically hauled along the ice from the other side of Lake Pöyliöjärvi. The memorial for those killed due to their convictions is situated at the western end of the old cemetery. The memorial for those fallen, made by Kalervo Kallio, was completed in 1956. As the story goes, the statue depicts a father protecting his family from a threat coming from the east. 325 fallen war heroes were buried in the churchyard, seven of whom were Lottas (female members of the Lotta Svärd auxiliary paramilitary organisation).

The commemorative tablet for the Swedish volunteers

is situated in the Kemijärvi town centre on the exterior wall of Hillatie School at Hillatie 6.

Itsenäisyyden puisto park a.k.a. the Veteraanipuisto park

In Taitelijaniemi Bay close to Kemijärvi town centre, a small park area was established on 24 September 1992 in the 75th jubilee year of Finland's independence. Nowadays, the park is better known as Veteraanipuisto (Veteran's Park). The park was set up by the Kemijärvi unit of the Disabled War Veterans Association of Finland, the associations Kemijärven Sotaveteraanit ry and Kemijärven Rintamiesveteraanit ry, and the Women's Division. The town of Kemijärvi takes care of the park's maintenance. A French howitzer (155 C Mle 1915 St. Chamond) has been placed in the park, pointing metaphorically to the east.

Volunteer Fire-Brigade's House (VPK)

The Volunteer Fire-Brigade's House, designed by master builder V. Kylmelin (later Kaltio) and built in 1913, is situated in Kemijärvi town centre. During

World War I, the military authorities of the Russian Empire seized the house. The house was used to accommodate troops, fortress workers, freight drivers and war refugees. During the Finnish Civil War, the White Guards used the house for accommodation.

In the Winter War, the house was a supply base for the Finnish troops and evacuees where the Lottas supplied food and took care of other required maintenance tasks. A commemorative tablet for the Lotta Svärd organisation has been attached to the exterior wall of the Volunteer Fire-Brigade's House. On 18 February 1940, as the enemy bombarded the parish village, the Volunteer Fire-Brigade's House was hit, and half the assembly hall's roof and floor were destroyed. During the Continuation War, the house was used by German troops.

Pelkosenniemi

Regional history

Pelkosenniemi is located at the intersection of three rivers. This location has brought influence from several different cultures to the area. People have moved along the river ever since the end of the Ice Age, with travellers coming in from the east, south and north. From Pelkosenniemi, the waters from the rivers Kemijoki, Kitinen and Luiro continue their way as the River Kemijoki to Kemijärvi and further on into the Gulf of Bothnia. The southern border of the Pelkosenniemi municipality was the border of Lapland for roughly 500 years. The border ran through Pyhätunturi, Talviaissaari, Karasinvaara and Vuotosuo-ma.

With the King's Resolution in 1673, Savo-based settlers lawfully arrived in Pelkosenniemi and utilised its game and fish supply. Settler Paavali Pelkonen was the first person to move across the border between Lapland and Lanta in the 1660s. The Pelkosenniemi municipality kept its name based on Paavali Pelkonen's homestead.

The battle fought in Pelkosenniemi on 18 December 1939 was one of the decisive battles of the Winter War in Eastern Lapland. During the Continuation War there were no battles in Pelkosenniemi. As the Germans withdrew from the Eastern Lapland area in 1944, nearly whole area scathed.

In 1962 the population of Pelkosenniemi was 2,751, but migration has reduced the number of inhabitants in the municipality. Nowadays Pelkosenniemi is one of the smallest municipalities in Lapland with regard to its population.

Pelkosenniemi and Kemijärvi are home to the Pyhä-Luosto national park, established in 1938 and expanded to the northwest in 2005 to the Luosto area. To the southwest of Ukko-Luosto and Lampivaara, the forests were completely spared from felling and are up to 400 years old.

Historical military sites in Pelkosenniemi A Monument for the Battle of Pelkosenniemi Decisive battles of the Winter War on the Lapland

frontline were fought on 18 December 1939 in the Vasaniemi and Lapinniemi areas in Pelkosenniemi. The enemy was stopped from advancing from the eastern border via Savukoski towards Kemijärvi. In Vasaniemi, there are battle fields and mass graves. The memorial to the battle is located in Lapinkangas. The memorial, made by Professor Ensio Seppänen, was erected in 1964.



