



**National Defence  
University**

**Knut Pipping**

# **INFANTRY COMPANY AS A SOCIETY**

**Department of  
Behavioural Sciences**

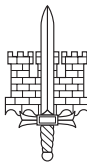
Publication Series 1  
Number 3/2008

**National Defence University  
Department of Behavioural Sciences**

**Knut Pipping**

**INFANTRY COMPANY AS A SOCIETY**

**Edited and translated into English by Petri Kekäle**



**Helsinki 2008**

ISBN 978-951-25-1892-0  
ISSN 1796-671-x

Layout: Heidi Paananen/TKKK

Edita Prima Oy  
Helsinki  
2008

# Contents

<b>FOREWORD (Pentti Lehtimäki)</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION: Finland in the Second World War 1939–1944 and Pipping’s 12th Infantry Regiment</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION: Knut Pipping’s “Infantry Company as a Society” and Aspects of Some Other Military Sociological Studies of Small Military Units During and After the Second World War (Olli Harinen)</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>INFANTRY COMPANY AS A SOCIETY (Knut Pipping)</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>PREFACE</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>THE SECOND MACHINE GUN COMPANY OF THE TWELFTH INFANTRY REGIMENT</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>I HISTORY OF THE COMPANY</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>II COMPOSITION OF THE COMPANY</b> .....	<b>72</b>
Organization .....	72
Composition According to the Home District of the Rank and File .....	74
Composition According to the Age of the Rank and File .....	78
Term of Service of the Rank and File in the Company .....	80
Company Losses .....	81
Composition According to the Men’s Profession and Marital Status .....	83
<b>III COMPANY’S LINES OF ACTION (CASE STUDIES)</b> .....	<b>85</b>
March .....	85
Battle .....	94
Peace at the Front .....	104
Rest .....	117
Railway Transport .....	124

<b>IV SOCIAL GROUPS IN THE COMPANY .....</b>	<b>127</b>
Rank Groups .....	127
Military Groups .....	136
Local Groups.....	146
Age Groups .....	150
Home District Groups .....	157
Mess Kit Groups .....	161
<b>V COMPLIANCE WITH FORMAL AND INFORMAL NORMS</b> .....	<b>163</b>
Courage .....	163
Private and Public Property.....	168
Alcohol and sexuality .....	178
Religion, Superstition and Information .....	187
Discipline .....	194
Helpfulness .....	204
<b>VI ATTITUDES TOWARDS OUTSIDERS .....</b>	<b>206</b>
Other Front Units .....	206
Home Front .....	208
Enemy .....	210
<b>LAPLAND .....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>I THE LAND .....</b>	<b>211</b>
History of the Settlement .....	211
Demographic Conditions.....	218
Economic Conditions .....	219
Crime .....	225
Religion .....	226
Political Views.....	227
<b>II HIETASUVANTO .....</b>	<b>229</b>
The Settlement .....	229
Inhabitants .....	231
Work and Free Time .....	235
Attitudes towards the Authorities and the Community .....	248
<b>CONCLUDING WORDS .....</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>256</b>
<b>Diagrams and Map Supplements .....</b>	<b>259</b>

## FOREWORD

During the Second World War Knut Pipping, a young Finnish sociologist, served as a NCO in a Finnish machine gun company. In 1942, during the war, he began an extensive sociological study of his own company. He gathered empirical material systematically during and after the war, and in 1947 his work was published as a doctoral dissertation at Åbo Academi. The dissertation was written in Swedish and had only a short English summary. In 2001 the Finnish Military Sociological Society started a project to translate Knut Pipping's study into English.

There are very few scientific military sociological or military psychological studies that deal with small, integrated World War II military units, like platoons, companies or batteries. "The American Soldier", a classical WW II study, was based on large-scale surveys and did not focus on small platoon or company-sized units. There are also a great number of very good military historical books and articles that deal with platoon or company-sized units in the Second World War, for instance "Band of Brothers" (Ambrose 2002, also a TV series), which tells the story of one infantry company. Although books like "Band of Brothers" provide fascinating reading and extremely interesting data for researchers, they are not scientific studies, like Pipping's. Since Pipping's work is relatively unknown to the English-speaking readership, and since there are very few similar small unit WW II studies, the Finnish Military Sociological Society wanted to have it translated into English.

The Finnish Military Sociological Society, which was founded in 1993 with General Jaakko Valtanen (former commander in chief of the Finnish Defence Forces) as its first chairman, has arranged military sociological seminars at the University of Helsinki and elsewhere from the beginnings of the 1990's and has participated in the preparations of the biannual National Conference on Military Science.

M.A. Petri Kekäle (Ministry of Defence, later Prime Minister's Office; member of the Military Sociological Society) has translated and edited the book.

The idea to translate Pipping's study into English was first proposed by M.A. Pertti Alanen, vice chairman of the Society. The board of the Finnish Military Sociological Society, with Lieutenant General Pentti Lehtimäki as its chairman, nominated an advisory group, which consisted of the following persons (who are also board members of the Military Sociological Society):

- Colonel Kalle Liesinen, chairman of the advisory group
- later replaced as chairman by Colonel (M.C.), Ph.D. Matti Ponteva
- Colonel, M.A. Erkki Nordberg (chief of the training section of the General Headquarters)
- M.A. Göran Lindgren (Finnish Reserve Officers' Union)
- researcher Olli Harinen.

The advisory group has checked the whole translation for accuracy and military terminology.

In addition to Pipping's original text the English version contains an introductory chapter written especially for the English edition by licenciate Olli Harinen from the National Defence University's Department of Behavioral Sciences, also secretary of the Military Sociological Society. He has also checked the translation of Pipping's chapters IV, V and VI for scientific terminology.

There is also an additional chapter about Finland's and Pipping's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment's role in the Second World War. This historical introduction to Pipping's book was compiled by the advisory group.

The Finnish Military Sociological Society wishes to thank the following foundations which have given grants for the work:

- Maanpuolustuksen kannatusäätiö
- Puolustusvoimien tukisäätiö
- Svenska Kulturfonden
- Stiftelsen för Åbo Akademi
- Oscar Öflunds Stiftelse
- Sotavahinkoyhdistyksen säätiö.

The state-owned Åbo Academy University, where Pipping's dissertation was published in 1947, is Finland's only Swedish-language multi-faculty university. It is the centre of higher education for Finland's Swedish-speaking minority and is a comprehensive research university with seven faculties. Fields of study include theology, the arts, law, social sciences, psychology, engineering and natural sciences. It has an acknowledged position at the forefront of research in, for instance, biotechnology, computer science, informational and structural biology and human rights.

The Finnish Military Sociological Society also wants to thank academician Eric Allardt (Finnish Academy of Sciences and the University of Helsinki), professor Harriet Strandell (currently at the University of Helsinki, before that at Åbo Akademi University) and professor Ohto Manninen (Department of Military History of the National Defence University) for their help and advice. Another contributor is the Finnish Defence Forces Language Centre, which has provided editing assistance. The society also wishes to thank Mr. Gunnar Pipping for permitting a published translation of Knut Pipping's study.

Pentti Lehtimäki

Lieutenant General, Chairman of the Finnish Military Sociological Society

# **HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION: Finland in the Second World War 1939–1944 and Pipping's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment**

## **The Winter War 1939–1940**

The final stage of the events that led Finland to the Second World War began when the treaty of non-aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union was concluded on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1939. In the secret extra protocol of this treaty Finland, together with the Baltic countries, was included to the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. In September 1939, the Soviet Union demanded military bases from the Baltic countries and made demands, which the Baltic countries did not dare to refuse.

The Finnish armed forces were mobilized in October 1939 and fortification work on the borders, especially on the relatively narrow Karelian Isthmus was accelerated. After negotiations with Finland, the Soviet Union broke her diplomatic relations with Finland and started hostilities on November 30<sup>th</sup> 1939.

The Soviet Union began her offensives on the Karelian Isthmus and simultaneously in Eastern Karelia and the Ilomantsi, Lieksa, Kuhmo, Suomussalmi, Salla and Petsamo sectors. To understand the course of war events, a few words must be said about the geography. Finland had a very long land frontier against the Soviet Union, disrupted sometimes by larger and smaller lakes. The frontier line started in the south from the Gulf of Finland near Leningrad. From there the frontier went northeastward across the Karelian Isthmus, crossed Lake Ladoga, and after that northward all the way through Karelia, east of Tolvajärvi, Ilomantsi, Lieksa, Kuhmo, Suomussalmi and Salla, to Petsamo in the far north, Finland's only Arctic Ocean port.

The repeated, strong Soviet breakthrough attempts against the main defence line were repelled with heavy Soviet casualties in Summa, Taipale and elsewhere on the Karelian Isthmus in December 1939. After an unsuccessful Finnish counterattack, the war on the Karelian Isthmus turned to trench fighting that lasted until mid-February 1940.

The enemy was encircled in several separate areas north-east of Lake Ladoga. The first of the defensive victories was gained in the Tolvajärvi-Ilomantsi sector by the middle of December 1939.

The Russians took the central village of Suomussalmi in the Suomussalmi sector, but the occupied village was recaptured by Finns on December 13<sup>th</sup> 1939. The Soviet division, which tried to come to help the Soviet troops in Suomussalmi,



was surrounded and annihilated in early January, and the greatest defensive victory of the Winter War was thus achieved.

The Soviet attacks were also repelled in the Lieksa and Kuhmo sectors and the enemy was compelled to retreat partly beyond the borderline before the end of December 1939.

In the north, the enemy first advanced relatively far into the Finnish territory in the Salla sector but was stopped in Pelkosenniemi soon after the middle of December 1939. After that – there, in the Kemijärvi sector as well as in Petsamo – the enemy was successfully restrained in its positions by small troops until the end of the war.

The Soviet forces from Leningrad, Kalinin and Moscow military districts had thus not been able to fulfil their order to occupy Finland. Therefore the Soviet Union began to concentrate forces from six more military districts on the Karelian Isthmus in January 1940. The main attack led finally to the breakthrough on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1940. The Finns were thereafter compelled to defend themselves in a poorly equipped intermediate position. This position had to be abandoned on February 27<sup>th</sup> and the Finns had to retreat to the even more poorly equipped defensive line -east of Viipuri. This defensive line was, however, supported by many water obstacles. Due to the very cold winter the sea on the Gulf of Finland was thickly frozen. That allowed the enemy to surprise the Finns by attacking them with strong forces over the frozen Gulf of Viipuri, which formed the southernmost part of the defensive line. This bold, dangerous attempt was contained only with great effort – but the enemy gained a bridgehead south-west of Viipuri.

The three-month long defensive battle had exhausted the Finnish troops to the extent that the Finns had to try to make peace as soon as possible. The peace treaty was signed in Moscow and the hostilities ended on March 13<sup>th</sup> 1940. Finland had to cede a lot of the territory they held at the end of the war, including Viipuri – Finland's second largest city – the entire Karelian Isthmus, some islands in the Gulf of Finland and lease a military base in Hanko, the southwestern tip of Finland.

### **The Continuation War 1941–1944 and Knut Pipping's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment**

Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1941 and the Soviet Air Force bombed Finnish airfields and civilian targets on June 25<sup>th</sup> 1941.

About 16% of Finland's population, 3.7 million people, was summoned to arms at the mobilization. The number of the field army was close to 500 000 men but decreased later during trench warfare, being less than 400 000, but reaching its maximum of about 530 000 men in summer 1944. The average strength of the

army was about 450 000 men and the total number of men who participated must have been about 700 000.

*Knut Pipping's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was mobilized in June 1941 in Savukoski in Lapland together with other Finnish field army units that were stationed there and elsewhere in the country. Pipping's machine gun company consisted of conscripts, who happened to be performing their military service at the outbreak of the war. Most soldiers of the Finnish Army were, however, reservists who were called to service.*

The Finnish soldiers were better trained and equipped than during the Winter War. Considerable purchases of equipment had been made during the interim peacetime period. The Finnish war industry had developed considerably. The longer duration of conscript training made training more efficient and experiences from the war were utilized. In general, the motivation to fight was also strong at the beginning of the Continuation War, though the public opinion did not reach the consensus that prevailed during the Winter War. Due to Germany's early success in the war, the faith in her power was strong and for many people the situation even seemed to offer an opportunity to gain a righteous compensation for the "unfairness" of the Winter War.

The fast German advance on the eastern front and the following change of an overall operational situation were followed by action in the Finnish front. First, the deployment of the Finnish troops had to be altered to fit the new offensive strategy. Thus, the main Finnish operation could not be started before July 10<sup>th</sup> 1941, when the Finnish Army mounted an attack north and north-east of Lake Ladoga. The preparations for an operation on the Karelian Isthmus began simultaneously. The city of Viipuri was recaptured on August 30<sup>th</sup> 1941 and at the turn of the month the front on the Karelian Isthmus settled roughly along the old border line of 1939 and stayed there until June 1944.

Offensive action lasted longest in Eastern Karelia where it was considered wise to advance to the Syväri – Äänisjärvi – Seesjärvi line, deep into Russian territory, and thus reach the line that was easier to defend. The former borderline between Finland and the Soviet Union was crossed in July 1941. This caused trouble both politically and for combat motivation. The River Syväri (Svir) was reached on September 7<sup>th</sup> and the capital of Soviet Karelia, Petrozavodsk was captured on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1941. Advance continued to the north where the offensive of the Karelian Army ended after the capture of Karhumäki and Poventsa from December 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. The troops then halted on the defensive line along the waterways after the offensive phase that lasted nearly half a year. Further in the north, the advance was halted near Rukajärvi in September 1941.

In the North, the Germans who had arrived to Finland through Norway assumed operational responsibility for the area between Lake Oulujärvi and the Arctic Ocean.

In the northern Salla sector, the Germans – aided by the Finnish 6<sup>th</sup> Division – recaptured the territory ceded after the Moscow Peace treaty as soon as in July 1941. However, they were unable to advance to Kantalahti by the White Sea as originally planned. The trench warfare began there after a new offensive phase in the middle of September 1941.

*Pipping's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, marched towards the Soviet border after the war broke out in June 1941. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, Pipping's battalion crossed the Soviet border and proceeded to Lake Pisto in the Salla sector, where it fought until the beginning of August.*

The assault from Petsamo to Murmansk, furthest in the north, started in June and halted after advancing some ten kilometres as soon as in early July. The Germans were unable to mount an further attack in this difficult roadless terrain.

There were Finnish troops also in the Suomussalmi – Uhtua – Kiestinki sector south from Salla. The Finns' offensive aims were achieved in this sector as early as in August 1941. However, the German troops proved to be unable to fight in the forests.

*After combat activity in the Lake Pisto area, Pipping's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was withdrawn and sent on 9<sup>th</sup> August to Kiestinki, which some days earlier had been captured by the Finnish main forces. The battalion fought its way some 45 miles eastward from Kiestinki, but met too hard resistance and was surrounded by strong enemy forces for about two weeks. The casualties were very heavy. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, the battalion was relieved and given a quiet front, in Sintosenlahti, where it stayed until October 29<sup>th</sup> 1941.*

In order to cut off the Russian railway line to Murmansk, the Finns had to join the Germans in their attempt at a breakthrough in the Kiestinki sector.

*On November 1<sup>st</sup>, the entire 6<sup>th</sup> Division broke through the Russian front east of Kiestinki and advanced about ten miles.*

This maneuver failed and the attack that had been started against Marshal Mannerheim's desire had to be stopped.

The advance phase lasted longer than expected. In addition, the crossing of the former borderline seemed to diminish the Finnish troops' combat motivation in autumn 1941 and resulted in denials and desertions. These never became decisive, but information operations became more important than before. The fact that the war was prolonged was clearly a disappointment and raised doubts about Germany's superiority and about the outcome of the war, especially as many soldiers had themselves seen how poorly the Germans had succeeded in forest fighting.

Germany pressed the Finnish politicians to make an alliance and to intensify the Finnish war effort, but in Finland these proposals were taken up evasively and Finland held to her claim that she was waging a separate war to accomplish her own security aims. The Supreme Commander Mannerheim persisted strictly in his right to command the Finnish troops alone. The Finnish offensive weakened, however, Finland's international status and she could not avoid the declaration of war by England even though the offensives of the Karelian Army ended simultaneously.

The following period of two and a half years from winter 1942 to summer 1944 was a period of relatively quiet trench warfare.

*After the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment's battles in Kiestinki in August – September 1941, the winter of 1941 – 1942 passed quietly in the regiment until the enemy attacked Finnish positions in April 1942. For the next two weeks, the entire 6<sup>th</sup> Division fought hard and was successful in defensive action.*

*In July 1942, the entire battalion, except for the 4<sup>th</sup> Company and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company, marched to Röhö where it was given charge of an outpost line – about eight miles in length – in an uninhabited and swampy forest. The battalion stayed there until September 1942, when it was relieved by Germans.*

*After that the battalion marched back to the old Finnish territory for a rest. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, it arrived in Nurmes, where it stayed in the garrison till January 1943.*

*The battalion was sent by train to Sunkku near Karhumäki. It served in Eastern Karelia in coast guard duty by Lake Onega until June 1943, after which it was given a front by the Stalin's Canal. It stayed there until June 16<sup>th</sup> 1944, every three months "in", and every three months "out".*

When the peace negotiations with the Soviet Union were interrupted in spring 1944, offensives from the Soviet side were to be expected. The general situation and the delay in the opening of another front by the Allies gave more opportunities to the Soviet Union after the Germans' gradual retreat from the Baltic countries. The Soviet Union had agreed with the Allies that she will launch an attack in the east simultaneously with the Allies' landing in France in May 1944, but had declined to define her sector of assault. She had also promised to develop her operations to a general attack until mid-July.

The Allied landing at Normandy started on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944. Three days later the Soviet Union started the major attack on the Karelian Isthmus.

The massive Soviet offensive on the Karelian Isthmus, which started with overwhelming artillery preparations, led to a breakthrough next day. The relative weakness of the thin defensive line, the superiority of the enemy and the lack of

modern antitank armament caused several chaotic situations at the beginning. It was impossible to hold the main defensive line. The Soviet offensive advanced relatively fast past the unfinished Vammelsuu – Taipale positions despite a counterattack by the Finnish Army's only Panzer Division, and led two weeks later to the abandonment of Viipuri, Finland's second largest city, in one day on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1944.

After that the resistance stiffened and the offensive was halted first in the Tienhaara bridge/crossroads area just outside of Viipuri and then at the Viipuri – Kuparsaari – Taipale line. The decisive, successful and extremely fierce battles took place in the terrain of Tali – Ihantala and in Vuosalmi. The Finnish defenders were aided by new German-made light antitank weapons (bazookas), by a strong German fighter-bomber unit with German crews, by new troops transferred from Eastern Karelia and by a massive concentration of Finnish field artillery units in the Tali – Ihantala area. The horseshoe-shaped defensive position, together with the Finnish Army's progressive field artillery observation techniques, enabled the concentrated fire of as many as 240 field artillery pieces on a single target at a time and with devastating effect. Many Russian attacks were thus repulsed before they had even properly begun. The battle of Tali-Ihantala engaged about 200 000 Finnish and Russian soldiers (150 000 Russian and 50 000 Finnish soldiers) for two weeks and ranks among the six largest battles in Europe in 1944.

*Pipping's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, along with the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, was transferred by train in June 1944 from Eastern Karelia to the Karelian Isthmus to launch a counterattack in the Ihantala area. The division arrived "at the eleventh moment". The 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment succeeded first in its counterattack, which started on June 28<sup>th</sup> and then in holding its front and repelling attacks in the Ihantala area.*

As for the Eastern Karelia, the front north from the Karelian Isthmus, the activities on the Karelian Isthmus had forced the Finns to begin to retreat from Eastern Karelia. Due to the great number of retreating troops and equipment, Finnish casualties increased when the enemy simultaneously launched an offensive with superior forces and even made a surprise landing at Tuulos from Lake Ladoga behind the retreating Finnish forces. Simultaneously, as told above, Finnish troops were transferred away from the Eastern Karelia to the Karelian Isthmus where they were needed even more urgently. The confused situation was finally stabilized at the U-position in Pitkäranta – Loimola line in mid-July 1944, after which the battle slowed down to trench warfare.

The operations of the troops that withdrew from the Isthmus of Maaselkä, even further in the north, continued longer, because the enemy moved some of her troops to this sector from the Karelian Isthmus as late as in July. The fighting ceased on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1944 when the Finns encircled two enemy divisions with a counterattack at Ilomantsi.

After the initial success and these unsuccessful last attempts, the Soviet Union seemed to need her troops in Central Europe. The favorable preconditions for peace negotiations were created for Finland after the defensive victory in July 1944 and the resignation of President Ryti on August 1<sup>st</sup>, which relieved Finland from all engagements between Finland and Germany. The Armistice Agreement was signed in Moscow on September 19<sup>th</sup> 1944. Finland was to withdraw behind the borderline of the year 1940, to cede Petsamo (Finland's only Arctic Ocean port) and to lease the Peninsula of Porkkala on the Gulf of Finland to the Soviet Union as a military base for 50 years. The most important military demand was to disarm the German forces in northern Finland and to extradite them to the Soviet Union. This led to war in Lapland between Finnish and German troops, and the Germans were finally forced to retreat to Norway.

*After four weeks' rest and fortification work behind the lines after the battle of Tali – Ihantala, Pipping's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was sent by train to Kontiomäki, immediately after the cease-fire. On September 19<sup>th</sup> 1944, it marched against the German troops which still held Lapland. It reached Sodankylä in Lapland on October 23<sup>rd</sup> after having marched for five weeks on the heels of the retreating Germans. After a period of rest, the last reservists left on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944, and Pipping's battalion ceased to exist.*

- The last phase of the Continuation War in 1944 was an obvious defensive victory for Finland. The main territory of the country was kept outside warfare and the national independence was preserved.

**Olli Harinen**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION: Knut Pipping's "Infantry Company as a Society" and Aspects of Some Other Military Sociological Studies of Small Military Units During and After the Second World War**

### **1 Pipping's Work: A Sociological Study of a Finnish Infantry Company in the Second World War**

After the Second World War, military sociologists realized the importance of primary group ties and other small group phenomena in the larger military organization. "The American Soldier" (Stouffer et al., 1949), a massive work based on empirical questionnaire studies carried out during WW II, and a research article by Shils & Janowitz (1948), which was based on German POW interviews, both stressed the importance of primary groups and group phenomena. In industrial sociology and psychology, somewhat similar results had been found, for instance, already at the beginning of the 1930's in the famous Hawthorne studies, which were followed or complemented in the 1940's by the social psychological small group studies by Kurt Lewin, Muzafer Sherif and Solomon Asch.

Charles Moskos, a military sociologist, wrote after reviewing different scientific and other sources about American soldiers' behavior in WW II:

"Thus, a variety of sources – the mass media, war novels, Mauldin's cartoons, the empirical data of *The American Soldier*, the writing of astute observers – agree on one central point, namely, the overriding importance of primary-group relationships within the broader context of the formal military organization. Despite his undeniable resentment of the military servitude, the American enlisted man in World War II was an effective soldier, effective because he was a member of a socially cohesive team."  
(Moskos 1970, p. 8)

The importance of small military groups had thus been established. However, soon after the publication of "The American Soldier", E.A. Shils (1950, p.18) pointed out that the best way to study small military groups may not be to focus

on the attitudes of individuals by carrying out large-scale attitude interviews or surveys of soldiers, as in the “American Soldier” studies.<sup>1</sup>

An alternative method is to carry out field studies of small, permanent military units at war using methods like participant observation, interviews and sociometric easurements. However, such field studies of wartime military units, which are extremely laborious and even dangerous to carry out, are rare even today, with some notable exceptions, namely a field study in Korea by R.W. Little in 1952 and 1953, in Vietnam by Moskos in 1965 and 1967 and by John Hockey in Northern Ireland in 1979–1980. With regard to the Second World War, the largest war so far, such scientific field studies of small permanent military units (company, battery, platoon etc.) are rare. This highlights the importance of Knut Pipping’s extraordinary, but little known Ph.D work in sociology. The dissertation was written in Swedish and had only a short English summary. It is now published in English for the first time.

During the Second World War, Knut Pipping, a young Finnish sociologist, served as an NCO (conscript) in a Finnish machine gun company. During the war, he began an extensive sociological study of his own company. He gathered empirical material systematically during and after the war, and in 1947 his work was finally published as a doctoral dissertation in Turku. (Pipping later became Professor of Sociology at the University of Turku).

The empirical material was gathered by systematically observing the behavior of soldiers in different situations during one year, from 1943 to 1944. Pipping had excellent opportunities to observe soldiers’ behavior as he served as an orderly (NCO) in his company in 1941–1944. Pipping also collected statistical and other material by means of interviews. After the war Pipping collected more material by using the company’s war diaries and other documentary material in the Defence Forces’ War Archives. In the Finnish Army, differing from many other armies, all units including companies, kept a detailed war diary, into which even the smallest details of daily company life were documented. As a result Pipping was able to cover a timespan of more than three years, from 1941 to 1944.

During the war of 1941–1944 Pipping’s company was involved in combat episodes from trench warfare to mobile operations in the wilderness and finally to heavy fighting on the Karelian Isthmus in the middle of the large-scale Russian offensive in 1944. The losses of the company (dead and wounded) were larger than the company’s entire original manpower.

---

<sup>1</sup> Although “The American Soldier” contains a large amount of survey data, this is not the whole story of the methods used. Besides structured survey questions, open-ended interview questions were used and their answers were cited frequently in the text. Participant observation was also used. For example, one of the authors, Robin M. Williams accompanied one U.S. Division from Normandy to Germany as a participant observer (see Stouffer et al. 1949, p.105 and especially Williams 1984, p.189). Despite this, there are no descriptions of small, integral soldier groups or units in the book.



Pipping's study was a very thorough empirical sociological investigation of one small military unit at war. Pipping (1978, p. 34) himself formulated the subject matter of his study as follows: "In this book I am trying to describe the interaction between the formal and informal organization in our war-time conscript and reservist army".

Pipping's study is especially interesting, when compared to other military sociological studies based on data from the Second World War.

With regard to military sociological and psychological studies on soldiers in the Second World War, one naturally cannot overlook "The American Soldiers" (Stouffer et al., 1949), a comprehensive work based largely on empirical questionnaire studies, which was published two years after Pipping's dissertation. Edward A. Shils has written:

"For the most part, 'The American Soldiers' is based on studies of the attitudes of individuals. There is no direct observation of groups in action and only occasional, indirect observations of group performance. The actual operation of primary group life is not described and indeed is seldom referred to." (Shils 1950, p.18).

In contrast, Pipping carried out an extensive analysis of the social structure of his company and the soldiers' informal norm system with which it was linked. He studied how this informal social structure influenced the men's behavior and attitudes in different situations ranging from rest to combat.

Another notable study is a famous research article by E.A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II" (1948). In this article the authors argue that in the German army primary group cohesion was a vital factor in keeping units together in battle and otherwise. Even here it should be noted that Pipping's dissertation was published in 1947, i.e. one year earlier.

Alexander L. George wrote about these two American studies and their relation to primary groups:

"Earlier studies based on World War II experiences in Western Europe (Stouffer, et al., 1949; Shils and Janowitz, 1948), postulated or seemed to imply the existence of a rather rich cluster of primary group ties shared by many members of units as large as squads or even platoons. In the more recent literature, however, a new conception of primary group ties ... has emerged. They are now described as being more molecular or granular in structure, often taking the form of a series of two-person relationships rather than affiliations among larger numbers of men." (George 1971, p. 298)

In his study Pipping (1947) not only “postulated or seemed to imply” the existence of a rich cluster of primary group ties, like Stouffer and Shils & Janowitz had done, but actually carried out a thorough empirical study of those primary group ties, i.e. of the formal and informal groups in his unit during 1941–1944. Pipping found that there were as many as six different kinds of social groupings, starting with formal military groups (for instance, squads) and ending with informal groups, for instance, “small groups consisting of two to four mates”, which Roger Little later called “buddy relations” (see Pipping’s detailed analysis of these groups in Pipping 1947, pp. 93–128).

One notable feature in Knut Pipping’s work is the long time-span of his systematic observations. The results obtained by similar later participant observation studies which were carried out, for instance, in Korea (Little 1964) and in Vietnam (Moskos 1970) were based on weeks or months of participant observation. Pipping was able to observe the internal dynamics of a small combat unit systematically in literally hundreds of different situations, combat included, during one whole year. Before this, he had already served two years in the same company. He also interviewed soldiers during and after the war and examined the company’s detailed war diaries, company statistics and other written documents, thus covering the whole time-span of more than three years, from 1941 to 1944.

This research approach using various methods produced a comprehensive study and ultimately a small goldmine of detailed empirical data.

In his text Pipping does not glorify his company or his battalion. He does not attempt to portray his research objects as “heroes”. Pipping takes the role of an objective researcher, noting page after page of careful observations on the behavior of soldiers and soldier groups. Most of his observations are on ordinary daily activities such as rationing food, digging trenches, marching, playing cards, dealing with superiors, but naturally also on behavior in combat. However, even his descriptions of battle are not vivid or “exciting”. Instead, they are matter-of-fact in detail, although this certainly does not mean that they are dull. The description always stays at the grass-root level, not a word is mentioned about the possible relation of different battles to larger matters.

Historically, it is interesting to note that Pipping’s company and battalion in fact took part in a battle that professional Finnish war historians have later referred as “decisive”, which was the battle of Tali-Ihantala at the end of the war in June 1944. In the Ihantala region Pipping’s 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, together with the other regiment of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, played an important role in blocking the Red Army’s thrust into Finland. In his book Pipping does not emphasize the importance of this in any way. To Pipping, the battle in a place called Ihantala was “business as usual” – a battle among many others – although an exceptionally heavy one, as he points out. It must be mentioned that the Finnish Defence Forces’ history of the 1941–1945 war, which was compiled in the 1950’s by the Office of War History, had not yet appeared at the time when Pipping wrote his dissertation.

Even the name “the Battle of Tali-Ihantala” was invented later. Pipping’s text was thus not tainted by retrospective historical interpretations. (Tali and Ihantala are small villages on the Karelian Isthmus, situated about fifteen kilometres from each other. Ihantala is near the coastline of the Gulf of Finland approximately 120 kilometres from St. Petersburg, former Leningrad.)

Pipping does not refer to war history literature, and his list of sources does not contain any war history books. This does not necessarily mean that he was completely unaware of such sources, however. He wrote that he has used material about his battalion from the Finnish Defence Forces’ War Archives, and his book contains a chapter called “The history of the company”, where he gives a chronological description of the whole battalion’s history during 1941–1944.

Those readers who are interested in war history may find a description of the general strategic situation on the Finnish front and the battle of Tali-Ihantala in the introductory chapter.

Apart from war history, the fact that Pipping’s company fought amazingly effectively in Ihantala is interesting from the behavioral perspective. Pipping’s book contains a large number of examples on privates’ behavior which followed the men’s own informal norms instead of formal military norms, and which often deviated from formal military discipline, orders and protocols. A layman could wonder whether soldiers’ deviation from military discipline and formal protocols should have led to poor combat performance and other undesirable results. Pipping’s book offers valuable insight on these issues.

\* \* \* \*

Of the above-mentioned WW II studies (Pipping, Stouffer and Shils & Janowitz, together with some research articles published in the *American Journal of Sociology* after the war, for instance Berkman 1946, Stone 1946, Gross 1954 etc.), Pipping’s study has been the least known to the English-speaking readership. It was first published in Swedish in 1947, with only a limited amount of copies. The Finnish translation was published in 1978 and was immediately taken into use as a university textbook on sociology in Finland.

## **2 The Analysis of the Social Structure of a Small Military Unit in Pipping’s “Infantry Company as a Society”**

In sociology and social psychology the social structure of a group consists of each group member’s position in the group and the relations between these positions. In a military group a member may be a veteran rifleman and regarded as a good fighter, while another member may be a newly arrived platoon commander, fresh from the training course and without combat experience. With this, each position

is linked with certain role expectations (other members expect him to behave in a certain way because he or she occupies just that position) and certain status. The more important a military role is in a combat unit, the higher probably the status of the person holding that role. Especially in a military group, the structure of the group is hierarchical; some members have more power and higher status in the group than other members.

The concept of informal organization links formal civilian or military organization to informal small groups, informal norms and cohesion. Besides formal, appointed leaders and official rules, every organization has its informal side. The informal organization includes the small, informal groups, which exist in the formal organization and their roles and own informal norms. Homans (1968/1951) spoke about the external and internal systems in an organization.

In “The American Soldier” one does not find any detailed descriptions of soldiers’ informal groups. As Edward A. Shils (1950, 18) wrote:

“For the most part, ‘The American Soldier’ is based on studies of the attitudes of individuals. There is no direct observation of groups in action... The actual operation of primary group life is not described and indeed seldom referred to.”

Shils and Janowitz (1948) do not give any detailed descriptions of the size and composition of primary groups. At one point they wrote: “It appears that a soldier’s ability to resist is a function of the capacity of his immediate primary group (his squad or section) to avoid social disintegration.” (Shils and Janowitz 1948, p. 281) At another point (p. 284) they say about the German soldier: “He was likely to go on fighting ... as long as he gave affection and received affection from the other members of his squad and platoon.” They also speak about the junior officers (i.e. the platoon commanders) and NCOs as *members* of the primary groups. At one point they talk about the unit (company and battery?) as one big family.

The fact that both “The American Soldier” and the study by Shils and Janowitz failed to give any detailed description of the informal or primary groups of World War II soldiers probably depends partially on the research method used. Large surveys, which provided the empirical material for “The American Soldier” are not good methods if one wants to study integral small groups, for instance squads, platoons and companies. The same can be said about interviewing a large number of individual prisoners of war from different German units. Since the interviews were done while the war was still being waged, one could not have studied integral squads, platoons, companies even if the researchers had wanted.

If modern researchers had only those above-mentioned two classic military sociological studies at their disposal, they would not have a very detailed scientific

description of the nature and composition of the informal military groups in any World War II army unit. Were those informal groups dyads, triads, squads (sections), platoons or even whole companies and batteries? Was it possible that a soldier belonged simultaneously to several different informal groups? Were those groups membership groups or reference groups? Were they small formal military groups or informal groups or both of these simultaneously? If a soldier belonged simultaneously to several different types of formal and informal membership and reference groups, how did they influence his behavior (and precisely which kind of behavior) in different situations (and in precisely which kind of situations)?

These kinds of questions seem to remain largely unanswered in the present English-language sociological research literature on the Second World War (see also Pipping's introduction to the new 1978 edition of his book). Fortunately, however, Pipping's (1947) study contains a detailed description and analysis of the informal groups found in one normal Finnish infantry company. Besides that it contains a description of some of the informal group norms in these groups and their influence on soldiers' behavior in different situations.

Naturally, one should not overestimate the importance of Pipping's results, detailed as they are, since they describe only one company (Pipping writes about this in the introduction to the new 1978 edition of his book). Even in the small Finnish Army there were about four hundred company-sized units in the land forces. This is why Pipping's results should be compared to a) other Finnish wartime units, b) similar research results from other countries.

In the Finnish World War II army the personnel of most companies and batteries were reservists. Pipping's company was, however, composed of young conscripts and received reservists representing different age groups, as well as even younger conscripts as replacements only after battles had caused losses. Pipping carefully analyzed the impact of replacements on the behavior of the soldiers. Pipping's unit was a machine gun company, while most infantry companies were rifle companies. Otherwise it was a normal Finnish infantry company, or at least almost normal, because its men came from sparsely populated northern Finland.

After the war, when Pipping was working on his dissertation, he went to a lot of trouble to find out whether the attitudes of the company's men were based on the fact that they were from sparsely populated northern Finland with its distinct features and their way of life there, compared to, say, southern Finland. After the war Pipping, who himself lived in southern Finland, studied Lapland and its population and economy, visiting several places and living for six weeks in a place called Hietasuvanto in 1946. Hietasuvanto is a small village in Lapland, where some men from Pipping's company came from. Pipping wanted to find out whether the attitudes of the company's men were based on the fact that they were from northern Finland, and their way of life there, especially their work in the lumber camps.

Some Finnish studies have also revealed some attitudinal and behavioral differences between different kinds of infantry companies (rifle, mortar, machine gun etc.) and between panzer, field artillery and infantry units. Some differences in discipline, attitudes, informal groups and informal group norms seem to have existed between different types of units (see Harinen 1993).

Pipping's analysis of the social groups in his company revealed six different types of social groups:

- military groups (sections, platoons, etc.)
- rank groups
- age groups (based on the time served in the company)
- local groups (for instance infantry men and machine gun crew manning the same strongpoint)
- home district groups
- “mess kit groups”.

One of these types was the **military group**: squad, platoon and company. The squad was, according to Pipping, not only a formal work group, but also soldiers' important social group. An individual soldier was naturally simultaneously a member of several military groups (squad, platoon, company).

Pipping analyzed how membership in these different military groups influenced soldiers' behavior. He found that squads, platoons and even the company could control (through informal norms and sanctions) their members' behavior. This is one of the most interesting themes in Pipping's book. He differentiates between common and special functions of soldiers and groups and between intragroup and intergroup control in squads, platoons and the company. Pipping summarized some of his results in the 1947 edition of his book like this:

“The functions of the men in a section may be looked at as partly common and partly special functions. To the former I count all functions in which everybody had to take part; these were: to stand sentinel, to divide up the dry food rations, (butter, sugar, tobacco, coffee etc.), and sometimes to carry water, cut firewood and clean the dugout (korsu) or tent. These common functions were shared equally between all the members of the section, and the intragroup control came into force as soon as somebody tried to escape his duties.

The special functions, i.e. the duties which the men had to perform in consequence of their positions in the section – e.g. the gunner's duty to hold the machine gun in a good stand –, were not supervised as rigidly by the intragroup control. These special functions were considered as rather belonging to one's private life.

The intergroup control acted in the same way as the special functions of the sections were concerned: the men in the 1<sup>st</sup> Section did not pay any attention to how the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section handled its machine gun, or how it performed its duties. However, when the common functions of the sections came into question, the intergroup control at once reacted very sensibly, e.g. when one section refused to do its part in the platoon's teamwork. The intergroup control between the platoons reacted in quite the same way: almost totally ignoring the special functions of the other platoons, but alertly supervising their performance of the company's common functions." (Pipping 1947, pp. 255–256)

As for the **local groups** mentioned above, Pipping says that there was an intergroup control between the different sections (squads) belonging to the local group as far as common functions (like wood-cutting and cleaning) were concerned. As for the special functions of the sections, there was no strong intergroup control.

Besides military groups and local groups there were **age groups**. When groups of reservists, each representing different age groups, were sent to Pipping's company to replace the losses of young conscripts, Pipping had a good opportunity to observe the dynamics between different age groups and their informal norms. The situation grew even more complicated as time went by and younger and younger conscripts began to arrive in the company. The former youngsters suddenly achieved, at the age of perhaps nineteen, the status of combat veterans. At the same time also older reservists arrived in the company as replacements. In Pipping's company a reservist who was 30 years old was nicknamed "Santa Claus". It was natural that a Santa Claus, who as a replacement was a new, inexperienced freshman in the company, had a different status than a seasoned nineteen years old warrior...

Another of Pipping's six types of social groups was an informal group of two to four men, similar to the buddy groups observed by Little (1964) in Korea. Pipping writes about the reasons that bonded these groups together. According to a later definition, group cohesiveness is based on interpersonal attraction. (There have been other kinds of definitions, too, see for instance Festinger 1968, Siebold & Kelly 1988, Oliver 1990, Siebold 2000.) According to Pipping (1978, p. 159), "personal sympathies" (or, in later terms, interpersonal attraction) often played an important role. But in other cases the reasons were, according to Pipping, much more instrumental.

Much has been written about identification with larger military units like battalion or regiment. Pipping found that the soldiers in his company felt that the company, not the battalion, was their membership group.



### 3 The Analysis of Informal Group Norms in Pipping's "Infantry Company as a Society"

#### 3.1 Some Background: The Concept of Group Norms in Sociology and Social Psychology

One of the authors of "The American Soldier", Robin M. Williams, in a retrospective article published in 1984 says that later research has generally supported the conclusion presented in "The American Soldier", namely that cohesive primary groups provide a strong causal nexus for military behavior (Williams 1984, p.190). "Our findings agreed with several other studies and with those of such trained observers as S.L.A. Marshall in holding that social solidarity or group cohesion was an essential basis for combat effectiveness of infantry soldiers" (Williams 1984, p. 191). He writes, however, that "... the influence may be either supportive of or in direct opposition to goals and norms of higher authority" (op. cit., p.190). He speaks in this connection of the goals and norms of primary groups compared to the norms of higher military authorities.

It would then seem that the informal group norms in small military groups could be of interest to military sociologists and psychologists, because they link the goals of the formal military organization to the goals of small soldier groups and individual soldiers in the military organization.

A researcher interested in soldiers' informal group norms could ask for instance:

- what are the informal group norms like in military groups?
- where do the informal norms come from and why?
- what are their functions for group members?
- are those norms congruent with the formal military norms and goals?
- if they are not, how do the formal and informal goals norms differ from each other, or do they interact or overlap in some way?
- are those norms different in different kinds of military groups (for instance, groups in different military branches, services, in barracks versus in field conditions, in buddy groups, sections, platoons, companies, in armies with different socio-cultural backgrounds, in wartime versus peacetime units, among veteran soldiers versus fresh troops, etc.)

**The concept of informal group norms: some classical studies.** In sociology and social psychology a social norm is a behavior rule in a group backed up by sanctions. Sanctions can be rewards or punishments. Social norms can be, but are not always, expressed verbally. Norms can be divided into, for instance, orders, denials, permissions and ideal norms. When social norms are studied, it is important to know:

- exactly which kind of behavior the norm is supposed to regulate



- in which kinds of situations the norm is supposed to regulate behavior
- whose behavior the norm regulates; sometimes it can regulate all behavior in a group, sometimes it is limited to a person who occupies a certain role in the group
- where does the norm come from, who, if anybody, has “dictated” it. (Allardt 1961, p. 13)

The group norms were first studied by Sherif in a famous laboratory experiment in 1936. In the first part of the experiment the test persons sat in a completely dark room one person at a time. They had to judge how much a point of light moved in the darkness. (In fact it did not move at all, but a person looking at a point of light in darkness sees it moving; this is called the autokinetic effect.) The judgments by different people varied considerably. In the second part of the experiment the same judgment was repeated, but this time so that the test persons worked in groups. It was found that each group formed a common judgment in a group discussion. This common result differed from the earlier individual judgments made by the same individuals. In the group there had emerged a common norm.