German road at Nivatunturi Fell

During the Continuation War, between 1942 and 1944, prisoners of war captured by the Germans built a road towards the village of Tanhua on the side of Nivatunturi Fell. The path of the road runs from the Materoseljä reindeer hut alongside Nivatunturi Fell, and parts of it can still be ridden on a mountain bike. In some parts, forest truck roads have been built over its path.

Pelkosenniemi Church and the Soldiers' Cemetery

Two municipalities, Pelkosenniemi and Savukoski, belong to Pelkosenniemi parish. The wooden church of Pelkosenniemi, completed in 1929 on the Kaupparju ridge, survived the ravages of the wars. Architect Yrjö Sadenniemi designed the church. The alterpiece is a painting by artist Aale Hakava from 1954. Manufactured by Kangasalan urkutehdas (organ factory) in 1937, the organ has ten stops. It was moved to Pelkosenniemi in 1962. The Soldiers' Cemetery is situated next to the church and is the final resting place of 78 soldiers fallen in the Finnish wars. The cenotaph, sculpted by Vilho Aalto, was erected in 1958.



Suvanto Village

The Suvanto village in Pelkosenniemi is the only village entity in Lapland that survived the wars. It represents the building tradition of the Perä-Pohjola region. It is a riverside village on the shores of Kitinen, and is very well preserved. The buildings represent peasant architecture and some of them even date back to the 1600s. The village was spared from being burned down during the wars and from being demolished and reconstructed after them.

Kairala village

As the Germans withdrew from the Eastern Lapland area in 1944, few areas remained unscathed. The western side of the village of Kairala escaped destruction, but the part of the village on the eastern side of the river was completely destroyed. Many buildings predating the war can still be seen on the western side of the village.

Savukoski

Regional History

From prehistoric times to the 1700s, there was Sámi settlement in Savukoski. Stone Age and Iron Age habitations have been found in the area of the municipality. The oldest iron weapons found in Finland, daggers dating from ap-

proximately 300 B.C. brought here from the east, were found in the village of Kuosku in Savukoski. Since rivers were the main routes of transport, habitation was concentrated on their shores. The first Finnish settler, Jaakko Karppinen, is mentioned in written records from the 1690s. The plentiful game and fish stocks attracted increasing numbers of Finnish settlers to the area, which eventually absorbed the local Sámi population. Both the Swedes and the Russians taxed the inhabitants. The municipality of Savukoski was established through a decision of the Imperial Senate in 1916.

The beginning of the 20th century was a time of massive logging operations in the municipality. The most famous logging site was run by Hugo Richard Sandberg from 1912 to 1916 in Tulppio with mechanised logging. Steam engines brought from America were used to transport logs. One of the engines has been restored and is now on display in Tulppio. The lumberjacks' protest against their living and working conditions burst out in the so-called 'Bacon Rebellion', which began at the Värriö logging site in 1922.

Typical landscape in Savukoski consists of vast wilderness with single fells rising in an imposing manner. The best-known fell is Korvatunturi, the home of Santa Claus, which lies on the border between Finland and Russia. Different types of nature reserves make up about 1/3 of the total area of the municipality. Other features typical of the local nature are vast swamplands and numerous rivers, the largest of which is the River Kemijoki that passes through the municipality. The River Tuulomajoki watershed in the northern reaches of the municipality carries its waters into the Arctic Ocean. The municipality shares a common border with Russia 65 km long, and the closest border crossing is 60 km away.

During the Winter War, Savukoski inhabitants were forced to evacuate when the Soviet forces attacked from the direction of Salla. In later developments, Soviet partisans caused destruction in the villages of Kuosku and Seitajärvi, and residential areas were burned down when the Germans retreated. After the wars, great logging camps were re-established. As a consequence, Savukoski's population number was at its highest in the 1960s, totalling about 2,400. There are 1,200 inhabitants in the municipality nowadays.

Historical military sites in Savukoski

Restored Salpa Line

The northern end of the Salpa Line is located in Savukoski. At its peak, the construction of the fortress line from the Gulf of Finland to Savukoski employed 35,000 men and 2,000 Lottas. The Salpa Line consists of anti-tank barriers made of huge rocks weighing up to 7,000 kg and 3m in diameter, as well as

concrete fortifications and field fortifications made of wood and rocks with entrenchments and shooting, lookout and machine gun nests.

The restored Salpa Line can be seen from a footbridge at the Sarvilampi resting place. This stop is situated 1.5 km from Savukoski on the left side of the road leading to Salla. The route is 1.2 km long, of which 0.8 km consists of footbridge. The path runs along an anti-tank barrier and takes you to two restored field fortifications, a Finnish watch post dating from 1940 and a German lookout and machine gun nest from 1944.