Solomon Asch’s experiment showed the impact that other people’s opinions can have on an individual’s opinion. Test persons, one person at a time, had to judge the comparative lengths of lines in a situation where several fake test persons were also present. These fake test persons expressed their unanimous opinion about the length of those lines. The unanimous opinion of fake test persons differed quite obviously from the empirical truth, which the real test person could see with his own eyes. The results were as follows: about one third of the real test persons adopted the fake test persons’ opinion, which differed quite obviously from the truth. Only one quarter of the test persons never yielded to the wrong opinion.

The Hawthorne investigations (Mayo et al.), besides revealing the importance of small informal work groups, also shed light on the functioning of informal group norms. In the Bank Wiring Room study it was found that the workers who deviated from the workers’ informal group norm either above or below, had to face group pressure and sanctions from other group members. These sanctions ranged from friendly persuasion to name-calling, physical violence and finally rejection and isolation. In this study it was thus found that in the group there existed a behavioral norm, which designated the upper and lower limits of behavior. Anyone who deviated from this norm in either direction was punished by other group members.

After these classic studies, where the concept of norm was established, there has been a lot of empirical research about informal norms, as was said above, but very few scholars have studied **soldiers’** informal group norms.

Pipping wrote in the Introduction to his new Finnish-language version of his “Infantry Company as a Society” in 1978, after first reviewing results of a number of post-WW II military sociologists, as follows:

“As the above survey shows, many military sociologists have noted that in addition to the formal norm system and structure there is an informal one in all our military units, but that only few people have studied their nature more closely. This is deplorable, because the formation of sociological theories could have benefited from this. It could also have made comparison of our own army with other armed forces possible. This being the situation, it seems that only the research in hand deals with the informal military structure in detail. Indeed, this matter could be a sufficient justification for republishing the book 30 years after the publication of the first edition.” (Pipping 1978, p. 27)

After the publication of the 1978 edition of Pipping’s book new studies have been published dealing with soldiers’ informal organization and norms. Among the best of these is John Hockey’s book “Squaddies, Portrait of a Subculture” (1986). Hockey collected the main body of his material by living three months with private soldiers of a British rifle company. Another important book is Ingraham’s and Manning’s “The Boys in the Barracks” (1984).

In the following text results presented in Hockey’s book and in one other study, namely Little’s “Buddy Relations and Combat Performance” (1964), both dealing with group norms, are reviewed starting with Pipping’s results. To keep this text reasonably short the results of Charles Moskos’ “The American Enlisted Man” are not discussed here, although they are equally important.

The purpose of the following chapters is not intended to be a “comprehensive” review of informal norms in Pipping’s and above-mentioned studies. Instead, its purpose is to interest the reader in Pipping’s study and encourage the reader to compare Pipping’s results with other studies to find differences and similarities. It should thus be underlined that in the following text the author has tried to find similarities, and has not tried to carry out comprehensive, systematic comparisons.

### **3.2 Informal Group Norms in Pipping’s “Infantry Company as a Society”**

Chapter V in Pipping’s original dissertation from 1947 was called “Individuals’ behavior and attitudes”. In the Finnish-language edition from 1978 Pipping himself changed the title of chapter V to “Compliance with formal and informal norms”, otherwise he did not amend the text in the chapter in any other manner. Chapter V is divided into six subchapters, dealing with formal and informal norms in the following areas of soldiers’ behavior:

- courage (or behavior in combat, taking risks)
- private and public property
- alcohol and sexuality
- religion, superstition and information
- discipline (including work duties)
- helpfulness

Pipping first describes formal and informal norms in relation to **courage**. As a background it could be mentioned that in the Finnish World War II army, like in most armies, there were formal rules and sanctions which concerned courage, risk-taking and acts of cowardice. Deserters could be given long prison sentences or even death sentences. Officers even had a legal right to shoot deserters on the spot during battle (Pipping says that they did not do this, although there were cases where officers threatened to do this). Bravery and initiative could be rewarded by medals and additional leave.

Pipping tells how under the continuing threat of being killed or being wounded men became relatively nonchalant in the face of danger. Pipping provides several descriptions of this. When the company marched to the front line after a short period of rest behind the lines, the mood was usually high, and no restlessness caused by the increasing danger could be noted. (Readers of Stouffer's "The American Soldier" may recall an excerpt where one of the soldiers' informal norms mentioned in the book was that of "being a man". Perhaps the soldiers did not wish others to think that they were worried? An alternative explanation for the high mood could perhaps be that the "rest" periods behind the front lines were no wild nights in a Saigon nightclub, but instead meant hard work to build or repair fortifications.) Pipping mentions events like carelessness while being on guard, reckless risk-taking while hunting in "no-man's land", carelessness when men dug shoddy trenches on Boks Island, and bathing in a Finnish sauna building extremely near the front line in Ihantala.

According to Pipping, men's surprising boldness was not, however, thoughtless, boasting carelessness. Behind each example of this kind of behavior was the knowledge that they had gathered through experience. (One must remember that for instance before the battle in Ihantala the company had been at war for about three years.) Men knew from experience what kinds of risks could be taken without serious consequences (Pipping 1978, p. 161). If the situation became really dangerous, men took the necessary precautions voluntarily. Pipping discusses, for instance, that when it became dark in the autumn in a place called Röhö, men voluntarily began to stand guard in pairs, compared to their habit of occasionally taking something to read or paper and pen to write letters while being on guard. The Russians often tried to surprise careless guards at night in order to take prisoners.)

Pipping refers to “the economic principle in the behavior of combat soldiers”. This principle meant that soldiers strived to live as comfortably as possible, as safely as possible.

Pipping mentions the balance between safety and comfort. Each group decided in each situation and depending on the men’s spirits how this balance was achieved. It should be pointed out that Pipping here speaks of the group, not of individual soldiers, as the actor in this balance.

To inspect Pipping’s results on informal norms concerning courage more closely, it is first necessary to take a relatively long citation in Pipping’s own words.

“We can talk about an economic principle in frontline soldier’s actions: an effort to achieve as pleasant an existence as possible under as safe circumstances as possible. The thought of being in danger was not of current interest during the long and peaceful years of trench warfare in 1942–1943. However, even though the everyday pattern of behaviour showed great lack of respect for death, there was always deep reverence for it in the background.

Depending on the circumstances and on the men’s spirits, each squad had its own way of reaching this balance between as pleasant and as safe an existence as possible. Too much caution was considered ridiculous whereas too much courage was regarded as lack of judgement. However, the result was generally satisfactory. A certain normal amount of courage was expected of every soldier. Anyone willing could show signs of greater courage but that was his own affair.

Nevertheless, one was not allowed to put others in greater danger even if he himself had more courage. One could join a patrol if he wanted to distinguish himself or if he got pleasure from the excitement. These patrols were irrelevant to the men if they did not have immediate meaning for the squad. There was talk about “unnecessary rush” (*turhaa hosumista*) and in such cases the question was posed: “what good will you get from that?” (*Mitä sinä siitä paranet?*)

Those who volunteered in efforts to catch prisoners at Stalin’s canal and in Salmijoki were in a way regarded as bold men. However, all their activities were considered almost irrelevant. Their performances could be judged on a “risk scale”, but because their action was unnecessary – and successful patrols, by the way, were rewarded with additional leave – it did not arouse interest. The case was different with the anti-tank men who destroyed tanks in close contact in Ihantala. Their actions were of vital importance to the entire battalion and were more highly appreciated than the mere risk scale would have required.

Putting oneself in danger was not held in esteem as such, but taking risks and helping others at the same time was considered a noble deed. Therefore, in addition to the neutral danger-scale, it could be justified to claim that the men performed their evaluation on a moral – though on an unconscious – scale. Moreover, the performances of the anti-tank men required more courage than was generally expected from the men. The unanimous decision of the company to place the anti-tank men first in getting additional leave can be given as proof of their highly valued performance. These leaves had been given as a reward for the courage these men had shown in the course of that critical week in Ihantala.

As has been stated, a fair amount of courage was expected of every soldier, and if he did not achieve this, he would become a target of mockery. Under normal and peaceful circumstances, there were few moments when the weakest soldiers would have the opportunity to show their cowardice. They would only reveal themselves in action. However, the disapproval that the others expressed was never particularly strong. The weakest ones would even be overlooked on the grounds that they had either got a shock or had in some way not been responsible for their actions. This question was eagerly deliberated when soldier 293 disappeared just before the departure for the first counterattack in Ihantala. However, there was more concern about how long he could go into hiding. He never returned to the company and in this way achieved a certain kind of fame: the men thought it was a respectable achievement to leave military service in this manner.

When soldiers 112 and 497 escaped a few days later, the reasoning went as follows: it was actually good that they left, because they would have been of no use here. The men made mockery about soldier 497 when the military police sent him back to the front and about soldier 112 who did not get anywhere from the command post. In fact, he stayed there for the rest of the fighting (he had actually been sentenced for desertion in Jelettijärvi). The men knew from previous experience that it could be rather uncomfortable on the front line and therefore seemed to comprehend that all soldiers could not bear too much pressure. As a result, they added the deserters to company losses. Of course, it was not altogether safe to escape, because most deserters were arrested sooner or later and had to answer for the consequences. If someone thought it better to expose himself to the dangers of desertion, it was his own decision.”

Here Pipping mentions several interesting points. First of all he says that everyone was expected to show “a certain normal amount of courage”. If someone failed to show a “normal amount” of courage, he was ridiculed and became a butt of jokes.

Pipping then describes what happened if someone showed more than the “normal” amount of courage. In such a case, men’s attitude (or rather, the group’s attitude) depended on whether the risk-taking improved or reduced their safety. If such risk-taking improved safety, it was approved or even praised. However, if risk-taking reduced the safety of other soldiers or the group, it was disapproved. An example of this kind of behavior could be a group member who voluntarily, without orders, engages with the enemy and starts a firefight, thereby drawing others into conflict. (The formal military organization naturally approved of this kind of risk-taking and at times rewarded it.) If risk-taking had no relation to the safety of the other soldiers, men reacted nonchalantly. An example could be a group member who volunteers for a patrol, which was sent behind enemy lines.

Pipping says that men had two different “scales”, with which they evaluated courage. The first was an “objective” risk scale. However, men did not evaluate deeds or actions according to this scale, as was seen above. Instead there was another, “moral” scale, which involved risk-taking, which helped or improved the group’s safety. This was regarded by soldiers as a more valued form of courage.

Pipping provides an example of positive sanctions by describing how the whole company thought that the additional leaves for bravery should be given to anti-tank defence men, who destroyed Russian tanks with bazookas at close range in Ithantala. Although men usually guarded their own “right” to leaves very jealously, the behavior of these anti-tank defence men was seen as vital for the safety of the whole battalion. Those soldiers had shown more than a normal amount of courage (which was not praiseworthy as such), but had also greatly improved the safety of the community.

If someone failed to show a “normal amount” of courage, he was ridiculed and became a butt of jokes. (In a situation where a small group of soldiers spends weeks, months and even years in a confined tent or dugout close together 24 hours a day, constant ridicule directed at a single group member may be quite a hard sanction.)

Pipping describes how the men ridiculed private 497 when he fled the front line and was brought back by the military police. Pipping says that the disapproval was not terribly strong, and he gives two possible reasons for this. One was that the men knew from their own experience what it was like to be at the front line, and they seemed to understand that not everyone could stand the intense pressure. Another possible reason was the small number of deserters in the company. (Pipping may have regarded that, had there been more deserters, men would have taken more drastic consequences.) Deserters were rarities, who were laughed at, and Pipping says that they themselves liked to portray their odyssey in a comical light.

Pipping's analysis here bears a resemblance to Little's (1964) study of a U.S. Army rifle company in the Korean War. Little tells that in every platoon there was the role of a "dud", a role for a soldier who performed inadequately compared to men's informal behavioral norm. Little tells that the "dud" became a butt of jokes and in this role served to define the lower limit of acceptable behavior.

Pipping also tells about private 148, who during a difficult battle phase in 1941 stayed mainly near the field kitchen section pretending to be ill. Later he was heard telling of combat. After this the field kitchen section was renamed "148's front line". Veterans of the company continued to use this name as late as 1944, three years after the incidence.

According to Pipping, the informal norm system was not limited only to enlisted men's behavior.

"Officers were, of course, expected to show as much courage as the men. An officer who did not follow his platoon into the fire, or who only occasionally visited the line, ran the risk of being shot by his own soldiers during combat, as examples from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion tell us. The men said that a cowardly officer, who drove his men into fire without following them, would always be white-washed in a court-martial; and therefore they must protect themselves by such drastic means." (Pipping 1947, p.258)

Next, Pipping describes men's attitudes and informal norms concerning **public property and private property**. Finnish soldiers naturally had personal private property like money, cameras, books, watches and so on. In addition to this they had items of public property which was allocated to each soldier, such as uniforms, boots, blankets, backpacks and rifles. Apart from individual soldier, different military groups had different kinds of group equipment: the machine gun section naturally had machine guns and tools and other equipment to maintain and repair them. Also, guns, sections, half-platoons and platoons had tools like saws and axes. In addition there were horses, wagons, sleighs, skis, bicycles, tents and so on.

Besides this kind of property soldiers saw military stores and loot left by or taken from the enemy. One more type of property was civilian property in the areas where the company stayed or passed through.

What was naturally important was the fact that official army regulations (or auxiliary orders given by company or higher officers) dictated quite strictly which kind of equipment each soldier, NCO, officer, and each section, platoon etc. should have at his/their disposal. (Pipping says, however, that such tools as saws and axes were not effectively controlled by superiors, for instance, by keeping a list of who had which kind of tools.) It was naturally forbidden to lose, break, give away or sell



that property, or have or take any other items of state property. All loot taken from the enemy or left behind by them belonged to the state and it was forbidden to take it. So there was a set of quite exact formal military regulation (norms) regarding public property.

According to Pipping, men valued highly certain items of public property, for instance saws, axes, submachine guns and flare pistols. (Submachine guns were highly sought after because they were considered effective weapons. However, there were not many of them in an infantry company.) Here it could also be pointed out that compared to, for instance, the Second World War U.S. Army or the German Wehrmacht the Finnish Army was “poor”, as there was scarcity of almost everything, including food, clothing and submachine guns.

Against this background it is interesting to find out how Pipping described men’s attitudes and informal norms towards private and public property.

Pipping says that men valued highly private personal property. Stealing personal property was rare. However, he also states that stealing among one’s own group would have been extremely difficult, as it would have been easy to spot the thief.

When it came to public property men’s attitudes were different. Men thought that public property was common property and a soldier could change a piece of his own equipment for a better one or simply take a piece of equipment that was lying around. In practice it was, however, uncommon to take or change personal equipment (which could mean uniforms?). In practice it was rather a question of objects like weapons, tools and skis.

Although this kind of behavior was generally allowed, there was a critical limitation: this behavior was not allowed to happen inside one’s own group.

It is interesting to compare Pipping’s observations with observations that John Hockey made in a British infantry company which is from a different era and a professional army structure (for a description of the British army see for instance Beevor 1991) forty years later:

“Legitimate scrounging occurred outside the private’s platoon. Inside it, it was regarded with anathema and seen not as scrounging but as *stealing*. A further distinction related to the types of articles which were considered to be legitimate targets for scrounging. All military equipment, whether belonging to individuals or held in unit stores, was considered to come into this category. In contrast, it was regarded as bad scrounging and illegitimate to scrounge more personalised items such as a person’s civilian clothing, and valuables.” (Hockey 1986, p.130)



Pipping says that platoons scrounged submachine guns, magazines, binoculars, flare pistols and tools in this way. The platoon leader could take part in scrounging together with his men. Pipping tells of a platoon leader who hid a scrounged submachine gun under his bunk when the battalion weapons NCO was searching for it. He tells how another platoon leader in 1941 told his men to take all “free” submachine guns that they happened to come upon. All this was, of course, officially forbidden and large internal raids were carried out in order to reclaim the scrounged equipment and to prevent further scrounging.

Men also thought that “army property” was common property. They felt that it was OK to steal army clothes, for instance sweaters and sell them to civilians while they were on leave.

Men also thought that it was OK to take articles left behind or taken from the enemy. In this way they took pistols, Russian officer’s belts, map cases and cockades. Pipping tells how sergeant 566, when he was told to give back a Browning pistol that he had taken from the enemy, got angry and threw the weapon into a swamp rather than return it. Occasionally, soldiers took valuable optical equipment or pieces of machinery, which they then broke or threw away when they found no use for them. Pipping also mentions a case, where after the Finns had occupied a village, men broke into a chemist’s shop, which they then destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

Pipping also describes in his book men’s attitudes and informal norms concerning **formal military discipline and work duties**. As a background something could be said about formal discipline in the Finnish war-time army.

According to Finnish veteran soldiers and war historians, the formal discipline in Finnish troops was usually much laxer than in the German troops. The Finns were able to compare the Finnish troops and their behavior to German troops, because during the war in 1941–44 there were several German divisions in Finland, and many Finnish soldiers had good opportunities to observe German soldiers and their habits. (Pipping himself had opportunities to observe German soldiers. He repeats, for instance, the rather common Finnish observation that Germans were poor, ineffective fighters in the wooded Finnish terrain.) Before the war, in the 1930’s, the Finnish officers and NCOs had maintained quite hard formal discipline in the peacetime conscript training, but already in the Winter War in

---

<sup>2</sup> It would be easy and tempting to do some guessing about Pipping’s description of informal norms concerning property. As tentative as the hypothesis is, it may be possible that the function of the norms concerning property in Pipping’s company was an attempt to protect one’s own group (for instance, the machine gun section or platoon) and to improve its safety and chances of survival. From this perspective, it would be rational to scrounge submachine guns, tools and binoculars for one’s own section, platoon etc. However, it would seem rational to refrain from scrounging “inside” one’s own section or platoon. Condemnation of such behavior also included scrounging from one’s own group by all outsiders, including the battalion weapons NCO searching for hidden submachine guns. If the safety and well-being of the group was the most important issue, it would also be understandable that men did not condemn soldiers who stole and sold army property so long as it did not belong to the group or its members and did not increase the danger for the group (like, for instance, selling their own guns) - it was “private” business and unimportant for the safety and survival of their own group. – However, all this is only guessing.

1939–1940 and especially in the Continuation War in 1941–1944, which Pipping described, the formal discipline at the front grew laxer.

According to formal army regulations the men had to salute all officers and NCOs. There was also a rule according to which a subordinate had to stand at attention when he was talking to a superior. The men, however, thought that soldiers need not salute when they were at the front. There were different interpretations of the meaning of the word “front”. Some thought that it included the whole Eastern Karelia, a very large area, but more commonly it was thought that the front meant the front line. Secondly, men never saluted NCOs. Men also did not stand at attention when they talked to officers and NCOs of their own company. The only exception was the company commander. When men talked to officers who were not from their own company, they stood at attention, but usually only at the beginning of the conversation. Pipping says that this lack of formal discipline angered the officers, especially the higher officers, but saluting officers also irritated the men.

Orders given by officers and NCOs were naturally official norms that men should have obeyed. Pipping says that men lingered in their work when they thought that the task that was ordered was useless. The men thought that this kind of lingering was not only allowable but also worthy of praise.

Especially NCOs were often in a position where their authority was not strong enough to get the men to obey immediately. Instead the NCOs, who were reservists like men, were forced to discuss the order with the men to get the work done. Pipping says that if a NCO had authority, it was partially based on his ability in practical matters. In this way NCOs let the group’s inner control decide which soldier or soldiers actually carried out the job. As a consequence, the men thought that they themselves were responsible for fulfilling the task (“take it easy, we will see that it gets done”). Only rarely did the men fail to obey the order that they themselves thought sensible. Here it must be pointed out that the machine gun company was often spread in a wide area, with, for instance, the machine gun sections or single guns attached to infantry platoons. This meant that their own company officers, for instance platoon leaders, were often not present to give them orders personally or to lend support to the NCOs, like in a normal rifle company.

The company’s officers, most of them reserve officers, were at first supported by the power which was based on their formal military rank as officers. But when the men got to know them better, their authority (if there was any) was based on:

- personal courage
- ability for practical judgment
- taking care of subordinates
- personality (Pipping does not elaborate)

- the officer's own willingness to keep a certain distance between officers and men (Pipping tells of an officer whom his subordinates forced to stand guard like privates).

As was mentioned above, the situation in the machine gun company was often such that officers supervised activities from afar and left the details to NCOs and men.

Pipping says that both the formal army regulations and the men's own morale (in later terms, informal norms) strived to maintain the security and comfort of the community (1978, p. 202). There were, however, big differences between these two. Pipping says that the men evaluated each task and order using the well-being of the community as a standard or a yardstick. In this way the men thought that many tasks and other things that they were ordered to do were useless from this point of view. Pipping says that men and officers (and NCOs) often had differing opinions about the measures that were taken to improve the safety and comfort of the community (p. 202).

The men thought, for instance, that close-order drill was useless, but they also thought that certain tasks to build or repair trenches and fortifications were useless.

If the men were ordered, for instance, to build some fortifications, and they themselves thought that such fortifications were necessary to ensure their safety, they approved of the order. If, however, they thought that the fortification, trench etc. was useless from that point of view, they did not approve of the order. Then they lingered, or, if they were not strictly controlled, just did not do it. The men thought that they knew what was important and what was not. (The reader is here reminded of the things that Pipping told about the men's courage and risk-taking. To an outsider the men's behavior might have looked surprisingly reckless, Pipping says, but the men thought that they knew from experience which kinds of risks one could take without severe danger, and when it was time to take precautions.)

The men evaluated each order and task using the safety and comfort of the community as a yardstick. If a task was more or less useless from that point of view, it was allowable or even praiseworthy to linger or to shirk from doing it. When men were punished for behaving in this way, other men felt sorry for them.

Pipping says that the formal military organization saw such things as obeying an order and carrying out a certain task versus lingering and shirking from it, very differently. From the viewpoint of the formal military organization it was important to obey every single order regardless of the real practical value or benefit that would follow in a given situation, if/when the order was obeyed. It was important, because every task was a part of a totality, "the discipline of the group". The army regulations were meant to condition a disciplined behavior pattern and obedience.

So an order (and obeying or breaching it) was not evaluated by judging whether it was beneficial or not, but by seeing it as one part of the totality, military discipline.

Pipping says that although the men might have understood this “theoretically”, they did not approve of it, which was shown, for instance, by their attitudes towards punishments.

## **4 INFORMAL GROUP NORMS IN A SELECTED NUMBER OF POST-WORLD WAR II STUDIES**

### **4.1 Informal group norms in Little’s “Buddy relations and Combat Performance”**

Roger W. Little observed soldiers’ behavior in an American rifle company during the Korean War. Little lived with a rifle company, which he studied for more than three months at the end of 1952 and at the beginning of 1953. His research methods were participant observation, interviews, conversations and a kind of sociometric interview (see Little 1964, p.196 and 198).

Little (1964, pp.200–202) found that the following informal norms regulated the behavior of the buddies.

(1) A soldier had to “understand” his buddy. They became therapists to each other.

(2) A soldier should not make the buddy relationship too “public” in the squad or in the platoon. (This was necessary to maintain the impression that every man in the squad was his buddy.)

(3) A soldier should not boast of his combat skills or compare his actions to those of others.

“The man who often boasted or expected recognition for his combat skills was considered the one most likely to forget, in a combat crisis, that he had a buddy and that buddies had to depend on each other.” (Little 1964, p.201)

(4) A soldier should not demand his buddy to make a choice between loyalty as a buddy and obligation to the formal organization (see Little 1964, p.201).

(5) Loyalty to a buddy was more important than loyalty to the formal military organization. In a crisis situation the soldier had to think first of his loyalty to his buddy and only secondarily of his obligation to the formal military organization.

If a soldier's buddy was wounded, it was his foremost duty to help him. The worst offence was to desert and leave buddies. "I always wanted to shoot the guy who bugged out on me, and I would anybody but my buddy, Dion." (Little 1964, p.202)

Little (1964, pp.202–204) found that in each platoon there were two roles that were given to some soldiers. "The dud" was a soldier who refused to do his share. "He was not called a dud because he lacked skill, or was awkward, or nervous. To such men the others always gave more help and attention" (Little 1964, p.202). The dud often became the butt of jokes. He became isolated from the other men in the squad.

It seems that Little describes here yet another informal norm (6), i.e. that everyone was expected to do his share. He describes the sanctions related to that norm (joking, isolation from the group).

While some norms had to do with a soldier's behavior towards his buddy, this norm seemed to concern everyone in the platoon.

"The hero" was the opposite role. He wanted to do more than his share for the organization. He thought first of himself and only secondarily of other soldiers in his squad or in his platoon. Although the formal military organization rewarded the hero with decorations and awards, the men isolated him and in this way punished him for his behavior. Little tells that the man often changed his behavior.

"The range of behavior defined by the roles of dud and hero has an implication for the larger organization. The role of the dud defined the minimum performance standards of a member. Below those limits, his failure to perform involved a distortion of the functional integrity of the unit. The negative definition of the hero's role tended to discourage episodes of reckless, aggressive behavior which would exceed the support capability of the larger organization, and enabled it to function with predictable routines." (Little 1964, p.204)

Little also speaks about the consequences of these norms for the official military organization. He says that the informal norms defined the limits of effectiveness of the military group. "The minimum contribution was that which fell below the standards exemplified by the dud. The maximum effect was that of and beyond the actions of the hero. Within this range of expected behavior, the larger organization was able to function within predictable limits." (Little 1964, p.218)

## 4.2 Informal group norms in Hockey's study "Squaddies, Portrait of a Subculture"<sup>3</sup>

In his book "Squaddies, Portrait of a Subculture" (1986) John Hockey describes a British infantry company from basic training to real action in Northern Ireland. Hockey collected the main part of his material by living three months during 1979–1980 with private soldiers of this rifle company. During this time the company was in barracks in the north of England, on exercise in Alberta, Canada and in a security forces' base during actual operations in Northern Ireland (Hockey 1986, p.1). Hockey's methods were participant observation, combined with discussions and interviews.

One important theme in Hockey's book is to show that the social order in the military organization is not like Max Weber's model of the bureaucratic organization, where order is based on hierarchy, rules and sanctions. Hockey talks about "negotiated order", where social order comes about as a result of "negotiations" between enlisted men and their officers, with both parties having to give back and be flexible to a certain extent.

In the Finnish WW II company that Pipping studied, especially NCOs were – Pipping observed – often in a position where their authority was not strong enough to get the men to obey immediately. Instead the NCOs, who were reservists like their men, were forced to discuss the order with the men to get the work done.

Hockey describes an informal norm system, or "a normative code", as he says, of the soldiers. He says that this normative code was the privates' (not the officers') unofficial norm system. It was related to their position at the bottom of the military hierarchy and the privates' relations to their superiors ("us" and "them") and the official norms. Hockey describes the norms that form this normative code and the sanctions that were used against those soldiers that did not conform to the norms.

The central principle in this normative code (or norm system) was that the privates had to "look after their mates".

"This normative code can be summarized by stating the one overriding concern, articulated by privates themselves, namely 'look after your mates'. Privates are concerned to provide support in various fashions, to their peers in all possible situations, in the face of internal (all those who hold superior rank) and external (the 'enemy') opposition. The operation of this overriding norm of 'looking after your mates' serves to classify as deviant all behavior, not conforming to its dictates." (Hockey 1986, pp.123–124)

---

<sup>3</sup> Dr. John Hockey has checked this chapter.

This general principle or norm included or consisted of several more specific norms, which were (1) giving mutual aid (reciprocity), (2) doing one's share, (3) not getting other peers into trouble, (4) moderation, conforming to group standards and (5) loyalty to peers. (Hockey 1986, 124.)

(1) The norm about mutual aid meant that all men had to help each other in all kinds of situations, helping each other against constraints or danger either from outside the organization (enemies) or within the organization. Hockey mentions such things as loaning money, covering a buddy whose absence from duty has been noticed by a superior, and helping a buddy in a dangerous situation during a patrol in Northern Ireland.

(2) The norm "doing one's share" meant that everyone had to do his share of the work, whether it was a question of physical work in the barracks or accomplishing one's responsibilities during a patrol. In the former case, everyone was expected to take part and do his equal share even in a distasteful task in the barracks. In the latter case it meant being "switched on" and being alert, for instance checking one's arc of fire, covering others etc. (Hockey 1986, p.124)

(3) The third norm said that one should not get peers into trouble. An example of getting peers in trouble or "dropping them in shit" is when some privates fail an equipment inspection and, as a consequence, the whole company has to stand a new inspection the next day. This kind of "fucking up" can be collective, as in the above example, or individual, and it can take place both in the barracks and garrison, or on patrol, where the consequences could be fatal. (Hockey 1986, pp.124–125)

(4) The fourth norm was about moderation in behavior, or conforming to a group standard. It was negative to be too energetic or zealous if that caused undesired consequences for other privates.

"An excess of zeal by a peer was discouraged on the same grounds as those held by industrial workers, namely, that such behavior might result in the group suffering undesired consequences. Just as in industry where the 'rate buster' (a worker on piece rates whose output is so high that it leads to the employer reducing the rate paid for each unit of output) is disliked by his or her peers, so privates also viewed such individuals with a jaundiced eye." (Hockey 1986, p.125)

Here Hockey refers to the Hawthorne studies, where the same kind of observations were made.

Hockey gives some examples of situations where this norm was in operation. One example was running too fast compared to others, thus making others seem slow. The same kind of situations could happen during a patrol. Privates expected their

peers to perform their tasks adequately when on patrol, but on the other hand “there was also a strong taboo upon what they perceived as unnecessary heroics” (Hockey 1986, p.125). Soldiers who took unnecessary risks were putting all the other men in their patrol in unnecessary danger.

“This disapproval of heroics, when combined with the norm stressing an adequate performance, guided privates to a level of performance which constituted a middle way between ‘hero’ (or in barracks being defined as ‘Tick-Tock’) and ‘fuckup’.” (Hockey 1986, pp.125–126)

In his glossary of military slang expressions, Hockey (1966) defines “Fuck-up” as “an individual who persistently turns in an inadequate performance, and as a consequence brings down extra work or the wrath of superiors upon his peers”. “Hero”, instead, was a pejorative, which was used at South Armagh, Northern Ireland to describe individuals (usually NCOs or officers) who exposed themselves to excess danger and in turn their subordinates.

In the U.S. infantry company in the Korean War, Little observed that in every platoon there were two deviant roles reserved for soldiers who either did too much or too little, namely the roles of “the hero” and “the dud”. “The role of the dud defined the minimum performance standards of a member. (...) The negative definition of the hero’s role tended to discourage episodes of reckless, aggressive behavior...” (Little 1964, p.204)

Pipping wrote that everyone was expected to show “a fair amount of courage”, and the men in his company ridiculed deserters who were brought back to the company by the military police. He told about private 148 who during a difficult battle phase stayed mainly near the field kitchen section feigning sickness. Later he was heard to tell about his experiences during battle. After this the field kitchen section was renamed “148’s front line”. Veterans of the company used this name three years after the incidence. Pipping also wrote about men’s negative attitude towards soldiers who took unnecessary risks and thereby increased the risk for other soldiers.

In the above described way Hockey seems to combine the three aforementioned norms in the British infantry company: the norm “doing one’s share” means that everyone is expected to take care of his duties, and the norms of “not getting peers into trouble” and “conforming to a group standard” (instead of overt zeal or unnecessary heroics), together with the sanctions linked to them, puts lower and upper limits to their behavior.

Hockey also describes what happened to a man who (repeatedly??) got his peers into trouble by failing to perform adequately. He says that the “fuck-ups” were isolated from social activities in barrack or off-duty conversations.



“Fuckups’ were, then, presented with the alternatives of either enduring their isolation or, as the privates put it, ‘switching on’ and improving their performance so as not to endanger the group’s interests further. There was, however, another option open to such individuals, namely, obtaining a transfer to another part of the battalion. Ostracisation did not merely inflict loneliness upon individuals, but it also involved the withdrawal of aid and, as I have indicated, privates, if they are to achieve a more comfortable existence, need such aid. The ostracised, therefore, found that life became much more difficult.” (Hockey 1986, p.127)

(5) The fifth norm demanded loyalty to one’s peers. A soldier could be disloyal to another or others by not helping him, by stealing his property or by “bubbling”, that is by providing such information to superiors that got peers into trouble. Hockey says that the loyalty that was demanded was not “monolithic”; there was variation as to who, for instance, deserved mutual aid or whose equipment one could or could not scrounge. Hockey says that in a battalion privates insisted that they would not steal from members of their own company, but actually such things happened. Hockey says that actually one’s own platoon was a group inside which it was really forbidden to “scrounge”. So in this area, concerning property, the norm demanding loyalty was flexible. But when it was a question of “bubbling”, there was no flexibility, no one was allowed to “bubble”. (Hockey 1986, p.126)

Hockey writes also about **unofficial sanctions** that were used against men who violated the normative code. He mentions the following sanctions:

- social isolation and non-cooperation
- name-calling and derision (there were at least two levels in the use of this sanction, the more severe one of which meant using expressions like “arse-licking” etc.)
- breaking or stealing the soldier’s property
- direct physical violence, for instance kicking or hitting with a rifle butt.

Hockey gives several vivid examples of situations related to norm-breaking, where those sanctions were used. The reader gets the impression that there was a connection between the norms that were broken and the sanctions that were used, although Hockey does not put this forward very clearly.

If Hockey’s presentation of informal norms is compared to Pipping’s, it seems that they have chosen a different approach as to how to present their findings. Hockey describes several norms, and shows how each of these norms “functioned” in different situations, ranging from working in the barracks to fighting in a pub and being on patrol.

Pipping, on the other hand, seems to group situations, instead of norms, under larger headings (courage in battle, public and private property, alcohol, discipline...) He presents certain types of situations such as courage in battle, dealing with public or private property, behavior related to alcohol and so on - and under each heading he describes different norms that operated in that area of behavior.

## **5 “BIBLIOGRAPHICAL” NOTES ON THE DIFFERENT EDITIONS OF PIPPING’S BOOK**

The original version of Pipping’s book was the Swedish-language dissertation from 1947. The somewhat different Finnish version from 1978 was edited by Knut Pipping himself. This third version, in English, contains:

- chapters I – VI and two chapters about Lapland, as in the 1947 version (which together form the main part of Pipping’s text)
- such parts of the 1978 version that are new or changed compared to the 1947 version (mainly the chapter called “Introduction” which Pipping rewrote almost completely and the chapter “Concluding Words”)
- this new introductory chapter
- a new chapter about Finland in WW II and Pipping’s 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in WW II

The differences and similarities between the 1947 Swedish version and the 1978 Finnish version are as follows:

(a) The chapter called “Introduction” was rewritten almost completely by Pipping. He wrote a new text, for instance comparing his own results to “The American Soldier” (Stouffer et al. 1949) and studies by other military sociologists like Shils & Janowitz (1948), Little (1964) and Moskos (1970). Pipping also omitted the earlier “theory” part from this chapter, where he had written, for instance, about Kurt Lewin’s field theory and the concept of attitude.

(b) Pipping changed the title of chapter V from “Individuals’ behavior and attitudes” to “Compliance with Formal and Informal Norms”. Pipping did not change anything else in the chapter.

(c) The 1947 edition had a main chapter called “Lapland”, which was divided into subchapters “I The Land” and “II Hietasuvanto (case study)”. In the 1978 edition Pipping omitted the first of these two subchapters. Hietasuvanto is a small village in Lapland, where some men from Pipping’s company came from. After the war Pipping, who himself lived in southern Finland, studied Lapland

and its population, visiting several places and living for six weeks in Hietasuvanto in 1946, to find out whether the attitudes of the company's men were based on the fact that they were from northern Finland, and their way of life there, especially their work in the lumber camps.

(d) The last chapter "Concluding Words", which in the 1947 edition contained more than twenty pages, has been shortened to four pages in the 1978 edition by Pipping.

(e) The text in chapters I– VI is almost exactly the same in both editions.

Chapter V in Pipping's original dissertation from 1947 was called "Individuals' Behavior and Attitudes". As told above, in the Finnish-language edition from 1978 Pipping himself changed the title of chapter V to "Compliance with Formal and Informal Norms". Pipping did not, however, change anything else in the whole chapter.

In 1947 Pipping did not use terms like "primary group" and "primary group cohesion". He used, however, the term "informal group".

In the new "Introduction" to the Finnish version of his book, which was published in 1978, more than thirty years later than the original Swedish version, Pipping already uses terms like "norm", "informal norm", "informal norm system", "primary group", "informal social control" and "cohesion of primary groups". In his new Introduction from 1978 Pipping first talks, for instance, about the official norm system of the army and then about the soldiers' own norms. At the end of the new Introduction he says that he moves on to describe in his book these two norm systems and their interdependence.

## LITERATURE

Allardt, Erik 1961: *Sosiologia*. (Sociology). Porvoo

Beevor, Antony 1991: *Inside The British Army*. Reading

Berkman, Paul L. 1946: Life Aboard an Armed-guard Ship. *American Journal of Sociology* 5/1946, p. 380–387

Festinger, Leon 1968: *Informal Social Communication*. In Dorwin Cartwright & Alvin Zander (editors): *Group Dynamics. Research and Theory*. New York

George, Alexander L. 1971: Primary groups, organization, and military performance. In R. W. Little (editor): *Handbook of Military Institutions*. Beverly Hills

Gross, Edward 1954: Primary Functions of the Small Group. *American Journal of Sociology* 1954

Hockey, John 1986: *Squaddies, Portrait of a Subculture*. Exeter University Publications, Exeter

Homans, George C. 1968: *The Human Group*. London

Ingraham, Larry H. & Manning, Frederick J. 1984: *The Boys in the Barracks*. Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Little, Roger W. 1964: Buddy Relations and Combat Performance. In Morris Janowitz (editor): *The New Military*. New York, p. 195–223

Moskos, Charles C. 1970: *The American Enlisted Man. The Rank and File in Today's Military*. Hartford, Connecticut

Oliver, Laurel W. 1990: *Cohesion Research: Conceptual and Methodological Issues*. ARI Research Note 90–133. U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1990

Pipping, Knut 1947: *Kompaniet som samhälle. Iakttagelser i ett finskt frontförband 1941–1944*. *Acta Academiae Aboensis, Humaniora XVI*. 1. Åbo

Pipping, Knut 1978: *Komppania pienoisyhteiskuntana. Sosiologisia havaintoja suomalaisesta rintamayksiköstä 1941–1944*. Otava, Keuruu

Shils, E. A. 1950: Primary Groups in the American Army. In Robert K. Merton & Paul F. Lazarsfeld (editors): *Continuities in Social Research. Studies in the Scope and Method of "The American Soldier"*. Glencoe

Shils, E. A. & Janowitz, Morris 1948: Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II. *Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol. 12, No 2, Summer 1948, 280–315

Siebold, Guy L. 2000: The Evolution of the Measurement of Cohesion. *Military Psychology* 11/2000, 5–26

Siebold, Guy L. & Dennis, Kelly R. 1988: Development of the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire. U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

Stone, Robert C. 1946: Status and Leadership in a Combat Fighter Squadron. *American Journal of Sociology* 5/1946

Stouffer, Samuel A. & al. 1949: *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath*. Princeton

Williams, Robin M. 1984: Field Observations and Surveys in Combat Zones. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 2/1984, 186–192

**Knut Pipping**

**INFANTRY COMPANY AS A  
SOCIETY**

## PREFACE

I began this work in Pindusi in the autumn of 1943 when I suffered from boredom caused by our small workload. I got the spark from my correspondence with my father, professor Rolf Pipping, and with my teacher, professor K. Rob. V. Wikman. My companions gave me the material without being aware of it.

The doctoral thesis that was the final result of this work was published in 1947 under the title "*Kompaniet som samhälle. Iakttagelser I ett finskt frontförband 1941–1944*". The thesis was defended publicly at the Åbo Akademi University on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1947. The book was soon sold out, as was the case with doctoral theses, because the edition was too small.

However, during the past thirty-one years I have noted that the book has aroused interest from various quarters. Therefore, I was greatly delighted when the publishing company *Otava* recently came forward with a proposal to publish the book in Finnish.

I accepted the proposal unhesitatingly on the condition that I would have the opportunity to check some parts of the introduction and the conclusions. I considered it necessary because of the theoretical and empirical observations that have been done in the field of military sociology during the past decades. However, I have restrained myself from doing other than insignificant stylistic corrections in the narrative part of the book, because it contains my actual contribution to military sociology.

I expressed my thanks to the various persons and institutions in the preface of my thesis for their good advice and material support that they gave me during my work. Therefore, I shall not repeat my thanks in this context. However, I want to make one exception. I thank my father from the bottom of my heart for all his support even though this message won't reach him any more. This book would hardly have been written without his encouragement.

Knut Pipping  
Turku, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1978

## INTRODUCTION<sup>3</sup>

I had neither any practical experience in sociological fieldwork nor any certain working plan in September 1943 when I began to think about the community life of that particular company where – except for three interruptions – I had served since 1941. These interruptions were as follows: November 1941 – February 1942, November 1942 – August 1943 and November 1943 – February 1944. I was quite acquainted with the social structure of the company by the spring of 1943 and was able to carry out the fieldwork more systematically. Indeed, I continued with the fieldwork until November 1944 when I was mustered out. I thought it was better to perform my study as unnoticed as possible, because all military matters had to be kept secret during the war and because I was afraid that our observant military police would try to hamper my work. Therefore, I had to abandon the idea of carrying out socio-metric experiments.

My reason for choosing a company rather than a battalion or a platoon as the object of my research is as follows: based on its military/organizational nature, the company formed a more important inner group for the men. Work, accommodation, supply and maintenance and holidays were determined at the company level. When someone mentioned the company where he served, it also became clear what his battalion, regiment and division were. In particular, one usually had to obey the orders of the company commander. In the first place, the men were under his command.

The status of the platoons in the company was in many respects similar to that of the company in the battalion. However, all men's activities – work, accommodation, supply and maintenance and holidays – depended considerably more on conditions in the company than the functions of the company depended on the battalion. Each company was able to arrange its internal matters almost irrespective of the other companies in the battalion. This kind of independence was totally impossible between the platoons in the company.

The fact that the men regarded the company rather than the battalion as their inner group appears among other things from the fact that the transfer to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company (inside the battalion) was seen as a move to a totally new environment, to a new social field, whereas the transfer from one platoon to another was seen only as a move from one tent to another. A soldier knew his companions in the company, his term of service in the company remained unchanged, he retained his position on the holiday lists and he had the same supply and maintenance as before. He was a newcomer in the second company even if he had served in the same battalion before.

---

<sup>3</sup> This is the updated and longer version of the introduction that was published in the Finnish edition (*"Komppania pienoisyhteiskuntana – Sosiologisia havaintoja suomalaisesta rintamayksiköstä 1941–1944"*) that was published in 1978. – Editor.