Monument to the Victims of Partisans in Kuosku

A Soviet border guard department killed seven civilian Kuosku residents on 3 September 1941 and set village buildings on fire. The partisans also attacked the village several times after that. The village of Kuosku is situated approximately 15 km from Savukoski towards Salla. The monument is located in the middle of the village north of the road. The monument was designed by Professor Ensio Seppänen. Its imposing granite boulder is from the Salpa Line. It was unveiled on 22 July 1979. A plaque was added on 15 July 1994 with the names of the Kuosku residents who were killed in the village and fell in the wars between 1939 and 1945.



Monuments to the Victims of Partisans in Seitajärvi

The partisans attacked the village of Seitajärvi on 7 July 1944. After the partisans' destructive actions in Kuosku, a field patrol, roughly a squad in strength, was brought to Seitajärvi to protect the village. When the partisans attacked, the men of the field patrol were nonetheless overwhelmed by the enemy. The partisans captured the people they caught and burned down three houses and related outhouses. The monument was designed by Professor Ensio Seppänen. It was unveiled on 15 July 1979 as a memorial to the village residents who became victims of partisans on 7 July 1944. The relief on the rock illustrates symbolically the destructive actions of the Soviet partisans, and the birds symbolise departure and freedom through death.

Another monument is situated in Paavonmaa, approximately 4 km south-east of the village. The monument was designed by the Seitajärvi villagers, is

made of natural stone and was unveiled on 7 July 1990. Ten captured women and children were killed at the site on 7 July 1944. 8-year-old Mirja Arajärvi was assaulted at the same location, but miraculously survived. The monument for Eliisa and Valtteri Ollila, victims of partisans in Seitajärvi, at Järvenpääntie 3 in the Ollila region in Seitajärvi was unveiled on 7 July 2001. The monument was erected by the Lapin sotilaspoikien perinnekilta tradition guild.

Monument for Detachment Sau

This monument was unveiled on 19 July 1996; the commemorative rock was erected by the veterans' association Savukosken Sotaveteraanit ry on the shores of River Kemijoki in Saunakangas in Savukoski, approximately 10 km from Savukoski towards Pelkosenniemi. During the Interim Peace, the site hosted a garrison of the 12th Brigade. During the Continuation War, it was the base of Detachment Sau. Er.Os Sau (1942-1944) was formed to fight off partisan attacks.



Commemorative Tablet for the Civil Guard House

The tablet is situated at the site of the former Civil Guard House, on the plot of the present Kisakartano Manor. The tablet was unveiled on 18 July 1998. The Civil Guard organisation (in Swedish, Skyddskår) was a voluntary organisation for national defence that operated in Finland between 1918 and 1944. It was dissolved in autumn 1944 on the orders of the Allied Commission. The primary mission of the organisation was to protect Finland from external threats. It also had internal duties, such as providing executive assistance and securing law and order. It was an important foundation for reservist activities, as it maintained reservist training during peacetime. The organization Lotta Svärd was founded in 1921 and its mission was to support the activities of the civil guards. The organization Lotta Svärd was a voluntary defence organization for women. It operated unarmed. On account of training the Lottas were divided into sections for medical treatment, equipment, office work and communication as well as collections and maintenance. The organization Lotta Svärd was suppressed in November 1944.

Savukoski Border Area Church and Cemetery

The church was built in 1956. It was designed by architect Paavo Riihimäki, with the original building only containing the church and the parsonage. The parish hall was built in 1986; the extension was designed by architect Pentti Aho. The installation "Ristin tie" (Way of the Cross) at the church was designed and made by Upi Kärri. The church received its mechanical organ with seven stops in 1976, manufactured by Kangasalan urkutehdas in 1966. A commemorative rock for those fallen is situated at the Savukoski cemetery. The statue was designed by Professor Ensio Seppänen. It is situated next to the final resting place of 58 fallen war heroes from the Winter and Continuation Wars. The statue was erected on 9 September 1962.

The victims of Seitajärvi were buried close to the soldiers' graves in Savukoski on 28 July 1944. The commemorative rock, made by Professor Ensio Seppänen, was unveiled on 15 July 1979. The monument for Savukoski residents who died during evacuation in the war years 1939–1945 was designed by border area vicar, Veikko Lindberg. The monument was unveiled on 17 July 1992 and is situated at Savukoski Cemetery.