I admit, of course, that had the study been carried out in the entire battalion, it could have provided a lot of interesting insights: it would have been easier to observe which norms of behaviour were unique in different companies and which ones were common in the entire battalion. It would also have been possible to study competition between the companies. Moreover, it would have been possible to evaluate the impact of external circumstances and the differences in the composition of the companies on the men's behaviour. However, such a study would have required observers in all companies of the battalion, and since I had to work alone, I thought it was better to study only that particular company I was familiar with.

Now one can claim that in order to be consistent with the latter remark, I should only have studied my own platoon, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon. This is correct in the sense that I served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon until September 1943 (this is also evident from my material which is mainly from that platoon). However, since I was twice detached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon during 1942 and served as the leader and as the orderly non-commissioned officer of the command squad from September 1943, I think I am entitled to present my opinions about other platoons, too (i.e. not just the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon). All the more so, since I began a systematic study of the company at about the same time as I became the leader of the command unit.

As will later come forth, one could distinguish groups according to the men's home area and their age. These were informal group formations as opposed to organized groups that were based on military factors. These informal groups encompassed formal group formations such as value groups, military groups and local groups in the company. Therefore, one could not study informal groups only at the platoon level. To some extent, groups that were based on the men's home area and their age exceeded the limits of the companies, too. However, they were so loose that one can hardly talk about their existence at the battalion level. Therefore, I thought that the company level would provide enough material for my research.

Moreover, there are some technical details that lend support to my idea that the company was the most advantageous unit size for my study. For example, the frequent transfer of men from one platoon to another is a matter that does not appear from the sources that I used for studying the composition of the company. In other words, it would have been nearly impossible to draw up statistics about the composition of the platoons and to form an opinion of their turnover.

When drawing up my descriptive presentation of the company, I have partly used my own notes, partly letters to the various pen pals and partly material of the battalion that is kept in the War Archives. All this material is, of course, incomplete and in so far as it concerns events before September 1943, I have had to resort to reconstructions that are based on my own and my companions' memories. Because the conditions in which the fieldwork was carried out were rather unfavourable

and because I had to observe the company alone, my notes are rather incomplete from the end of the war, too. If I have not been totally certain about the flow of events, I have – as far as possible – interviewed my companions in the company and have also preferred incompleteness to faultiness.

Everything that applies to the line of action in the company, its group formation and the men's attitudes, is totally based on the above-mentioned comparative notes and letters. In order to write the chapter that deals with the history and the composition of the company, I have searched for material in the archives. All war diaries of the company have been preserved, as well as the lists of identification tags and most of the orders of the day of the battalion. With the help of these sources I have been able to draw up the register of all those men who served in the company during the war. This register constitutes the statistical basis of the men's home area, their age and term of service as well as their turnover in the company.

However, I cannot be totally certain that this register is absolutely complete. The turnover of men was very high in the summer of 1941. Also, men that were immediately removed from the name lists after they had arrived in the company might not have been taken into account. The risk is all the higher, because a few orders of the day of the battalion could not be found in the War Archives. However, this is not a matter of concern with very many men.

Unfortunately, the statistics that I have collected are unreliable in another respect, too. As far as the men's home area and age are concerned, the statistics are not complete, because the army changed over from identification tag lists to a more convenient filing system. These filing cards – just like the lists – are kept in the War Casualties Archives in Helsinki. Because the filing cards of the company are scattered among the more than 500,000 cards in the archives, I have not been able to fully prove the home areas and the years of birth of those men who arrived in the company after August 1943. The reason for this is that I did not consider it worth the effort to go through the entire file of identification tags of the Finnish army. However, I have at least been able to determine the home provinces of those men who arrived in the company later. This was achieved by going through the orders of the day and – not least – by interviewing the clerk and the staff sergeant of the company in the summer of 1946. They both knew the men very well.

After peace had been restored in the country, I started to work up the material that I had collected in the company. I soon realized it would be interesting to study whether the men's behaviour patterns in the company were modifications of their civilian behaviour patterns. I had gained some understanding of their civilian environment by talking with men in the Kiestinki region during their holiday trips and during the Lapland War in 1944. In order to study this matter more deeply, I made a trip to Lapland in August-September 1945.

Based on the observations that I made on my trips in the Oulu – Kajaani – Salla – Sodankylä – Yli-Tornio – Oulu –region, I eventually chose the village of Hietasuvanto as the object of a more detailed study. I settled in Hietasuvanto in July 1946 and stayed there for about six weeks. I have been able to compare the observations I made there with wider observations elsewhere: in Vuostimo (Kemijärvi) in Räisälä (Kemijärvi), in Kuhmo (Ranua), in Yli-Olhava (Ii), in Mankilankylä (Rantsila) and in Hanhilanperä (Vihanti) and also in scattered observations in most of the parishes of the above-mentioned area.

Choosing the above-mentioned sample was the only possible solution, because I had to carry out this study alone. I am totally aware of the fact that due to its incomplete representativeness, I can be criticised for choosing Hietasuvanto as a typical example from this large area. Moreover, one may claim that it is in principle wrong to draw conclusions from observations that have been made during the war and after the destruction of northern Finland in the autumn of 1944 and think that they represent conditions that prevailed before 1939. Both objections are justified but I did not have any other alternative in either case. However, as a slight defence against the latter remark, I want to point out that the notes I have made from literature and the observations I have made during my trips show that the conditions in northern Finland are so stable that even the war with its consequences cannot have caused major structural changes in that region.

Because this study, as has been said, is a monograph, my observations and conclusions have validity only for a certain company. In order to be more certain about whether the men's attitudes had a civilian background or whether they had been adopted during military service, I organized a poll at the turn of 1944/1945 and hoped to obtain more consistent comparative material. The forms were published partly in newspapers (Borgåbladet, Vasabladet, Västra nyland and Aseveli) and partly as separate prints (300 in Swedish and 500 in Finnish). (Most of those who answered the questions in the separate print had received the forms directly from me or from my acquaintances). Only a small amount of the answers were returned: 25 altogether, of which two had to be rejected.

These were divided as follows:

#### Category

Swedish-speaking:	12
Finnish-speaking	11

#### II Category

Officers	2
Non-commissioned officers	12
Rank and file	9

## III Category

Infantrymen	12
Light infantrymen	2
Field-artillerymen	7
Anti-aircraftmen	1
Frontier soldiers	1

## IV Category

Answers to the press poll	14
Answers to the separate print	9

The small number of answers was naturally a disappointment, because it ruled out statistical analysis that could have been a basis for generalizations. Therefore, I cannot say anything about the representativeness of my study at the time of *Kompaniet's* publication in 1947. After that, several books have been published about life at the front. Many of them support my understanding of the time, i.e. that general conclusions concerning the entire army can be drawn from the results of my study. However, one has to make a reservation that concerns special conditions at those front sectors where the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was not engaged in combat.

The strongest scientific support for my understanding can be found in *Sotasavotta*, a memoir based on a collection that was organized by *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura* (Finnish Literature Society), *Otava and Pohjoismainen Yhdyspankki* in 1973. It aimed at gathering and saving tradition about wartime life in dugouts. Over 300 men from all over the country who had served at the various front sectors sent over 12,000 manuscript pages with answers. Of these, the best ones were later published in *Sotasavotta*.<sup>4</sup> (In one review<sup>5</sup> of that book, I have pondered why the amount of answers to my poll was so much smaller than in the collection organized by *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura*).

As the most important or as an equally important confirmation of the universal applicability of my results I want to mention Väinö Linna's *Tuntematon Sotilas* (*The Unknown Soldier*) which – to my understanding – is as much an excellent sociological document as it is a great novel. Other literary descriptions and various memoirs have also strengthened my individual observation, but as I have shown in my *lectio praecursoria*<sup>6</sup>, these kinds of books have limited value as sociological evidence. This is mainly due to the fact that writers usually deal so intensively with their own reactions that the community in which they live disappears into

<sup>4</sup> Nyman, A.&al. (ed.): *Sotasavotta*, Helsinki 1974.

<sup>5</sup> Nytt ljus över fortsättningskriget. *Finsk Tidskrift* 1976, pp. 559-.

<sup>6</sup> Pipping, K.: Den finländske soldaten i litteraturen, *Finsk Tidskrift* 1947, p.5.

the background. The same applies both to the literature of the first war years (which my *lectio* deals with) and also to the literature that was published later.

Finally, I want to address a problem I was aware of when I began my observation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment but whose significance was not totally clear to me when I started to write *Kompaniet*. It is a question of my own restricted point of view that is possibly distorted, too. When I started my fairly systematic observation in the autumn of 1943, I had become acquainted with the official and unofficial norms that prevailed in the army and had also taken in the behavioural patterns of the non-commissioned officers and the rank and file. However, I had not only learnt the norms and the procedures. I had also internalised them: I considered them correct and binding. As a result of this, I looked at the different aspects of military life from a particular point of view. It was different from what a totally impartial and objective observer would have applied (were it possible to find such a different point of observation). The same must be said about the way with which I have presented the information in my book.

Now that I have gone through what I wrote thirty years ago, I notice that – as I have taken notes – I have observed matters in a similar way. This does not mean that my following observations would be wrong but that they are apparently incomplete. Namely, I think I have probably paid special attention to behaviour that I felt was desirable from the viewpoint that I had unconsciously taken. At the same time I have left out of account or have forgotten things that did not fit with the overall picture I had formed about the community life in the company. Therefore, that picture is probably distorted.

As a researcher I cannot but fret about this point. However, there is a consolation. I am conscious of the fact that I am in good company, because nobody who has carried out active observation has been totally capable of avoiding a distortion like this. My hope is that the one-sided things that appear in my study are not too big. Judging from the comparative material that has been at my disposal, this does not seem to be the point. Or is it so that even this comparative material contains the same distortions as my own presentation?

There were not any sociological studies about military units when I wrote the original version of my doctoral thesis "*Kompaniet som samhälle*" in 1946. A few short writings in quarterlies such as *American Journal of Sociology* and *American Sociological Review* were an exception. The following is an excerpt from the latter journal: "very little has been written about the social psychology of a soldier. Professional writers with an inclination to dramatize events, war veterans, journalists and cartoonists have almost solely described experiences that have been gained in the army... Even though their pieces of work are valuable documents about human life, they do not bring forward all information that would be necessary to explain

the nature of a military community and the effect of that community on its members.”<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, I had to handle and present my material in a totally original way that I thought would be the most rewarding. I wanted to create a monographic presentation about the community life of a fighting military unit. I considered it necessary to dedicate a lot of attention to informal relationships, because my observations seemed to prove that the connection between the formal and informal structure of the company was very important in explaining the soldiers’ behaviour. Therefore, the book deals extensively with men’s behaviour that deviated from the rules and regulations. As a result, a reader might get the impression that the company was an unruly bunch of stubborn fellows, “jermus”, who constantly defied orders. However, the incorrectness of such an impression appears from the fact that the company stuck together in spite of the physical and psychological stress that was occasionally quite strong.

For example, there were fewer deserters than in the other units of the battalion. It seems quite apparent to me that this feeling of togetherness and battle morale were greatly encouraged both by the informal norm system which the men had created themselves and which they considered legal and by the informal structure of the company that this structure had created. An attentive reader will notice that the men usually behaved in a disciplined manner but that they reacted in a negative way – i.e. against their own norm system – when they did not understand the content or meaning of the orders. I firmly believe that most of what seemed to be resistant behaviour to a superficial observer was actually one of the most important factors that raised these men’s battle morale. How could the company otherwise have fought so well and how could the battalion otherwise have become “the second most bloody battalion of the army” as it (like many other battalions) sometimes called itself.

In the course of the last 30 years after the publication of “*Kompaniet*”, I have sporadically followed material that has been published in the field of military sociology. All in all, there is a lot of material. 845 publications are named in a bibliography that came out (which does not strive to be perfect) in 1968.<sup>8</sup> If we think that the number of publications after 1968 is at least the same – which does not seem like a faulty assumption – we come to the conclusion that at least 2000 articles and books about military sociology have been published by now.

The vast majority of writings in military sociology consist of articles that have primarily been published in military and sociological journals. I have read only some of them – partly because of their large number and partly because many of these publications are not available in Finland. However, the material I have been

<sup>7</sup> Editorial Foreword. *American Journal of Sociology* 1946, vol. 51, pp. 359–.

<sup>8</sup> Ziegler, Rolf: Ausgewählte Literatur zur Militärsoziologie. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Sonderheft 12/1968, pp. 327–.

able get hold of shows that the aspect of military life that has been of greatest interest to me – i.e. the interaction between the regulations and the informal norm system of the rank and file – has hardly been dealt with. This has happened in spite of the fact that many writers have indicated it is necessary to study this kind of phenomenon. In my opinion, this neglect may be due to the fact that only a few researchers who have devoted themselves to military sociology have served either as privates or as non-commissioned officers. So, they have not had the possibility to study the informal norm system from the inside.

Furthermore, it must be stated that only a few of the studies I have read are based on active observation whose aim is to describe and analyse the social life of an entire unit. Instead, most military sociologists who have conducted field studies have ended up using various polling methods. These researchers have been more interested in surveying the interaction of attitudes that predominate in different groups among the rank and file than in the way these differently shaped groups operate. Therefore, by their nature, these studies are more socio-psychological than sociological.

The same also applies to more widely disseminated military-sociological (or –psychological?) studies such as Stouffer's *The American Soldier*<sup>9</sup> and Ginzberg's *The Ineffective Soldier*<sup>10</sup> which for the sake of their scope and profundity must be dealt with more closely. The former work is based on polls (altogether about 600,000 interviewees)<sup>11</sup> that the Research Branch of the Information and Education Division of the War Department conducted in the American Armed Forces from 1941 to 1945. The latter one is based on material that the Conservation of Human Resources Project – launched by President Eisenhower – compiled mainly from the archives of the War Department and the Veterans' Administration after the war.

So, all that material and all those detailed studies on which these two works are based originated with a practical-descriptive and diagnostic purpose: to help the American war command resolve strictly defined and concrete problems which seemed to be of significance in the conduct of the war. The most important of these questions dealt with education, promotions, battle morale, leadership, change and muster-out of troops. Furthermore, they dealt with the relationship between officers and rank and file, between white and black soldiers as well as between frontline troops and logistic personnel. Because many of these polls were prepared irrespective of each other, it is quite natural that separate partial studies were not planned within a common scientific framework.

After the war, professor Stouffer – active at Harvard University and a leading figure in the Research Branch – was given the task of reanalysing all the material

<sup>9</sup> Stouffer, S & al.: *The American Soldier I-II*, Princeton, New Jersey 1949–50.

<sup>10</sup> Ginzberg, E & al.: *The Ineffective Soldier*, New York 1959.

<sup>11</sup> Moskos, Charles C.: *The American Enlisted Man*, New York 1970, p. 6.



compiled by the Research Branch with the assistance of his wartime companions. It is the results of this newly conducted study that have been published in *The American Soldier*. As a result of his work, Stouffer got the opportunity to reorganize some of the huge amount of material within a pertinent framework. He thought it was better to observe the soldiers' life in the army as a continuous act of adaptation and paid special attention to the relationship between the rank and file and the officers. He explains the behavioural differences that surfaced in the analysis by referring to such independent factors as the length of the men's service, their civilian background or both of these.<sup>12</sup>

First, he sees the men's adaptation to military life in the light of their adaptation to its formal norms and values. Second, he sees it in the light of the men's adaptation to the norm systems of those informal groups they were part of and, third, to the military subculture in general. Even though relatively few questions had been drawn up about the men's relationships with their companions, they were nevertheless variable and there were enough of them so that the effect of the men's member and reference groups on their behaviour could be observed in the analysis.

Therefore, it has sometimes been said that – when he was writing *The American Soldier* – Stouffer and his companions “discovered the primary group” and its importance again. But – as Shils has shown – the argument is not totally true:

“*The American Soldier* is mainly based on examining the behaviour of the individual. The work does not contain a single immediate observation about the group – only indirect observations about the performance of the entire group. There is not a single description about the life of the primary group and also very few references to it. The strength of *The American Soldier* does not lie with descriptions of the primary group of the US Army in combat. Rather, it rests with the analyses that deal with (1) the effect of the primary groups (regardless of their quality) on the performance of an individual soldier and with (2) factors that have contributed to or have hampered the birth of primary groups as well as membership in them”.<sup>13</sup>

In some of the secondary analyses of the above-mentioned work, Shils, Merton, Kitt and Speier try – among other things with theories that have been developed in connection with small group research and with relevant material from *The American Soldier* – to analyse more closely the significance of membership and reference groups to soldiers' attitudes and behaviour. Even they have not gotten very far, because the original material does not include information about entire groups, only about the attitudes of individual soldiers. Unfortunately, in spite of

---

<sup>12</sup> Stouffer, *ibid.* I, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Shils, E.A.: Primary Groups in the American Army, which is in Merton R.K. & Lazarsfeld, P.F.: *Continuities in Social Research. Studies in the Scope and method of "The American Soldier"*, Glencoe, Illinois 1950, p. 18.



its abundant material, *The American Soldier* does not portray a picture of how different kinds of units operate in the US army.

Except for three rather comprehensive general surveys about the state of research of military sociology<sup>14</sup>, only two compiled works<sup>15</sup> have – as far as I know – been published in this special field of sociology. In spite of their many merits – e.g. presentations on the status of the armed forces in American society, the impact of technology on the external structure of the armed forces, status relations in the formal hierarchy of the armed forces and the professional status of officers – both books have dealt surprisingly little with the informal social structure and control in the smaller army units (companies and platoons). To a large extent, this is a result of the fact that there simply is not any available material that would shed light on this side of military life. However, it seems that this defect is also a result of a certain unwillingness to take up the matter. This is manifested in a book written by Coates and Pellegrini. The adjustment of recruits is dealt with in a chapter that the author starts by quoting Stouffer:

“When in the following we talk about personal adjustment, we will refer to personal adjustment to what the army considered desirable. We could have defined the concept in a different way, e.g. adjustment to the informal structure of the army, even when it was in conflict with military requirements. However, taking into account our task and in order to help the supreme command of the armed forces and in order to solve the analytical task of this chapter, it appeared it was the most useful to define the concept of adjustment as adaptation to the requirements of the armed forces.”<sup>16</sup>

I suppose that this view about the task of the Research Branch at one point contributed to the fact that its interviews – taken as a whole – almost entirely ignored the informal norm and value systems of the soldiers.

Without knowing how fast and extensively the results of The Research Branch were reported to its researchers, it is impossible to conclude who should be regarded as “the founder of the primary group”. The honour belongs to Shils and Janowitz if we only look at the date of publication, because they published their rather often quoted work *Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II*<sup>17</sup> over a year before the completion of Stouffer’s book. The article that is based on interviews of captured German soldiers shows, in the first place, that there was a distinct positive connection between the cohesion of various primary groups and the soldiers’ will

<sup>14</sup> Lang, K.: Military Organisation, in Marsh, J.G.: *Handbook of Organisations*, Chicago 1965, pp. 838-; Ziegler K.: *ibid.*; Moskos, C.C.: The Military in the work of Inkeles, A. & A. (ed.): *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 2; 1976, pp. 55-.

<sup>15</sup> Janowitz, M.: *Sociology of the Military Establishment*, New York 1959; Coates, C.H. & Pellegrini, R.K.: *Military Sociology*, University Park, Maryland 1965.

<sup>16</sup> Stouffer, *ibid.* vol. 1, p.83, excerpt from Coates & Pellegrini, *ibid.* p. 287.

<sup>17</sup> Public Opinion Quarterly vol. XII, 1948, pp. 280-.

to continue their battle – even though the situation looked hopeless. Secondly, it proves that solidarity within a primary group is more important to the will to fight than ideological or other external factors. Marshall came to the same conclusion in his famous study *Men under fire*, which is based on informal but acute observations about the US Army at different front sectors.<sup>18</sup>

Shils, Janowitz, Stouffer, Merton, Kitt and Speier emphasized the significance of informal groups and the meaning of informal social control already at the end of the 1940's, and several other sociologists have emphasized the same thing. Therefore, it is quite amazing that so few sociologists have started to conduct field studies of this phenomenon even though e.g. American sociologists should have had a good opportunity for it in Korea and in Vietnam. To my knowledge, only one sociologist, Kenneth Little, has studied the informal structure of his unit with the means of active observation. In addition to his unpublished doctoral thesis, he has written a short article that deals with “buddy relationships” in an infantry company in Korea. Unfortunately, the article deals only with one kind of informal groups (which will later be called “mess kit groups”). Of course, this does not have to mean that other kinds of groups did not exist in Little's company.<sup>19</sup>

Charles Moskos's *The American Enlisted Man* has a much more ambitious goal than Little's article. However, the book provides less information than its name and introduction promise. The following is stated in the introduction:

“The bitterness felt by a common soldier against officers and the possible military structures are alleviated by strong informal ties that bind him to his own unit, to the non-commissioned officers and to the rank and file. These strong primary group ties to his companions are a precondition for his adjustment to military life. At war or in a garrison, on a ship or on a plane, in the USA or overseas, the social field of a soldier does not extend further than to those small groups where he belongs. The informal ties shaped by these small groups are more important than the distant goal of the Defence Forces, and the war and its goal will be totally overshadowed by these norms.”<sup>20</sup>

In spite of his perception, Moskos did not bother to find out more closely during his fieldwork (in 1965, two weeks, and in 1967, six days at the front in Vietnam) how the informal structure and norm system of the units he had studied had developed in reality. His book sheds less light on the informal relationships in the US army than Shils' and Janowitz's article about corresponding relationships in the German army.

---

<sup>18</sup> Marshall, S.L.A.: *Men Under Fire*, New York 1947. e.g. pp. 42, 148 and 150.

<sup>19</sup> Little, B.W.: Buddy Relations and Combat Performance, in Janowitz, M.: *The New Military*, New York 1964, pp.195-.

<sup>20</sup> Moskos, *ibid.*, p.5.

As the above survey shows, many military sociologists have noted that, in addition to the formal norm system and structure, there is an informal structure in all our military units. However, only few people have studied their nature more closely. This is deplorable, because the formation of sociological theories could have benefited from this. It could also have made the comparison of our own army with other armed forces possible. This being the situation, it seems that only the research in hand deals with the informal military structure in detail. Indeed, this matter could be a sufficient justification for republishing the book 30 years after the issue of the first edition.

In much the same way, while some military sociologists have proved the existence of informal norms and groups without trying to study them more closely, others have paid attention to some other features of military communities without analysing them more closely. Since these matters will be addressed in the descriptive part of my book, I shall deal with them now and start by quoting Moskos:

“The American army, navy and air force have been characterised in two ways that seem to contradict each other. On the one hand, we have a belief that the American armed forces have nowadays more and more *features that are common to all the wide bureaucracies* in a modern complex society. As a result, many administrative mechanisms and social forms in the armed forces begin more and more to resemble corresponding functions in the civilian world. On the other hand, we often have summarized descriptions – especially in the media dominated by popular culture – where the armed forces are portrayed as a semi-feudal institution; it has characteristics of such nature that they do not have any equivalents in the civilian society. Those descriptions *emphasize the totalitarian character of the army, navy and air force* and the sharp distinctions between the civilian and military sectors.”<sup>21</sup>

Moskos continues that – strictly speaking – these two beliefs are not conflicting. They only represent different points of view: looking from the top of the military hierarchy (or from the viewpoint of many outside researchers), similarities between the armed forces and any other large bureaucracy are often very striking. On the other hand, from the viewpoint of those who live or work at the lower end of the hierarchy, life feels as regulated and limited as in a penitentiary, mental hospital or some other totalitarian institution. For my part, I would like to add that the contrast between these two viewpoints becomes even smaller if we think that all totalitarian institutions are in fact differentiated bureaucracies where those people who live at the bottom of the hierarchy correspond to clients of the bureaucracy and where nursing staff and guards correspond to bureaucrats. In other words, these viewpoints complement each other and are not mutually exclusive.

---

<sup>21</sup> Moskos, *ibid.* p.37.

This becomes very clear when we compare those characteristics of bureaucracy that Max Weber thought were typical of all bureaucracies with those distinctive features that Erving Goffman thought belonged to totalitarian institutions. As we will see, the features of these two ideal types partly overlap each other. At the same time, they characterize almost all features of the army, navy and air force. In order to make my presentation more clear, I shall first introduce Weber's and Goffman's lists separately. After that, I shall combine them.

According to Max Weber, the following features are typical of bureaucracies:<sup>22</sup>

- A1. Civil servants of the bureaucracy – who will later be called bureaucrats – retain their personal freedom and are under the authority of their superiors only on official business.
- A2. Bureaucrats have been hierarchically organized and have acquainted themselves only with tasks that belong to their line of business.
- A3. Every post has its own clearly defined line of business.
- A4. The posts are filled on the basis of a free contractual system. Thus, in principle, posts are filled between different applicants on the basis of free choice.
- A5. All posts are filled on the basis of the technical qualifications of applicants. In the most rationally organized bureaucracies, the competence of the applicants is determined with degrees or on the basis of their diplomas – or with both systems. Bureaucrats are not selected. They are nominated.
- A6. Bureaucrats have a fixed salary in money and they are usually entitled to a pension. The official has the right to discharge a civil servant only under special circumstances. Usually, only a private organization has this right. On the contrary, every bureaucrat has the right to resign on one's own initiative. A salary chart reflects the hierarchical position of bureaucrats so that the higher officials are better paid. In addition, those bureaucrats who have been given more responsibility than is required by their position may get a salary increase.
- A7. A bureaucrat's post is only or at least his most important duty.
- A8. Service in bureaucracy makes up one's career. All bureaucracies have a fixed promotional system based on the years of service or skills that have been shown in duty – or both. Promotion is tied to the superior's evaluation of the candidates.
- A9. A bureaucrat does not own tools needed in the performance of his/her official duties. He/she does not own his/her position either.
- A10. Bureaucrats are subject to strict and systematic discipline and their performance of official duties is controlled in a similar manner.

---

<sup>22</sup> Weber, M.: *The Essentials of Bureaucratic Organisation: An Ideal-Type Construction*, translation: Parsons & Henderson; in Merton, R.K. & al.: *Reader in Bureaucracy*, New York 1950, pp. 18–.

In turn, totalitarian institutions have the following features (based on Säilä's and Goffman's summary of Goffman's presentation).<sup>23</sup>

- B1. They have been isolated from the outside world with natural barriers or walls.
- B2. Inmates' connections with the outside world are limited.
- B3. There is a strict division between the staff and the inmates.
- B4. Working, spending of free time and sleeping are restricted – unlike in normal society – to the same place and are under the surveillance of the same authority.
- B5. The activities of all individuals take place with other inmates who have an equal status.
- B6. There is no family-life.
- B7. The inmates are bound by numerous detailed rules that are backed by plenty of punishment. (B8 does not exist in Pipping's text. – Editor.)

The following characteristics can be added to the above list. They have a secondary meaning to Säilä's and Mäkelä's studies, but they seem to be important to my own analysis:<sup>24</sup>

- B9. The workload that is demanded from inmates can vary a lot between institutions, but usually neither the amount of the work done by the inmates nor the quality of their work has any influence upon the payment they receive from their work.
- B10. From the very moment the inmate becomes a member of the totalitarian institution, he/she starts to lead the life of an institutional inmate that lasts until he/she is released from the place. This life can cause big changes in his/her perceptions of him/herself and of other people who are meaningful to him/herself.
- B11. Life as an institutional inmate usually starts with a number of humiliations the guards inflict on the new inmates of the institution. Usually, the aim of the transitional rituals is to destroy the inmates' personality so that it can be more easily reshaped to fit the norms of the institution. Tests of allegiance will usually be included in these transitional rituals.
- B12. The inmates are forced to dress up in uniforms in many institutions. These uniforms of the institution usually differ from civilian dress, often do not fit well and are made of coarse and cheap material. Usually the first task of the new inmate is to change his/her own clothes for the uniform of the institution and to get rid of such private things that from the viewpoint of the institution should not be in the inmates' possession. This new dressing has a symbolic meaning to many inmates and it has considerable influence on their perception of themselves.

<sup>23</sup> Säilä, S.-L. & Mäkelä, K.: Totaalisia yhteisöjä on erilaisia, *Sosiologia* Vol. 4, 1967, p.114.

<sup>24</sup> Goffman, E. *Asylums*, New York 1961, p. 14–.

B13. Unlike in civilian life where various authorities control individual behaviour, every guard or nurse is entitled to control every aspect of the inmates' behaviour inside a totalitarian institution. This increases the probability that many inmates will be subjected to humiliation that – in turn – increases their risk of suffering from different degrees of chronic pain.

Let us now examine these points side by side to see how well or poorly they fit in our conscript army during the war:

A1, A10, B4, B5, B8

I The all-pervasive difference between civilian life and the army lay in the fact that soldiers, especially frontline soldiers, were in the service all the time. They could not leave their place – much less could they resign. Strictly speaking, they were in service even when on leave. However, it did not matter what the soldiers did at home behind closed doors; that had nothing to do with their active service and was left out of their superiors' supervision. However, they were forbidden to talk about things that were regarded as military secrets. An important reason for the conflict between frontline soldiers and soldiers on the home front was the fact that the latter had a much better possibility to get leave for the evening and thereby get rather often away from their superiors' supervision and almost feel like civilians. In this comparison, B4, B5 and B8 give a more exact picture about the army than A1 does.

A2, A3, B4

II Of these features, A2 fits better with the army than B3 does. Even though there was a distinct barrier between officers and the rank and file and also between the non-commissioned officers and the rank and file, the difference between them was not as clear as is expected of point B3.

A3

III This condition applied to the entire army regardless of the fact that most military duties were of such nature that they had many officeholders. In particular, these duties could be learnt so easily that moving from one job to another did not cause any disturbance in the unit.

A4

IV This concerned only regulars.

A5

V This condition did not in fact concern the entire army, because nobody – neither conscripts nor regulars – had any military competence when they entered service (apart from some active members of the Voluntary Defence Corps). However, everyone was trained for a particular kind of task in the army.

A6

VI Condition A6 applied mainly to the peacetime regulars. Career officers, reservists or conscripts could not quit service during the war. This was an all-inclusive factor for the military personnel and – compared with other duties – put military service in a unique position. Condition A6 concerned servicemen and reservists, because they got a daily allowance (those with maintenance liability got a veteran's pay, too). The amount of the daily allowance was not affected by the amount or quality of the soldier's work.

A7

VII Everyone who served in the army fulfilled this condition.

A8, A10

VIII Everyone who served in the army fulfilled both these conditions.

A9

IX Everyone who served in the army fulfilled this condition. However, as will be pointed out in the book later on, many soldiers treated the material that had been entrusted to them as their own property.

B1

X This applied to all the frontline soldiers but to a lesser extent to the home front.

B2

XI This applied to all the frontline soldiers but to a lesser extent to the home front.

B6

XII This applied to the entire army, excluding officers who worked at the headquarters in their hometown.

B7

XIII This holds true of the soldiers who served in garrisons on the home front. On the contrary, frontline soldiers were basically on guard duty and had occasional labour duty.

B11

XIV All conscripts started their service as recruits whose training has traditionally included bullying. Those ordered to NCO training have to go through a period of bullying at the beginning of the course and those who are later ordered to the reserve officers' school become targets of bullying once more at the beginning of the course.

B13

XV This concerns the army in its entirety even though many frontline soldiers were of the opinion that only the nearest superiors were entitled to make remarks about their behaviour. In their opinion, officers on the home front had no right to do so.

The examination above shows that – with regard to the army – half of the characteristics of bureaucracy as described by Weber fit with Goffe's characterizations of totalitarian institutions. In addition, those parts of the list that do not fit with one another can be applied to the army. In other words, the army can be regarded as a bureaucracy and as a totalitarian institution. If we pay closer attention to them separately, we can notice that those with a bureaucratic nature characterize more the life of the officers whereas those with a totalitarian nature fit better with the life of the rank and file. To a certain extent, this gives more strength to Moskos's remark that it depends on the observer's position in the hierarchy whether he sees the army as a bureaucracy or as a totalitarian institution.

When different kinds of organizations have been studied, it has repeatedly been found that they seldom operate according to a formal organizational model. In general, these organizational models are designed as rationally as possible. As a result of this, those individuals who work in the organization cannot develop satisfactory social relationships. Instead, they remain distant from one another. The main purpose of these organizational models is to facilitate the achievement of these goals either instantly or after some time. The personnel are not always familiar with the goals of the organization; and even if they are, they often disapprove of them. The personnel may not identify with the goals of the organization both because of their ignorance and because of their rejection of these goals. The same applies to such situations where the personnel are familiar with the goals of the organization but where they regard these goals as irrelevant or as less relevant than



other goals. Job satisfaction is an important goal which consists of many components but which is often at the top of the value hierarchy and goal hierarchy of the personnel of every organization. In order to achieve this goal, the personnel formulate their own informal norms and create their own control mechanism.

Numerous studies have shown that there is more or less a tug-of-war between the leadership and the personnel of every organization. Both parties attempt to achieve their own goals in this competition by resorting to the norms and the control mechanism they have designed and that often contradict one another. In many bureaucracies, for example, the lower bureaucrats have simplified complex routines that they consider impractical or useless. In addition, inmates have in all totalitarian institutions formulated norms and developed behavioural patterns that are in conflict with the formal norms of the institution. A significant amount of these informal norms aims at making the everyday life of the inmates more tolerable. They also strive to help them retain their identity in a social system which – for one thing – tries to suppress their identity and mould it to fit the formal model.

In this book, I attempt to describe the interaction between the formal and informal organization in our wartime army that was based on conscription and reservists. The restricted official norm system – morale based on manuals – had throughout our independence been developed on the grounds of old pan-European – Prussian in particular – military traditions. It was a strict norm system that emphasized control, because its main purpose was to maintain control even in unexpected situations. As a counterbalance to this system, conscripts had developed their own norms and their own morale whose purpose was to alleviate the harshness of their service and to give the individual soldier as much freedom as possible within the limits of the manuals. Some of these informal norms can be recognized in other armies, too: they are probably universal. Some of the norms could be found in peacetime garrisons, others – some of which were variations of the above norms – developed at the front and were formulated with a view to the conditions so that life at the front would be as tolerable and safe as possible.

I shall now move on to describe these two norm systems and their interdependence. I have tried to adopt an impartial and objective stand towards both systems. I have noted, however, that I have not totally succeeded in my effort. Instead, I have described the informal system with greater sympathy than the formal one. However, I believe that this distortion will not mislead readers and that scientific research can benefit from my book.

# THE SECOND MACHINE GUN COMPANY OF THE TWELFTH INFANTRY REGIMENT

## I HISTORY OF THE COMPANY

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was operational already at the beginning of the war in June 1941. Among other things, it included the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company that consisted of conscripts who had already been in service. However, the company did not have full strength at the beginning of the mobilization. Therefore, it was reinforced before it left for the border.

During peacetime, the company had been stationed in Saunakangas<sup>25</sup> in the parish of Savukoski where it was stationed at the beginning of the mobilization, too. The departure order came on June 16<sup>th</sup> and the company marched to Saija. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was loaded into lorries and transported to the village of Kuusamo whence it marched slowly towards the border. This march looked more like a field exercise than a serious military operation. Garrison duty and drill were considered as important as during the deepest peacetime, and the entire battalion attended a service on Sunday. During their leisure time, the rank and file fished in peace and quiet and the company commander “was happily married in Kemijärvi”.<sup>26</sup>

The order to attack came on July 9<sup>th</sup>. The battalion got off and marched to the east about 30 kilometres a day and crossed the old national frontier at 8.02 A.M. on July 11<sup>th</sup>. It reached its first target, the village of Suvanto, about 15 kilometres behind the border, without meeting any resistance. While the rifle companies proceeded to the south in the direction of Pistojärvi, the machine gun company stayed behind in Suvanto to build and repair a small village road that led from Suvanto to Pistojärvi.

This peaceful work continued until July 18<sup>th</sup> when the company was called in the middle of the night and marched first to Pistojärvi and from there to the actual front line in the south. The men were fire-baptized and the company sustained its first combat losses there. The battalion proceeded about 15 kilometres south and southeast during two weeks of fighting and was positioned a little bit southeast of Malviainen on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

All this action, “the trip of Pisto”, during which the battalion was a separate and independent operational unit, was a side-operation: its purpose was to take over Uhtua from the southwest and at the same time to support the main attack from

<sup>25</sup> See map supplement 1.

<sup>26</sup> War diary number 1 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1941; War Archives 1199.

Raate through Vuokkiniemi. The task of the battalion was clearly regarded as less important. So, on August 4<sup>th</sup>, it was given an order to leave its positions in Malviainen and to march fast to Kiestinki, which had recently been captured.

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, the entire battalion was together in Suvanto where it had arrived through different stages along roads that were soaked by the rain. It was loaded into cars and transported to Kiestinki in a few hours. Already on the following day, the battalion was sent as a reinforcement to those rather weak forces that attacked in the Kiestinki-Louhi direction and proceeded about 15 kilometres along the Kiestinki-Louhi railway during the next couple of days. However, it met with severe resistance there and was at times almost totally encircled by the enemy. Connections behind the company were cut off most of the time and war diaries bear testimony – among other things – to food shortage: “We have received only some foodstuffs. On August 21<sup>st</sup>, we received foodstuffs for two days and after that the enemy took over the railway. On August 26<sup>th</sup>, we got some foodstuffs on horse-drawn carriages”<sup>27</sup> The terrain is, like elsewhere in Northern Karelia, very swampy; there were large wet swamps and small lakes between long, low and sandy ridges that were covered with pine trees. It rained most of the time so that the men were not only tired from hunger and from being constantly awake but also from the cold and from getting soaked.

These four weeks of August, the so-called “Motti” (the period of encirclement), were the bloodiest in the history of our company. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, only a small group was left even though the company had received fresh supplies of men (filler replacements) in the middle of August. This group was detached and moved back to Kiestinki. According to the report given by the divisional commander to the army-corps headquarters on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, the battalion was: “Totally worn-out. In the doctor’s opinion, the group is in poor health. It is effective after having rested for a while and after having received some fresh supplies of men”.<sup>28</sup>

A few days of rest, a review by the commander of the army corps and a pass in review were to be expected in Kiestinki. After that, the battalion was commanded to take on a peaceful stretch furthest on the right flank of the division. Here, on a three-kilometre wide peninsula, Sintosenlahti, it dug in and spent a few peaceful months in almost ready positions. The winter came with a snowfall around October 15<sup>th</sup> and the construction of the dugouts was speeded up. The battalion received some fresh supplies of men around the middle of September so that the machine gun company had almost at full strength. The company had the strength of less than three platoons and an extremely small supply and maintenance unit on September 6<sup>th</sup> when it was eventually rotated. However, as a result of the reinforcement, a fourth platoon could be set up and sent to the front line.

<sup>27</sup> War diary number 1 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1941; War Archives 1199.

<sup>28</sup> War Archives 11946.

Without getting engaged in bloodier fighting, the battalion held these positions till October 29<sup>th</sup> when it was rotated and marched to Kiestinki. It continued along a major highway to the east on the same day. The trip continued on the following day, too. In the afternoon, the battalion settled down between a railway and a highway about 17 kilometres east of Kiestinki. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, the battalion grouped itself for an attack and at dawn, just like the whole division, it launched an attack. Breakthrough was the assignment of the regiment. It succeeded in spite of the severe resistance and the regiment continued its progress in the afternoon. In order to cut off a road six kilometres behind the Russian front line, the entire battalion – logistics included – broke through in the form of a large semicircle through an uncut forest.

In the meantime, other forces tied up the enemy. On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, at dawn, the battalion reached a highway, positioned itself on both sides of the road and cut off the way for the enemy's retreat. Repeated attempts to progress from the front line failed. As a result, its task was only to tie down enemy troops. The battalion was rotated on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and it regained its previous position furthest on the right flank of the division. The lines had by then moved about ten kilometres east and the battalion would now lean on Lohilahti on its right flank.

The battles that were fought here and the positions that were built for them were typical of all northern front sectors. In Petsamo, Salla, Kiestinki, Rukajärvi and to some extent even in Karhumäki – i.e. everywhere else except in Syväri and on the Karelian isthmus – the war was fought in such a manner that the front line stretched 10–20 kilometres in both directions of the connective channel which in this case was made up of a road and a railway that ran parallel to each other. The terrain was uninhabited wilderness to the right of the outermost base of the flank in Lohilahti and all the way to pickets in Röhö that made up the furthest left flank. This formed a 60-kilometre wide and uncontrolled opening. In the north, there was a 100-kilometre wide opening from the left flank of the Kiestinki sector in Jelettijärvi to the first pickets of the Salla sector.

The battalion spent the winter in these positions. Winter had arrived already at the end of October so that it was dark and cold in November. The positions were built during the winter months and by February they were in a relatively good condition. The long winter months elapsed quite peacefully. Only a few bigger forays broke the monotony until, at dawn on April 24<sup>th</sup>, the enemy attacked unexpectedly. The small enemy units attacked the positions of the battalion for two weeks and sometimes the enemy artillery directed weak and harmless harassing fire at the positions. All attacks were repelled without any problems and without any noteworthy losses. As a precaution, the 4<sup>th</sup> Company and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company that had been in the reserve were commanded to the front.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Company and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company had built a long picket line from Lohilahti to Lammaslahti during the winter. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, the 6<sup>th</sup> Company and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company took over this line, which was made up of eight small pickets. In some places, the pickets were situated several kilometres from one another. At the same time, the enemy staged a large encircling manoeuvre that posed a threat to the security of the entire sector. Strong enemy units moved around the left flank of the division and proceeded partly in the direction of Kokkosalmi (18 kilometres west of Kiestinki) and partly in the direction of Kiestinki itself. The threat of encirclement was imminent and – in order to strengthen the left flank – the main parts of the battalion were transported partly in cars and partly on forced marches to Jelettijärvi on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Only the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of our company stayed in its position to give support to those German companies that temporarily assumed responsibility for the flank of the battalion. In other words, the main part of the battalion took part in the defensive battles of Jelettijärvi where the main forces of the enemy were broken up and encircled. However, the contribution of the battalion in the so-called “trip to Jeletti” was not particularly remarkable. Its action was characterized by reluctance and confusion. The acting battalion commander of the time – burdened with responsibility – did not succeed in staying calm and his nervousness spread both to other officers and to the rank and file.

At this point, one of the company commanders totally lost his self-control. This was not bound to strengthen the men’s will to fight. Therefore, reactions such as the refusal of some men in the 4<sup>th</sup> Company to take part in the attack and the desertion of some men from combat were understandable. Among the deserters, there were also two men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company.

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, the enemy had finally been defeated and peace restored, but only a small amount of this honour belongs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. It now marched back to Kiestinki and from there back to its own positions. The 4<sup>th</sup> Company and the 5<sup>th</sup> Company took over the line from Lohisaari to Lammaslahti and the 6<sup>th</sup> Company the picket line from Lohilahti to Lammaslahti.

The summer elapsed peacefully without any fire activity – apart from smallish forays. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was rotated on July 24<sup>th</sup> and it moved on slow day marches through Kananainen to Röhö. The 4<sup>th</sup> Company and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company, however, stayed for a time in their old positions in Lohivaara. Having marched mainly in the daytime and during the light and gentle night-time - about 25 kilometres a night - the battalion arrived at its destination by the newly built Kananainen-Röhö road, about 7 kilometres north of the village of Röhö, on July 29<sup>th</sup>. In the course of the next few months, its task was to defend this road in a sparse picket line. The small pickets,

each about from 10 to 15 men, were quartered in tents along the Röhöjärvi-Soppijärvi-Logovaarakajoki line. The logistics staff built a log cabin 3-4 kilometres west and the command post of the battalion was placed along the road. These small pickets were hardly fortified at all, because military activity on both sides of the front was minimal during the first six weeks. Only in September, when the nights got darker, did the enemy demonstrate greater activity. However, the actual combat action was restricted to small skirmishes with small enemy patrols that had stealthily broken through the lines of the battalion.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, the battalion was replaced by a German mountain jaeger detachment and the battalion marched on to the west. It marched from 20 to 25 kilometres a day through Vuonninen and Juntusranta to Suomussalmi where it arrived on October 6<sup>th</sup>. After having participated in the commander's review of troops, the battalion continued to Hyrynsalmi and was then transported to Nurmes where it arrived on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

In the course of the following months, the battalion led a peaceful life in the garrison including barracks duties, close orders, and terrain exercise. The rank and file that had been on duty longer was seen to be in need of normal service after months of patrolling at the front whereas common exercises with experienced soldiers was useful for the younger replenishment. The non-commissioned officers and some of the officers were commanded to participate in short refreshers training courses.

After three months of rest the battalion was sent to the front on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1943. It was transported by rail to Käppäselkä. Its task was to patrol the shores of Lake Äänisjärvi until the break-up of ice. Therefore, the battalion was deployed in small pickets along the lakeshore. There was not any combat action during this time, if minor exchanges of fire with the enemy's motorized sleighs are not taken into account. The advanced training continued in Nurmes. The rank and file of the battalion had its first contact with the East Karelian civilian population here.

Guarding the shores of Lake Äänisjärvi proved unnecessary after the break-up of ice and the battalion was commanded to Stalin's canal (the canal connecting Lake Onega to the White Sea) on July 14<sup>th</sup>. The resting period that had started in Sungu on April 29<sup>th</sup> was over. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, the battalion assumed responsibility for the first stretch of the canal that included "Pirunsaari", a famous base. In particular, the posts in Pirunsaari were poorly built and were exposed to enemy observation. Therefore, the battalion had to work quite hard to improve its posts. The enemy was on the alert and its fire harassed this work. Therefore, great caution was always necessary. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the enemy tried to capture Pirunsaari after strong artillery preparations. However, it failed in its attempt. On July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, after a heavy concentration of artillery, it tried to capture the island again. It succeeded in getting a foothold on the island but was forced to retreat.

On August 24<sup>th</sup>, the battalion was rotated. It was placed as a reserve in Pindusi a few kilometres behind the Pirunsaari sector and took part in the fortification of the area. On October 24<sup>th</sup>, in order to assume responsibility for the Poventsa sector, it marched to the front line again. It was the southernmost sector along the canal. The trenches led straight through the ruins of Poventsa – sometimes only 100 metres from the Russian lines. The dugouts and nests were mainly placed in cellars. Half of them were in collapsed buildings. The autumn was rainy and the water sometimes rose to knee-level in the trenches. Apart from some skirmishes and patrolling, battalion activity was restricted to guard duty and target shooting. It was rotated at the end of January and assumed responsibility for Salmijokikaista, the northern sector of the canal. In Poventsa, there had been attempts by 2–3 – man strong patrols to capture prisoners from the Russian side; they were sporadically carried out in Salmijoki, too, but without notable success. The only serious combat where this battalion got engaged during this time was fought on March 7<sup>th</sup> when - after heavy artillery preparations - the enemy attacked the base on the island of Boks in the darkness of night.

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, the battalion was finally rotated. It rested a few kilometres behind the front line where its task was to build another defence line. However, it left this resting place on April 14<sup>th</sup> and marched to Ristilampi, about 20 kilometres west, to complete the main defence line of the sector. Under the strict supervision of higher officials, the pace of work grew continually tighter and reached its climax in May when only the engineer battalion was able to exceed the achievements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.

When the Russians' major offensive on the Karelian Isthmus began, the battalion was put in a state of general alert, and on June 16<sup>th</sup> it left Ristilampi for the Ilomaselkä station where it was loaded on a train on June 21<sup>st</sup>. Five days later the battalion already made up a body of reserves in Ihantala on the Karelian Isthmus where it was sent to take part in the counteroffensive on June 28<sup>th</sup>. It fought incessantly the following week; it repelled one attack after another and lost three quarters of its men. However, after a rotation on July 4<sup>th</sup>, it left the positions that it had occupied. A few days of rest and ample reinforcements gave the battalion strength to the extent that it was able to assume responsibility of its old sector, which it held until August 9<sup>th</sup>. On that day, the battalion was transferred to a halt area, first to Kilpeenjoki and later to Virkinniemi.

On September 4<sup>th</sup>, the night after the cease-fire, the battalion was once again loaded on a train and transported to Kontiomäki where it was stationed at the demarcation line in German-held territory. When the armistice was signed on September 19<sup>th</sup>, the battalion marched towards the Germans, because they would not leave the country voluntarily. The battalion gave chase to the Germans who then retreated. However, the battalion was rotated already in Hyrynsalmi and relieved from its responsibilities as a leading force. Due to the destroyed roads and bridges, the battalion proceeded slowly and was never engaged in fire with

the Germans who retreated faster. After a short visit to Suomussalmi, it proceeded through Puolanka and Pudasjärvi to Rovaniemi where it crossed the river Kemijoki on October 16<sup>th</sup> and on to Sodankylä where it set up its tents on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. This would be its last camping site. One age group of reservists after the other was mustered out in the course of the following two weeks and on November 2<sup>nd</sup> the last reservists of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion fell out of the ranks of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. At the same time, the battalion ceased to exist.



## II COMPOSITION OF THE COMPANY

### 1 Organization

During the wars from 1941 to 1944 the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was made up of the headquarters and the headquarters company, three battalions, a gun company, a mortar company and a quartermaster unit. Each battalion consisted of a headquarters company and a logistic unit, three rifle companies, a machine gun company and a light mortar platoon.

According to the manual, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company consisted of the company commander, a command squad, three machine gun platoons, an anti-tank platoon and a supply and maintenance platoon. The composition of the company is shown in the following table:

	Officers	NCOs	Privates (Men)
Company commander	1	0	0
Command squad: Observation NCO, plotting and gas protection NCO, orderly NCO, two plotters, four plotting and gas protection men and four orderlies	0	3	10
Three machine gun platoons: Three platoon leaders, two half- platoon leaders, six orderlies and four machine guns (a leader, five men and a driver per gun)	3	18	78
Anti-tank platoon: Platoon leader, two orderlies, two drivers, four anti-tank guns (an anti-tank gun leader and nine anti-tank gun men per gun)	1	4	40
Supply and maintenance team ("töpinä"): Sergeant major, medical NCO, logistic NCO, staff sergeant, veterinary NCO, clerk, two medics, gunsmith, eighteen cartridge carriers, three cartridge vehicle drivers, shoemaker, one man for provisioning, two cooks and five supply and maintenance drivers	0	5	34
<b>TOTAL (197)<sup>30</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>162</b>

<sup>30</sup> Changes and amendments to the Infantry Manual 1 and Infantry Manual II, §§ 38, 49, 65, 69–.

Strictly speaking, the company commander should have been a captain. However, most of them were lieutenants. Platoon leaders were usually commissioned officers but the leaders were often older non-commissioned officers, too. In fact, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was for a long time led by an old sergeant-major, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon for a while by a corporal and the anti-tank platoon at different stages – altogether for half a year – by a sergeant. Due to the shortage of non-commissioned officers, the posts of half-platoon leaders were often not filled. Sometimes the company had to make do with one half-platoon leader. At times, one of the rifle leaders had to take up this post whilst leading his squad. There were also situations where the half-platoon leader did not have the military rank required by the task (i.e. sergeant, staff sergeant or sergeant-major). The rifle leaders were often corporals, but it was quite common that lance corporals (even men) served as leaders. From March 1943 until the end of the war, the staff sergeant took care of the sergeant major's duties in the company.

The strength of the company varied considerably over the years. The small pieces of information that I have been able to get hold of show that the number of men only seldom met the requirements of the manual. At the outbreak of the war, the company may have been 179-man strong<sup>31</sup>, but the initial strength varied from 179 to 185 men in November and December 1942 (the field strength from 123 to 152 men). The initial strength of the company was 177 men in July 1943 and varied from 146 to 203 men (the field strength being from 121 to 180 men) between April 15<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup> in 1944.<sup>32</sup> The latter figures, however, do not bring out the fact that the strength of the company was actually only 64 men during one week in July (4<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup>) 1944.

As will be shown, even the initial strength (*"kirjavahvuus"*) did not reach the level that was determined in the manual. There were two reasons for the even greater shortage in the field strength: about 10 % of the required initial strength was usually on leave and many of those who had been hospitalized remained in the company register.

The actual platoons would nearly always have been undermanned in these conditions if – in order to prevent this – the officers had not usually reduced the number of logistic personnel. The register from November 1943 shows how the officers tried first and foremost to maintain the size of the machine gun squads by replenishing them with parts of the anti-tank platoon and the logistic personnel. The strength of the company was divided as follows:

---

<sup>31</sup> List of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company's identification tags, June 1941. War Casualties Archives.

<sup>32</sup> The record of strength of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, War Archives 3390 and 9493.

**Table 1**

Platoon strengths in November 1943.

1 <sup>st</sup> Platoon	2 <sup>nd</sup> Platoon	3 <sup>rd</sup> Platoon	Anti-tank Platoon
1. 1+6	1. 1+8	1. 1+8	1. 1+5
2. 0+6	2. 1+6	2. 1+6	2. 1+3
3. 1+5	3. 1+7	3. 1+7	3. 1+4
4. 1+5	4. 1+7	4. 1+6	4. 1+6
3+22	4+28	4+27	4+18
1+1+1	1+2+1	1+2+1	1+1+1
1+4+23	1+6+29	1+6+28	1+5+19

Command squad and supply and maintenance: 1 + 5 + 25

The initial strength of the company: 5 + 26 + 124 = 155

The combat strength of the company: 5 + 24 + 102 = 131

This overall strength of 155 men, just like the number of men in the platoons, can be regarded as normal averages. The register from March 1944 gives the following numbers: command squad: 1 + 1 + 2, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon: 0 + 5 + 24, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon: 1 + 6 + 24, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon: 1 + 3 + 23, anti-tank platoon: 1 + 4 + 27 and supply and maintenance: 0 + 4 + 22. In other words, the overall combat strength was 125 men (4 + 20 + 101). As has been stated, the machine gun platoons were rather well manned whereas the anti-tank platoon and the supply and maintenance units were undermanned. Considering the fact that the anti-tank squads were extremely seldom used for their actual task, i.e. anti-tank attacks, and that machine-gun squads were more often engaged in action, the above-mentioned placing of forces seems suitable. Moreover, unlike machine gun squads, anti-tank guns were never placed at lonely posts. Therefore, anti-tank men did not have to be alone on guard at separate posts.

## 2 Composition According to the Home District of the Rank and File

Our army had applied the regional call-up system since the beginning of the 1930's. As a result, most of the regiments were provincially based. The 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was no exception in this regard. Were it given a provincial name, it would have been called the Lapland Regiment.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was also originally made up of men from the province of Lapland, i.e. from the Civil Guard Districts of North Finland and Länsi-Pohja.<sup>33</sup> 113 men, (63.1 % of the men in the company) came from North Finland and 20 men (11.2%) came from Länsi-Pohja. In all,

<sup>33</sup> See map supplements 2–5.

133 men came from these districts and amounted to 74.3 % of the overall strength of the company. Of the rest, 22 men (12.3 %) came from the Civil Guard District of Oulu and 24 men (13.4 %) from other districts.<sup>34</sup>

The regional system could not be put into practice even though the army command held on to it in principle. On different occasions, the company also received reinforcements from other than northern Civil Guard Districts. As a result, its Lapp nature was significantly weaker at the end of the war. However, the natives of Lapland gave the company a relatively strong stamp.

The company received fresh supplies of men from many different Civil Guard Districts during and after the bloody battles in late summer 1941. This also took place in February 1942. However, most of these men came from the Civil Guard Districts of Oulu and Raahe. Moreover, these batches were small and their relative share also diminished afterwards when some of the older men came back from hospitals. The company, which had shrunk quite a lot, received a rather big batch of recruits – mostly from the Civil Guard District of Raahe – in October 1942. At the beginning of 1943, there were only minor changes in the strength of the company.

Therefore, the following numbers from June 1943 can be regarded as representative of the composition of the company from October to November 1942. 56 men came (31.6%) from the Civil Guard District of North Finland and 11 men (6.2 %) from the Civil Guard District of Länsi-Pohja; in other words, 67 men (37.8 %) came from these districts. 61 men (34.5 %) came from the Civil Guard Districts of Oulu, Kajaani and Raahe and 49 men (27.7 %) from other districts.<sup>35</sup> As can be seen, men from Lapland still made up the biggest group. However, the combined share of men from other northern Civil Guard Districts (i.e. Oulu, Kainuu and Raahe) was almost as big. In all, men who came from the south were in the minority (27.7 %) and men from the north in the majority (72.3 %).

The company received additional reinforcements in October 1943. These men came mainly from the Civil Guard Districts of Saimaa, Savonlinna, Mikkeli and also from Civil Guard Districts in the province of Uusimaa. According to the company register from March 1944, 36.2 % of the men came from Lapland (40 men – i.e. 26.8 % – from the Civil Guard District of North Finland and 14 men – i.e. 9.4 % – from the Civil Guard District of Länsi-Pohja), 31.5 % (47 men) from the Civil Guard Districts of Oulu, Kainuu and Raahe and 32.3 % (48 men) from the south. In other words, two thirds of the company's men were still recruited from the five northern districts.

---

<sup>34</sup> List of the company's identification tags, War Casualties Archives.

<sup>35</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 263/1a/June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

The company lost its original Lapp nature only after the severe bloodletting in Ihantala in June 1944. The reinforcements that arrived in July and August were motley crowds in every respect. They also had the effect that the southern Civil Guard Districts began to dominate (87 men, i.e. 54.1 % of the total). The share of Lapland was 24.8 % (i.e. 40 men of whom 31 men, 19.2 %, came from the Civil Guard District of North Finland and 9 men, 5.6 %, from the District of Länsi-Pohja). Furthermore, the combined share of the Civil Guard Districts of Oulu, Kainuu and Raahe was 21.1 % (34 men).

If one adds up and examines the number of men who served in the company during the war, one can note that – of the total of 612 men who were registered – 326 men (53.3 %) had been born in some of the five northern Civil Guard Districts and that 286 men (46.7 %) had been born in the south. 172 men (28.1 %) came from the Civil Guard District of North Finland, 40 men (6.6 %) from the District of Länsi-Pohja and 114 men (18.6 %) from the Districts of Oulu, Kainuu and Raahe. The main part of the 286 men from southern Finland arrived only towards the end of the war - about a third of them during the last months of the war. Therefore, one may claim that the company should be regarded as a northern, though not Lapp, unit.

Quite a lot of men came from other northern districts even though most of the reinforcements came from the south. In all, the company was replenished with 433 men. 79 of them, i.e. 18.3 % of the total, were from Lapland (59 men, 13.6 %, from the District of North Finland and 20 men, 4.7 %, from the District of Länsi-Pohja). 91 men (21.0 %) came from the Districts of Oulu, Kainuu and Raahe, and 263 men (60.7 %) were from the south.

A closer examination reveals that the township of Rovaniemi and the parish of Rovaniemi contributed the biggest lots of men – 52 and 27 respectively – to the original rank and file of the company (179 men). In other words, their combined share was bigger than the total number of men who came from the south. Kemijärvi was second with 19 men and Ali-Tornio came third with 11 men. However, only a small number of the fresh supplies of men came from Rovaniemi. In this regard, the biggest batch – 32 men in all – came from Kemijärvi. All in all, Rovaniemi and Kemijärvi contributed the biggest shares: 58 and 51 men respectively and, combined, 17.8 % of the total wartime strength that served in the company.

If the representation of rural and urban populations in the company is examined, one can note that 64 were townsmen and 38 men came from townships. In other words, 102 men (16.6 %) came from population centres. The biggest number of them (28) came from Rovaniemi, and Helsinki came next with 14 men. There were six men from each of the following towns: Oulu, Turku and Rovaniemi and five men from each of the following towns: Raahe, Tampere and Viipuri. Three men came both from Kemi and Joensuu and two men were from each of the following population centers: Jyväskylä, Käkisalmi, Lieksa and Hyvinkää. In

addition, one man came from each of the following centers: Kotka, Lappeenranta, Lahti, Hämeenlinna, Kajaani, Tornio, Rauma, Kuusankoski, Riihimäki, Toijala, Joensuu, Karjaa and Pitkäranta.

So, five sevenths of all the men who served in the company during the war came from the countryside. In comparison, four fifths (78.8 %) of its original composition was from the country. Just like the regiment, the company was for the most part made up of men from the countryside.

The company command did not try to build uniform platoons according to their home area. The division of men in the company was purely random. In addition, the fact that the proportional share of men who came from Civil Guard Districts was approximately the same both in the platoons and in the company as a whole can be seen from the following table (March 1944):

**Table 2**

Composition of the platoons according to the men's home area (Civil Guard District)

Distr. of	1 <sup>st</sup> Platoon	2 <sup>nd</sup> Platoon	3 <sup>rd</sup> Platoon	Anti-tank Platoon	Command and supply & maintenance	Company total
North Finland	11	10	6	7	6	40
Länsi-Pohja	1 12=42.8%	2 12=38.7%	6 12=38.7%	2 9=28.1 %	3 9=33.3 %	14 54=36.2%
Oulu	1	3	2	5	5	16
Raahe	2	6	4	8	3	23
Kainuu	1 4=14.2%	1 10=32.2%	3 9=29.0%	2 15=46.9%	1 9=33.3%	8 47=31.5%
Northern Finland	16=57.0%	22=70.9%	21=67.7%	24=75.0%	18=66.7%	101=67.7%
Southern Finland	12=43.0%	9=29.1%	10=32.3%	8=25.0%	9=33.3%	48=32.3%
	28=100.0%	31=100.0%	31=100.0%	32=100.0%	27=100.0%	149=100.0%

As can be seen, the different home districts were rather evenly represented in the platoons. According to the registered strength of the company, the proportion of the districts was still the same in August 1944. However, there was one exception: the amount of southern men was significantly higher in the anti-tank platoon that had sustained relatively small losses.

### 3 Composition According to the Age of the Rank and File

At the beginning of the war, the company was a standing unit made up of conscripts. They were youngsters who had been born in 1920. The reservists who arrived in June 1941 represented a totally different age class. Therefore, as regards the men's age, the uniformity of the company was broken right at the beginning of the war. In a company that went to the battlefield, the oldest man had been born in 1896 and the youngest one in 1921. The men were divided into different age groups according to the following table:

**Table 3**

Composition of the company according to the men's year of birth in June 1941

Born in 1896–1899	14 men
Born in 1900–1904	10 men
Born in 1905–1909	11 men
Born in 1910–1914	18 men
Born in 1915–1919	56 men
Born in 1920–1921	70 men
<hr/>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	179 men

The reinforcements that arrived during the summer and fall of 1941 were a heterogeneous group of men, not only based on their home district but also on their age. Therefore, the regiment was rotated in February by putting the older men into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion while those who had been born before 1912–32 men in all – were transferred. The company received a fresh supply of 28 men who had been born in 1912–1921. This process of rejuvenation continued in October 1942 when the company was strengthened with 45 men from the 1923 age group. In addition, altogether 30 men, some from the 1923 age group and others from the 1924 class, arrived in several lots during 1943.

**Table 4**

Composition of the company according to the men's year of birth

March 1944		August 1944	
1912–1914	7 men	1904–1914	72 men
1915–1919	40 men	1915–1919	25 men
1920–1924	102 men	1920–1924	54 men
<hr/>		<hr/>	
149 men		151 men	

If, as presented above, all the men who served in the company are put in order based on their age group, the following table is obtained:

**Table 5**

Total number of men according to their year of birth

Born before 1900	14 men	2.2%
Born in 1900–1904	16 men	2.6%
Born in 1905–1909	35 men	5.7%
Born in 1910–1914	48 men	7.9%
Born in 1915–1919	126 men	20.6%
Born in 1920–1924	221 men	36.1%
	460 men	75.1%
Year of birth unknown	152 men	24.9%
	612 men	100.0%

As I mentioned in the introduction, it has been impossible to get perfect information about all the men. Therefore, 152 men about whose age I cannot give exact information have been placed in the table. Some of them were put in and disappeared from the company register in summer 1941, and others were registered during and after the battles in Ihantala. At least one third of these 152 men belonged most likely to the 1900–1904 and 1905–1909 age groups, because they arrived in July-August 1944.

The only principle that the officers followed in assigning the men to the platoons was that older and weaker men were placed in the supply and maintenance unit. This fact, like the rather strong similarity of the platoons, appears from the following table (March 1944):

**Table 6**

Composition of the platoons according to the men's year of birth

	1 <sup>st</sup> Platoon	2 <sup>nd</sup> Platoon	3 <sup>rd</sup> Platoon
1910–1914	4	1	-
1915–1919	6	8	10
1920–1924	18	22	21
	28	31	31
	Anti-tank Platoon	Command and	Company total
			Supply & Maintenance
1910–1914	-	3	8
1915–1919	5	11	40
1920–1924	27	13	101
	32	27	149

In supply and maintenance, only half the men were from the 1920–1924 age group whereas the proportion of this group varied from 64.8 % to 84.4 % in other platoons.



## 4 Term of Service of the Rank and File in the Company

The above numbers have indicated that the composition of the company varied considerably during these years. Therefore, it may be interesting to study how long the men served in the ranks of the company and why they had to leave it.

When the company marched to the border, it was – as has been stated before – 179-man strong. In addition 122 men were registered in 1941, 134 men in 1942, 44 men in 1943 and 129 men in 1944. At different times – that I have been unable to determine – another four men were included in its ranks.

As might be expected, those who served a year or less – 377 men in all (62.0 %) – made up the majority of the company. About a quarter of them arrived in summer 1941 and about a third during the summer and fall of 1941 when the company sustained big losses. A total of 61 such men who only stayed for a year arrived during the peaceful years of 1942 and 1943. If their term of service is studied more closely, one can notice the following: those who arrived in 1942 served approximately 5.45 months and those who entered service in 1943 served an average of eight months. On the contrary, those who arrived in 1941 served on the average only 3.70 months.

Thus, about two fifths of the men served in the ranks of the company for more than one year: 12.8% served 13 – 24 months, 12.3% served 25 – 36 months and 8.5% served 37 – 41 months. The following table gives a more detailed picture of the terms of service in the company:

**Table 7**

Total number of men according to their term of service

Term of service	Year of arrival				1941-1944	%
	1941	1942	1943	1944		
Months						
0-12	187	33	28	129	377	62.0
13-24	24	38	16	-	78	12.8
25-36	21	54	-	-	75	12.3
37-41	52	-	-	-	52	8.5
Unknown	17	9	-	-	26	4.4
	301	134	44	129	608	100.0

Less than a fourth of those who arrived in 1941 and at the beginning of 1942 were left when the company moved on to the Karelian Isthmus. About 76 veterans made up half of the company strength. Over the years, these men had formed the core of the company. One after the other of those men who had spent the winter in Lohilahti had disappeared and been replaced by a bunch of younger men. Then, devastating mortar fire in Ihantala wiped out half of the remaining veterans

from the register in just a few days. Only 38 of them were left in August 1944. When the war ended, their number had increased to 44, because some men had returned to the company from hospitals.

The company had to endure fierce battles during the first phase of its history, which lasted until November 1941. This phase was characterized by big changes in its composition. The second phase, which lasted until the battle in Ihantala, was peaceful. Many of those who had survived the fierceness of the first phase disappeared gradually, and many vanished during the third phase in Ihantala. Only a small part of those who had seen the swamps in Kiestinki marched along when the company moved north to chase the Germans.

## 5 Company Losses

As has already been mentioned, the company went through two phases – July–September 1941 and July 1944 – when it sustained heavy losses from enemy fire. However, they made up only about half of all the losses that the enemy inflicted on the company. For their part, the losses in July 1944 do not even represent half of all the losses that the company had to sustain.

The number of soldiers killed in action was highest in 1941, over twice as many as in 1944. Percentage-wise, these figures were not much higher: in 1941, they made up 15,6 % and in 1944 9,3 % of the normal combat strength. In 1942–1943, the average fatality rate was 3,5 %, but it does not have the same significance as the figures of 1941 and 1944. In 1942–1943, there were casualties throughout the year whereas in 1941 and 1944 most of the soldiers fell during a short period: during two months in 1941 and in a little more than a week in 1944.

**Table 8**

Company losses. Total number of casualties in 1941–1944

Year	Fallen	Wounded	Missing	Sick	Total
1941	37	127	11	26	201
1942	5	15	3	73	96
1943	8	20	2	41	71
1944	16	79	6	34	135
1941–1944	66	241	22	174	503

Year	Returned	Net losses
1941	80	121
1942	77	19
1943	54	17
1944	79	56
1941–1944	290	213

When we start to examine the numbers of wounded, sick and missing men, we can see that a large number of them returned to the company in time. So, only 39.4 % of all the wounded and only 21.3 % of the sick men were removed from the company register. 31.8 % of those who had been reported missing returned to the company in the course of time.

The following table gives a picture of the relative losses of the company. It shows that the number of wounded men who were removed from the company register was significantly bigger than the corresponding number of sick men. One reason for this might have been the fact that the cases of sickness were for the most part fairly slight, colds or abdominal illnesses, that could be cured in a rather short period of time in a nearby field hospital.

**Table 9**

Company losses. Removed from the register in 1941–1944

Year	Fallen Men %	Wounded Men %	Missing Men %	Sick Men %	Total Men %
1941	37/100.0	57/44.8	6/54.5	3/11.3	103/51.2
1942	5/100.0	11/73.3	2/66.6	10/13.7	28/29.1
1943	8/100.0	5/25.0	2/100.0	8/19.5	23/32.3
1944	16/100.0	22/27.8	5/83.3	16/47.1	59/43.7
1941–44	66/100.0	95/39.4	15/68.2	37/21.3	213/42.3

The percentage of wounded men who were removed from the register in 1941–42 was significantly higher than the overall average and corresponding number in 1943–44. However, this does not mean that those who were wounded at the beginning of the war would have been more seriously injured than those who were wounded at the end of the war. Instead, it shows that the authorities consistently started to send recovered men to their former units. Those who fell sick during the very last months of the war did not return to the company any more; instead, they were sent home from the hospitals. This was probably reflected in the large number of sick men who were removed from the register in 1944.

If the number of disabled men who were removed from the register is compared with the number of transferred men, we can see that almost half of those men who were removed from the register – 182 in all (46.5 %) – were healthy when they left the company. The number rises to 361 (63.3 %) if the 186 men who were demobilized at the end of the war are also included. The following table provides more detailed information about this matter:

**Table 10**

Removed from the company register in 1941–1944

Year	Injured			
	Fallen Men %	Wounded Men %	Missing Men %	Sick Men %
1941	37/29.4	57/45.5	6/4.8	3/2.4
1942	5/15.5	11/12.1	2/2.2	10/11.0
1943	8/18.2	5/11.4	2/4.5	8/18.2
1944	16/11.9	22/16.4	5/3.7	16/11.9
	66/16.7	95/24.1	15/3.8	37/9.4
		Unhurt Men %		Total Men %
1941		23/18.2		126/100.0
1942		63/69.2		91/100.0
1943		21/47.7		44/100.0
1944		75/56.0		134/100.0
		182/46.0		395/100.0

We can see that more than half of the men who were removed from the register in 1942 and 1944 were transferred elsewhere and that most of those who were removed due to their disability were wounded. In addition, the table shows that the number of fallen men is significantly larger than the number of men who were removed due to sickness.

The turnover in the company, as can be seen, was fairly high: over 600 men. In other words, more than three times the strength of the company was involved in it over the years. Nearly two thirds of these men were killed, wounded or taken prisoner or they suffered from illnesses. However, even though the casualty rate in the company was high, it could not compete with the losses that the rifle companies of the battalion had to sustain. The turnover in these units was much higher than in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company.

## **6 Composition According to the Men's Profession and Marital Status**

The material that has been at my disposal contains very little information about the men's civilian occupations – so little that it was not worth the effort to compile them into a table. However, I mentioned at one point that only about a sixth of the men in the company came from population centres. One can draw the conclusion that most of the men got their civilian income from farming or from related occupations. I also mentioned that most of the men came from northern

Finland where there is a lot of forestry along with farming. Or rather – if one wants to say so – there is farming in addition to forestry. Therefore, I can probably claim that most of the men from Lapland were originally lumberjacks.

The bulk of townspeople who served in the company were different kinds of workmen, craftsmen, factory workers, drivers or miners. There were only some students, office employees or sales clerks.

Only a small group had more than elementary education and eight men, five of them officers, had passed the matriculation exam.

Information about the men's marital status is just as incomplete, so I cannot present any figures. As an estimate, however, it can be claimed that most of the original men of the company were unmarried. This also applies to those men who arrived in 1941–43. Many of them got married during the war, and most of those who arrived in summer 1944 were probably already married.

### III COMPANY'S LINES OF ACTION (CASE STUDIES)

#### 1 March

*March to breakthrough battles, October 28<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> 1941*

On October 28<sup>th</sup> 1941, when the company was in Sintosenlahti, a message came that it would be disengaged the following morning at 5 AM. Rumors about its disengagement had started to circulate already a week before this message. The rumor that was regarded as the most reliable brought the information that “the pastor had said that the battalion would move to rest behind the lines”.

At that time, the fighting elements (1 officer, 4 non-commissioned officers and 21 men) of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon were living in a recently completed dugout. The drivers of the platoon billeted in the battalion's command post. With the exception of the men and the drivers of the fourth machine gun, the platoon's men were newcomers in the company; they had arrived as fresh supplies at the end of September. However, almost all of them had experience in winter-warfare.

The bulk of the night was spent in making preparations: packing all those little things that added to the men's comfort and brought them pleasure. Amongst the things that the men had had time to acquire during the months they spent in Sintosenlahti were the following: a small paraffin lamp that was kept above the sleeping bench, sacks and cardboard that were used as mattresses, birch-bark pouches and shoes etc.

The men started to carry cartridge bags from the machine gun nests at four o'clock in the morning and the iron stove was taken apart and laid down on the snow for cooling a few minutes before five o'clock. Both horses of the platoon were tied up during these preparations. However, the detachment did not commence immediately; dawn was already breaking when machine guns were carried from their posts and packed on the sleighs. There was enough room for the men's equipment, because the platoon did not have much ammunition. The packing, however, took place only after a little wrangling.

The horse of the second half-platoon was a nag that would not have had the strength to pull all the equipment of the first half-platoon. In addition, the driver of the first half-platoon was not willing to take care of the second half-platoon's things. Only after a long negotiation – in which the bilious soldier 202 was very much involved in – could the platoon get moving. The men had a short break without the platoon leader's permission after they had marched a few kilometers on a slippery road. The company commander reprimanded the platoon when it

arrived a little late at the company command post. However, this was not the case with those men who dispersed to greet men of the other platoons.

After a short stop the company continued its march, this time in a column and at a brisk speed. After a few hours the company had reached the billeting area of the supply and maintenance unit in Kiestinki where the men dispersed after lunch to look for the canteen and to meet men of the other companies. The march continued in extended formation after a few hours of rest. The men moved in pairs or in small groups; the platoons did not even try to stay away from each other.

The entire detachment looked more like a wandering group of gypsies: the sleds were full of weapons, equipment, sacks and tents. The central pole of the tent stuck out of one sled and a lantern swayed at its head. The Germans who had billeted by the road looked in astonishment at this caravan that formed a striking contrast to their disciplined columns of cars.

About an hour before sunset the company stopped and put up its tents like the rest of the battalion. The company had been in high spirits throughout the march. However, the spirits fell a little, because the tents were in a bad condition and the weather was cold in the evening. The tent of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was in a particularly bad condition: it was ragged and burnt by sparks. It was crowded, too, and some of the men looked for a better sleeping place elsewhere. Two NCOs asked for a place in the field telephone men's tent. After a little persuasion, they were allowed to lie down at the door. However, this was on the condition that they would do their fireguard duty.

In addition, the battalion was ordered to attend service in the dusk of the evening. After the sermon the commander gave a short speech in which he gave the men encouragement for the upcoming battle. After that the priest of the battalion administered Holy Communion to those who wanted to go to confession.

The logistic NCO served out "life insurances" (*henkivakuutusia*), i.e. hand grenades, to the willing in the morning after the departure. The demand was not great, because nobody cared to carry grenades. The NCO had difficulty in getting enough men to help him in putting primers to the grenades, because the men preferred to make coffee, play cards and meet their companions. At that moment, it was not hard to guess where the company was heading. In addition, all signs suggested that anything but trench warfare was to be expected. The men had heard that two other battalions of the regiment had arrived from Salla and that the division had received more artillery. They had on their way been infected by a slightly nervous and loud behavior so that on that day – even less than on the previous day – one could not talk about formal march discipline.

The men wandered – alone and in small groups – along a snowy forest path. In the hope of being entertained, the men dropped into Finnish and German billeting

areas that lay along the path. A few men stopped and brought themselves to ask for soup at a field kitchen of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment. Some other men begged for military bread and tobacco from the Germans or tried to buy rum from them. Sergeant 487 dropped into the regiment's supply store where he managed to get himself a fur coat. Alone or in pairs, the men made trips to get supplies and willingly shared them with others if they had obtained more than they needed for themselves.

The company arrived at the planned camping site a few hours before dark. The platoons put up their tents and the men squabbled over the axes to cut spruce twigs for their bunks or dead trees for making coffee. The drivers cursed that the men had spread out too much in the tents while they had been taking care of the horses. The men squeezed up and made room for the drivers beside the door only after views had been exchanged about the horsemen and those at the front line.

In order to get fresh supplies and to check its equipment, the battalion stayed in the same position throughout the following day. One half-platoon leader of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, sergeant 487, tried but did not manage to get a new tent for his platoon. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon needed a new tent, too. Its leader, staff sergeant 343, and the rest of the platoon had served longer in the company. Therefore, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was given the only new tent that had been received from the regiment.

Handguns were inspected and machine guns cleaned carefully. Tyres were removed from the gun carriages, cartridge belts were refilled and winter uniforms were distributed to the men. Rifle-leaders squabbled over the spare parts and cooling liquids in the cartridge center whereas their men made coffee, played cards or scouted nearby German billeting areas. The leader of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon came from the battalion command post after dinner and gave the order to begin the attack at 4 AM the following morning. However, this did not prevent the platoon from having a drinking bout before their departure: they drank the rum they had gotten in exchange for the fur coat.

### *March from Röhö to Hyrynsalmi, September 24<sup>th</sup> - October 13<sup>th</sup> 1942*

The battalion received an order to prepare for a long march in the middle of September in 1942. At that time, it was stationed in Röhö. Among other things, the men were ordered to provide thorough foot care for themselves. However, this measure was totally ignored. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, pickets were finished and the men gathered at the company command post. The squads arrived one after the other and began to load their vehicles. The company now had a full number of horses, four per platoon, and there was a lot of room in the carriages. Nevertheless, the drivers were unwilling to take the men's private things: elk and reindeer hides, bundles and sacks.



The regiment commander had given orders that strict discipline should be enforced during the march. Therefore, every man had to carry all his equipment: rifle, backpack, field bag, gas mask and steel helmet. In order to reduce the weight, the men emptied their backpacks and packed their things in cardboard boxes and sacks in the hope of having these things drawn in the carriages. So, the men of the first machine gun of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon had packed all their blankets and overcoats in a common sack that was rolled tightly inside the tent. Some drivers were so unwilling to take this excess load on their carriages that the entire crew of the machine gun once more had to be reminded of their responsibilities “towards those who would have to walk and would not have the opportunity to be drawn on the carriages like some other men”.

Most drivers, however, kindly loaded their companions' things and faithfully kept watch on them throughout the journey. It was not, however, worth the effort to ask drivers of some other platoon or supply and maintenance unit to carry their personal things. In order to reduce the load, all sorts of spare equipment - such as spare boots, underwear and overcoats - were left out and given to the staff sergeant who very unwillingly received this unexpected supply of articles. In fact, he who had tried to return all excess material of his store to the battalion store, which in turn had also tried to get rid of it and turn in as much equipment as possible.

When the battalion began to move, the commander made it known that he would not accept any breach of discipline during the march and ordered the officers to see to it that there was not any undisciplined behavior. The company started out by platoons in a marching column. The point patrol was in front, because enemy patrol operations were to be expected. To the annoyance of the company commander, the signalmen only seldom kept their distance. For the most part, they moved together or joined the point patrol.

In order to maintain discipline more efficiently, one half-platoon leader stayed at the end of the platoon. However, he was unable and seldom even cared to prevent the men from hiding their gas masks or their field bags in carriages or from changing places with drivers. The drivers had received strict orders to carry their rifles on their backs and walk beside the carriages, but most of them put their rifles in the carriage and rode on the load.

The battalion stopped once an hour for ten minutes and at lunchtime it had an hour's rest for eating. Usually, hot porridge was not considered sufficient nourishment. Therefore, most men made themselves coffee during the break. Two or three men formed a cooking team and several teams gathered around the same fire. In order to have enough time for eating and cooking, one had to make it to the front of the food queue. As a result, the men rushed to the field kitchen when they heard the command for a lunch break. Team members usually brought hot porridge to the man who had gone out to fetch water and light a fire for making coffee. Those who boiled the water had to keep a constant watch over the pots in the field kitchen, because the men willingly took washing water from them.

The march continued after the lunch break until about 4 PM when the battalion billeted. Each platoon had two tents that were put up fast in an experienced manner. The men of the different tents had a traditional sleeping order. For example, corporal 206 and soldier 461 slept next to each other, because they shared an elk skin that served as their mattress. In a similar manner, soldiers 518 and 307, who were members of the same cooking team, always slept next to each other.

A field latrine had to be dug after the tents had been put up, spruce firs spread and the tent stoves heated. Based on the given orders, each company had to have at least two latrines. This small task was rotated from one platoon to another and was always performed very reluctantly. The platoons took very close care of the digging order. Therefore, it was very difficult to shirk responsibility in this case. This job was also rotated in the platoons, i.e. from one half-platoon to the other, and – at least in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon - the half-platoon in turn tried to shun the job by pleading other tasks that it had just performed. When the half-platoon eventually gave in, its leader usually had difficulty in getting the men to work: one man had a sore, another one had just been on guard, a third had to write a letter and for some any kind of work was revolting.

The kitchen orderly started to serve out haversack rations to the platoons after the supply and maintenance unit had gotten its tent in order. The serving out of the rations - which was always very interesting - began in the tents after the platoon representatives had fetched them. Usually this was performed by one of the half-platoon leaders. His performance was followed very closely so that no injustice would take place. After that it was time for the men to run and stand in line for food, wait for mail or be on camp guard.

On the following day, the wakeup call was given a few hours before departure (8 AM). However, many men did not get up and procrastinated so long that they got busy with making coffee. The tents were taken down at the last minute and the fact that the latrines were not filled was put down to the hurry.

After a few days of marching, the battalion began daily to send a squad of three men (1 NCO and two men from the rank and file) from each company to look in advance for a proper billeting area. Their task was to find a place for the tents, chop wood and twigs – and dig the field latrines. The men who were chosen for this scouting task usually had some kind of a sore. It also happened that totally healthy men flattered the NCO in charge of the patrol and thereby succeeded in getting a ride. The task that the squad performed did not always meet the expectations. The NCO whom the battalion had chosen as the patrol leader sometimes reserved the best pitches for his own company and allotted the rather miserable “lots” to the others. Sometimes the patrolmen only thought of the comfort of their own platoon and chopped only some wood and twigs for the

other platoons of their company. Now and then, they did not dig the field latrines at all.

Throughout the march, home leaves were granted to the same extent as in normal circumstances. As a consequence, the platoon strengths varied too. The men took advantage of the situation by counting the men on leave, i.e. “the black men”, in the morning report when they fetched their haversack rations from the kitchen orderly. So the men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon kept on fetching some extra portions of food.

The father of this idea was the leader of the first half-platoon, sergeant 392, who wisely did not reveal his plot to the second half-platoon. Therefore, the first half-platoon got a few extra cubes of sugar and somewhat bigger butter pats every day. Only in Hyrynsalmi did the leader of the second half-platoon, corporal 404, realize how things were and demand that the extras be evenly shared. One could not say that the actions of the first half-platoon would have aroused any anger – possibly with the exception of corporal 404. Everyone had received his ration and only the state had lost.

On September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, the battalion rested in Vuonninen. In order to “improve discipline”, a few hours of drill was ordered to the battalion on both days. Discontent was widespread and the duty officer of the company – sergeant 289 who was a rather slow man and did not have much authority – had to work for almost three hours before he could get the company organized. In order to speed up the formation, the company commander – lieutenant 257 – had to go through all the tents and order the men out. The drill was carried out in a particularly slack manner after that: the NCOs were as dissatisfied as the men and demanded neither precision nor speed.

There was also another reason for doing the exercise in such a reluctant manner. Every man wanted to get as good a coat as possible. As a result, most men of the company swarmed around the staff sergeant’s carriage. He had received an order to distribute the coats only after the drill. The men, however, would not lose sight of the coats, because they did not want the cooks, the clerk or those on camp guard to disappear with the few good coats. After the drill, all the men rushed to the supply store where they tore, pulled and tried on the coats in such a manner that the staff sergeant had to give up his plans about organized distribution of the coats.

A few days later the men procrastinated again. The company commander tried to make the men sing during the march, because lively and rhythmical singing would be a manifestation of the company’s good condition and strict discipline. The roads were in very poor condition, because it was raining, and the men considered such an additional effort completely unnecessary. As a result, their singing was of rather poor quality. Approximately half the company sang the first five or six beats

and after that most men fell silent. The few high-pitched voices that pitifully and loneliness continued the singing formed a sharp contrast to the brisk words of the song and were drowned out by the company's laughter. The commander ordered the men to sing another song but the outcome was just as poor. He, however, did not give up and ordered the men in the evening to a singing exercise after they had put up the tents. Lieutenant 350, a rather unmusical man, commanded the exercise.