Attractions on the Russian Side of the Border

Regional history

The events of the Winter War and Continuation War are largely connected to the Eastern Lapland border region in the terrain on the Russian side of the border. The area known as Vanha Salla ("Old Salla") is an area of approximately 6,000 square kilometres which Finland lost from Salla in peace negotiations with the Soviet Union. Nine Salla villages were also lost along with the ceded territory. Fierce battles were fought in the Vanha Salla area during the offensive stage of the Winter War and during the offensive and withdrawal stages of the Continuation War. During the interim peace period, Soviet soldiers constructed strong battle stations in the area. During the Continuation War, the battleground extended from the Vanha Salla area to the River Verman in the direction of Kandalaksha (Kantalahti). The Continuation War offensive stopped there in September 1941. Finnish troops were removed from the area and the responsibility for the front was left with the Germans. Trench warfare, which lasted until September 1944, began at the River Verman.

Historical military attractions located in the direction of Alakurtti Some memorials are located in the border zone, requiring visitors to obtain a special permit to see them, along with a passport and a visa. The border zone extends from



Winter War peace terms meant that Salla lost around one half of its surface area to the Soviet Union. The Finns refer to the area as "Vanha Salla", or "Old Salla". The picture shows the former Salla parish in the Vanha Salla area. The Sallatunturi Fell can be seen in the background. (Photo: Salla museum)

the border to the passport checkpoint located about 20 kilometres away. Unauthorised stopovers at the memorials in the border zone may prevent tourists from visiting the area. It is therefore crucial for visitors and travel agents to have the required valid permits when stopping over in the border zone.

The Vanha Salla churchyard

The first church of Kuolajärvi, or Vanha Salla, was designed by C.L. Engel, an eight-cornered log house which was completed in 1838. The church was destroyed during the first days of the Winter War in 1939. Close to the church are the graves of those Salla-based soldiers who fell during the Finnish Civil War, the Winter War and the Continuation War as well as a cenotaph and Finnish cemeteries. The old cemetery is behind the church and the new cemetery lies east of the Siltajoki River. Close to the cenotaph is also a commemorative rock for those killed in 1918 due to their convictions. These sites are located in the border zone.

Cemetery for German soldiers in Vanha Salla

A cemetery for German soldiers, established during the Continuation War, can be found in Peterinselkä in the Vanha Salla parish area. Nowadays the cemetery

is maintained by the German Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e.V. The cemetery contains the remains of German soldiers who fell in the battles near Kandalaksha and in the battles near Kiestinki and Kalevala. Also buried in the cemetery are the remains of soldiers fallen in battle recovered in recent years from the battlefields by search parties looking for bodies. In total, around 7,000 dead are buried there. The cemetery is located in the border zone.

Cemetery for Soviet soldiers in Vanha Salla

Soviet soldiers who fell during the Continuation War are buried in the Vanha Salla area in a cemetery established along the main road leading to Kandalaksha. Around 600 fallen soldiers are buried in the grave for Soviet soldiers. The cemetery is located in the border zone.

The Spekov Memorial

The Soviet Union border guard Alexander Spekov fell in battle during the Winter War in 1940 at Aatsinki. After his death he was proclaimed a hero of the Soviet Union. His memorial is located in the area of Vanha Salla, on the left of the main road leading to Kandalaksha. The memorial is located in the border zone.



The Kairala bottleneck

The Kairala bottleneck area saw battles in December 1939, July and August 1941 and September 1944. Battle stations can be seen on the eastern side of the bridge. Also on the eastern side is a memorial erected by the Russians for Soviet soldiers who fell in battle.

Kelsinkäinen

Kelsinkäinen is a highland area to the east of Kairala formed of several fells. The first Finnish positions during the Winter War were in the direction of the old road at the foot of the fell. The most well-known battleground in the area is Kieristelmävaara, where Infantry Regiment 12 fought bloody battles from 8th – 10th July 1941. In the same area there were also fierce battles in mid-September 1941 as the Germans withdrew towards Finland.

Alakurtti staff area

The German XXXVI Mountain Corps staff was located on the western shore of Tuntsajoki River from September 1941 to September 1944. The current road cuts through the staff area. To the north of the current road, near the old road, there is a cemetery for Soviet soldiers in the memorial area for the 122nd division. On the western shore of the Tuntsajoki River, near the old bridge, there is a memorial for Soviet pilots.