In order to get some sound out of the company, the lieutenant ordered the men to sing a particularly indecent song called "The Girls of Korhola" (*"Korholan Tytöt"*) after he had – without much result – made the company repeat some of the officially approved marching songs. When it was time for the indecent part of the song, the practice had to be stopped because neither the lieutenant nor the men could hold back their laughter. After that incident, the company commander did not try to make the men sing any more.

After having left Eastern Karelia, the battalion was transferred back to Finnish logistics from German provisioning under which it had been since July 1941. The difference was striking both as to quantity and to quality – especially at the beginning – and the men could feel it all too well in their bellies. Many men had tried to talk the kitchen orderly into serving out more potatoes, but he did not have the courage to give a single one from his limited supplies. Nevertheless, some men boiled potatoes in the evening but questions about how they had gotten hold of so much of this wanted produce were not presented. In addition, nobody would beg others for a share. At the most, those who had succeeded in getting potatoes shared them with their own cooking team.

There were many means of getting potatoes, the most elegant of which was probably the following: at the same time as the kitchen orderly was weighing haversack rations, the man in front of the line would carefully cut a hole in the sack, pick potatoes for himself and keep up a conversation with the confused orderly.

#### *March from Kajaani to Sodankylä, September 8<sup>th</sup> – October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1944*

The march from Röhö can be compared with the march the company made from Kajaani to Sodankylä some three years later after the armistice. If one only looks at formal discipline, the company's march from Röhö was probably its best performance. The form of a marching column was retained throughout the journey and only a few men tried to sneak into the passing lorries. In addition, there was no more drinking or looting. In comparison, the march from Kajaani to Sodankylä looked more like a looting expedition.

On September 8<sup>th</sup> 1944, the battalion arrived in Kajaani and the sellers of illegal alcohol came immediately to the troop carriages after the train had stopped. The

fact that the men had not had any alcohol on the Karelian Isthmus was obviously not the only reason for buying all the available liquor at the station.

The men started having fun before they unloaded the carriages. In particular, the men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon were quite drunk when the company organized for departure in the dark of the night. The officers succeeded only partly in keeping the company in marching form – least of all the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. The drunken men were boisterous and wandered along the road like a chaotic crowd. The platoon leader, sergeant major 40 who never said no to a drop, was so drunk an hour after the departure that he could not walk any more. His attempt to continue the journey with the company sergeant major's bicycle – someone had stolen it from the gunsmith – ended up in a ditch. As a result, the men threw the sergeant major on the platoon's supply and maintenance vehicle and tied him up. After a while, they had to do the same thing to a few other men who had drunk too much.

Regardless of the apparent lack of discipline, the company arrived together in Kontiomäki where it had to wait for the outcome of the armistice talks.

After two weeks of rest, the advance to contact with the Germans began on September 19<sup>th</sup>. The march was carried out through sparsely populated areas that had been evacuated in great haste a few weeks before. There was very little looting; partly because of the tight control, partly because of the limited number of targets and partly because nobody really wanted to steal from his fellow countrymen. One has to remember that many men in the company came from this area.

Looting became common only after the men came across German stores. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, the battalion arrived in the outskirts of Rovaniemi. The Germans had already retreated across the river, but they still held the centre of the market town. The battalion had to wait for pontoons in an area situated a few kilometres south of Viirinkangas. Sergeant 38 and some of his men took off for a private scouting mission right after the tents had been put up. They headed for the Germans' warehouse barracks that were still burning in Pulli. The men were shot at and they had to give up their attempt. The sergeant and corporal 461 got a few scratches that, however, did not keep them from trying again after dark.

In addition, they were not the only ones to try. Men arrived on foot, on bike and even on horseback from the entire regiment to pick up meat cans, loaves of bread and marmalade jars. The smell of burnt flesh hovered above the area. Hundreds of men stained with sooty and melting grease roamed into the German warehouses that were still burning and tried to hoard as many meat cans as they could carry. The blaze of fire from the burning market town across the river lit up the sky and the Germans started to shoot at the daredevils with four inch guns at the climax of the looting. However, their fire was so poorly directed that none of the Finns cared to stop the looting too soon. This being the case, the looting continued throughout the night. In the morning, the regimental supply officer posted a guard at the nearly empty ruins.

During the following night, the battalion moved on foot a few kilometres up the river to the foot of the Ounasvaara hill and stopped to wait for river crossing. There was a big barrack full of German commission breads right next to their campsite, but the jaegers of General Lagus had already taken over this warehouse. However, the guards could not stand the remarks and angry looks of the men of the numerous companies. Consequently, the men who had been hanging around the barrack for many hours could eventually walk away with loaves of bread that were piled up on their arms like firewood.

The horses began to get tired after a few days of marching to the north. The logistic NCO had to distribute cartridges from the store in such a manner that the strongest horses would get the heaviest loads. The drivers who drove the strongest horses were astonished, and it was almost impossible to make them haul the cartridges of the other platoons.

The loads had to be transferred every morning and day after day it became more difficult to distribute the cartridges. The drivers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon explained in Aska that their horses would not endure any longer and that they would leave the cartridges at the roadside if someone else did not haul them. After a long negotiation, the logistic NCO was permitted to inspect the carriages of each platoon. So it happened that after the inspection the horses were suddenly strong enough to pull the cartridges too.

Not all men had gone in for looting. Instead, many were satisfied with buying meat cans from those who had gotten possession of batches of cans. Some of the more enterprising men of the company had made several trips to a store in Rovaniemi and had collected as many as 70-75 cans for further sale. The price of canned meat went up when the stocks dwindled: at first you could get a can for 50 marks but a week later you would have to pay at least 100 marks.

The cooking teams usually shared a store even though these cans were private property most of the time. For example, the staff sergeant, the clerk and the office driver had acquired 50 cans on horseback. Little by little, they ate them in front of the office tent. In Ounasvaara, the stocks were filled with a huge joint of beef (“myskihärkä”) that the staff sergeant had found. As presented above, the transportation problem was solved so that the drivers of each squad vehicle would transport the cans.

The men made similar trips even when the company was on the move. When they found a promising place, they fell behind and searched it thoroughly. There was enough traffic so that one could always be certain about getting a lift and catching up with the company. Similar journeys, though on a much larger scale, were made to the defense lines the Germans had abandoned in Portimosalmi and in Saarenkylä and to the big liquor warehouse in Vika.

Also those men who did not go in for looting (because of mines there was always a certain risk) took advantage of the possibility to get a lift in a passing lorry. Every morning the battalion sent a billeting recce detachment to put up signs for a suitable area. Therefore, it was not difficult to know where the battalion would spend the following night. Sometimes even a third of the company strength would disappear during the march. Those who had fallen out of the lines would reappear in the billeting area and grin at the rest of the company when it arrived there.

Both hitchhiking and looting were regarded as personal matters: disapproval was neither shown nor expressed. The men talked almost admiringly about soldier 401's skills in getting a lift. During this time, he had barely walked any kilometres. Whenever opportunity presented itself, the men would ride on the vehicles of the supply and maintenance unit; this happened quite often, because the drivers walked willingly to keep themselves warm. Nobody carried his backpack and only a few carried their rifles or field bags.

Sometimes the officers tried to keep the men in a column, but in general the control was quite weak. Those who were present would almost march in a column – but in random groups without much rhythm, alignment or distance of paces.

## 2 Battle

### *Breakthrough battles in November 1941*

In the first phases of the Continuation War, on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1941, when the battalion set out for the attack after a short rest, its mission was to advance as a reserve for the regiment. The 6<sup>th</sup> Company and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company were commanded to serve as a reserve for the battalion. According to the regiment's attack plan, the mission of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was to break through the Russian lines and roll them up to the right and to the left. The mission of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was to follow and advance through the forest to the Kiestinki-Louhi highway and to prevent the possible Russian reserves from assisting those troops that the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and the other units of the division had already encircled.

The tents were taken down at 3 AM and the battalion organized for departure. The spirits were high and were further raised by the booming of the Finnish artillery. Until then, the artillery had been small in number in the direction of Kiestinki, but it was strengthened for this attack. Therefore, the booming of the artillery – which in itself was not noteworthy – aroused general admiration. As they waited for the progress of the troops, the men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company wandered in small groups around the sleighs of the supply and maintenance units. The sleighs had been ridden to a pass where the men made coffee and warmed themselves



with big fires. The wounded began to flow back – either on foot or in Lapp's sledges – and attracted as little attention as the shells that the enemy was scattering in the area. A lost German orderly aroused much more interest.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Company, the 5<sup>th</sup> Company and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Machine Gun Platoons that had been attached to them began their advance to contact right after 6 AM. A few men were missing when the 6<sup>th</sup> Company and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company were alerted after a little while. They had either gone to sleep in a dugout or to play cards with the drivers of the supply and maintenance units. However, the rest of the platoon was gathered together quickly and it proceeded to help the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Companies whose attack had been halted by the Russians' counterattack.

Four men of the other half-platoon were wounded in a minefield. The medic looked after the leader of the third machine gun who was the most seriously wounded, and soldier 425 helped the others to retreat. The half-platoon had almost been reduced to half its size in a few minutes. Under these circumstances, the leader of the fourth machine gun gathered up the rest of the men in one squad and abandoned the gun of the third squad.

The enemy counterattack was soon repelled. As the men waited for the next attack, they went through fallen enemies and picked themselves some cockades. The rifle infantry retreated a few hundred metres when the next attack came. However, they did not warn the machine gun squad. On that account, the squad soon realized it was alone without any support and decided to retreat fast. This retreat was slightly panicky and it took a quarter of an hour before the leader could make the men seek shelter in positions that they had just abandoned.

After this little incident, which could have ended badly, the situation stayed calm until about 2 PM when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was detached from the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment to begin its progress through the forest. The gap in the Russians' line could be kept open and the supply and maintenance of the battalion followed immediately after. A long column of men, arms and sleighs wound through the trackless wilderness.

At midnight, the battalion had a break after a 10-kilometre march and the men lit big fires even though it was strictly forbidden. It was bitterly cold and the men had neither time nor will to look for the tents and put them up. Only the battalion commander erected his tent and both the field telephone men and the gas protection squad followed his example. The men walked around the fires and assessed the events of the day. The blazes were common property; nobody had the right to use the fire for making coffee or to stand closer to the fire than someone else.

After an hour's rest, the battalion moved on under a full moon and blazing northern lights. The point of the battalion ran into the Russians' rear line and stopped in



deep silence at 3 AM. Coughing men were silenced immediately and the faces of smoking men were quickly covered. However, the line was deserted and the men continued their progress through the forest.

At dawn, they had an hour of rest again and the men made coffee heavily guarded. Suddenly, one post alerted the troops and the entire battalion was soon filled with panic. The men ran around recklessly swearing, screaming for help and urging one another to escape. The officers and some of the NCOs calmed down immediately and, very quickly, they succeeded in suppressing the men's restlessness. Also, the alarm turned out to be false.

The progress continued in full combat readiness. The machine gun and mortar men had to carry their heavy weapons and it was difficult for them to follow the rifle infantry in soft snow. The NCOs shared the burden with the men in a brotherly manner and even the officers took turns at carrying the load. They rotated the load every now and then and were able to get some variation – though not relief – to ways of carrying the weapons, because both the tripods and the cartridge boxes weighed about the same.<sup>36</sup>

Without much adventure, the battalion reached the main road and took up its positions. The day passed peacefully: the machine gun men sat by a few open fires, cooked a little something to eat, played cards and talked about what lay ahead. Guardsmen went to and fro at their posts, greeted neighboring soldiers both on their left and their right and waited to be rotated. The supply and maintenance of the company arrived only after dark. It was accompanied by soldier 144 who had fallen behind when the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon set out for the counterattack in the morning and by soldier 425 who had taken the wounded to the battalion aid station. (The entire supply and maintenance of the battalion had been left at the last resting place, i.e. where the battalion had been seized with panic). The platoons could eventually get their tents and their soup, which was the first warm meal after the breakthrough had begun. The 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and the 6<sup>th</sup> Company were transferred to the rear to be on reserve, and all the men could go to sleep. Only the fire guardsman stayed awake.

On the following morning, the 6<sup>th</sup> Company and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company advanced to the front again. The platoon had by now become so small that it could man only two machine guns and a light machine gun which soldier 28 had taken as booty and which he faithfully carried. There were only a few spades. Therefore, the men operating the machine guns moved to the same place with the platoon leader while the entire platoon dug itself into the front line that followed the edge of the forest. There were about 250 metres of open marshland between our soldiers and the enemy, and more and more movement could be seen on the enemy side in bright sunshine.

---

<sup>36</sup> The gear of Maxim 09 consisted of the actual gun, the tripod, cartridge belts, cartridge bags, pitcher, spare barrel and a tool bag. For example, see Huhtala: Ryhmänjohtaja ("Squad Leader"), pp. 117-.

The men had slept late. They were also in good spirits and so – though, without notable success – they entertained themselves with target shooting. Confident in their snow suits, the men moved bravely and shot without taking cover. They walked along the edge of the forest on their way to greet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, which had taken up positions about 100 metres left of them. The men became slightly restless when the infantry gun was taken to its position about 30 metres left of the first gun of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon; they were afraid of coming under mortar fire that the gun would most likely attract.

The attraction of novelty disappeared very quickly and the platoon was content when it could erect its tents about 100 metres from the edge of the forest. In the afternoon, all machine guns received an order to make heavy fire preparations. The artillery had not arrived on the scene yet, and the men quarreled about who would be in charge of firing and be able to shoot long and fine rounds. On the contrary, nobody was particularly eager to go to the cartridge centre to fetch more ammunition. The men gathered in the tent when the food arrived and the guardsmen stayed put in their foxholes. Both squads took care of their own posts, and those men who were responsible for the light machine gun were divided between the machine gun squads.

However, the great attack plan of the division could not be carried out and the attack was halted. The life of the platoon continued in this manner until November 23<sup>rd</sup> when the battalion received an order to assume responsibility for the Lohilahti-Lammaslahti line. During that period, the platoon changed its positions a few times and was occasionally engaged in small skirmishes. For the most part, however, it spent its time on peaceful alert. It did not dig itself in properly at any point and was satisfied with a few temporary holes for the machine guns.

#### *Defensive action in Lohilahti in April 1942*

At dawn on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1942, the enemy attacked rather fiercely along the entire Lohilahti line. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon had been subject to the 4<sup>th</sup> Company and was hit by an attack that was possibly the fiercest in the battalion's sector. The first attack was repelled after a couple hours of fighting. Because it was anticipated that the attack would be renewed, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was strengthened with one gun from the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon that was in reserve. In the afternoon of April 25<sup>th</sup>, the machine gun took up its position and dug itself a nest that was shallow and of rather poor quality.

Pohjolan metsikkö (“*Nordic forest*”), i.e. the base that the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was supposed to strengthen, was manned by one platoon of the 4<sup>th</sup> Company and by two machine guns of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company. The machine gun men kept guard with their guns: in single guard during the daytime and in two-man guard at night. Consequently, serving as guard was rather strenuous. The men

kept guard and rested in two-hour shifts at night. On the other hand, the daytime was divided into two eight-hour shifts as follows: two hours of guarding and six hours off-duty. The machine gun men did not grumble even though guard duty was much heavier for them than for the rifle infantry.

As long as it had been peaceful, the base had been manned by a half-platoon that was made up of rifle infantry and two machine guns. This group, about 30 men, could go in the dugout at the base. Now, there were 50 men – almost twice the normal number – and there was much less space in the dugout, which was only 8x5x2 metres in size. Therefore, nobody could talk about “his own bed”; the men lay down where there was some space between two sleeping men.

Corporal 392 and soldier 461 who had been in two-man guard since 4 AM were rotated one morning at 6 AM. Soldier 461 chopped wood and lit the fire while corporal 392 brought the water. Then, amidst a little conversation, they waited for the coffee to boil up. They drank the coffee quickly and lay down between the sleeping men. The food vehicle had already brought the porridge and the mail when soldier 461 was woken up at 1 PM. One man found an advertisement in Kaiku magazine which read: “Warning: LIVE FIRING” (*Varoitus: KOVAPANOS-AMMUNTA*)

There was a row of full mess kits by the side of the road that led to the dugout, because all of the men had not bothered to fetch their rations of porridge. One guardsman gave the alarm at 2 PM. He had seen two Russians come crawling towards our line, apparently to cut a hole in the barbed wire. Almost the entire off-duty guard gathered in the trench, after which there was general target firing. When the Russians realized that they had been seen, they turned back but did not manage to escape.

The men became triumphant after the first detected hit; lance corporal 206 got so enthusiastic that he jumped on his chest gear and emptied one magazine after the other. They squabbled over the two binoculars that were at hand, and when the Russians eventually lay dead on the ground, there was animated discussion about the best way of getting at their weapons and cockades.

The men calmed down when the enemy mortar began to roar. They all ran to the dugout for shelter when the first shells hit the ground. A few men stayed at the door to see where the shells would fall. They also had a profound discussion about whether the roof was strong enough to sustain the 120 mm mortar shells. The shells exploded at regular intervals around the dugout, but there were not any direct hits. The men moved on to discuss the likelihood of an enemy attack and thought it was wiser to follow the platoon leader’s order to take up the positions. The mortar fire intensified and even its machine guns “started to sing”. Everybody was tense and waited for the order to open fire. The men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon’s

machine gun nest wanted to respond to the fire even though they could not see the enemy. However, the gun leader succeeded in holding the men back.

Time passed by and enemy fire preparations continued, but the front terrain was still empty. After twenty minutes, the firing became weaker and then stopped altogether. The men left their positions for the guardsmen and the off-duty guard assembled – both surprised and slightly disappointed – in front of the dugout. One man of the 4<sup>th</sup> Company had gotten a shell fragment in his bottom and attracted the attention of the others for a little while. Soon after, the men heard a light machine gun array fire and from five to six men – sergeant 120 in front – rushed to see what was going on. After a while, they came back carrying three Russian soldiers who had come too close to the barbed wire.

The Russians were wounded and had surrendered. The men fell on the prisoners immediately after they had been taken to our side of the barbed wire. The men started to pick up the cockades from the Russians' caps and went through their kits. The men expressed eagerly and volubly their opinions about the Russian's kits and provisions, but nobody was allowed to take and keep their property. Somebody gave cigarettes to the men who had been taken captive, another brought them coffee and a third brought them sandwiches. At the same time, sergeant 120 returned with the weapons that the captives had thrown away when they surrendered. The captives soon calmed down. After half an hour, two armed men took the captives in a triumphal procession to the battalion command post. When the men left the command post, they were given a good deal of advice about proper ways of escorting prisoners.

The change of guards took place at regular intervals while the off-duty guard went through the events of the day. Nobody cared about a few hours of sleep; the soup arrived and was served, darkness fell on the camp and the two-man guards set out for their posts.

### *The battle in Ihantala from June to August 1944*

At 8 AM on June 28<sup>th</sup> 1944, the battalion departed from Kilpeenjoki to assume responsibility for a front sector on both sides of the road in Ihantala. Its mission was to obstruct enemy progress from the direction of Viipuri and force it to retreat.

Already early in the morning, the ground attack planes had attacked the battalion and fired at the billeting areas. Therefore, the men looked worriedly at the sky. The happy unconcern that had always before been so typical of the marching of the company to the front had now changed to restlessness. During the march, the battalion was assaulted from the air again. As soon as the hum of the enemy planes could be heard, the men filled even small hollows in the open terrain. As a result, the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon and many men of the 5<sup>th</sup> Company lay in the same

gravel pit. If somebody turned his head toward the sky, he would be turned over on his stomach. This was done to prevent the enemy from seeing the faces of the men who had taken cover.

The men were for these reasons quite reluctant when the battalion was ordered to attack fifteen minutes after noon. The offensive began successfully, but after a few kilometres of progress enemy resistance became fiercer. The battalion launched an attack twice, but it sustained heavy casualties and was beaten back. At night, the enemy took the initiative and attacked with tank support, but it could not force its way through to the battalion's positions.

At noon on June 29<sup>th</sup> – while the 6<sup>th</sup> Company outflanked the enemy – the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Companies launched a direct attack from the front. However, the enemy was too strong and it finally took the initiative. Throughout the rest of the day and the following day, it assaulted on the battalion's right flank where the 5<sup>th</sup> Company and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company were situated, too. Early in the morning of June 30<sup>th</sup>, the battalion was forced to retreat to its original positions; this way, it got a few hours' break.

At this point, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was attached to the 6<sup>th</sup> Company. It had to stay on a rocky hill immediately right from the road. The sector was not wide, only about 200 metres, and the machine guns had to stay in their positions quite close to one another. There was neither time nor chance to build a dugout. Therefore, the platoon billeted in a pit under a big stone. It was a crowded and uncomfortable billeting place; so, the most energetic men dug themselves foxholes a little further off.

The platoon was alone responsible for these posts and kept guard with all its four machine guns. The 6<sup>th</sup> Company had sustained proportionally heavier losses than the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company. Although the men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company had to decrease the number of posts or to have longer shifts, this did not have an effect on the platoon's guard duty.

The food arrived rather irregularly, because enemy attacks recurred every little while. When it attacked, it usually shot barrage fire on the road a little further back of the target. On that account, the men had to resort to their haversack rations more than normally. Because the rations had not been made bigger, they always ran out fast. Therefore, the food vehicles were much expected, and there were always men willing to walk the difficult stretch to the road to get food. Besides, there was a chance to have a chat, hear the news from the rear and – in all likelihood – get some cigarettes.

The food vehicle driver usually received a good deal of orders before he drove back. Someone needed good trousers and another boots. Moreover, somebody wanted a sweater in exchange for his backpack and another wanted to buy cigarettes

from the supply and maintenance unit. The company commander's orderlies, who paid visits more often than the food vehicle drivers, were just as expected. Besides, they knew about the rumors that circulated in the other platoons and had certainly heard rumors about the timing of the battalion's disengagement.

Throughout this period, the company - just like the rifle companies - took care of the food deliveries to its troops. However, it would have been more practical and would have cut the amount of driving if the provisions of the machine gun platoons had been brought in the rifle company vehicles. However, this idea had met with resistance from two quarters. First, the supply and maintenance drivers of the rifle companies could not understand why the drivers of the machine gun company should be relieved from driving to the front. Second, the men of the machine gun platoon wanted to get their provisions from the company's own drivers; partly because the men did not want to be cheated in the distribution of food and partly because the drivers could be better trusted in the delivery of their orders.

As far as the cartridges were concerned, the men were not as strict. Nobody asked who transported the ammunition or where it came from. There were cartridge boxes in every nest and on every manned mound and in a way the men considered them common property. The men of other squads could easily take a magazine or two for themselves, but it was not permissible to take more. If someone sorely needed more cartridges, he would certainly get what he needed, though it was better to ask first.

Most ammunition was delivered from the machine gun company's cartridge centre, because it was closer to the front than the rifle companies' centres and because the machine gun men had to fill their cartridge belts all the time. On that account, the 6<sup>th</sup> Company used a great deal of the machine gun company's cartridges. However, except for the logistic NCO of the machine gun company, nobody paid any attention to that.

As is well known, the armament of our machine gun men did not include any machine pistols. It was the favorite weapon in the army and desired in every machine gun squad, because it was handy and useful in close combat. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was no exception in this regard. Several sub-machine guns of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company became free from use on the Ihantala hill, and the platoon's men did not waste the opportunity to "inherit" them. However, a certain amount of caution was required from the "inheritors", because the men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company regarded themselves as "main inheritors" and wanted to exchange their rifles for sub-machine guns, too.

Just like the entire battalion, the platoon started to feel itself abandoned after a few days of fighting. The four German assault guns that had been in the battalion's use did not venture come out against the Russian tanks that unscrupulously moved in front of our lines and every little while broke through them. However, the

tanks were always either destroyed or driven back with *Panzerschrecks* and *Panzerfausts*. The men had the impression that the big reserves behind the battlefield had been idle. Because the men were not rotated, they also thought that they were treated unfairly. Day by day, their irritation increased, and the fact that several men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company fled as a result of strong enemy fire on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> certainly did not decrease their annoyance.

The Russians attacked repeatedly. When one attack was beaten off, they immediately began a new one. This way, e.g. on July 1<sup>st</sup>, the enemy carried out six attacks supported with tanks, the air force and a substantial amount of artillery. Despite the apparent hopelessness that was the result of the men's exhaustion, only two men – and they were the only ones – fled from the platoon. One of them, soldier 612, was an elderly man who was regarded as a harmless blowhard, and the other one, soldier 497, as a selfish sluggard. So these men were not much needed or missed. Besides, one did not know for sure whether they had been wounded or had fled. A cartridge carrier could be wounded in intense fire and be taken to the field dressing station without his comrades knowing anything about the matter.

The rest of the platoon did not follow these men's example. Nor did the men follow the example set by the neighboring battalion, the 16<sup>th</sup> Detached Battalion. There, in order to get a short period of grace or maybe to get an opportunity to disappear, five to six men would leave the front and assist in carrying the wounded to the rear. On the contrary, the bulk of the platoon – just like in the company or in the battalion – showed exemplary endurance in spite of the intense firing and the heavy losses.

The first gun of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company probably sets the best example. In the morning of July 1<sup>st</sup>, only two men – corporal 259 and lance corporal 518 – were left and they tirelessly tried to keep their machine gun in action. Then, lance corporal 518 fell and corporal 259 borrowed a man from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon that was close by and continued until he himself was killed in the morning of July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

This very same 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon had kept its positions even when the bulk of the 5<sup>th</sup> Company panicked in the face of the attack by Russian tanks in the evening of June 28<sup>th</sup> and fled headlong from the front line for a little while. These two men, corporal 259 and lance corporal 518, had on that day crawled to save their observer, soldier 492, who had been wounded in front of the front line during the counterattack.

Naturally, it was considered very important to rescue the wounded and to send them quickly to the field dressing station. Moreover, the fallen were sent to the rear as quickly as possible. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, on the left flank in the sector occupied by the 5<sup>th</sup> Company's and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company, a few



men had fallen and it was impossible to carry them to the field dressing station in the daytime.

During the following nights, the enemy attacked so fiercely that all the men in the front were fully employed. Therefore, the dead lay where they had fallen. The men were very annoyed at the fact that nobody came from the supply and maintenance unit to collect the dead. They asked every orderly who came to the front to send word to the commanders that the bodies should quickly be taken to the field dressing station and then home.

Staff sergeant 201, half-platoon leader of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, noticed on July 8<sup>th</sup> when the company assumed responsibility for its sector that there was an undamaged sauna about 300 metres behind the front line and started to warm it up with soldier 180. The men of the third gun who had built a dugout nearby were not very enthusiastic about the sergeant's plans. They were afraid that the smoke would attract enemy fire; nevertheless, their fear was overcome by their desire to go to the sauna. So, after the first successful attempt, the men warmed up the sauna regularly. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon regarded the sauna as their property, but all the men in the front were welcome to warm it up and have a bath. However, the drivers and orderlies had to look for a bath elsewhere.

Early the following morning, when it was peaceful and the off-duty guard had gone to bed, a guardsman of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company fell asleep. As a result of this, a Russian patrol managed to break through the lines unnoticed, woke up a few men it had come across and took them away as prisoners. This incident couldn't go silently and in a moment the entire sector was awake. The patrol saw it was better to retreat; however, the men could not prevent it from killing the guardsman and from taking the prisoners who were half-asleep.

This was a horrible incident that could have brought the guardsman imprisonment for life or a death sentence if he had survived. However, the incident did not arouse much anger among the men. For the most part, they felt pity for the dead guardsman and, naturally, for the prisoners, too. It is impossible to say how the men would have reacted if the guardsman had not been killed.

Things went slightly differently a few weeks later when the conditions were much more peaceful. An enemy patrol took soldier 97 by surprise; he was at his post but had sat down to smoke a cigarette with two trench orderlies, soldier 91 and sergeant 126. They could only surrender and follow the patrol obediently. However, the group was detected when it had advanced 50 metres into no man's land. Automatic weapons began to crackle and even the mortars had time to fire a few shells. Soldier 91 pretended to be wounded and threw himself into a shell crater. The Russians – in their horror-struck haste – did not care about him and left him behind. He had to lie down while daylight lasted. Only in the evening could he



slowly begin to crawl back to the positions he had so hastily left. Eventually, he reached his destination.

In this case, men of one's own platoon were involved. Therefore, the others felt all the more pity for their fate. Even months later, one could hear the men talk and wonder about the conditions in which soldier 97 and sergeant 126 might live. Also, they much admired soldier 91 for his ingenuity.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, the company was rotated and it billeted about 3 kilometres behind the front line. When it arrived at its camp area that was much reduced in size, the men could not at first believe that the designated place was really meant for billeting. The sound of the shells could be heard nearby and the land was badly burnt by fire shells in some places. Someone said: "It's raining shells here", and another stated: "The Russians are concentrating fire here". A third man said: "Even the devil could not survive here".

It took a long time before the officers and the NCOs were able to calm down the nervous men and could make them realize that every forest was equally exposed to danger and that the shells that fell in the area were shot at random. After half an hour, the worst restlessness was over. Coffee fires were smoking and the men quickly dug small foxholes under suitable blocks of stone. Soon the entire company fell into deep sleep and only the camp guardsman walked around yawning.

### **3 Peace at the Front**

#### *Sintosenlahti from September to October 1941*

The battalion assumed responsibility for an entirely unmanned sector after it had arrived at the Sintosenlahti line in September 1941. Therefore, its first task was to build positions and billeting dugouts. First and foremost, the men of each machine gun hastily dug a nest for their gun without paying much attention to the performance itself. Most machine gun nests comprised only an open foxhole that measured 2 x 2 x 1 metres. Often, however, it also included a covered foxhole of the same size for cartridges and cartridge carriers. The rifle infantry dug foxholes that were gradually connected with one another to constitute a trench. The men started to dig crawl trenches to the rear only at the end of October; however, these trenches were barely dug when the battalion was rotated.

Like the rest of the battalion, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company spent the first days in tents. Some men of the off-duty guard were assigned to dig nests, some to build a sauna with the 6<sup>th</sup> Company and some to build a billeting dugout for the platoon. Due to the shortage of men, guard duty turned out to be rather strenuous and the work progressed slowly. The work was also carried out in a rather slapdash manner. Anyway, the sauna was better built than the dugout.

A new 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was formed when the company received replacements at the beginning of September. It assumed responsibility for a part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon's sector – including the dugouts. On that account, the platoon had to billet in very close quarters: 23 men in a dugout that measured 4 x 3.5 x 1.7 meters. There was a bunk on the back wall, the stove took up almost half of the floor space and, naturally, there were no windows. The small ration forced the men to use kerosene very sparingly. Therefore, during the daytime, the men had to content themselves with the light that came in through the open door.

Various tasks were performed outside, because the weather was still relatively warm. So coffee was mainly made outdoors on an open fire where the men also ate, cleaned weapons, wrote letters and washed up. Haversack rations were distributed outdoors, too.

In the middle of October, however, the men began to build a new dugout next to the old one, because they felt the living conditions had become intolerable. Without any pressure from their superiors, they started to dig a hole, hew logs for the walls and build the ceiling. After five days of work, the platoon was able to move into a new and spacious dugout that measured 6 x 4 x 2 metres. The door was on the long side and the bunks on both sides of the central corridor. The three men who until then had lived in the sauna moved into the dugout with the platoon, but the men of the fourth gun thought it better to live in the old dugout.

In the course of these months, the daily routine became as follows: two-man guards were changed to single guards and the men of all the four guns gathered together at 6 AM. A few men set out to fetch water, somebody lit the fire and – while grains of rye for the coffee surrogate were ground – water began to boil. The off-duty guard went to sleep and very soon the entire dugout was fast asleep. At around 10 AM or at noon, most men would get up and begin to make breakfast. The orderly prepared breakfast for the platoon leader and himself. Sergeant 487 and corporal 404 – like soldiers 28 and 29 as well as soldiers 372, 393 and 144 – shared things and “had a joint household”. While on guard duty, soldier 169 had succeeded in shooting a wood grouse, and – happy at a welcome change – plucked its feathers.

Breakfast usually consisted of coffee and a sandwich with cheese and herring – occasionally of some pork loin and canned meat. Soldier 383 weaved a knife sheath from birch-bark and helped sergeant 392 make a few birch-bark shoes. Lance corporal 494 wrote a letter, and after he had finished it, he tried with soldier 281 to make his machine gun work. To prevent the enemy from finding out the location of his nest, he was not allowed to test fire in his battle position. Therefore, he carried the gun into the dugout and performed the test firing there. The bulk of the platoon followed the project with great interest. When the machine gun round penetrated a blanket, the men burst out laughing.

At around 3 PM, the men started to wait for warm food. Everything was carried on saddle, because there were not any proper roads in the battalion's sector. On that account, soup was brought and mail delivered to the front only once a day. Clean underwear or sound equipment was only seldom delivered there. The men were much more interested in getting haversack rations than the soup which was known to be either macaroni soup, pea soup or "feed soup" (*rehusoppa*) that was made from German vegetable cans. The leader of the first half-platoon, sergeant 487, distributed the haversack rations among the guns after which the gun leaders distributed – with the keen assistance of the squads – the rations to their men. The men cursed the kitchen orderly who had stinted on the rations and the company sergeant major who had not sent enough kerosene.

After this, they crawled into the bunks to read letters and newspapers. As usual, soldier 325 went to the neighboring dugout to play cards, whereas lance corporal 426, soldier 383, lance corporal 494 and soldier 178 sat down to play blackjack with very small stakes. Meanwhile, corporal 25 squabbled with corporal 392 over the turns to fetch water.

The two-man guards went to their posts at 6 PM and settled down in their foxholes. In the course of time, the men had become accustomed to the fact that nothing happened at the front and – as a result – they had become less vigilant. The guardsmen sat and chatted with each other and paid visits to the neighboring posts on their right and their left. Sometimes they crawled to smoke in a covered foxhole. In any case, they were cautious enough to prevent the cigarette from being seen in the dark.

They were rotated after two hours and the new two-man guard took the guards' fur coats. The off-duty guard stumbled in the dark to the warm and comfortable dugout that seemed to radiate light and warmth. There, "at home", the duty officer, who was either the platoon leader or one of the half-platoon leaders, was boiling water for the shivering guardsmen.

The canteen arrived at the front every third day. The battalion had two canteen sisters who ran its canteen and who took turns visiting the companies. At around 2 PM, the men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company and the Mortar Platoon gathered together to wait for the arrival of the canteen sisters at a place that was situated a good kilometre behind the front and where the supply route – a narrow horse path – of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company parted from the main path. Most men were armed, all of them were dirty or quite shabby, and many of them had either a moustache or a long beard. The canteen horse arrived after a short wait. It had a coffee can and a box of pretzels on its back.

The men queued up upon their arrival and kept close watch on queue-jumpers. The canteen sisters rationed out the coffee where powdered cream (*"milkki"*) had been added and also the pretzels and the sweets that were fine and rare delicacies.

Most men had brought several mess kits, because – on the one hand – the officers did not allow the bases to be emptied for the sake of canteen visits and because – on the other hand – all the men did not care to walk the long way for “white coffee”. The sisters were slightly suspicious of men who had several mess kits and usually demanded the base commander’s written permission from these men. Naturally, with a wink or a smile, the men could get more than one ration.

The platoon went to sauna a few times a week and it was usually easy to get someone to warm up the sauna and the water. If one wanted to go to sauna, however, one had to start out before dawn, because the platoons did not have any fixed sauna days. If one was an enthusiastic bather, one could have a bath not only during his platoon’s own turn but also at other times. As a precondition, however, one had to ask for permission and help fetch water from a nearby swamp.

### *Picket duty in Lammaslahti from May to July 1942*

On May 5<sup>th</sup> 1942, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon moved from Lohilahti about five kilometres south to the picket line in Lammaslahti. The 6<sup>th</sup> Company, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company and a frontier soldier company had built this line during the winter. It consisted of a simple barbed-wire obstacle and nine log cabins and machine gun nests that lay beside them. The line followed the northern shore of Lammaslahti but parted from it at the fifth picket, made a curve through the forest and joined the 5<sup>th</sup> Company’s sector somewhat east of Lohilahti.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Company was responsible for the line and the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company and a light mortar squad (supplied with a 81-mm mortar) attached to it. The picket was situated approximately in the middle of the line. It was a little short of a squad in size, all in all 14 men, and consisted of men from the 6<sup>th</sup> Company, a gun from the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company and a scout dog with its caretakers from the frontier soldier company. Sergeant major 40, the leader of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, led the unit. The log cabin was big and spacious, 6 x 4 x 2.5 meters in size. It had a stove and three glass windows.

The machine gun squad had not spent many days at the fifth picket when a big doe (female reindeer) with a calf stepped on a mine in front of the barbed-wire obstacle. Together, the men were able to drag the catch to the log cabin and everybody was willing to help in skinning it. Due to the time of the year, the hide was of poor quality. However, soldier 518, who was pleased with the calf’s hide, separated the skin and kept it. Everybody cut himself a piece of meat that was edible (the season of the reindeer flies was at its worst, so a good deal of the meat was unfit for eating) after which the men began to gorge themselves with the meat. The men agreed amongst themselves not to speak about the matter, because

they did not want to be harassed by begging men from the other pickets and the command post of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company.

About a month later, two young moose were killed when a mine exploded in about the same place. However, the summer was already so warm that the men thought they would not be able to eat all the meat before it went bad. On that account, one moose was given to the 6<sup>th</sup> Company so that for once there would be enough pieces of meat (*"sattumia"*) in the soup. The men of the fifth picket had a big iron pot at their disposal and they prepared a feast for the whole unit. The man who arrived from guard duty took his turn at the pot, looked after the fire and added water. About half of the moose was used for this feast, which lasted several hours in the light summer night. The gorging was slightly prehistoric in nature: the men were not able to repress their greed even though they knew that their bellies would not tolerate that kind of strain. A rumor about the feast spread all along the Lammaslahti line, and some men of the platoon arrived all the way from the eighth picket - seven kilometres away - to fetch a piece of moose meat for themselves.

A few kilometres from the mouth of the bay, right by the shore, was a Russian village. In particular, soldiers U.E., V.J. and K.J. from the 6<sup>th</sup> Company visited it very often, checked its houses and brought back all kinds of household utensils: broken porcelain dishes, old pots, ragged quilts and blankets, dirty mattresses etc. They also found two boats and a totally usable seine so that the men of the fifth picket could catch plenty of fish after the ice had melted at the end of May.

At the time, the whitefish were spawning and about half the men would fish with a seine almost every night. The catches were usually so big that even the men who could not participate in the fishing got their share. Some of the most enthusiastic fishermen, a mortar forward observer and soldiers 461 and 206, tried to salt a small amount of whitefish. They did not succeed, however, either because the dish they used was unsuitable or because they did not have enough salt. They were calm about their comrades' mocking.

Later in the summer, they changed over to trolling but with rather scant results. Men from other pickets that were situated deeper in the forest arrived almost daily to borrow a boat. Their requests were always granted if the boats were free. If a man from one of the pickets in the forest trolled with a man from the fifth picket, the catch would, if possible, be shared equally. However, sometimes a visitor would try to take more than his share of the catch – even all of it. The men from the forest tried to justify the latter action with the fact that they did not have the opportunity to fish every day. This justification, however, was not approved.

Even here, the men formed cooking teams. The above-mentioned men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company formed a team of their own. When the warmth of the summer felt suffocating in a log cabin, they made a tent from a sheet they had brought from

the village and billeted in it. Soldiers 518 and 307 formed another team that almost daily squabbled over turns to fetch water and soldiers 206 and 461 joined together, too.

Like other pickets, the fifth picket could live at peace from the enemy during these two and a half months. There were always two posts during the first weeks. In time, however, the men began to feel that guard duty was too strenuous if a man was on duty for two hours and off-duty for six hours. Therefore, after some days of discussion, they decided to cut guard duty and content themselves with only one post during the daytime.

In spite of repeated orders to dig trenches to unite the log cabin with the machine gun and sub-machine gun nests, the men got down to work only at the beginning of July. This happened even though they realized how important and useful it was to have a crawl trench to the machine gun nest that was situated on the other side of an open space. Also, the men guarded inattentively; they basked in the sun, wrote letters and read and paid quite little attention to the forward terrain.

On Whitsun eve, the fourth picket reported that it had seen an enemy patrol of about 200 men progress towards the fifth picket that – because so many of its men were on leave – was only eleven man strong. Having received the report, the men immediately began to prepare for combat by manning the nests, carrying cartridges to the positions and filling machine gun casings with cooling liquid. The men knew very well that their picket could easily be rounded from the left and in that way their return route would be cut off.

However, they did not ask for reinforcements from the 6<sup>th</sup> Company's command post where two machine guns were on reserve, because they were concerned that they would get the following answer: "Are you afraid?" The men themselves had laughed at the company commander who was surrounded by so many men and who had hand grenades and a loaded pistol next to his bed when he slept. The hours passed in nervous expectation, but no Russians could be seen. At midnight, the off-duty guard could no longer be kept in its positions. Therefore, it could go to sleep and it also slept rather well without anybody disturbing it.

One evening early in July, soldier 202 – a machine gun driver – and soldier 20 rowed to a deserted village to cut hay for their horse, which had been kept at the picket all the time. Soon after they had left, shots and screaming were heard from the village and, a little later, the boat could be seen floating on the bay. Some men set out to row with another boat and returned with the body of soldier 20. All the men, excluding the guardsman, came down to the shore and, in silence, carried the fallen man on a stretcher - hastily put together - to the log cabin. While the men inspected his wounds, tied up his jaw, put spruce twigs under his head and a handkerchief on his face, they talked quietly about the incident. The orderly collected the dead soldier's things and his brothers-in-arms took his haversack

ration and the picket leader made a report to the command post. The leader also stated in his report that a strong patrol would be sent out to find and – if possible – catch the Russians who in all likelihood had taken soldier 202 prisoner. The patrol started out but returned without finding anything but traces of the enemy. This incident – just like another one a week later – put an end to the fishing, but could not make the men put up two posts in the daytime.

Because of combat action and the thaw season, the battalion had been denied leave in April. The order was overruled only at the end of May when the men of the fifth picket were also caught up in a mania to go on leave. The ten-kilometre distance to the battalion command was in part very swampy. Nevertheless, all those men who thought it was their turn to have a furlough walked this long trip to be able to talk to the company commander. Even corporal 38, who had been transferred from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in April, thought it was his turn, too. However, soldier 461 denied this and explained that corporal 38 had served in the company for only a little over a month and could therefore not go on leave before the men who had served in the unit since the beginning of the war. Soldiers 20 and 307 gave their support to corporal 38, because they too had just arrived from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. They claimed that the matter should not be resolved on the basis of one's term of service in some company. Instead, the decision should be based on the length of time that had elapsed since the last leave. Naturally, the men could not reach an agreement, so corporal 38 thought it better to leave the matter unsettled and wait until the first stage of the mania was over.<sup>37</sup>

So, the men's furloughs started to roll again. Based on the orders in force, 10% of the company strength could be on leave at the same time. As a result, one man (sometimes two men) went daily on leave and the same number returned. The length of the leave was fourteen days (excluding days for travel).

In winter and spring, based on the platoons' lists of people on leave, each platoon had sent one man on leave every fifth day. Overall, this arrangement was quite random and meant that the furloughs came in more rapid succession in small platoons. On that account, changing over to a company-based list stirred up some discontent. After a few weeks, when the new system was in full swing, the men calmed down and admitted that it was more just than the previous one.

### *Picket duty in Röhö from August to September 1942*

In August-September 1942, the battalion was stationed on the picket line in Röhö. There, the terrain consisted mainly of swampland bordered by sandy heaths with pines in an east-west direction. The pickets had been placed on the heaths

---

<sup>37</sup> At this time, the men often sang the following stanza from a 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion's song: "If only my old lady kicked the bucket, I would ask for leave" (*Eukkokaan ei heitä veiviään, että loma-anomuksen panis' vetämään*)



from one to two kilometers from one another. The command post and the supply and maintenance unit of the company were situated approximately four kilometres behind the front in the middle of the sector.

The pickets were manned by one or two rifle squads and by a machine gun squad. The 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company was attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> Company. Together, one of its rifles and a squad of Second Lieutenant S's platoon of the 5<sup>th</sup> Company held the picket Kuukkeli (*Siberian Jay*).

Like the men of the other pickets the men of Kuukkeli billeted in a tent. On August 9<sup>th</sup>, after the platoon had been building paths paved with sticks for a week, it was transferred to the front where there were no fortifications. On that account, the men in Kuukkeli had to dig a machine gun nest and a few foxholes right after they had put up the tent. The outcome of their digging was a pit, not a nest. Tactically, its position was not totally satisfactory, because it faced too much dead space in the forward terrain.

So, the men billeted in the tent just like they had lived in dugouts: every man had his own place. The 5<sup>th</sup> Company's men slept on one side of the central corridor and the men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Machine Gun Platoon on the other side of it. Places closest to the heating stove were the most sought after. So, further back, there was more space. The men in cooking teams slept next to one another. For example, lance corporal 206 and soldier 461 became inseparable after they first shot a moose and then used its skin as their mattress.

During the first days, two posts were manned: one east of the tent the other west of it. The men thought that the enemy could attack from the rear, too. The men, however, soon began to think that it was too strenuous to have two hours of duty every eight hours and decided to retain only one post in the machine gun nest. In the middle of September, after enemy patrolling had become more active, the men were forced to keep a post in close proximity to the tent at night. This guardsman also had to look after the fire in the stove. In other words, the decision was not only based on caution.

Changing over to keeping two posts resulted in a several days of quarrelling between a rifle leader who acted as the picket leader and the rest of the men. The leader claimed that because he was responsible for the rest of the men he should be exempted from guard duty. The men contested this claim and argued that everyone was equally responsible for the picket and that the corporal was such a "small shot" that an ordinary soldier man could take care of his duties. The quarrel ended in a compromise; the picket leader was on duty on those nights when, for instance, there were less than nine men due to furloughs.

Based on the plan that was made for the Röhö sector, the positions built by the pickets would form a long line of field fortifications where the pickets would



function as its bases. Each picket had received an order to build barbed-wire obstacles in its area and to carry out the necessary clearing for its firing area. The men did not have much interest in this construction work, so the picket leader had quite a job to get them to work every morning. Great efforts were not required: the men only had to hew and put up 20–25 poles a day. Nevertheless, by hook or by crook, everyone tried to escape the work. In their opinion, the barbed wire could not prevent the enemy patrols from breaking through the line, because long stretches between the pickets were left without effective guarding. In other words, they thought their work was useless.

Even though the men did not consider the picket leader's responsibility so heavy and time-consuming that he should have been exempted from guard duty, they nevertheless thought that he was responsible for the functioning of the picket's supply and maintenance. The tent of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company turned out to be very flimsy when it started to rain in September. It was the picket leader's task to see that the tent would be changed. Likewise, if the men thought their food rations were too small, he had to keep the kitchen orderly under control. In addition, he had to persuade the logistic NCO to get more flare pistol cartridges when they began to run out and, in particular, it was his job to persuade the staff sergeant to send clean underwear. On the other hand, however, if trousers, boots or summer shirts were in question, the men would walk peacefully to the supply and maintenance unit to get better and not worn out clothes. Naturally, one had to try and see that they were clean.

The supply and maintenance unit had settled down in log cabins by the small Logovaarakka river. The company commander, the sergeant major, the logistic NCO, the staff sergeant, the clerk and the orderlies lived in a log cabin that served both as the command post and the office. The veterinary NCO, the kitchen orderly, the gunsmith, the shoemaker, the cooks and the driver of the supply and maintenance unit lived in another building. In addition, the stable, the food and ammunition store, the equipment store, the field kitchen and the sauna were all situated in the area.

The sauna was warmed up daily, partly because the logistic personnel allowed themselves this luxury with pleasure – since there was enough water – and partly because few pickets had a sauna. Therefore, the men came from the pickets to the supply and maintenance unit for a bath. In this way, perhaps, the supply and maintenance unit in Röhö became, more than elsewhere, a meeting and market place for the company's men. The men went there to have a bath, change their gear, write applications for leave and meet friends from other pickets. These meetings were often fixed in advance on the phone. A repeated question in many telephone calls was: "Shouldn't we go to the supply and maintenance unit for a bath?" (*"Eikös lähetä töpinään kylpemään?"*). Many of those who went to the sauna brought some provisions to have coffee after the bath; if one was lucky, one could meet a friend who had returned from leave and offered "civilian treats" (*"siviilisattumia"*),

i.e. tidbits in exchange for provisions. In addition, the unit was located on the road to the canteen. So, many men extended their sauna visits all the way to the canteen.

The visits to the sauna were often hunting trips, too. There were plenty of birds in the area and every wanderer could come across flocks of wood, black, hazel and willow grouse. The most enthusiastic hunters, however, could not content themselves only with accidental discoveries. Instead, they left for long trips to no man's land where birds were more peaceful and thereby easier to shoot. Even though nobody had a shotgun or a dog, the men's hunting luck was usually good. Even hazel grouse were shot with military rifles and sub-machine guns. Squirrels were shot, too, not for their meat but for their skin.

Everyone dreamt about shooting a moose, but only once did this dream come true. When lance corporal 206 and soldier 461 succeeded in shooting a moose, they took its antlers, skin, tongue, muzzle, heart and part of its fat and let others of the picket cut the rest. The men agreed to keep the incident secret, but soon the entire Röhö line knew that they had shot a bull moose. One reason for the men's willingness not to let the thing out to the public was that a little earlier the army corps headquarters had given an order that Finnish game law was in effect in the Kiestinki-Uhtua sector, too. As a result, moose hunting was allowed from October 16<sup>th</sup> to November 16<sup>th</sup> – and even then with a special permit – on the condition that the shooter gives the skin and half of the meat to the government.

Therefore, suspecting an inspection, the happy hunters in Kuukkeli dried the moose skin in secret and took it to a thick cluster of young spruce. I do not know whether the company commander ever got to know that a moose had been shot in Kuukkeli; at least, he never let anybody find out. Moreover, neither he nor the other battalion officers cared to see that hunting orders given by the army corps headquarters were obeyed. The men laughed heartily at this order, which they regarded as a “high-ranking officers' whim”, because they knew that nobody would care if they had a moose in their sights.

As has been previously noted, the enemy had showed greater activity since September. Some of the pickets were alerted almost every night, but seldom did things develop into anything more than random exchange of fire.<sup>38</sup> The men soon noticed that the Russian unit they faced had to consist of closely selected and well-educated men and expected it to be a recruited frontier guard battalion. The Russian patrols broke through the lines under cover of the night and sneaked about the command posts and the supply and maintenance unit in the hope of catching prisoners.

---

<sup>38</sup> Such random exchange of fire, based on the sound from the front, was called “nickel safety-catch” (*nikkelivarmistus*). Compare to the expression “13 grams of nickel through the skull” (*13 grammaa nikkeliä kalloon*) that was synonymous with the expression “a bullet through the head” (*kuula kalloon*). (A nickel-jacketed rifle bullet weighs 13 grams).

Under these circumstances, the men of the supply and maintenance unit also had to be more often on guard duty – even more than the men at the front. The men at the front laughed maliciously and slightly mockingly and thought that the company commander, lieutenant 257 (who hadn't really displayed valor on the battlefield in Jelettijärvi), and the drivers of the supply and maintenance unit were seeing things and exaggerating considerably. However, not only in Kuukkeli but also elsewhere, tent guards were introduced and alarm systems made from barbed wire and clattering empty cans. The camp was circled by alarm wire within a 150-metre radius.

#### *Salmijoki from January to April 1944*

In January 1944, the battalion left the ruins of Poventsa and received a sector in Salmijoki where the line followed Stalin's canal. The distance to the Russians' lines varied from 300 metres to a good kilometre. The entire battalion was stationed at the front and the sector was about 10 kilometres wide. The location of the positions was favorable: they were along a water system that provided an open firing area. The positions were rather well built when the battalion received them.

However, one could see that they had to be improved continuously. On that account, based on orders from the battalion headquarters, every base had to provide a few hours of daily work for building the fortifications. In order to reduce the burden on the men at the front, the men of the supply and maintenance unit had to hew and carve pre-prepared parts for the nests. These parts were then transported to the front where the men dug them into the ground and installed them. About half the company's men built these pre-prepared nests daily, but the men at the front (with the exception of two guns of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon) took the digging so easily that not a single nest was ready when the battalion was rotated in April. So, the men had not cared to dig themselves into the ground on the island of Boks. Instead, they had been satisfied with digging battle and crawl trenches in the snow with their spades. As a result, they sustained heavy losses when the enemy attacked on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

The men did not care much about the actual defensive structures and hardly ever could one hear the men talk about them. Instead, they complained about the uncomfortable, dark and crowded dugouts: "These are not places for humans" (*"Eihän nämä ole ihmisten asuntoja"*). In their opinion, the senior command was at fault, because it let the men live in such cramped holes. At the same time, the men did not lift a finger to improve their living conditions. In any case, the conditions were better than in Kiestinki, because here the dugouts were more spacious and had at least one window.

In Salmijoki, the days passed according to the same routine as in Lohilahti, in Sungu and in Poventsa. The bases were quite strong, too. They resembled small

colonies that sometimes comprised even four dugouts: one for the rifle infantry, one for machine gun men and one for anti-tank men. Even the machine gun squads were quite big – on the average from six to seven men. On that account, guard duty was not particularly onerous, especially because the peaceful situation did not require a two-man guard at night.

The good and protected connections to the rear meant that two warm meals could be delivered to the front daily. Because of the peace and quiet, the men could be confident – depending on their marital status, of course – about getting a furlough every third or fourth month.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, one did not have to go to the supply and maintenance unit for a bath, like in Röhö, because every major base had its own sauna.

Interaction with the other bases was rather limited. At the most, the men set out to one of the closest neighbors with the food vehicles or on skis to play cards or buy tobacco. Mostly, however, they stayed at home in their dugouts where they slept most of their off-duty time, idled and made coffee. Almost all the men played cards daily and some went in for woodcarving. Nobody, however, went hunting, because there was little game in the area that was situated between Poventsä and Karhumäki. A few times, some enterprising young men made moonshine with the men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company.

Already in Poventsä, Sergeant Major H and some other men of the jaeger platoon had made small trips to the enemy side to catch a few prisoners. Now, Sergeant I from the 5<sup>th</sup> Company and corporal 475 from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon followed their example. In the hope of extra leave, especially the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon began to creep through no man's land, which was about 300 metres wide in their sector. This entertainment became so popular that the platoon leader had to make a list of turns. The results, however, did not meet the expectations because the enemy tightened its guard right after it noticed the increase in our activity. The men also tried target shooting, but with rather meager results, because in those places where they could see the enemy positions the distance was only 500 metres.

However, if the men at the front led a quiet life in idleness and lacked energy, the supply and maintenance unit was all the more energetic. At 6 AM, the cooks were already on the move, and the drivers started to water, feed and brush their horses at dawn. At about 8 AM, the orderly NCO drove the mail to the battalion headquarters, and a little later the drivers on duty left for the battalion's construction work. The morning porridge and the mail were delivered at about 10 AM and the haversack rations at 3 PM to the front. The logistic NCO, the

---

<sup>39</sup> According to the new regulations of the field army, every man – if he had served impeccably – was granted 36 days of leave if he was unmarried and 44 days if he was married. In practice, that meant twelve days every four months for single men and 11 days every three months for married men. This regulation gave rise to endless disputes between married and unmarried; the latter thought they were treated unfairly. Overall, however, the men were content with the fact that they could be certain about going on leave in the foreseeable future.

staff sergeant, the kitchen orderly and the veterinary NCO had to drive almost daily to the battalion stores.

The mail arrived in the battalion (headquarters) again at around 7 PM. The orderly NCO fetched it to the company command post, and there was often a race between the companies' mailmen. The mail was sorted out at the command post in the course of the evening when the impatient men would arrive from the bases to reap their share of the harvest. In general, the atmosphere was not very hurried in the supply and maintenance unit. One had to eat and – at the very least – drink coffee before going anywhere. In addition, the men would quarrel over whose turn it actually was to start out.

The days of the company commander's two orderlies were filled with all kinds of little tasks: fetching food, making coffee, washing up dishes, cleaning and running errands nearby. They went to the front very seldom. Were there something that could not be settled over the phone, the orderly NCO would usually ride on his horse. Only sometimes did the company commander visit the front. Nobody missed him except, perhaps, for the rest of the company's officers who seldom got an opportunity to visit the command post.

The company sergeant major, the clerk and the store NCOs were engaged in paper war almost the entire day. All orders, accounts, inventories and write-offs had the effect that the men had to fill in four or five forms – and often with enclosures. Almost all the drivers who went to the front had to bring their boots, winter uniforms and underwear as well as flare pistol cartridges.

Every now and then, men from the front would arrive to change their gear, write applications for leave, get mail or chat, but in general the men did not visit the supply and maintenance unit as often as the men in Röhö. Therefore, it was quite an uncommon sight when the entire company was brought to the unit for rotation on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

The platoons arrived in the course of the afternoon and all sleighs of the company were loaded amidst shouting, screaming and swearing. Most men wandered around as if they had gone to market and looked for their friends whom they had not seen since Poventsa. Their spirits were high, because everyone was happy to leave the front behind and looked forward to resting a few months in the vicinity of Karhumäki where there were women, liquor, movies and places of entertainment.

## 4 Rest

### *Nurmes from October 1942 to January 1943*

In winter 1942–1943, the entire regiment was kept at rest. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was stationed a few kilometres north of Nurmes in a barrack village where the company had a barrack and five cardboard tents for its use.

Ordinary garrison duty began after compulsory fitting and cleaning work. The wake-up was at 6 AM. From 7.30 AM to 11 AM and from 1 PM to 5 PM the company was in field training, in drills or at the firing range or in different odd jobs. Taps was at 9 PM. Sundays were free except for an hour's saluting exercise and an occasional camp service.

After a day in Nurmes, the company was strengthened with 45 recruits from the 1923 age group that were immediately distributed to the platoons. The Anti-tank Platoon, which had been compelled to provide reinforcements to the machine gun platoons in Lohilahti received the bulk of this new lot. For the present, even though the new men belonged nominally to different platoons, they were gathered up and formed a so-called recruit platoon that was kept apart from the original company in connection with organization, inspections and exercises.

During the first weeks, in particular, the company was engaged in different kinds of crafts: building an equipment store, an ammunition store and a roof for the field kitchen as well as loading the barracks at the railway station. These duties were regarded as something to strive for, because the groups were led by NCOs and worked for the most part outside the officers' supervision. While the older men were engaged in crafts, the recruits were usually trained under the company commander's supervision.

The recruits showed after their arrival that it had been rather difficult to bring them under control in the recruiting center. On that account, the commander wanted to carry out their training in the most severe manner. Those NCOs – just like some older men – who were ordered to train the recruits agreed totally with the commander about bringing them under discipline with tough training. The NCOs, however, were less willing; so the recruits' training was not so tough after all. When the company organized in the morning, it was part of the show that the officer of the day gave the recruits a little extra training, because they had performed so slowly and poorly in dressing the ranks. During combat training in the field, the recruits had to carry a machine gun more often than the older men so that "they would get used to it". In addition, they had to carry water to the barracks and chop wood for the barracks and the tents.

After some weeks in the company, the most enterprising recruits went to the company commander to inquire about possibilities to go on leave. They had been

in the army for over a year and thought they were as entitled to a furlough as the older men. Their attempt immediately aroused a lot of anger among the older men who realized that – were the recruits allowed to go on leave – they would have to wait longer for their next turn. It took the company commander several days to make up his mind. During this time, the company talked primarily about this topic. Also, there were often bursts of temper on both sides of the camp. Eventually, the company commander announced that the recruits could have their furloughs. However, this could happen only after the older men had had the opportunity to go on leave from Nurmes. Until then, they would have to be satisfied with a furlough in the vicinity on Sundays – and even this so that the more senior were given the priority.

In the course of time, however, the crafts could not employ all the older men of the company. In addition, based on an order from the senior command, there had to be regular exercises. The men were not particularly enthusiastic about such “war games”. If there were combat exercises, the men preferred to be on the defender’s side so that they could sit back in peace. That is why the exercises were carried out in a rather slack manner. If required, the men did not look for cover or protection against being seen (“visual shelter”) and, if possible, did not shoot the blank cartridges so that they could avoid cleaning their weapons. Furthermore, if the company left for night exercises, the men would “get lost” in the dark.

Firing aroused much more interest in the men. They tried to achieve as good results as possible and often challenged their comrades to a contest. The average marksmanship was not particularly good. Therefore, after almost every shooting exercise, the superiors commented on the poor results. The recruits’ poor results were less a consequence of themselves than of the fact that, in general, they had poorer rifles. Upon delivery, the older men acquired good weapons from the equipment store. Hoping for better results, the recruits borrowed these new weapons and even queued up for some of the really good rifles in the company.

Both morning and afternoon duty usually began with a lecture. The barrack was crowded and some of the men had to make way for others on the bunks where one could also hide. The recruits were always placed to the front rows whereas the older men lay on the beds and slept behind the men in the front. The officers knew this all too well, but did not care to interfere with the matter before the snoring became too disturbing.

The platoons took turns at guard duty, cleaning and potato peeling. The right to be first in the food line alternated between the platoons, too. The company duty officer, who changed daily, was not always totally aware of the platoons’ turns in different tasks and, with the support of their men, the half-platoon leaders tried to get rid of their turns every now and then. Their lack of success was due to the vigilance of other platoons.



The food situation was poor that winter, which was noticed in the army provisioning, too. Dissatisfaction with small rations was widespread and the men tried to get themselves more food from farms close to their garrison. The cooking teams that had sprung up at the front were still together. Their main task, however, was no longer cooking food but buying it. Already on the first two nights, the most enterprising men went to Nurmes on a recce mission, and succeeded in obtaining a milk can, securing suppliers of potatoes and finding sauna masters. Because the region was sparsely populated and the shortage of food was widespread among the civilians, too, the men succeeded only relatively seldom in establishing permanent relations with others. That, on the whole, was a precondition for procurement.

The cooking teams were not big – at the most from three to four men. Their members fetched milk by turns, and on payday they settled the expenses if the accounts did not balance in the long run. Anyway, the sums were small. In this way, those who had acquired a little extra held a special position while those who were worse off adopted an indifferent attitude and did not strive for membership in the teams, nor did they beg for anything but an occasional drop of milk in their coffee. The men did not make these trips to get supplies just to fill their bellies. They also socialized with the inhabitants: chatted with them in the evenings, warmed up their saunas and helped them with different chores. The men preferred jobs that would give them a little something to eat. For example, corporal 232 and soldier 533 helped a farmer in slaughtering and brought along a slice of pork loin.

Because these visits could be made at any time, they brought some welcome change to the soldiers' daily routines. It was strictly forbidden, however, to leave the battalion area on a free evening, but in the countryside nobody cared to check that the order was obeyed. One did not leave for the township easily, because the road, the streets and all public places were patrolled continuously. Despite this risk, sudden decisions to go on leave were common. Only recruits and silent and proper men cared to apply for an evening leave on the nights when it was possible. Those who went absent without leave were primarily men who were interested in girls or had love affairs. The illegal trips were not totally hushed up, but one was usually secretive about them so that the matter would become more interesting. The company officers knew that these breaches were common, but – except for the company commander – nobody cared about the matter.

In general, the men thought the best time to go on an illegal leave was an evening when one of the company officers was leading a patrol in the township. They reasoned that the officers would not willingly give away their own men. On the other hand, the company commander – lieutenant 257 – even tried every little while to catch the men who returned late from their leave. In addition, he made himself even less popular by arranging a roll call in the hope of “catching” men who had gone AWOL.



During the time in Nurmes, the frequency of visits to the field dressing station increased considerably. In particular, the number of venereal diseases increased, which was a result of the possibility to visit prostitutes. In absolute terms, however, the incidence of venereal diseases was very low and did not increase the number of visits very much. At the front, about two men had gone to the battalion aid station daily. Here in Nurmes, the company medics had to take five or six men every morning to see the doctor. Sometimes, if the weather was really bad or if the program of the day was more unpleasant than usual, the number of men could grow to fifteen - even twenty - if there were officers, NCOs, older soldiers and recruits, too. Despite the light punishments to those who pretended to be sick, the frequency of visits remained high throughout the time the company spent in Nurmes.

### *Pindusi from August to October 1942*

From the end of August till the end of October, the company rested in Pindusi, which is situated halfway between Karhumäki and Poventsa. The company billeted first in cardboard tents and later on in old farmhouses. Each platoon had two cardboard tents: one for the older corporals and another for the corporals of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoons.

For the most part, the battalion performed work duty in the course of these months. The duty officer organized the company at 7.30 AM and sent it to carry out the tasks of the day. Those who were assigned to assisting jobs stayed at the base and the bulk of the men marched unhurriedly to different places to do their share. The company built machine gun nests all along the line further back. This way, the men had to work in small groups led by the NCOs or lance corporals. Also, the work progressed very slowly.

When, after the long march, the group arrived at a nest they were working on, the men sat down to smoke. They then pondered for a while what they would do next, and then some men started to dig. Having worked uninterruptedly for about fifteen minutes, the men got fed up and handed the spades to those who were willing. Then, again, they had a long chat and dug a little between the long breaks. Most of the time, the platoon leader had to set an example, and the men expected him to dig as much as they did.

In particular, the men loathed digging work that always progressed slowest, too. A group of five men could spend two weeks digging a hole that measured 2.5 x 2.5 x 2 meters. If the terrain was stony, the work could last even longer. Blasting work was very popular, but carpentering was liked the most. When complex structures were concerned, it provided the men with an opportunity to show great craftsmanship and astounding ingenuity. Every hewed log gave them reason for a profound conversation and the clever carpenters willingly showed their skills.

One could distinguish a certain division of labor in the more demanding jobs: those who regarded themselves as skilful in a certain field (or those who were skilful) took over the command and gave the finishing touches. On the contrary, those who were assistants did all the rough work. The superiors had to interfere very seldom; this division of labor took shape by itself and the less skilful submitted to their fate without complaint.

Two days of the week had been designated to military exercises that consisted of formerly customary things: drills as well as shooting and combat exercises. Even the company officers could not show much interest in these exercises and – to a large extent – entrusted them to the NCOs. As a result, the exercises were carried out with almost the same amount of efficiency as the work duties.

In order to increase the men's enthusiasm, different sports events were organized: mostly competitions for groups such as football and handball games or relay races. Many of the men had not taken up sports in civilian life. So these games had some charm of novelty even though many of the older men were of the opinion that such running was quite childish and tiring.

Every fifth day the company had to take responsibility for guard duty at the battalion's main post and on a potato field in Limbus. Usually, the guarding that alternated between the platoons was held in rather high esteem, not least because the men on duty were exempted from other service on the following day. Also, the men soon noticed that the detachment on duty, especially in Limbus, had an extraordinary opportunity to obtain potatoes. Lance corporal 259 and all the men of his gun unit had so much interest in guard duty that they always volunteered when it was the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon's turn.

At that time, the men's major entertainment was to steal potatoes. Already in the spring, the contingents had received large pieces of land that they cultivated for their own use for the following winter. Whenever possible, the men provided themselves extra food rations, because they thought the normal rations were always too small.

On potato fields, though, there were guards that had the right to shoot; this, however, made the fun all the more rip-roaring. Potato thieves were shot at only twice; so the company's men said they would never shoot if they met somebody on the battalion's lot. It was told that the hated finance officer used to patrol alone on his cultivated land in Limbus. Even though he had an unsecured pistol in his hand, the men's backpacks were always bulging with potatoes when they returned from his plots. The catch that the men brought back was their private property. However, the men of the same tent often put their potatoes in a common store.

When it was stationed in Pindusi, the battalion received an order that nobody could go on leave before he had chopped and piled two cubic metres of firewood. This was not met with much enthusiasm, but soldier 461 soon noticed that one could simply move a completed pile to another place and put one's name on it. He taught the trick to some of his good comrades, but not to the orderly NCO whose duty it was to check the chopping of firewood.

In Pindusi, drinking started to become a habit in the company. It was easy to get liquor, because – on the one hand – the logistic personnel in Karhumäki could obtain large quantities of it by rail from Finland, and because – on the other hand – the men of transport companies sold their motor spirit (i.e. denatured alcohol) with pleasure. Also, if the opportunity arose, they did not shy away from emptying truck tanks. One could see drunken men in the company daily; especially the NCOs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon distinguished themselves in this respect. Most of the drunken men behaved in a manner that did not cause offence. On that account, the officers thought it unnecessary to interfere with the matter. Only after some of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon's men had behaved badly in the canteen, the company commander considered it necessary to punish the guilty and give a harsh sermon to the entire company.

However, the men were not satisfied only with bought liquor and started to distill spirits, too. The enterprising corporal 13 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon found a demijohn and started to distill a large amount of moonshine together with congenial comrades. Three days passed as the men waited and looked gently after their "treasure". When the moonshine was ready, the men went on a big drinking spree in the platoon's tent. Both half-platoon leaders were fetched from the NCOs' tent and – while sergeant major 40 acted as a radiant Bacchus in the middle – the platoon emptied full mess kits of moonshine. The noise was deafening and spread widely in the silent September night.

### *Kontiomäki in September 1944*

For two weeks in the middle of September 1944, the battalion billeted in tents a few kilometres north of the Kontiomäki railway station and waited for an order to attack the Germans. There was no reason to build field fortifications, because its mission would be to set off in pursuit of the retreating enemy. Also, advanced training was considered unnecessary, because restoration of the peace was expected in the near future. As a result, the men could idle away their time.

Nevertheless, the company organized every day and was commanded to different kinds of assisting jobs. Sometimes it was inspected or sent to close-order drill or arms handling exercises. However, neither the officers nor the men took these things seriously; the officers took turns in leading the company and not all of the men even cared to come to the daily organizations of the company.

The village and the road provided a lot of other interesting things, too. Large herds of cattle of the evacuated people came along the road to be loaded on a train in Kontiomäki and transported elsewhere. There were large numbers of animals at the station area every night and the men spent a great deal of their time with the evacuated women who were herding cattle. The men bought milk and listened to rumors about the Germans' progress, flirted with the women and took willing women to the village to dance.

Corporal 13, who was a butcher by profession, set up a business with three moneyed men from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon. They bought a young bull, slaughtered it and sold it in pieces to the battalion's men. The men kept carefully silent about their profit, certainly not a paltry sum of money. Some of the money was exchanged for rye flour, and when their business was reinforced with soldiers 109, 497 and 82, who were enthusiastic about and interested in distilling, they fermented a large amount of mash.

Since the time spent on the Karelian Isthmus, the company had possessed distilling pipes that the logistic NCO had faithfully transported on his carriage. Once, he had also succeeded in hiding the pipes from the company commander's curious eyes. One beautiful evening, the distilling began in a deep gorge close to the company's billeting area. Only after the fusel content reached too high a level (in other words, when 24 half-bottles were full), the business partners delivered the mash to lance corporal 362, soldier 439 and some other men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon who were happy to be able to distill a few extra half-bottles of liquor from the same mash.

Corporal 13 and his partners only kept the "nose drops" (*nokkatipat*), i.e. the first, cleanest and the strongest distillate, to themselves. They sold the bulk of it, bought more rye flour and put a new round of mash to ferment. Unfortunately, the battalion was ordered to move on before the distilling could start all over again. This did not, however, worry the business partners, who loaded the distilling tank and the pipes into the cartridge centre's carriage. When the company bivouacked in the evening, the partners took the gear to the forest and lit a fire. By the time of the evening call they had distilled 25 full half-litre bottles.

At the same time as northern Finland was being emptied of its civilian population, the army transported away those stores that had been situated north of the demarcation line. A detachment of the battalion was commanded to assist in loading the equipment at the railway station in Hyrynsalmi, about 20 kilometres north of Kontiomäki. Second lieutenant 324 who, arrived there to lead this task force could easily gather together enough men, because a rumor had it that there were big stocks of German liquor in Hyrynsalmi. The second lieutenant brought along the bulk of his platoon and, a day later, the group returned with their water bottles full of liquor.

This successful trip tempted some men to go to Hyrynsalmi on their own. It was easy to get a lift, because the motor traffic was quite heavy, and with some ingenuity they could get what they wanted. A few days later, when sergeant 392 had to choose ten men to dig potatoes in Lehtovaara – a deserted village about four kilometres from Hyrynsalmi – he had to refuse many of those who had volunteered. The men took their water bottles and pitchers – in the hope of filling them – but the driver refused to drive all the way to Hyrynsalmi. He also refused to slow down when he passed a parked car loaded with rum. In order not to return altogether empty-handed, lance corporal 503 and soldier 165 set out to chase sheep that had been left behind in Lehtovaara. When they returned, the entire patrol had a feast with roast lamb and potatoes.

Finnish details that in the course of those days moved via Hyrynsalmi to the southern side of the demarcation line had plenty of rum. Therefore, some men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon – lance corporal 461 and soldier 377 in particular – ambushed, took the driver of the last supply and maintenance vehicle in a column by surprise and managed to fill a few pitchers before the drivers' screaming made their comrades come to their rescue. Even though the men were better armed, they did not want to get into shooting and hastily took to their heels.

The men did not forget sexual matters even though their minds were mainly occupied with liquor. As was usual in our garrisons, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday evenings were free and a dance was held at some farmhouse. During the war, however, public dances were forbidden. Even though they were illegal, the few military policemen and officers connived in the matter. These dances or “balls” were poorly lit and did not have much music; a few carbide lamps took care of the lightning and an accordion and balalaika provided the music. Someone who was on good terms with the regiment's logistic personnel acquired a carbide lamp, and the dancers would collect a small amount of money in exchange for the musician's pains.

Kontiomäki was quite an insignificant population centre and its surroundings sparsely populated. So the men fought hard to get into the girls' favor. Anyhow, most of the soldiers who were willing to dance had to be content with watching the dance all evening long. Nevertheless, interest in these events was widespread on every occasion.

## 5 Railway Transport

The battalion had left Ristilampi and arrived at the Ilomaskä railway station at about 10 AM on June 21<sup>st</sup> 1944, immediately north of Kontupohja, and billeted to wait for the loading to begin. The Anti-tank Platoon was ordered to take care of the air surveillance and the rest of the company settled on a pasture.

Soon afterwards, porridge was ready and the men took their places in a queue at the field kitchen. The drivers of the supply and the maintenance unit took their horses to drink, some men busied themselves with their kits that were on the load and others went to the lake to swim. Some men were half-naked and took the sun while others retreated to the shade to play cards. Some of the most enterprising men wandered about in the surroundings, but did not find anything worth bringing back.

The company organized for loading at 4 PM. One NCO and two soldiers were ordered from each platoon to take the troop cars and put them in order. The rest of the company was ordered to load the vehicles while the drivers took the horses to their railway cars.

Many of those men who had been ordered to load the carriages only stood idle or gathered at the troop cars to be able to take the best sleeping places. They took their kits secretly into the cars and asked those who were already inside to reserve places with the kits. When all the carriages were on the train, the men rushed to the cars and - without waiting for the command - hopped in. Those, who were outside, shouted at the men who were already inside, pushed one another from behind and tried to elbow their way into the cars. There was a throng in the corridor between the bunks and the men jumped back and forth as they searched for a good place. Those who had managed to get a place on the upper bunks tried to prevent them from becoming overloaded and did their best to secure the places they had reserved for their comrades who were still outside.

In a short time, all the men were on board. The troop cars were ordinary freight cars that had been equipped with double bunks that - depending on their model - could take 28, 36 or 41 men. The 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and the bulk of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon billeted in the first car. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, the rest of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon and part of the Anti-Tank Platoon billeted in the second car while the rest of the Anti-Tank Platoon and the supply and maintenance unit billeted in the third. The battalion officers had a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class car for their use. Since the platoons had to be divided in this manner, the men made sure that they got into the same car with their cooking team and good friends.

When everything was ready, the train whistled and departed. The men sat in a row by the open doors or were lying and looking through the vents. Generally speaking, spirits were very high: the men sang and whistled, shouted and waved at all sorts of things they passed. In one car, the men amused themselves by shooting in the air. In addition, the kitchen orderly had delivered field rations. In no time at all and without worrying about the future, some men were feasting on them.

There was a lot to talk about. The destination was unknown, but many men had a hunch that it would be the Karelian Isthmus. Some guessed Suojärvi or Ilomantsi

and others thought it would be Kiestinki or Kuusamo. Lance corporal 518 had a roadmap that was studied very closely. The men grieved at the loss of Viipuri, made comments about the march and its events and were agitated about the fact that a military policeman had destroyed a large Alko liquor store in Karhumäki. Soon, it began to grow dark; doors and ventholes were shut and – one after the other – the men fell asleep.

Early the following morning, the train stopped briefly at the Suojärvi railway station and the men rushed to the field kitchen carriage to have tea. Others rushed to the canteen to get coffee or juice in their water bottles. When the train was already on the move, the last men came back running and – amid peals of laughter – were helped on board. It did not matter if someone found himself in the wrong car. For the sake of variety, it was usual to travel a few stretches in a friend's car.

The train had a longer halt in Maaselkä and the men lined up for porridge. Those who wanted to have coffee collected some firewood and, in a little while, small fires were blazing on the railway embankment. The men's curiosity rose when the train departed: would it head for the north, along the Karelian railroad for the south or would it make for Sortavala? To the Karelians' delight, the train headed for Sortavala. They realized they would get an opportunity to stop off at home, and it did not matter if someone was left behind, because the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's train – certainly with the same destination – would come five to ten hours later. From that time on, somebody would be missing when the train departed after a short stop.

Elisenvaara and Virasoja were equally exciting places. Somebody had heard rumors that the battalion would move on to Luumäki, far behind the front, to build a new main defensive line. However, when the train steamed south from Virasoja, it was clear to everyone that combat action could be expected in just a few days. The train was unloaded in pouring rain at the Jääski railway station. The high spirits vanished in the rain and, faced with a gloomy future, changed into an irritated nervousness. The company organized for departure after it had been unloaded. Also, the sky cleared up and, in a slightly better mood, it began its march to Kilpeenjoki and Ihantala. Those six men who had stayed behind around Sortavala arrived on the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's train and marched in the line as if nothing had happened.

## IV SOCIAL GROUPS IN THE COMPANY

### 1 Rank Groups

Even though there were very few regulars (officers and non-commissioned officers of the regular army) in the company, it is possibly worthwhile to draw some attention to this category of personnel. I think it is probable that the men's attitudes towards their leaders in general were – to some extent – affected by their attitudes towards the regulars.

In the company, however, the men seldom got involved with the regulars, because only the company commanders (except for one commander), one company sergeant-major and some older NCOs were professionals. Nevertheless, most of the men had had regulars as their superiors during their military service, and that had laid the foundations of their attitudes.

In general, career officers and NCOs of the regular army were considered to be stricter with discipline, more precise with respect to military behaviour and more impractical and less sensible in organizing different kinds of tasks and duties. This impression was probably more or less true. One has to keep in mind that in peacetime garrison service the regulars had become accustomed to the idea that their most important task was to habituate the conscripts – who were hard to handle – to discipline and, furthermore, that they had always had an almost infinite amount of labour free of cost at their disposal.

The reservists' attitudes towards the regulars were thoroughly disparaging. The prevailing attitude among them was that "a person who is not good enough otherwise, applies for the Cadet School". In the eyes of the men, NCOs belonged to the same category as policemen. In other words, they were recruited from men who wanted a more comfortable and "finer" job than those who worked hard and who were not talented enough to devote themselves to higher professional training. In addition, as far as I can see it, the men's attitudes towards the officers of the standing army were affected by the reserve officers' attitudes that had developed as a result of the professional soldiers' occasionally patronizing attitude towards "amateur officers".

The reservists' contempt for the regulars usually manifested itself in references to the fact that they, the reservists, had a civilian occupation that required skill and experience. In addition, they emphasized that they were free in their civilian life – something that those in regular service could never become: "You will never become civilians". When peace was around the corner, the men teasingly asked the only active NCO of the company what he thought about the idea of staying in the army when everybody else had left. Neither did they hide their malicious



pleasure in the fact that the regulars would be worse off in every way and that they would lose the leading position they had held in the army during the war.

Even though one could perceive a weak sense of togetherness between all reservists, both the officers and the men, there was always a certain contrast between the officers on the one hand and the NCOs and the men on the other hand. This contrast was hardly due to differences in age, because the average age of the company officers was approximately the same as that of the NCOs and the men. The fact that the officers – with one exception – came from southern Finland was probably of more significance.

Even more important was the fact that the officers had a higher level of education than the men and that they held different positions in civilian life. Five of the ten reserve officers had matriculated, three had passed the grammar school and two of them had only attended elementary school. It is highly probable that the officers' education strengthened the men's impression of them as "masters" (*herra*).

This concept, "master", should in my opinion be the basis for analysing the men's attitudes towards the officers. Even though the word "master" does not necessarily have any political shade of meaning, it has approximately the same echo among the common people as the word "bourgeois" has among leftists. "Master" refers to an employer, a foreman or a person from the upper-middle class who employs other people without participating in the work itself. Probably it could be best understood by referring to those career officers who benefited from the war with their camp and daily allowances and who were eager to continue it (*sotatyönteettäjä*).

However, the reserve officers were also included in this concept, because they looked after discipline. So, in the eyes of the men, they were supporters of the system and benefited from continuing the war, too. One has to remember that the men constantly emphasized that the war was "a war of the masters" and that they themselves were totally indifferent to it. They put their attitudes towards the officers into one sentence: "The masters are here only because they want to keep us in the most infernal conditions" (*Herrat ovat täällä vaan sitä varten, että pitäisivät meikäläiset mitä kuisimmassa jamassa*).

The men at the front came into close contact with the company's subalterns; therefore, their attitudes toward them changed in a certain way. The platoon leaders billeted in the same dugouts with the men, slept on the same hard bunks, ate from similar mess kits, were plagued by the same lice and were exposed to the same dangers. As a result, the men's attitudes towards their own subalterns differed considerably from their attitudes towards officers in general.

The difference between the officers on the one hand and the NCOs and the men on the other hand was discernible in the fact that the officers did not have any

guard duty and did not participate in manual work. In addition, they always had orderlies who served them, made their coffee and washed their dishes. This order of things was considered natural; the officers were expected to take advantage of their privileges, i.e. to behave like “masters”.

It can be said that the officers' attitudes towards the men appeared from their attitudes towards the orderlies. Officers – such as second lieutenants 252 and 324 – who did not command their orderlies to different tasks but made requests, as if asking them a favour, did not mix only with their equals. They also socialized with the men: played cards and joked with them, talked about their private matters and let them look after themselves as much as possible. On the contrary, some other officers – such as lieutenant 257 – treated their orderlies like servants. They demanded that the orderlies be always available and did not allow any kind of familiarity.

Furthermore, these officers did not try to get into any kind of contact with their men and preferred to isolate themselves to their dugout corners. To some extent, the orderlies' opinions influenced the men's overall evaluation of their superiors. This was the case because the orderlies came into close contact with them and willingly told about their experiences to other men. In addition, the men could see how an officer treated his orderly and could thereby form their opinion about his personality.

In general, the men tried to keep away from the officers, because they had adopted the above attitudes. At the front, the prevailing sentiment among the men was: the further away from the command post, the better. They wanted to be left in peace and be far away from unnecessary control and various assigned tasks. In 1942–1943, the long and peaceful period at the front had made the men lazy and negligent of their service. They felt that too much command interfered disturbingly with activities they knew best. Experience had taught the men that one could neglect guard duty to quite an extent without exposing himself to very big dangers and that they did not necessarily need all those field fortifications that the division headquarters had planned. In addition, the probability of a direct attack against a dugout was so small that only two layers of logs and some stones were needed on the roof. In their opinion, all additional measures that aimed at increasing their security – and security in their sector – gave the impression that the system tried to take their restful way of life away from them.

After the subalterns had been acquainted with their men, they pretty much let them live all by themselves. For example, they did not interfere with matters that concerned guard duty – except if their superiors sent orders that caused changes in guarding. At one point, for example, there had been an order to keep two two-man guards after dark in the Nyberg woods at Lohilahti. The men thought the order was unnecessary and did not care about it. The platoon leader did not

interfere with the matter even though he probably knew that the men did not obey the orders.

The platoon leaders soon noticed they had very few things to look after in peaceful times. A platoon would, of course, accept the posts and the positions when it assumed responsibility for its sector. A platoon leader would only exceptionally try to make some changes for the better. Every now and then, orders concerning different kinds of tasks were received from higher quarters and it was the platoon leader's duty to look after the men's performance. In such a case, he had to balance skilfully between two opinions: either his superiors would regard him as an unfit soldier or his men would think of him as a slave driver.

It was a negative thing to display fear and the men soon noticed if the leaders were afraid of their own superiors. The men themselves were of the opinion that they must not display fear; at least they had to act like they were following orders in fear of a punishment. They had to behave in this manner to avoid giving any impression whatsoever that they agreed with their superiors about the utility of some matter. I assume the officers realized that they could not win much with threats when small things were in question. Hiding behind the articles of the manual was an acknowledgement that they did not have personal authority and that they only emphasized their insignias.