Tuntsajoki

In early September 1941, fierce battles were fought along the Tuntsajoki River. Soviet soldiers blew up what was then the Tuntsajoki River bridge as they retreated from Alakurtti. The Germans, on the other hand, destroyed the area and laid mines as they withdrew from the area in September 1944. During the Continuation War, a German airfield was located on the eastern side of the Tuntsajoki River in the area where there is now an airport.

Voitatunturi Fell

A dominating landscape feature located in the area between the River Verman and the River Voyta. German and Finnish troops continued to occupy the area even after troops had already reached the Verman River.



Voyta River

After the Tuntsajoki River, the Red Army's next line of defence was located at the Voyta River. Construction troops had built strong machine gun nests along the eastern shore and cleared the trees on the western side in order to make a good shooting area. The Vermanjoki River stations were constructed in the same way.

Karhu station

The easternmost train station along the Kandalaksha (Kantalahti) rail line to which the Germans had railway access during the Continuation War. During the interim peace period, the Soviet Union had built stops at regular intervals, where it was possible to construct double tracks to function as overtaking spots for trains.

Verman River

The offensive by German and Finnish troops on the western side of the River Verman stopped in September 1941. The Red Army troops gathered on the eastern side of the river were firmly in their field-fortified stations and their fighting was supported by several artillery firing units. On the eastern side of the road bridge is a memorial for



Soviet troops erected by the town of Kandalaksha with signs in Russian detailing the battles in the area. There are well-preserved battle stations and barbed wire barriers on both sides of the river. Please note when visiting that there may be live ammunition and undetonated mines in the area.

HISTORIC WAR ATTRACTIONS IN THE EASTERN LAPLAND ON THE MAP

Savukoski

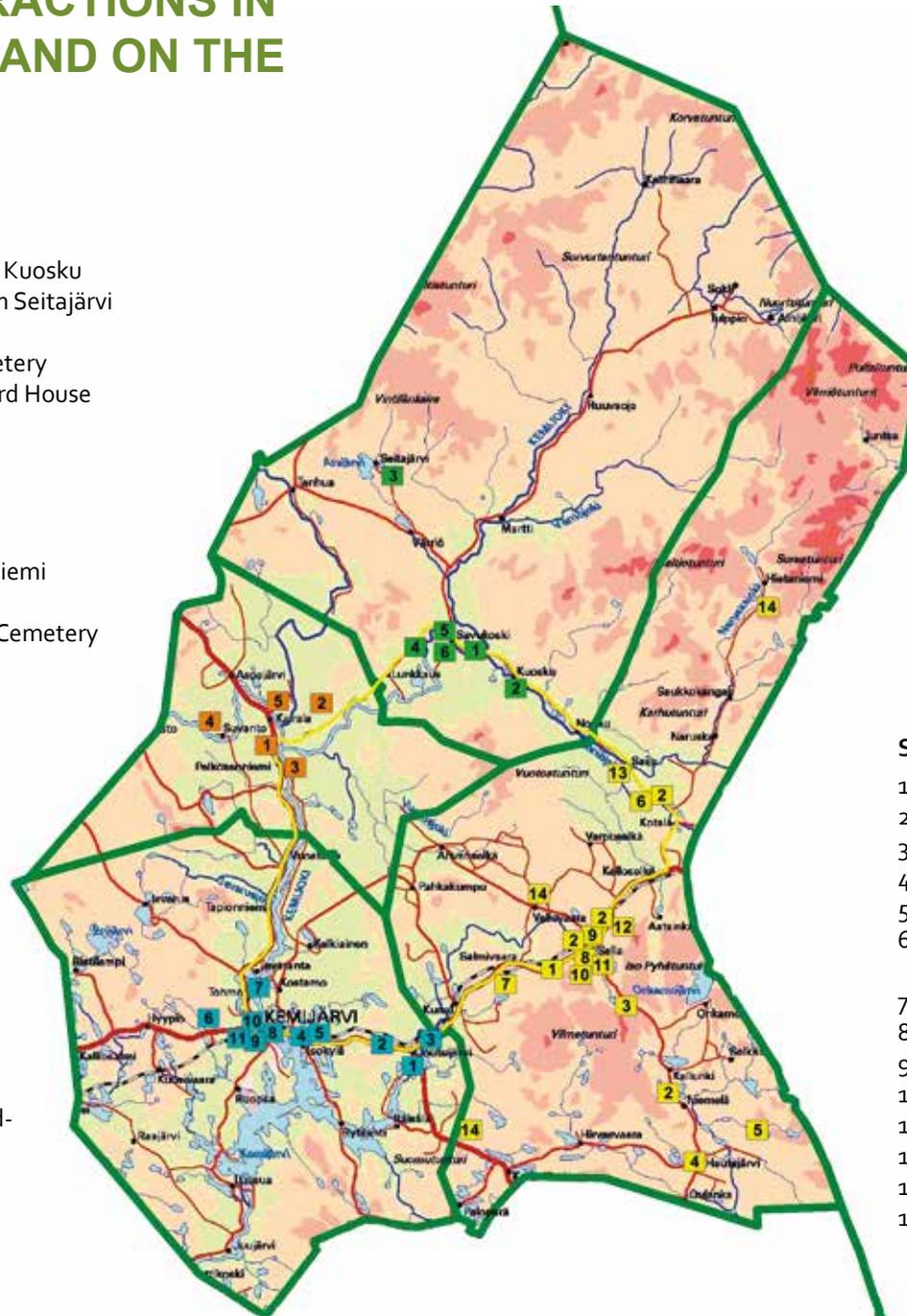
- 1 Restored Salpa Line
- 2 Monument to the Victims of Partisans in Kuosku
- 3 Monuments to the Victims of Partisans in Seitajärvi
- 4 Monument for Detachment Sau
- 5 Savukoski Border Area Church and Cemetery
- 6 Commemorative Tablet for the Civil Guard House