The officers were aware of the fact that the men regarded them as "masters". Most company officers tried to narrow the gap between themselves and the men. Those who tried hard succeeded after they had lived with their bunch at the front for a while. Differences in daily habits (that were better discernible when an officer was a newcomer) evened out in the company's daily routine in the course of time. If a particular officer was capable of adapting, he was eventually admitted as a member – but never as an equal – in the group. The men in his tent or dugout would no longer pay more attention to him than they did to the others. They took his privileges, which that kept him at another level, as a self-evident thing. They socialized with him in the same manner as they did with their comrades: played cards, joked, drank liquor, went to sauna and changed boots with him. They continued to mix unceremoniously with him after he moved to the officers' quarters (as in Pindusi and at Ristilampi). Anyway, he would still be a master to the men. For example, compared with their comrades, the men did not tell about their activities as openly to him.

One has to remember that the officers could not live together as a group at the front. They all had their bases and pickets (sometimes, though, there were cases where two officers lived together if their bases were very close to each other). The officers lived in their own quarters when the company was on a march or at rest. However, their group attitude was not dependant on external conditions. They defended their view that they should be entitled to furloughs more often than the others – whether they were at the front or as a group behind it. In addition, no

matter where the officers billeted, they were equally dissatisfied with their clothing. However, when they billeted at the command post, they had a better chance of getting equipment from the company store and, every now and then, extra rations of food, too. Anyway, even when the officers were alone, they were seen as and they thought of themselves as a special rank group.

Upwards from the company commander, the men had very little contact with the senior officers. The contacts were mainly limited to various inspections that made the men experience displeasure. A saying in the army goes: “You can always complain about something”. In this respect, the superiors’ eagerness to look for something worth repairing determined the level of reluctance among their subordinates.

The company commander was not taken that seriously, or even solemnly, but when the battalion commander – for example – arrived for an inspection, the men started to behave in a controlled manner. They moved uneasily aside and behaved as if the matter did not concern them at all. A few battalion commanders, Lieutenant Colonel K and Major E, succeeded without prejudice in establishing a sense of confidence between themselves and the battalion’s men. The men learnt they could expect a friendly reception if they turned to either of these men in a straightforward manner. They were called “men of the people” (*“kansan miehiä”*) even though they were “masters”.

The company NCOs billeted with the men all the time and, for the most part, performed similar duties as the men. Only some half-platoon leaders, when they served as base commanders at the front, did not do any guard duty. Also, even though a NCO was nominally the foreman when a dugout was built, the men expected him to participate in the work in the same way as the men did.

The NCOs did not regard themselves as a special rank group either. Instead, as opposed to “masters”, they thought of themselves as representatives of the people. In the peacetime garrisons, certainly, officers aimed purposefully at increasing the NCOs’ authority. For example, they tried to strengthen the NCOs’ sense of a certain distance from the men. However, that was a failed attempt most of the time, because reserve NCOs always thought they were closer to the men than to regular NCOs and officers. In addition, this was probably furthered by the fact that the NCOs who were chosen straight from the rank and file had been kept under equally strict discipline with the men during the time of their military service. However, they did have some privileges.

In these circumstances, it was totally natural that those who were promoted to the rank of NCO during the Continuation War – and most of them without any special NCO training – developed a strong feeling of togetherness with the men.

Of the 113 NCOs who served in the company only 27 (i.e. a fourth) were promoted during the war. If the NCOs are studied more closely, one can see that the 1920 age group is the biggest: 32 NCOs, of whom 8 were promoted during the war. Most of the NCOs in this age group had received their training in the regiment's NCO training schools during the interim peace years in 1940-41. Therefore, one can say that significantly more men were promoted in the company after its formation. This factor and the fact that the company's NCOs had mainly been recruited from the Civil Guard Districts of North Finland (Lapland), Länsi-Pohja and Oulu at the beginning of the war. In other words, the fact that they came from the same area as most of the men may have strengthened their feeling of togetherness with the men already at the beginning of the war. This was especially important, because the battles in the encirclement stage (*"Mottivaihe"*) did not allow any kind of putting on airs (*"herrastelu"*), i.e. playing a master, on the NCOs' side: the NCOs who were encircled had to do guard duty, dig nests and operate the machine guns just like the ordinary soldiers.

Since I had not served in the company before the outbreak of the war, I cannot state for sure what the relationship between the men and the NCOs had been like before. However, judging from what the men told me about garrison life in Saunakangas, the NCOs and the men seemed to have socialized on an equal footing.

The fact that the NCOs who were promoted in the company felt allied to the men appears, as has been noted, natural. In practice, that was the state of the affairs, too. All of these NCOs had served in the company for quite a long time; the average term of service among them was 25.6 months while it was 10.7 months among those who had been NCOs already when they joined the company. It was part of the game that one pretended not to know anything about his promotion. Interest in getting more stripes on one's shoulder straps was regarded as a manifestation of proud character. Lance corporal 356, who had served as the company commander's orderly throughout the war and who waited to be promoted to the rank of corporal, had to hear every little while from the others that he was "fighting for stripes" (*"sotii natsoja"*). The others were a bit happy when – on one occasion after the other – he was not promoted.

It was very common that the NCOs did not wear their badges of rank. However, this was due less to their modesty than to their laziness and also to the fact that they were afraid of being disclosed when they were absent without leave. Partly, they were showing off, too: it was considered folksy not to stand out from the rest with one's badges of rank. Sergeant major 40 almost always appeared without his badges, but this happened less because he wanted to show off and more because he was unassuming. In autumn 1944, when he was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant, he first refused to attach rosettes to his collars and only after the men's prolonged pressure did he give in. They were certainly somewhat proud of the respect that had been shown to them and to their platoon leader.

The NCOs never operated as a group at the front. They always billeted amongst their men. If several NCOs billeted in the same place at large bases, they saw themselves as part of their military group. At times, some NCOs would set up cooking teams – such as corporals 38 and 567 in Lammaslahti, corporals 181 and 364 in Röhö or corporals 199 and 206 by Stalin’s canal – but the reasons for the formation of these cooking teams must be sought primarily from personal likings and previous experiences. These pairs had served together in another unit before their arrival in the company.

Some NCOs settled down in a special billeting area when the company was at rest in Pindusi. The older NCOs and the machine gun leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoons billeted together while the gun leaders of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and all the NCOs of the Anti-tank Platoon billeted with their men. The shared accommodation of the older NCOs was probably due to the fact that – when the premises and conditions allowed it – they wanted to avail themselves of the privileges that their military rank brought them. In particular, staff sergeant 404 was pushing this arrangement. Already in Nurmes, where he only had held the rank of corporal, he was planning separate accommodation for the NCOs. Because of the lack of space in the barrack, however, he was only able to organize a separate corner for them.

The men regarded him as a typical foreman (*“piällysmies”*) from the province of Savo. They were of the opinion that his fresh promotion to the rank of staff sergeant made him even more prone to putting on airs (*“herrastelu”*). Therefore, it is not totally inappropriate to call him a spiritus rector. Even though the other older NCOs approved of this arrangement, they were not as interested in it as the staff sergeant was. So sergeant major 40 and sergeant 232 moved together with their platoon when the company got hold of some old houses that dated back to imperial Russia. Also, sergeants 269 and 327 from the Anti-tank Platoon billeted with their platoon all of the time.

In this context, shared accommodation can be regarded as a manifestation of solidarity between the NCOs and the men. The fact that the NCOs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon billeted with their men can hardly be explained by lack of space in the NCOs’ tent or by other such “technical” reasons. The gun leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoons, altogether eight corporals, shared a tent while the 30 men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon had two tents at their disposal. In other words, the corporals of this platoon had less space than was necessary. Even if all the gun leaders of the company had moved together, their tent would not have been overcrowded. If the corporals of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, e.g. because of warmth, had wanted to billet in closer quarters, they would have had as little space in the gun leaders’ tent as they had with their men. The same applied to the NCOs of the Anti-tank Platoon.

The external qualifications of these corporals were similar regardless of whether they billeted with their men or with other gun leaders of the company. In this

context, however, it is tempting to make an assumption of some “inner” factor that had an effect on the fact that the gun leaders of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon billeted with their men and that the gun leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoons lived apart from their men. In that case we shall above all try to find a correlation that could explain the phenomenon.

First, if we examine whether there was any interdependence between the rifle leaders’ and the men’s home district, we can see that both the corporals and the men of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoons came predominantly from northern Finland while the bulk of the men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon came from the north but that its NCOs came from the south.

**Table 11**

The men and the Corps according to their home district

	1 <sup>st</sup> Platoon		2 <sup>nd</sup> Platoon		3 <sup>rd</sup> Platoon		Anti-tank Platoon	
	Men	Corp.	Men	Corp.	Men	Corp.	Men	Corp.
Civil Guard Districts of North Finland (Lapland) And Länsi-Pohja	5	3	6	4	9	1	-	2
Civil Guard Districts of Oulu, Kainuu and Raahe	4	1	10	-	8	-	11	1
Northern Finland	9	4	16	4	17	1	11	3
Southern Finland	10	1	9	-	7	3	2	1
	19	5	25	4	24	4	13	4

As can be seen, it is hard to discover any correlation between shared accommodation and the home district – except for the Anti-tank Platoon where the bulk of the men and the corporals came from northern Finland.

Also, it is useless to try to find out any correlation between the age of the corporals and that of the men. On the other hand, if we look at the average term of service in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, we can see that it was 15 and 23 months among the corporals and 15.5 and 12.8 months among the men respectively. In other words, the differences were 0.5 and 10.2 months. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon, the corresponding figures were 19.7 and 24.2 months for the corporals and 16.1 and 11.8 months for the men. So, the differences were 3.6 and 12.4 months respectively. We can see that even though the differences in the term of service between the corporals and the men in the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoons were small, the corporals of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon lived apart and those of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon together with their men.



On the other hand, even though the differences in the term of service between the corporals and the men in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon were big and about the same length, the corporals of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon lived apart and those of the Anti-tank Platoon together with their men. The Anti-tank Platoon consisted - with the exception of one man - of men who had originally arrived as recruits in Nurmes. On the contrary, 12 out of the 25 men in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon belonged to the original company strength or had arrived in Kiestinki just like all corporals of the platoon. Therefore, one could assume that the NCOs preferred to billet with the younger men who respected them much more than the older men did. Why, then, did the corporals of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon live with their men? Half of them were old veterans from Kiestinki.

With respect to correlations, a closer look at the corporals' service conditions provides us only a slight hint. Two corporals of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon had been promoted in the company and belonged to its original composition. A third one had joined the company in Lohilahti. Three of the Anti-tank Platoon's four corporals had been promoted in the company and one of them belonged to the original company strength. The fourth one was an original member, too, and had been promoted to the rank of corporal already before the outbreak of the war. As for the corporals of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, none of them belonged to the original make-up of the company, but one had joined the company in Lohilahti and had later been promoted. Two of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon's corporals had been in the company ranks since the beginning of the war and two had joined in Lohilahti.

As can be seen from the above, there is no certain or clearly distinguishable correlation. Based on the home district and the conditions of service, it is hard to explain quantitatively the sense of togetherness between the machine gun leaders and the men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon. One can hardly even talk about a sense of togetherness. The only explanation that I can give is a reference to purely personal likings between the gun leaders and their men. As for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, one can also give an explanation that is also related to the men's civilian environment: in March 1942, the biggest lot - two NCOs and five men - of the reinforcements that had arrived from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion were left in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and formed its predominant squad in every respect.

The fact that they held together may be attributed to purely personal likings and the similarity of personalities, but also to the fact that they came from the same area (Kemijärvi) and that they had served together before they joined the company. Furthermore, as recruits in the company they soon realized - if they stuck together - that they themselves were best suited to promote their own interests. Their attitude may later have spread among the other men of the platoon and played a part in bringing about the solidarity which the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was so known for in the company. [The platoon was nicknamed "the gang from Kemijärvi" (*"Kemijärveläisten sakki"*) even though the men from Kemijärvi made up a minority, though a dominant one, already in Pindusi]. The fact that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon did not



display similar cohesion – even though its squad of two NCOs and eight men belonged to the original composition of the company – may be explained by the fact that these older members had so much confidence in their position both in the platoon and the company that they did not care to stick together.

So, even though some NCOs isolated themselves, one cannot talk about any group attitudes in this respect. The NCOs' tents did not stick out from the other tent groups, and the NCOs who billeted separately mixed with the men in the same manner as they had done at the front. In addition, they saw nothing special in the fact that some NCOs lived away from the others. They did not take the isolation that took place in Pindusi for putting on airs.

When the battalion billeted in Ristilampi, some NCOs of the headquarters company began to push for a club for the battalion's NCOs. However, this initiative from higher quarters met with little response. The NCOs thought they did not make up a well-defined rank group and never acted as one. When staff sergeant 201 struck Captain H, the 5<sup>th</sup> Company's commander, so that some teeth were knocked out at a drinking party, sergeant 547 explained that the incident was a big shame to the company NCOs who in his opinion had to do something to repair the damage to their reputation. Instead, his comrades only smiled at his pondering; in their opinion, the incident was entirely between these men. In much the same manner, the men did not react to the lowering of sergeant 82's rank; he had displayed fear, but the men thought it was his private matter.

Neither did the NCOs think of themselves as a group that had special duties. They idled away their time just as eagerly as the men, could not care less about their obligation to salute, went AWOL, drank too much, played cards, distilled liquor and were afraid of the officers, too. The men always considered the NCOs as part of their bunch just like the NCOs felt affinity with the men. The NCOs were fully admitted as equals in the men's community. In fact, these two rank groups formed a uniform group, "the people". Later on, I will mainly deal with this group and its attitudes. It was this group that shaped the life of the company. The officers were always there, but they belonged to another sphere and only operated as controllers of public power.

## 2 Military Groups

In a military sense, the division of the company into platoons and machine gun squads was constantly present and, to a large extent, this group attachment determined the men's attitudes. First and foremost, the men led their lives in military groups.

If the men's common functions – in other words, activities that required the participation of every man – within a machine gun squad were involved, the

internal group control of the group would work automatically. The machine gun men were equal to one another and uniform division of labour prevailed in the entire company.

The men's common functions usually consisted of guard duty and distribution of haversack rations – sometimes of cutting wood, fetching water and combat action with the machine gun, too.

However, if special tasks – i.e. activities that formed a part of one's duty as a machine gun man – such as the gunner's duty to operate the actual gun were involved, the internal group control would work much more poorly. Everyone saw his task as a somewhat private matter and took care of it in his own way. In such a case, one did not expect help from his comrades and did not interfere with their matters either.

Guard duty was the most important form of common function. It determined the rhythm of the day and nobody could get away from it. In fact, the men did not try to avoid it, but always tried to make their duty as convenient as possible. A missing man on duty meant that the off-duty time would be shorter. This and the fact that a corporal was considered to be only slightly above the men in the ranks strengthened the men's view that the gun leaders should be on duty just like the ordinary guys (*"tavalliset jätkät"*).

Therefore, the men looked askance at the fact that the gun leaders were exempted from ordinary guard duty in Poventsa and were ordered to patrol the positions as trench orderlies. In addition – once in Lohilahti – when a man went on leave in his turn, the men even thought that he behaved somewhat unfairly towards the others, because too many gunmen would be absent at the same time. However, the right to go on leave was considered so precious that the men did not want to prevent anybody from taking his turn. Nevertheless, they borrowed a man from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon for those days when there were too few men in their ranks.

The rotation of the guard shifts was permanent for a long time. To a large extent, the shifts were purely accidental but, to some extent, they also depended on personal sympathies and antipathies. Some men were not so scrupulous about the change of shifts. For example, soldier 425 who was a passionate card player even managed to forget his shift as he sat at a card table at some neighbouring base. Therefore, nobody wanted to have a shift before him and everybody was happy when he was assigned to serve as an orderly of a platoon leader. The cooking team members served one after the other with pleasure so that one could have the coffee ready before he released his comrade from the shift.

It was also possible to buy oneself out of a shift or two. In particular, card players resorted to this method, because they did not want to stop playing at the height of their luck. At the beginning of the war, the rate was 50 marks an hour and

there were almost always willing men to buy themselves free from a shift.<sup>40</sup> The men of each squad (or the men of a dugout if several squads billeted together) oversaw the wake-ups and the changes of shifts: the clock was hung on the central pole or on the wall so that the fire guardsman – i.e. the man who had last arrived from duty – could see the time. If the post was close, the guardsmen took care of the wake-up.

Usually, the men tried to avoid four or six shifts, because in that case the same men would be on duty at the same time. This was unpleasant to those who happened to get the 2AM-4AM, 10AM-noon and 6PM-8PM shifts (in other words, two shifts in the dark). In order to have more variation, a few one-hour shifts were introduced in the daytime or some other corresponding measures were taken.

Distribution of the haversack rations was another common function of the squads. Every day or every other day, depending on the kitchen orderly or the prevailing situation, the machine gun men received their package of butter, sugar, tobacco, coffee substitute and cheese or marmalade. On Sundays, they also got biscuits (crackers) and rusks.<sup>41</sup> The entire squad followed the distribution with great interest. The gun leader usually delivered the goods, but because of the unpleasant nature of the job, he gladly passed it on to someone else. The men gathered around the rations and saw to it that no injustice would be done to anyone. However, they were not as careful as the prisoners who cast lots to deliver their rations. By the end of the war, this measure had become so common that nobody even cared to suspect anyone of cheating. In fact, the men tried to avoid distributing the rations, because it had become such a boring routine.

The common machine gun of our army, the water-cooled Maxim 09, requires a rather large number of men: a machine gun squad where the gunner is responsible for the actual gun, the loader for the tripod, the observer and the cartridge carriers for the cartridges and the gun leader for the entire squad, the spare barrel and the cooling liquid. According to the manual, the other equipment of the squad – the saw, the axe, the hack, the billhook, the sledge, the tool kit, the flare pistol and the binoculars – were to be divided among the men, but they never acted accordingly. Instead, the squad took care of the equipment together.

The division of labour in a squad was fully determined by the men's personal capabilities. The company commander chose the gun leaders and he also saw to it that the platoons were approximately of the same size. The platoon leaders regulated the size of the squads, but the machine gun squad took care of its internal division of labour. In ordinary circumstances – when it was peaceful at the front or in

<sup>40</sup> Compare with Pentti Haanpää's excellent short story "Peli-Jaara" in "Yhdeksän miehen saappaat", pp.150-.

<sup>41</sup> When the connections between the front and the supply and maintenance unit were unreliable and long, in combat or at picket duty in Röhö, the men received all their provisions as haversack rations and had to cook their food.

times of rest – this did not play any important role, and the men seldom thought who the gunner or the loader was. The oldest men of the squad usually took it for granted that they were the gunners or gun loaders and the younger ones were put to carry the cartridges.

The internal control of the squads worked automatically during short combat periods. However, the squads were led by the gunners and the gun leaders who together with the gun loaders made final decisions about the position and firing activity of the machine guns. The observer was seldom on duty as an observer and was hardly needed in relatively well-manned positions. Sometimes he served as a cartridge carrier and sometimes as a gunner. The cartridge carriers' work was relatively light when the men were in their positions, because the gun loader, the gunner and the gun leader saw to it that enough ammunition was always available. However, if the campaign was mobile, the cartridge carriers had plenty of work. In such a case, the observer and even the gun leader carried cartridge belts. Two men – even one – can operate a gun in its position, but all the men are needed to carry the ammunition.

All the men of a squad participated in its control. If someone was left behind or got lost, nobody would set out to look for him. Either he could find his way back – and everything would be fine – or he disappeared and the loss had to be taken with the same calmness as other losses were taken. Sometimes it was relatively difficult to stay together in thick forest terrain. Therefore, instead of risking the dispersal of the entire squad, it was better to face the risk of losing a man. There were only a few of these mobile operations and someone in the company would always get lost during an attack. In such an event, however, one could not notice any sign of anger among the men. Soldier 293 vanished on the evening before the company's first assault on the Karelian Isthmus or the departure of soldier 497 from the front in Ihantala aroused much more interest. In general, the machine gun squads worked and stuck together well. The entire first squad of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon got lost on the Karelian Isthmus; however, it stuck together and reappeared at the command post to receive new orders.<sup>42</sup>

The men's other common functions – chopping wood, cleaning, fetching water and construction work – were primarily common functions of the local squads that I will deal with later on.

As far as the men's special tasks are concerned, the squads' internal control materialized more poorly. In these, I include care of those parts of the machine gun gear – primarily the gun and the tools – whose care was everyone's responsibility. The gunner and the gun loader were formally responsible for the gun and it was seen that the cleaning of the gun was solely their responsibility. They would get help from the other squad members if they asked for it. In exchange for the help

---

<sup>42</sup> Compare with pp.102–103 above.

they received, however, the gunner and the gun loader were expected to help the others in cleaning the cartridge belts.

Based on this division of labour, the gunner and the gun loader were of the opinion that nobody else was allowed to shoot just for fun and thereby dirty the gun. Those who were found guilty were obliged to clean the gun, too. Were it really necessary to shoot, the gun would be cleaned together. The spirits were high even after a small squabble and the cleaning was done while the men went through the events. However, such interruptions were quite rare during the quiet period at the front.

The machine gun was usually covered and oiled well and nobody would care to shoot. The recruits, rifle infantry men, fire observers and visiting officers sometimes showed interest in shooting, but the machine gun men asked them not to shoot so that they could avoid cleaning the gun afterwards. Usually the men and the NCOs – at least – respected this reasoning. (The other reason for their unwillingness to shoot was the fact that they did not want to reveal their positions to the enemy.

So, the men controlled one another's behaviour in the positions and trenches, both in combat and in times of quiet, and made remarks if someone – due to lack of caution – was about to reveal both himself and the positions.<sup>43</sup>)

Consequently, the gun was cleaned quite seldom. In fact, months could pass and the box would not be opened. Furthermore, because of a lack of caution and without anybody noticing, the gun was sometimes not cleaned after it had been used. For example, after an alert in Lammaslahti, soldier 461 once left the barrel jacket full of water. Only after a week had passed did the gun leader notice that water had leaked into the box. All his authority was needed to make the gunner, soldier 461, begin cleaning the badly rusted mechanism of the gun. The men had possibly noticed the matter before him but did not care about the incident and declined to help. In their opinion, it was the gun leader's responsibility to supervise things. However, since all the duties had become normal routines already during the first months of the war, he was almost always of the opinion that the men were familiar with one another's duties and could execute a certain amount of internal control. Naturally, there were conscientious squad leaders in the company who kept very close watch over their men.

The tools, just like the gun gear, were common property of the squads, but some of the men thought the tools were their own property. For example, if someone had "evacuated" an axe, he regarded it as his own. The men used the word "ours" when they talked about their gun whereas an axe would be referred to as "NN's axe". The squads kept a very close eye on the tools even though they were private

---

<sup>43</sup> Compare with page 105–106 above.

property. A lost tool caused much more commotion than a rusted lock on a machine gun or a lost cartridge belt.

So, judging from the tight control, the tools were much more important than the machine gun. This was due to the fact that they were used in necessary tasks on a daily basis while the latter was needed only in exceptional circumstances. So, when on the march, the entire machine gun gear was left in the driver's care: it could be on the load so that none of the men would care about it. In contrast, the tools were well looked after; at the same time as the gun rusted and got filled with rubbish, the axe and the saw were carefully packed on the load. The men saw to it that they would not be damaged and someone also checked on every break that the tools were still there.

Things were the same with the sub-machine guns: someone who had obtained a gun thought of it as his private property that, however, was used by the entire squad. The owner always had a preferential right to the gun and it could not be used without his permission. Besides, the men lent them very unwillingly to other squads. They acted in the same manner with flare pistol cartridges, which were very important during the dark times of the year. Single men on guard duty seldom dared to lend them to men who were in other companies' positions, because the cartridges were the common property of the entire squad and nobody could be certain whether the loan would be paid back or not.

In other words, we can see how the internal control of the machine gun squads was stronger when their functions were more interesting to the entire squad and weaker when less interesting things were at stake. The even distribution of common duties and activities among the men was supervised very carefully. With regard to more special tasks, the tightness of control depended on their value to the entire squad in a concrete situation.

The squads were very little interested in the private lives of their men. As long as the squads' functions were not disturbed, everybody was free to do whatever he wanted. Even matters related to one's duty – if they did not concern the entire squad – were regarded as private affairs. For example, the squads were totally ignorant of the way their men looked after their personal arms and skis. At the most, these matters were relevant to the gun leader, the platoon leader or the logistic NCO.

As far as the functions did not concern the entire squad, the men expressed very little interest in one another. The comrades were accepted as they were, because one could do nothing to change them. Nothing could be done to have them transferred and there was no chance of getting a transfer for oneself. The men tried to be on the best possible terms with one another, because one could not do much to alter the situation. Naturally, their opinions could often differ both in practical matters and in wider questions of principle.

However, such conflicts were seldom serious and the comrades attempted to serve as intermediaries if a serious conflict was imminent.<sup>44</sup> It must be said that in general the squads lived in harmony. The men adjusted themselves after their arrival, and – as far as I know – only once did a machine gun squad reject a man because he was abnormal. He was pathologically afraid of being left alone and would start shooting without any reason when on duty. Therefore, the men turned to their company commander who dispatched the man to a hospital for further observation; he never came back.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, it can be expected there was internal control at the platoon-level and that it would also affect the inter-group control between the machine gun squads. It was necessary to have the entire platoon assembled for this control to work. This, however, happened only when the company was on the march or at rest. On those occasions, the division of the company into machine-gun squads was usually of less importance, because the platoons or the half-platoons took care of the common duties. The company resorted temporarily to task forces if smaller units were needed. As a result, inter-group control would only rarely manifest itself in the platoons, because the squads had so few common tasks to share.

This, however, does not mean that there was not any control between the squads. The drivers saw to it that the squads controlled one another when they did not want to transport any other packages than those of their own squad<sup>46</sup>. Also, similar measures were taken when the half-platoons oversaw the distribution of rations or when the field latrine was dug. Inter-group control worked in so far as common duties were concerned. However, it worked between those groups that were relevant at a given time and, depending on the circumstances, these were more often half-platoons than machine gun squads.<sup>47</sup>

For a squad at the front, it did not make any difference how the other squads of the platoon functioned, i.e. how the military groups in the platoon took care of their special tasks. At the front, the squads did not have any common duties – except when they were at the same base. At the base, there was tight inter-group control within local groups, especially if machine gun and rifle infantry squads billeted together, but I will deal more fully with this in the following chapter.

On the contrary, inter-group control of the platoons within the company's sphere could manifest itself even at the front. As long as the furloughs rotated between the platoons, the men constantly made sure that their platoon's rights were respected. There was control over the platoons' other common functions – i.e. guard and fatigue duty – when the company was assembled. Camp guard duty

---

<sup>44</sup> Compare with page 184 below.

<sup>45</sup> In this context, we can give an example where a group's internal control could even reach into one's private sphere: the same man was indescribably dirty and infested with lice and was therefore forced by the entire squad to go to sauna so that he wouldn't infect them with the lice.

<sup>46</sup> Compare with pages 87–88, 93–94 above.

<sup>47</sup> Compare with pages 85–86, 87–88, 93–94 above.



rotated between the platoons and it was almost unthinkable that some platoon would shirk its responsibility. Some routines such as potato peeling and cleaning as well as priority in the food queue (in Nurmes) and sauna bathing (in Ristilampi) rotated, too. Everybody took part in the supervision of these common activities. Sometimes, however, the company duty officer was not fully aware of the turns between the men and some men tried to take advantage of his uncertainty. In such a case, outsiders who were not directly involved were in control.

As far as special tasks are concerned, the machine gun platoons did not watch over one another, but they did keep an eye on the supply and maintenance unit. The unit held a unique position with its duties that concerned the platoons very closely. In peaceful conditions, the platoons could take care of their special tasks in their own way. Minor neglect usually went unnoticed and was always condemned mildly. The men at the front always thought they were above the others and that they were entitled to certain privileges, too. The supply and maintenance unit, whose duty was to serve the front, did not have the same privileges; if the unit assumed privileges, it happened at the front's expense. However, it was taken almost for granted that the unit used its position to obtain some advantages.

The most important task of the supply and maintenance unit was to deliver warm food, haversack rations and mail to the combat troops when the company was stationed at the front. Under those circumstances, it happened very seldom that the driver of the food vehicle did not show up. Those few occasions aroused a lot of anger among the men and the driver, soldier 448, who failed to turn up a few times and had to bear a lot of shame. He was criticized much more than the guard who fell asleep at his post.<sup>48</sup> It happened much more often that a driver forgot to deliver the food rations that had been entrusted to him. As a result of such forgetfulness, short remarks were made about his competence on the whole. If the men were left without clean underwear for a long time, if the tobacco bought arrived a day late or if the rations were smaller than usual, it was taken as proof of the incompetence and slackness of the supply and maintenance unit. In such a case, the men would send more or less abusive greetings to the company sergeant major, the staff sergeant or the kitchen orderly.

The negligence of the supply and maintenance unit aroused the strongest indignation in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon during the battle in Ihantala when the dead body of corporal 259 was left lying on the roadside for almost two days. It was the unit's duty to take the fallen to the rear and not fulfilling this almost sacred duty was considered unheard of – especially because it had enjoyed relative quiet during these bloody days and because there were enough men in the unit.

---

<sup>48</sup> Compare with page 103 above.



Somewhat slighter but still deep enough indignation was aroused by lance corporal 555's furlough: he was the first man to go on leave after the suspension of leave was reversed just before the armistice was concluded. According to the list of people on leave, it was his turn but he was a driver who had never appeared at the front during the battle in Ihantala. In addition, many men at the front had been without leave almost as long as he had. Their resentment was not directed only at lance corporal 555, who stubbornly stuck to his right that was based on the list but also – and even to a greater extent – at corporal 505, who was the company clerk. He kept the list of people on leave and it was commonly believed that he misused his position to obtain advantages for the supply and maintenance unit. The undivided opinion of the men at the front was that the unit's men had no right to go on leave before all the men at the front had been on leave once. They expressed their opinion to the company commander, who put the blame on his short term of service in the company and referred them to the company sergeant major. He, in turn, hid behind the commander's back. They did not arrive at a conclusion before the suspension of leave was reintroduced. Moreover, lance corporal 555 returned – to everybody's delight – from the regimental headquarters before he had even managed to get on the train.

The attitude of the men at the front towards the personnel of the supply and maintenance unit – contempt mixed with envy – was probably a result of the strict control the supply and maintenance unit directed at them. The men at the front eagerly received stories about the supply and maintenance unit's irregularities even though the only way for them to interfere was to show their disapproval. In particular, the warehousemen were suspected of misappropriation whereas the ordinary drivers were only envied for their easier and less dangerous duty. The drivers tried to defend themselves with their heavier work and their longer days: they had to drive all day long whereas the men at the front had only a few hours of guard duty. However, nobody took this argument seriously, not even the drivers themselves, and most people probably thought along the lines of a song that was sung by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment at the front:

“ — I needn't worry about attacking if I get a transfer to the supply and maintenance unit — ” ( — ”*siirron jos saan töpinään, ei tarvis mennä hyökkäämään* — ”)<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, the men did not hide their malicious pleasure when someone from the supply and maintenance unit was sent to the front – usually because of some mischief. They waited in excitement to see how staff sergeant 201 would adapt himself to the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, where he had been transferred as a punishment for hitting the commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Company. Until then, he had only served in the supply and maintenance unit but nobody had held any grudge against him. As

<sup>49</sup> The song has been printed in “Pohjan Poika” and reprinted in “Korsusta Korsuun”, Kiestingin ja Uhtuan suuntain korsu- ja marssilauluja (a book of dugout and marching songs used in the direction of Kiestinki and Uhtua), p.67.

the company sergeant major, he had always been full of understanding towards the men at the front. However, he was a bit slack. The staff sergeant turned out to be an excellent soldier in Ihantala and won the respect of all the men.

Instead, the medical NCO – sergeant 547 – became an object of derision, because he was incapable of hiding his dissatisfaction and fear when he was ordered to serve in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon for a while after the battle in Ihantala. In fact, the entire front laughed when the supply and maintenance unit had to be more often on guard duty than the men at the front. In a similar manner, they thought it was fair that the unit had to man a gun in Salmijoki whereas in Ihantala they attempted to get more drivers as replenishments to the front. In some directions, it was clearly more common that transfers to the front were used as a measure of punishment; though, the higher command did not approve of this:

“——It has occurred in some units that transfer to the front has been used as a means of punishment. Therefore, I order my subordinate commanders to see to it that nothing like that happens. It is an offence against the men at the front to use the front as a place of deportation. If transfer to the front can be used as a means to improve the life of an undisciplined man (e.g. misuse of alcohol and so on), the transfer – if it is resorted to – must not be said to be the punishment.

Chief of Staff  
Lieutenant Colonel V. Karanko

Chief of the Personnel Section  
Captain E. Urponen.”<sup>50</sup>

The drivers were in every way considered to be inferior to the men at the front. When the company moved into a house in Pindusi, staff sergeant 404 made a remark about the dirty room: “Their horse drivers must have lived here”. The drivers themselves dismissed the contempt by referring to their enviable position, but outside the company they sometimes presented themselves as men from the front. For example, soldier 304 once presented himself on a leave train as a gunner from Pirunsaari but did not notice that a comrade from his company was standing nearby. Naturally, to the disgrace of soldier 304 and the drivers, he passed on the story to the company.

The men of the cartridge centre, the veterinary NCOs, the orderly NCO and the orderlies saw to it that they were included in the company combat strength and not in the supply and maintenance unit. They did not allow the men to call them “guys from the unit” (“*töpinäukkoja*”) even though they usually billeted close to the unit.

---

<sup>50</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> Division, number 5604/1/7a/secret/November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1943; War Archives 11945.

It can very well be said that most men at the front hoped to get a transfer to the supply and maintenance unit; however, there were also those, both NCOs and men, who did not want to leave the front. Depending on the circumstances, the NCOs were probably somewhat less willing to serve in the unit than the men, because they would get enmeshed in red tape. Some NCOs at the front who were transferred to the unit tried eagerly and long to trade places with someone, because they did not like being there. The actual logistic NCOs - veterinary NCO (sergeant 547), staff sergeant (sergeant 264) and the clerk (corporal 505) - willingly admitted that they were not suitable for service at the front. However, they emphasized that their work was strenuous and unrewarding.

There were also drivers, for example soldier 178, who wished for a transfer to the front. However, he got the following answer from the company commander: "Good men are needed in the supply and maintenance unit too".

The officers regarded the supply and maintenance unit as a gathering place for the laziest and stupidest men whereas the men saw it as a retreat for veterans or unhealthy and physically weak men. The latter argument was widespread among the men who had served a long time in the company and applied for a transfer to the unit.

The record of strength from March 1944 shows that the men's average length of service was higher in the supply and maintenance unit than at the front: 26.1 months in the unit and 20.7 among the combat troops. 53.8 % of the men in the supply and maintenance unit and 27.0 % of the men at the front had arrived in the company during 1941. Most of the elderly men in the unit had been wounded at the beginning of the war or had obtained the position of driver on their return to the company.

### **3 Local Groups**

The men formed local groups at various bases when the battalion was stationed at the front. The size and composition of the groups varied. The so-called front line was made up of a barbed-wire obstacle that had been built in the most advantageous manner; in other words so that the forward terrain was as open and easily controllable as possible. The battalion's sector in Kiestinki can be regarded as a typical example. The barbed-wire obstacles followed suitable swamps so that the men could have a good field of fire and the bases were situated at varying distances from one another so that they could exercise control over the forward terrain from their nests. The bases consisted of a dugout or two, a short trench and nests for automatic weapons. The sector was divided between the companies so that each rifle company had a sector of its own. The machine gun platoons were attached to the rifle companies and the machine guns were placed at the most suitable bases.

In addition, each company sector had a mortar forward observer and an artillery observer.

Here and there – from the path that wound from one base to another – roads departed to the rifle companies' command posts. From there, the roads went further to the battalion command post where the commander of the machine gun company, the cartridge centre, the battalion aid station, the telephone centre, the battalion's reserves and the canteen were placed, too. From there on, the roads extended to the battalion's supply and maintenance where the offices, the stores, the stalls and the logistic personnel's barracks of the various companies were situated. The roads extended further to the rear to the regiment's supply and maintenance, to the division, to Kiestinki and on to Finland. In the wilderness sectors, the roads to the battalion's supply and maintenance were only bridle paths where only horse sleds could be used. In Karhumäki and on the Karelian Isthmus, however, there were proper roads.

In other words, the machine gun men were never alone at any base and they were separated from their company comrades at the front. They often had their own dugouts, such as in Sintosenlahti, in Poventsa and in Salmijoki, but they had to share a dugout with rifle infantrymen in Lammaslahti and share a tent in Röhö. Thus, the tactical conditions facilitated the formation of groups that were more or less of a temporary nature. The basic elements of these local groups – the machine gun squads and the rifle squads – fulfilled partly common and partly special tasks.

Guard duty was a form of common action within the local groups only in exceptional circumstances, because the machine gun men usually kept guard with their guns whereas the rifle infantrymen were responsible for their posts. The rifle infantry and the machine gun men were very seldom responsible for the same posts. Therefore, these groups exercised control over their own men's performance on guard duty, but this does not mean that they would have been totally uninterested in each other in this respect. If a group or its member neglected their duties, the others would react and put the blame for the breach on the entire group. The control was always latent even though such neglect of duty was few and far between.

With respect to the delivery of rations, the local group did not exercise any control. Machine gun squads and rifle squads received their rations separately and took care of their division amongst themselves. They received their rations from the same driver only in exceptional circumstances. This system made it possible to exercise control over the respective supply and maintenance unit: the men could compare their rations – just like one could compare soups – with those of the rifle infantrymen. If they were dissatisfied with the provisions, they could refer to how things were in the other companies. As for the bread, it did not matter whose it was. In every dugout there was a breadbox that was used by all the men. Sometimes

it was fetched from the machine gun company's store and at other times from the rifle company's store.

Thus, maintenance of the dugout was the only form of common action. The chopping of firewood rotated between men in the dugouts – regardless of whether they were machine gun, rifle infantry or fire control men – and the men's turns were usually based on their place in the dugout. Control, exercised by all the men, had to be used over and over again, but if a man was missing, no detours via his military group were made to find him. At bases where all dead trees had been already been used, the groups took turns to get a horse from the supply and maintenance unit. In general, little attention was paid to cleaning. It rotated nominally, too, but in practice it was done by someone who happened to be willing to do it, because his disgust overcame his laziness.

At picket Kuukkeli in Röhö, the men emptied the tent once a week. They carried out the dry spruce twigs, dusted the blankets and the greatcoats, swept the tent stove and the ground under it and carried in new spruce twigs for their beds. The repair and improvement of their common dugout was done as voluntary work if several men were needed. At other times, the repairs were left to those who were willing to take the initiative. For example, when the roof of the dugout leaked in Nyberg forest, it was repaired together one morning. Also, all the men took turns to empty the dugout of water and to dig drainage when it was flooded with melting snow in Nordic Forest (see p. 60).

At the bases, all such duties that did not concern the shared billeting place were regarded as special tasks of the military groups. Thus, the rifle infantry squads did not care about the machine gun nests, just as the machine gun men were uninterested in light machine gun nests and battle trenches. Sometimes even the officers' authority was not enough to detach men from their military group and move them to work in another group's positions. Despite repeated orders – even from the battalion commander – the men did not bother to dig battle trenches in Kuukkeli, because the trenches were for the rifle infantry. On the other hand, they took part – though, somewhat unwillingly – in building barbed-wire obstacles.

On the whole, no positions were dug on the island of Boks in Salmijoki before the Russians' attack on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Even after that, the machine gun men concerned themselves only with machine gun nests. At picket 5 in Lammaslahti, however, all the men participated in digging a battle trench that was also a crawl trench to the machine gun nest. In other words, it was useful for both groups. There, the cooperation was possibly facilitated by the fact that the men's usually separatist attitude had been softened by their shared guard duty.<sup>51</sup>

In general, the battalion received positions that had been ready built. Thus, there was only a limited amount of actual construction work. Sometimes, however,

---

<sup>51</sup> Compare with page 109 above.

positions had to be changed or improved at the bases. The work was carried out amidst widespread murmur: the men were of the opinion that the work did not pay off, because they usually had to move on as soon as they had completed it. To a large extent, the men's unwillingness to work can be explained with this attitude and their view that the supply and maintenance unit – which was thought to spend its time in idleness – should be commanded to carry out necessary construction work at the front. The higher command gave its blessing to this idea at the end of the war; in Salmijoki, the supply and maintenance unit, which composed of men from the various companies, built wooden parts for the nests and dugouts. The 4<sup>th</sup> Company applied a similar system in Lohilahti where it put its reserve platoon to dig trenches at the company's forward positions.

As can be seen from the above example about picket Kuukkeli, the officers' authority did not always suffice to alter the men's deep-rooted group attitudes. In Röhö, the officers were stationed a long way away and were only represented by a corporal as the picket chief. In addition, the work in Röhö consisted of special tasks. Therefore, the example does not show how the men behaved in the presence of the officers of those companies to whom they were subordinated. Thus, the men held the view that the base commander did not have authority in all situations over the men who were merely subordinated to him. He had to pass his orders via the men's squad leader and sometimes the inner-group control of the military groups' members was exercised by the groups themselves.

Even though it was seldom the case, it would undeniably have been more practical if the various machine gun squads at the front line had had joint supply and maintenance with the rifle companies. Nor did the men approve of such an arrangement<sup>52</sup>, because they knew from their previous experience that the rifle companies would never pay much attention to their wellbeing. In addition, the complaints they most probably would put forth would be ignored. In short, they would be regarded as a strange and troublesome burden. (The machine gun company's officers were familiar with and shared the men's views in this regard and attempted to arrange things so that machine gun men would be supplied and maintained directly from their company). Both single men and groups had acknowledged places of their own in a company and could, if required, exercise control. If subordinated to a strange company, they were intruders without any rights and were cut off from their own group, too.

Therefore, it must be asked why the machine gun and rifle infantry squads associated so well with each other that - for example - they shared guard duty at picket 5 in Lammaslahti and at Kuukkeli in Röhö. This can probably be explained by the fact that those men of the 4<sup>th</sup> Company who fought alongside the machine gun company's men in Lohilahti were rotated every other week whereas the rifle infantrymen at picket 5 and Kuukkeli were not rotated at all during the two months the battalion manned these pickets. Consequently, after some time of

---

<sup>52</sup> Compare with page 100–101 above.

coexistence that the men did not expect to last long, these groups assimilated. The coordinated control that was exercised from above was more limited at the pickets that were led by a staff sergeant or a corporal. Therefore, the men bore more responsibility for the functioning of their groups.

## 4 Age Groups

Groups other than organizationally or tactically based ones can be found in the company, too. Of these, groups based on the men's age are in the foreground.