Pelkosenniemi

- 1 A Monument for the Battle of Pelkosenniemi
- 2 German road at Nivatunturi Fell
- 3 Pelkosenniemi Church and the Soldiers' Cemetery
- 4 Suvanto Village
- 5 Kairala village

Kemijärvi

- 1 Joutsijärvi
- 2 Mäntyvaara
- 3 Salpa Line Concrete Bunker
- 4 Tasasenvaara
- 5 Puikkola
- 6 Ketola/Hanhikoski
- 7 German defence stations
- 8 Kemijärvi Church and Churchyard
- 9 The commemorative tablet for the Swedish volunteers
- 10 Volunteer Fire-Brigade's House (VPK)
- 11 Itsenäisyyden puisto park a.k.a. the Veteraanipuisto park



Salla

- 1 Paikanselkä War Memorial Area
- 2 Salpa Line in Salla
- 3 Cellar of Sotka
- 4 Memorial to the Wilderness Jaegers
- 5 Memorial for the Victims of Partisans in Kiviaapa
- 6 Memorial to Those Who Lost Their Lives in Post-War Mine Explosions
- 7 Memorial for Two Boys from Helsinki
- 8 Salla Museum of War and Reconstruction
- 9 Salla Station and railway
- 10 Church of Salla
- 11 Monument for the Soviet soldiers fallen in Salla
- 12 Grave of Soviet prisoners of war
- 13 Saija
- 14 Sites from the Reconstruction Period

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT TOURISM SERVICES IN THE AREA

KEMIJÄRVI

Kemijärvi tourist information

Kuumaniemenkatu 2 A, 98100 Kemijärvi
+358 (0)40 189 2050
info.visit@kemijarvi.fi
www.lakelapland.fi
www.kemijarvi.fi

Kemijärvi regional museum

Sepänkatu 4
98120 Kemijärvi
+358 (0) 5039 591
posti@kemijarvenmuseo.com
www.kemijarvenmuseo.com

PELKOSENNIEMI

Nature Centre Naava – Pyhä-Luosto Visitor and Culture Centre Naava

Luontotie 1, 98530 Pyhätunturi
+358 40 767 1144
visit@pyha-luosto.fi
www.pelkosenniemi.fi

SALLA

Salla tourist information

Myllytie 1, 98900 Salla
+358 (0)400 269 838
tourist.info@salla.fi
www.salla.fi
Avoinna ma-pe klo 10-16

Salla museum of War and Reconstruction

Savukoskentie 12,, 98900 Salla
+358 40 576 0762
museo@salla.fi
www.salla.fi/museo

SAVUKOSKI

Savukoski tourist information

Korvatunturi Visitor Centre (Metsähallitus)

Samperintie 32, 98800 Savukoski
+358 (0)20 564 7556
matkailu@savukoski.fi
www.savukoski.fi/matkailu/www.savukoski.fi
www.metsa.fi ja luontoon.fi