As has been noted before, the company sometimes received its reinforcements in bigger contingents and sometimes in groups of two or three men. The bigger part of these replenishments arrived, as can be seen from the table below, in rather strong contingents. Only 130 men came privately or in small groups:

Table 12 Reinforcement groups

1941	June	12.-15.	0+5+77=82	Freshly called up reserves
	July	3.	0+0+34=34	Freshly called up reserves
		31.	1+2+10=13	Freshly called up reserves and from home front units
	August	20.	0+2+9=11	Freshly called up reserves and returnees from hospitals
Before and during the "motti"-stage			1+9+130=140	
1941	September	16.	0+1+8=9	Reserves from home front units and returnees from hospitals
		30.	0+4+7=11	Reserves from home front units and returnees from hospitals
1942	February	17.	0+0+17=17	Recruits, and 1922 age group
	March	1.	0+7+25=32	Reserves from the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Company of the 12 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 1912 age group and younger
In Lohilahti			0+12+57=69	
1942	October	30.	0+0+45=45	Recruits, 1923 age group
In Nurmes			0+0+45=45	
1943	October	20.	0+0+22=22	Recruits, age group 1924
1944	April	17.	0+4+18=22	Reserves from the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Company of the 12 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment & the Headquarters Company of the 6 <sup>th</sup> Division
1944	May	16.	0+0+9=9	Reserves from the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Company of the 12 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment & Headquarters Company of the 6 <sup>th</sup> Division

---

In Karhumäki			0+4+49=53	
1944	July	12.	0+13+31=44	Freshly called up reserves, age group 1910 and older
1944	August	18.	0+2+32=34	Freshly called up reserves, age group 1905 and older
On the Karelian Isthmus			0+15+63=78	
<b>TOTAL</b>			1+40+344=385	

---

I think primarily of the men's seniority in service when I talk about age groups later on. However, this is not sufficient to determine their group placement, because a distinction was drawn between reservists who had done their military service in peacetime garrisons and had served at the front before and recruits, conscripts, who had only served in training centres. In other words, a reservist who was new in the company was treated differently from a recruit.

If we look at the age groups according to their arrival in the company, we can see that only a few of its oldest veterans were left when the company stationed itself in Sintosenlahti. Although most men of this "original batch" (*alkuperäinen revohka*) had not been part of the group all the way from Saunakangas - but had arrived in several turns in Kuusamo, Pisto and "motti" - they regarded themselves as an age group of their own when the company received reinforcements in September. The group (0+5+15) that arrived then was put together with five veterans into the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon.

When the platoon built itself a new dugout, the veterans thought it was better to live in the old one than to move to the new and more spacious dugout.<sup>53</sup> Right after the arrival of the recruits, these men had showed that the old men were superior to the others: they freely and easily visited friends in the surroundings, adopted a competent and somewhat patronizing tone when there was talk about guard duty and kept themselves somewhat apart from the daily routines of the rest of the platoon. They did not care about chopping wood and were not so precise about the exact changing of the guard.

Partly because of the billeting conditions, the platoon of newcomers was somewhat isolated from the rest of the company all the way till the beginning of the breakthrough battles. During that time – both during and after the battles – the platoon's men came into closer contact with their older company comrades. During the long winter months, their assimilation progressed to such a point that at the beginning of the following year hardly anybody thought that the men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon were younger. They were given the right to go on leave after the breakthrough battles, too.

---

<sup>53</sup> Compare with page 104–105 above.



The recruits who arrived in September were reservists and their fast and complete assimilation may be explained with the above things. The fact that they were familiar with the way of life in the army (*“armeijan meininki”*) made it easier for them to adapt. The company’s veterans also thought the reservists were perfectly satisfactory soldiers, because they had “worn the King’s crown” before.

However, things were different with the recruits who arrived in February. At the most, they had half a year of service behind them at a training centre on the home front. In addition, the training had taken place during the war with no chance for “old-time bullying”. In other words, in no way could they be considered equals. Also, these men stuck out even more, because they were dispersed into different combat platoons. The estrangement of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon’s men during the autumn did not matter so much to the other older men of the other platoons, who first and foremost regarded the newcomers as members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, i.e. members of another group, with whom they did not have constant dealings. In contrast, the recruits who arrived in February were constantly nearby and when discussions touched upon previous experiences or conditions at the front – something that often happened – their estrangement could be noted immediately. This was especially the case when something unusual happened – something that needed an explanation.

In fact, it was not difficult for the newcomers to adapt, because ordinary days at the front were not particularly complex. In a couple of weeks, they were totally in the routine. They realized but did not want to admit, that their position as representatives of another age group was different from that of the older men. The older men took it for granted that they had the right of priority to pleasant assignments and furloughs and that the recruits did all kinds of odd jobs. As we know, the men followed the principle of seniority in the peacetime garrisons, too, where the “old guard jaegers” (*“kantajääkärit”*) together with the NCOs bullied the recruits. This attitude survived at the front, too.

The four recruits of this group who were placed in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon happened to end up in the same half-platoon. Thus, they had to billet in the same dugout. They formed a mess kit group that was divided in two when – after a while – soldiers 199 and 296 were ordered to participate daily in the battalion’s course for NCOs. These recruits did not become targets of any severe bullying; all regular work was divided evenly, but when something pleasant came up – e.g. when there was an Easter celebration in the canteen – the older men wanted to take advantage of their precedence. In addition, the recruits did not get a furlough before the older men had had their turn.

In contrast, those reservists who arrived somewhat later from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion were placed on the leave list according to the same principle as the company’s old men, even though some of these protested quite energetically. It was the company commander who made the decision. He was almost of the same opinion as his

men - even though he lived apart from them - concerning affairs between the old and new men in the company. As opposed to the recruits, the Santa Clauses (*"joulupukit"*) from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion were "one of us" because they had served in the same regiment. Besides, they were better acquainted with the ways of the army.

For example, they knew how to look after their rights when furloughs were concerned: they had a unanimous opinion that they did not hesitate to express to the company commander. In contrast, the recruits were not familiar with the prevailing conditions. The older men tried to assure them that the company commander would not let them go on leave before they the older ones had had their turn. However, it did not occur to the recruits to express their undivided opinion to the commander in this matter.

Just like the reinforcements that had arrived in September, the Santa Clauses were soon assimilated and began to be regarded as old men in the company. However, in order to distinguish themselves from the company's own old men, they held on to their nickname (i.e. *"joulupukit"*). As time went on, they began to set the tone in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon. However, they acted less as an age group than as a home district group.<sup>54</sup>

The recruits who had arrived in February were acknowledged as old men when the company received 45 new recruits in October. The line was drawn between those who had been in Kiestinki and those who had arrived in Nurmes: the former were frontline soldiers and the latter from the home front. The recruits were kept as one unit in the service even though they belonged nominally to different fighting platoons and were also a target of the old men's special attention. When the company organized itself, the duty officer arranged some fun by exercising the recruits for a while as the old men looked on and commented on their performance. All such control over the recruits had the company commander's approval and was considered to be part of their training.<sup>55</sup> Even the officers – who assigned the tasks to the men – gave their approval to the view that the old men had right of precedence to easier jobs.

For the most part, in a similar manner, the company commander gave his blessing to the older men's view about how the furloughs should be organized. One may also mention the following as an example of the older men's privileges: the frequency of visits to the battalion aid station increased considerably in Nurmes mainly because those who declared themselves to be sick were exempted from duty before noon. Naturally, the company commander knew this age-old trick and promised – as was common in the peacetime garrisons – to punish malingerers. However, this practice concerned only the recruits. If some of the older men showed up for an unnecessary visit, the commander let the matter go unnoticed.

<sup>54</sup> Compare with pages 135–136, 159–160 below.

<sup>55</sup> Compare with page 117–118 above.

When the company held field exercises, the men wished in particular for orders to assist in cleaning the barracks, because those who participated in it had very little to do and could loiter around for most of the day. The older men took this work in turns, but they seldom cut enough firewood and never carried any water inside. They thought it was enough if they swept the floors a little. When the company came back from the exercise, the duty officer chose a few recruits to cut more wood and carry water. The recruits grumbled, but they had to bend to the unanimous and determined opinion of the older men.

The company's recruits were kept as a group of their own as long as the company stayed in Nurmes. In January, when the company was transferred to the front again and the recruits were – even in practice – distributed among the platoons, their assimilation began to proceed faster, because their special status was no longer weighed by differences in their service and living conditions. Their assimilation took place just as unnoticed as the previous time, even though this contingent was considerably bigger. They were treated just like the others after a relatively short time; only in some situations did they come across as recruits to the rest of the company.

The group of recruits who arrived in the company in October 1943 was not treated as severely as the recruits who had joined the company in Nurmes. However, the company was stationed in a garrison and the recruits billeted and organized as a separate unit even though – just as in Nurmes – they were divided among the platoons right after their arrival. The duty officer trained the men a little as they organized, but they were not given any special recruitment exercise. On the contrary, they participated in the company's everyday activities just like the rest of the men. A week later, when the company moved to the front, they were assimilated just like the previous groups of recruits.

That rather big group of reservists that came mainly from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion to the company in April 1944 was treated in a similar manner as the Santa Clauses: they were part of the regiment and some of them had been transported from the company to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion as part of the rotation in March 1943. Things were totally different with those old reservists who arrived in July and August to fill the gaping holes caused by the battle in Ihantala. Because of their age, they were called "militiamen" (*"nostomiehet"*) even though they did not belong to the militia. They had all been called up at the outbreak of the war but had been demobbed at some point in 1942. Thus, they were experienced soldiers and most of them had experience at the front from the Winter War, too.

The men's attitudes towards the militiamen more resembled their attitudes towards the Santa Clauses than towards the recruits; however, the militiamen were not seen as belonging to the company in the same way as the Santa Clauses did. Their presence was considered somewhat temporary and even they thought of their call-up as a passing period. While all the older men in the company – even the

Santa Clauses who had arrived in April 1944 - were acquainted with the army's routine, accepted the conditions as such and got on fairly well, these "militiamen" had the following attitude: "why are old men unnecessarily teased here?" (*"miksi nyt vanhoja miehiä suotta täällä kiusataan?"*). That attitude was a result of their intolerance and inability to resign themselves to the circumstances. When the company's older men cursed one thing or the other, they did not mean anything serious, because they knew that they could not do anything about it.

On the other hand, the militiamen buried themselves in things and analyzed everything they disliked; above all, they paid attention to the unpleasant sides of military service. The company's veterans – the Santa Clauses and the recruits – had learnt that field service could provide many moments of happiness to an easily pleased and inventive person. They strived to make their life as tolerable as possible whereas the "militiamen" did not even attempt to make their life more pleasant. The latter obeyed the orders, dug diligently and were on good terms with their comrades. However, all this happened listlessly and with a murmur and was in sharp contrast to the ways of the company's own men who shirked their duties, loitered, quarrelled and pleased themselves with the prospect of getting some unexpected benefit.

As a result of such an attitude, the position of the "militiamen" as a special group was emphasized. They formed their own mess kit groups instead of joining those of the other men of the company. They did not want to go in for stealing during the march in Lapland. Instead, they thought it better to march with the company in a well-behaved manner. Thus, one can hardly say that these two groups of "militiamen" were assimilated in the company. They did not share the prevailing views of the other men; rather, they considered them childish and unworthy to the dignity of settled older men.<sup>56</sup>

There was always some tension between the different age groups even though they were assimilated in the company after a while. The older men were on the one hand disturbed by the younger ones' laziness and, on the other, by their evident wish to be regarded as equals. One could constantly hear the older men complain about how the younger ones shirked all kinds of duties. So, both the officers and the NCOs were of the opinion that the young were harder to handle than the old. The older men thought they were entitled to certain privileges, but the recruits – who would soon make themselves at home – did not want to respect such privileges. The recruits thought they should have the same rights, because they did the same service as the older men.

The recruits tried to imitate the older men: they tried to wriggle out of work by referring to the fact that there were even younger men in the company or that

---

<sup>56</sup> This brings forward an interesting phenomenon: a group that for the most part obeys the pattern of behaviour based on the manual is in contrast to the rest of the company whose men follow common behaviour patterns that have been moulded by their own environment.

they had the right to shirk their duties just like anybody else. They loitered at their workplaces and were unwilling to obey their superior's orders. They paid close attention to the leave lists but returned late from their own leave. Things of that sort restricted the older men's privileges and this alone was enough to create a tense atmosphere between the various age groups. Since such behaviour meant abandonment of traditions that the older men had learnt to appreciate during their term of military service but that the recruits only became acquainted with in the company, they saw it as a break against good tone and general customs. Moreover, since the recruits were thought to shirk their duties in unsuitable circumstances or in an irresponsible manner, the tension increased further.

Despite this latent antagonism between these two group attitudes, there was not much control. This division into age groups did not take clear shape, because the men were randomly divided between military and local groups and because they were always of the opinion that they and their age group belonged to the older men's group. Even the youngest batch of recruits thought of themselves as part of that group after they had spent a month in the company. Control in the military and local groups – and over the men in these groups – was solely directed at general and special functions. In contrast, control in the age groups was primarily directed at the men's private lives; i.e. against something that was not of any direct or central interest to the military and local groups. The younger one's insubordination was not disliked because it would have disturbed group functions but because it was unfit for them to "open their mouth".

To some extent, belonging to an age group determined one's position in military and local groups. For example, whereas one's position in the company was unequivocally and absolutely determined by the military group, belonging to an age group was of relative nature and determined by the company's composition at a given time. As the company received reinforcements, the recruits who had arrived in Kiestinki in February were promoted and were "old men from Kiestinki" (*vanhoja Kiestingin miehiä*) by the end of the war. On the other hand, one could be old in his machine gun squad but also a recruit if he was compared with the reinforcements of September 1941.

The relativity of belonging to an age group was particularly evident in small groups. In the company as a whole, it could only be noticed because of that the men "advanced" as the company became younger. However, the men advanced mostly in their own eyes and in the eyes of the younger men, because the older ones always kept their age in mind and brought it up if it could benefit them. Sometimes one could notice that the formation of age groups broke the division of men into military groups. This happened, for example, when fatigue details were formed in Nurmes. One did not think that this or that platoon would receive orders for this or that service but that the older men should be comfortable. Another example that only shows how the age groups functioned but not how they broke the platoon division can be seen in Pindusi. The company received a

consignment of new trousers and the younger men who were alert got hold of the bulk of them. The older men (amongst whom “the men from Kiestinki” counted themselves) were really angry and reported to the staff sergeant, lance corporal 588 (who had arrived in the company during the “motti” stage), that he had been disloyal towards his age mates.

## 5 Home District Groups

It has already been stated above that two-thirds of the company’s original composition came from Lapland. This homogeneity diminished gradually and by the time of the demobilization, only a quarter of the people came from the north. There was always a big group of men from Lapland in the company even though it was never predominantly Lapp. As far as civil habits are concerned, one might think that this fairly big group was quite homogeneous nature.

To my understanding, one can talk about Lapland as a big and homogeneous cultural area that in many respects differs from southern Finland. In addition, the different parts of southern Finland also differ from one another. Therefore, I start from the assumption that the homogeneous Lapp environment was more suited to bring about uniform attitudes than the culturally more heterogeneous environments of central and southern Finland.

Now, it is very difficult to put forward firm proof about the actual existence of home districts or, for that matter, that they played any role in the company. If that was the case, they were formless just like the age groups. One could possibly mention the cooking teams as an example of home district groups that had a discernible organization. In the course of the withdrawal from Karhumäki, on the Karelian Isthmus and during the march in Lapland, corporal 206 from Ranua, lance corporal 461 from Iijoki, soldier 377 from Kemijärvi and soldier 323 from Kemijärvi formed a reliable mess kit group in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon. In addition, corporal 585 from Tampere and lance corporals 588 and 362 from Helsinki made up a cooking team in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon in Röhö, during the march to Nurmes as well as during the stay in Nurmes. Corporal 392 from Turku also joined the latter team.

The significance of these examples is greatly diminished when we take into consideration the fact that lance corporal 461 and soldier 323 in the first team belonged to the original composition of the company, that corporal 206 and soldier 377 had come in February 1942 and that all four men had served together in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon all the time. In addition, all three members of the latter team had served together in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon after their arrival in the company in August 1941. The fact that these men made up a cooking team may just as well be due to their belonging to the same age or military group.

Home leaves could eventually give an example of the contrasts between the north and the south. In addition to the ordinary days of leave, the men were awarded travel days whose number depended on one's destination. Men from the south, who generally had better connections home, often felt they were treated unfairly, because they got proportionately fewer days for travel than men from the north. The men from Lapland thought they were unfairly treated, too. The amount of travel days given to them often turned out to be insufficient, because connections up north were seldom trustworthy. The travel days often gave rise to long discussions where the men aired their more or less genuine animosities against the other home district groups.

The senior officers regarded the regiment as a Lapp contingent all through the war even though men from the south had replaced many of the Lapps over the years. It was called the "Regiment of Peräpohjola" (*"Peräpohjolan Rykmentti"*), "Swamp Jaegers" (*"Jänkäjääkärät"*) or something of the kind in the orders of the day, in speeches etc. These allusions to the Lapp nature of the regiment annoyed some of the men from the south. Corporal 585 complained about the matter in Nurmes and stated that the men from the south had considerably smaller chances to advance in the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment where "northern woodland men" (*"Pohjolan Jätkät"*) were favoured.

During the march in Lapland, when the northern men were delighted to see their home districts again, many southern men vented their indignation – led by corporal 57 from Helsinki – on the repulsiveness of Lapland. When their comrades from Lapland were not within earshot, the southerners slandered northern people by calling them wilful, sly and provincial. For their part, the northern men regarded the southerners as conceited, lazy and selfish.

Even though the senior officers tried to strengthen the men's sense of belonging to their home district by alluding to the native places of the original men, there was – as far as I know – no partiality with respect to promotions, furloughs, assignments or anything else. (In general, the senior officers did not seem to be aware of the changes in the company's – or the entire regiment's – composition and did not show much interest in the men's origins).

In the company, seven of the fourteen NCOs who were promoted came from the south; eleven of the twenty-seven men who were promoted to NCOs and fifteen of the forty-seven men who were promoted to the rank of lance corporal were southerners. The number of southerners who were promoted was smaller than the corresponding number of northerners, but so was also the number of southerners who served in the company. Besides, they had generally served a shorter time than the men from the north.



Based on a circular in the “Maaselkä Group” (*“Maaselän Ryhmä”*), there was evidently a strongly developed sense of belonging to a home district group in some parts of the officer corps:

“..... At the same time, I draw my subordinate commanders’ attention to that local patriotism that has become noticeable in different units and mostly among the commanders of these units. Foremost, this localism has manifested itself in that men from one’s province are in every possible respect – even totally undeservedly – given benefits. If a man comes from the same province as the unit, or its commander, he is given – often even ruthlessly bypassing men from other provinces - the qualifications that are required to be promoted or to be rewarded for one’s services. And if an officer from another province is transferred to a unit that is led by such a localist commander, the commander concerned will soon request that the officer be transported away, because he is good-for-nothing. Also, it often happens that the commander in question - in his hope of getting rid of such an unwelcome man – places the officer at a post where he certainly will not succeed.

Commander of the Maaselkä Group  
Lieutenant General T.Laatikainen

Chief of Staff  
Lieutenant Colonel Y.A.Järvinen.”<sup>57</sup>

To some extent, the age groups were also home district groups: the original men from the north, the reinforcements that arrived from North Finland, Oulu and Raahe in February, the Santa Clauses from Kemijärvi, the recruits that came to Nurmes from Raahe and Kainuu, the replenishment that came in October 1943 and the militiamen from southern Finland. Consequently, on the one hand, it is difficult to determine how much the men’s behaviour was based on their age and their home district and, on the other hand, what was dependant on their belonging to a military group. One could observe very strong group solidarity in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon in Nurmes and from there on. The platoon’s good spirit and cohesion were known in the entire company.

If the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon’s composition is compared with that of the other platoons, one can notice that (in March 1944) the average term of service in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was slightly longer, i.e. 21.3 months, than in the other platoons of the company where it was 20.7 months. Furthermore, if the fighting platoons are compared, the amount of men (seven) that entered before September 1941 was second smallest, the number of recruits (five) from the youngest age group was second smallest and the amount of Santa Clauses (eight) was second highest in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon.

<sup>57</sup> Personnel Section/Headquarters of the Maaselkä Group, number 4505/I/12 persons/June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1943; War Archives 11945.



Thus, the proportions between the various age groups were about the same as in the entire company.

If the composition of the platoons is studied on the basis of the men's home district, one can notice that – percentage-wise – both the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon and the Anti-tank Platoon had more northerners: 70.9 % and 75.0 % respectively against 67.7 % in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon. It is difficult to explain the cohesion under those circumstances in the light of these numerical facts. Clearly, there had been some changes in the platoon's composition after it left Kiestinki. As far as I can remember, even though I do not have any figures from that time, there were more Santa Clauses in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon than in the other platoons. This matter is of minor importance because it cannot be verified. Neither does it have any effect on my explanation according to which individuals have more significance than the percentage of the composition.

A group of colourful men from northern Finland served in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon (which the others had inappropriately nicknamed “the gang from Kemijärvi”, (*Kemijärveläisten sakkki*): sergeant major 40 from Kemijärvi, lance corporal 533 from Kemijärvi, corporal 13 from Kemi, soldier 385 from Kemijärvi, lance corporal 391 from Kuhmo, lance corporal 299 from Kemijärvi, corporal 181 from Oulu, soldier 421 from Kemi and so on. These were very close to the ideal of a northern man, a jack (*jätkä*), a lumberjack and a riverman, whose lifestyle is very suitable to a soldier in the field. These “jacks” dominated their platoon and brought up their comrades to their spirit. The other platoons could not parade with such strong personalities. Therefore, they did not show comparable group spirit even though their continuity was just as good.

The interest shown by the northern men towards one another could also be noticed when someone returned from leave. Rovaniemi, first and foremost, but also the parish villages of Kemijärvi, Kemi and Oulu, were all well-known places and centres of entertainment, and the men were eager to know how things were there. News spread fast in Lapland even though the distances were long. Therefore, it could be expected that people from neighbouring parishes had heard news from one's own village. It was not uncommon for the men to pay visits to other platoons to see what those who had returned from leave had to offer: rumours or something to eat. Men from the north knew one another or one another's circumstances from their civilian life and they could have common acquaintances even if they did not always know one another personally. In this way, the men from the north were connected not only by their similar home environment but also by other things. The southerners did not have similar chances to be acquainted with one another and thereby take an interest in one another as civilians.

One might have expected that there was a contrast between townsmen on the one hand and country people on the other hand. However, rather little attention was paid to whether one came from a town or from the countryside, and only some

people from Helsinki made an issue of their background. When they arrived in the company, the townsmen were often somewhat helpless in the face of the life in the wilderness. They were probably less content and therefore sometimes adopted a superior attitude towards the others and sought compensation by describing the temptations of living in a town with as happy colours as possible.

Apparently, this had very little effect on the country boys who – though they liked to go out on the town for a few days and maybe even dreamed about moving there – in any case thought that life in the countryside was safer. As regards pleasures, some of the company's men from Helsinki tried to amuse themselves with making a mockery of the country boys' simple taste, but these responded by referring to the crime and the lack of food in the towns. As can be seen, the contrast between country people and townsmen was of slight and traditional nature and – to my knowledge – it was smaller than the contrast between northerners and southerners.

## 6 Mess Kit Groups

As has been mentioned at various places above, there were mess kit groups in the company. They were small groups that consisted of about two to four good friends and comrades. When a man came to the company, he almost immediately sought a brother-in-arms from his military or local group and usually left his mess kit group only when he was transferred from the company. Hardly ever did the mess kit groups split up because of some discord between the comrades, but it could happen that a man left his group in order to ally himself with a newcomer.

It is self-evident that the mess kit groups consisted of men that represented the same military or local group. They often consisted of men from the same age group<sup>58</sup>, the same home district group<sup>59</sup> or the same rank group<sup>60</sup>; however, this was by no means a rule. As far as I could see, personal sympathies tied the members of the mess kit groups together: one's pleasures and hardships, packages from home and the "hoarded" potatoes, liquor and "unknown brides" were shared with other group members. One paid visits to the canteen, took absence of leave or chopped cubic metres of wood in their company. One also shared all household work with them: cooking, washing the dishes and getting food supplies.<sup>61</sup> Above all, the mess kit groups manifested themselves in the last-mentioned activities; they were also called cooking teams (*"keittoporukat"*).

---

<sup>58</sup> Compare with pages 152–153 and 155–156 above.

<sup>59</sup> Compare with pages 157–158 above.

<sup>60</sup> Compare with page 132–133 above.

<sup>61</sup> Compare with pages 88–89 and 119–120 above.

The cooking team members could be more or less intimately connected with one another. Some stuck together through thick and thin and never left one another's side while others looked at their relations more from an "economic" perspective and mainly attached importance to the even distribution of household work. I can hardly say more than this. It is impossible to give details about how the cooking teams functioned, because it would require much more exhaustive studies.

## V COMPLIANCE WITH FORMAL AND INFORMAL NORMS

### 1 Courage

Under the constant threat of being killed or wounded, the men became quite indifferent to the danger in their everyday lives. Usually, morale was high when the company marched to the front after a short period of rest in the rear, and no sign of anxiety about the increased danger could be detected. The march from Jääski to Kilpeenjoki was an exception in this regard; the men knew that the battalion was proceeding towards fierce battles and that the enemy's air activity was disquieting. The men had learnt from experience that – deep down – the dangers were not big at the front and that they would have to resort to special precautionary measures only in extraordinary circumstances. So, one could say that the men hardly thought about death during quiet periods at the front.

The nonchalance with which guard duty was taken care of at Lohilahti, the free and easy unconcern with which the men hunted in no-man's land in Röhö and the carelessness they showed when they did not dig proper battle trenches on the island of Boks meant anything but a constant threat of death on their minds. They did not give up on this attitude even in dangerous situations, which - for example - is shown by the fact that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon warmed its sauna in the immediate vicinity of the front. During times of quiet, it was almost normal for the men to take writing paper or something to read when they set out for guard duty, i.e. when they “set out to be afraid again” (*“mennään taas pelkäämään”*). However, this attitude was discarded when it became restless at the front.

However, the men's often surprising foolhardiness was not unreflecting and boastful nonchalance. Every such pattern of behavior was based on accumulated experience: the men knew what kind of risks could be taken without serious consequences. If the situation showed signs of becoming dangerous the men immediately took the necessary precautionary measures. For example, when the battalion was stationed in Sintosenlahti, the men did not dare smoke freely at their posts. When picket 5 received information that a strong Russian patrol was on the move, all the men at the picket took up their positions. A machine gun was manned when a rabbit let off a few mines in Lohilahti, and when the autumn became more impenetrable in Röhö, the men began to shift to two-man guards. In Poventsa, warning signs were placed in the trenches in places that were exposed to enemy observation.

We can talk about an economic principle in frontline soldier's actions: an effort to achieve as pleasant an existence as possible under as safe circumstances as possible. The thought of being in danger was not of current interest during the long and

peaceful years of trench warfare in 1942–1943. However, even though the everyday pattern of behaviour showed great lack of respect for death, there was always deep reverence for it in the background.

Depending on the circumstances and on the men's spirits, each squad had its own way of reaching this balance between as pleasant and as safe an existence as possible. Too much caution was considered ridiculous whereas too much courage was regarded as lack of judgement. However, the result was generally satisfactory. A certain normal amount of courage was expected of every soldier. Anyone willing could show signs of greater courage but that was his own affair.

Nevertheless, one was not allowed to put others in greater danger even if he himself had more courage. One could join a patrol if he wanted to distinguish himself or if he got pleasure from the excitement. These patrols were irrelevant to the men if they did not have immediate meaning for the squad. There was talk about "unnecessary rush" (*turhaa hosumista*) and in such cases the question was posed: "what good will you get from that?" (*Mitä sinä siitä paranet?*)

Those who volunteered in efforts to catch prisoners at Stalin's canal and in Salmijoki were in a way regarded as bold men. However, all their activities were considered almost irrelevant. Their performances could be judged on a "risk scale", but because their action was unnecessary – and successful patrols, by the way, were rewarded with additional leave – it did not arouse interest. The case was different with the anti-tank men who destroyed tanks in close contact in Ihantala. Their actions were of vital importance to the entire battalion and were more highly appreciated than the mere risk scale would have required.

Putting oneself in danger was not held in esteem as such, but taking risks and helping others at the same time was considered a noble deed. Therefore, in addition to the neutral danger-scale, it could be justified to claim that the men performed their evaluation on a moral – though on an unconscious – scale. Moreover, the performances of the anti-tank men required more courage than was generally expected from the men. The unanimous decision of the company to place the anti-tank men first in getting additional leave can be given as proof of their highly valued performance. These leaves had been given as a reward for the courage these men had shown in the course of that critical week in Ihantala.

As has been stated, a fair amount of courage was expected of every soldier, and if he did not achieve this, he would become a target of mockery. Under normal and peaceful circumstances, there were few moments when the weakest soldiers would have the opportunity to show their cowardice. They would only reveal themselves in action. However, the disapproval that the others expressed was never particularly strong. The weakest ones would even be overlooked on the grounds that they had either got a shock or had in some way not been responsible for their actions. This question was eagerly deliberated when soldier 293 disappeared just before the

departure for the first counterattack in Ihantala. However, there was more concern about how long he could go into hiding. He never returned to the company and in this way achieved a certain kind of fame: the men thought it was a respectable achievement to leave military service in this manner.

When soldiers 112 and 497 escaped a few days later, the reasoning went as follows: it was actually good that they left, because they would have been of no use here. The men made mockery about soldier 497 when the military police sent him back to the front and about soldier 112 who did not get anywhere from the command post. In fact, he stayed there for the rest of the fighting (he had actually been sentenced for desertion in Jelettijärvi). The men knew from previous experience that it could be rather uncomfortable on the front line and therefore seemed to comprehend that all soldiers could not bear too much pressure. As a result, they added the deserters to company losses. Of course, it was not altogether safe to escape, because most deserters were arrested sooner or later and had to answer for the consequences. If someone thought it better to expose himself to the dangers of desertion, it was his own decision.

I assume that the relatively small number of deserters in the company was one reason for the forgiving attitude towards them. Of those who had survived the period of encirclement (*"motti"*) only two were thought to have shown signs of weakness. One man deserted the company in Jeletti and seven men in Ihantala, of whom six were quickly returned to the company. The disappearance of these men was hardly noticed in the midst of the other losses of the company and the workload of those who were left increased only a little. These men could only blame the deserters for weakness and forgave them. Thus, the deserters turned out to be curiosities who were laughed at, and they willingly described their escapades in a comical light.

The deserters who were sentenced by the field court-martial usually won over the sympathy of the other men. The men felt undivided pity for those who had escaped from Jeletti (mostly from the 4<sup>th</sup> Company) and were given heavy sentences of up to twelve years of imprisonment.

Those four death sentences that were pronounced and carried out during the battle in Ihantala cast a gloom over the battalion. The men thought it was altogether too cruel that someone had to pay for his fear with his life. Neither the officers nor the older NCOs thought they could shoot men who, regardless of threats and warnings, fled from the front line, even though they both had the authorization from the highest quarters.<sup>62</sup> The tribute of human lives taken by enemy fire was considered altogether sufficient without any additional sacrifices.

---

<sup>62</sup> This order was confirmed several times; for example, see the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 1142/I/12a/secret/August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1944; War Archives 9493.

Therefore, it was considered almost unforgivable when shells of our artillery fell short of the enemy targets. It was understandable that such things might happen when lines were shifting, but the men did not accept any excuses. Their bitterness was very deep when lance corporal 518 fell from Finnish shell fragments in Ihantala: in the men's opinion, such carelessness was due to the fact that the fire observers did not venture to shoot far enough.

The officers were also held responsible for taking losses into account. It is true that the men talked with a tinge of pride about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment as the “second bloodiest battalion of the army” (*“armeijan toiseksi verisin pataljoona”*). On the other side, for example, the Santa Clauses talked bitterly about the battle in Keskinäinen (in Salla in summer 1941) where the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon sustained heavy losses. The regiment's first commander was regarded as a hard “man killer” (*“miestentapattaja”*), an unpleasant characteristic that his personal courage made up for.

The personal courage shown by the commander had great significance for his authority, and the commander's right to expose his men to dangers had a certain bearing on the courage that he showed himself. The men even went so far that they thought they were entitled to shoot an officer who led them into fire without sharing the dangers with them. In Jelettijärvi, some men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion fired at the hated captain C but succeeded only in wounding him. After the battle, many men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion could be heard saying that they would have shot captain 184 – who acted as the deputy commander of the battalion at the time – if only they had had the chance. The “masters” were always seen to pull together so that a personally weak “man killer” was declared innocent at the field court-marshal even though he, owing to his incompetence, had the lives of many of his subordinates on his conscience. And since the official justice did not take common people's opinions into account, the people had to take justice into their own hands. It is certain that personal antipathies played a certain role in the murder attempts, and if one is to believe stories that circulated at the front, such attempts took place quite often. On the other hand, the approving attitude of men when they evaluated these incidents shows that such extreme measures were considered justified.

During the entire war, there were no homicides in the battalion and even assaults and batteries were few and far between, one or two cases per year. One of the two assaults in the company, where soldier 372 slightly stabbed soldier 504, only provoked some mirth among the men; in their opinion, it was a harmless squabble between real men. The officers took it from a humoristic point of view, too. The company commander – who stated in his report that disciplinary measures were unnecessary – described the incident as “bear wrestling” (*“karhunleikki”*). Another incident, where staff sergeant 201 punched the teeth out of the 5<sup>th</sup> Company's commander's mouth during a drinking-bout, mainly aroused the men's approval,

because captain H was not popular. Such a fight was a private affair and honest fights were considered totally acceptable when it meant getting even with someone.

The army felt deep respect towards the fallen, whose bodies were always – if possible – transported home. For example, the battalion sent commandos in August 1941 to Pisto to check the bodies of some fallen men who had been buried there in temporary graves in July 1941. The task of the detachment was to exhume the bodies and send them home to be reburied in soldier's graves in their home districts. Lack of respect towards fallen comrades was considered extremely inappropriate, and even in the slang at the front – which was otherwise quite disrespectful – the fallen Finnish soldiers were always addressed as “(dead) bodies” (“*ruumis*”). In contrast, dead enemies were unrestrainedly called “corpses” (“*raato*”) and were buried in mass graves without any ceremonies.

The dead were treated with at least as much respect as the wounded, who always received great attention and whom everybody was obliged to assist if it was necessary. The men adopted a somewhat sentimental attitude towards the fallen, wounded and sick men and disapproved of the professionally cool way with which the doctors and other medical personnel treated their patients. For example, the men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon were rather upset when soldier 465 – whose wound was only partly healed – was sent back to the front from the field hospital in August 1944. So his comrades sent him daily to the battalion aid station for treatment. Sergeant 486 got some reputation as a hero when he waited a few days with shrapnel in his back before he went to the battalion aid station to show them.

Being wounded or getting sick meant that one was in a privileged position. Therefore, many men regarded a small wound or a symptom of a less dangerous disease as a welcome change to the monotony. The men willingly took the trouble to have some peace and quiet in a hospital, even to get some sick leave. Such small wounds were called “old men's wounds” (“*vanhan miehen haava*”). The men inflicted such wounds on themselves – shot either in the arm or foot – if they wanted to get away from the front when the situation became too uncomfortable. To my knowledge, nothing of the kind happened in the company even though many men said during the battle in Ihantala that they would willingly choose an “old man's wound”.

On the other hand, the men feigned illness every now and then. According to the company tradition, soldier 148 shammed illness during the encirclement period (“*motti*”) and mostly stayed in the supply and maintenance unit. He later told about his experiences at the front wherefore the supply and maintenance unit was nicknamed “148's front line”. The older men of the company sometimes referred to this name even during the last year of the war. As has been mentioned above, feigning illness was considerably more common when the company was at rest<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Compare with page 120 above.



and was in fact very uncommon at the front. On the contrary, it could happen under critical circumstances at the front that even fairly sick men stayed put until they became completely unfit to serve. There were many who during the big dysentery epidemic on the Karelian Isthmus refused to go to the battalion aid station, because – as they said – “there were too few men at the front”.

Only one man in the company committed suicide by standing up on the breastwork as a target for the enemy snipers. He had just returned from his home leave during which he had led a fast life. He had been reported to the authorities and he had also got gonorrhoea. So the man was expecting disciplinary action and, moreover, had an eight-month jail sentence for exceeding his leave – a sentence he had not served yet. He belonged to the original composition of the company and was regarded as a so-called “jermu” (see p. 9). Officially he was reported as killed in action. However, there were many who thought he was killed as a result of the masters’ bullying (“*herrojen vittuilu*”). The common view was that he acted foolishly but in a courageous manner too.

## 2 Private and Public Property

The men kept all their belongings openly in the field, in their rucksacks or on the shelf. These “technical circumstances” probably had the effect that respect for private property was very strong and, to my knowledge, there were no thefts in the company. Just the fact that all the belongings were stored in one place in the tent or in the dugout guaranteed their safety. The men did not steal within their own group, because it would have been very easy to track the thief. Outsiders’ visits were so few and far between that it was easy to keep account of them and catch the suspects. Anyhow, the fact of the matter was that things were not stolen if they were “in their place”.

Everybody was responsible for the army equipment that was entrusted to him, but army equipment was more or less regarded as common property. Therefore, for a long time past – already in peacetime garrisons – it had been considered totally justified to trade for better equipment that was going unattended; and, one could simply take over such equipment. As a result, the person who suffered a loss let the “harm circulate”. In other words, he performed the same operation as soon as the opportunity presented itself. With respect to articles of dress, this principle was put into practice to a very limited extent in the field. On the other hand, it was applied very willingly to weapons, tools, skis and other such equipment that was more group than private property. But the harm was not allowed to circulate in one’s own group.

Machine pistols were very sought after<sup>64</sup> and sometimes they even disappeared from the arms racks. The officers did not approve of such “evacuation activity” at

<sup>64</sup> Compare with page 101 above.

all and large-scale raids were carried out towards the end of the war when machine pistols disappeared. Disciplinary measures were taken very seldom if a machine pistol was found, because the entire machine gun squad, even the entire platoon, would declare itself guilty. In order to avoid disclosure, the “hoarder” and his group carefully concealed the evacuated weapon – often with the platoon leader’s help and cooperation. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon had a “black” machine pistol for a long while. It was kept under the platoon leader’s bunk and – despite repeated attempts – the logistic NCO could not find it.

For example, before the breakthrough in 1941, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon’s leader urged his men to take over all free machine pistols that they might come across. After demobilization, the company had seven “black” machine pistols and about 35 machine pistol magazines, most of them drum magazines. Pistols and flare pistols as well as binoculars were also very sought after objects that were kept very carefully. The company’s logistic NCO searched in vain for binoculars that he very well knew the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon had concealed somewhere.

Most of all, the men “evacuated” tools. The platoons had a constant shortage of axes and saws that never entered properly into the logistic NCO’s books. So nobody was officially responsible for them. If someone saw a free axe, he took it and the entire group would take good care of it. If the original owner was capable of tracking down his lost property, the men tried to defend their booty by all possible means. However, it was kindly returned if the previous owner could show proof of his ownership. Such hoarded items were named after the persons who had obtained them and who also regarded them as their private property.

The men did not usually break into locked stores, i.e. the company’s or the battalion’s armories or equipment and food stores. It gave general offence in the company when one of its men in March 1944 broke into the kitchen orderly’s storeroom and stole butter and sugar. And when ten men – mainly from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon – filled their mess kits with butter from the regiment’s unlocked stores at the Jääski railway station, the rest of the company’s men had to bear part of the blame. In both cases, the company commander interfered with the matter and the men’s sympathies did not by any means lie with those who had been caught in the act.

On the other hand, it was considered totally justified to keep “black men” in the feeding strength. In other words, the kitchen orderly was given a strength that was bigger than the actual figure.<sup>65</sup> He could seldom be cheated, because he practiced the same system when he made orders from the battalion store, knew the trick and could therefore be on the alert. He always had some surplus rations in his store so that he would not have to spread too little butter on the bread. The general view among the men at the front was that office personnel always had

---

<sup>65</sup> Compare with pp. 90 above.

“black men” at the office. However, they were mistaken, because only the kitchen orderly had extra rations at his disposal.

In addition, it was considered totally permissible to misappropriate army equipment. For example, one would receive an entirely new and fine sweater from the company’s equipment store and sell it to some civilian during furlough. After that, the man would buy an old and worn-out sweater or bring one from home. Then the sweater would be returned to the staff sergeant or be changed for a better one. Coats and sweaters – boots and trousers, too –sold particularly well at home back in Finland. So many men got themselves a happy and “wet” evening on their leave by smuggling surplus items of equipment to Finland. The men would willingly have taken guns, too, but it was much more difficult to transport them. Keen hunters sometimes tried to take along a military rifle. For example, when the troops were demobilized, corporal 511 went to the logistic NCO and asked him to give him a really good rifle without registering the incident. If proper rifles had not been so few and far between and so carefully counted, he most probably would have been given one. Smuggling reached really huge proportions and the officers did their best to curtail it. All the men were checked at the time of their departure from the battalion and their equipment was written down on their leave permit. This permit was checked both by train patrols and by the battalion headquarters, but nothing helped, as can be seen from the following letter that was delivered from the Quartermaster Section of the Wartime General Headquarters:

“In order to get some kind of a picture of the illicitly acquired equipment by the military personnel who are on their way home, the Detached Unit of the Military Police carried out a general raid from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of May in 1943. During this period, altogether 262 persons were arrested, of whom nearly everyone had several illicitly acquired weapons – 525 in all – in their possession. The arrested persons were divided as follows: seven officers, 54 NCOs, 178 men, 22 under the obligation to work and one soldiers-home sister.

Based on the reports issued by the field post’s censorship, altogether 116 parcels that had been sent from detachments and that contained state property were confiscated in the course of the last three weeks. It has become evident that most of those who have been arrested are from units further in the rear. According to statistics kept by the Detached Unit of the Military Police and various inspection organs, 46 of the reported cases of misappropriation originated from fortifications, 44 from headquarters or headquarters companies, 23 from depots, 21 from field hospitals and war hospitals and 11 from transport companies. Several misappropriations have been reported from the following frontline units: ten in the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, ten in the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment and nine in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade.

The above figures do not provide a comprehensive picture of the circumstances, because the inspections were not 100 % foolproof. Moreover, the figures do not include the arrests that took place in the troop units. —.

Chief of the General Staff  
General of Infantry E. Heinrichs

Chief of Operations  
Lieutenant General A.F.Airo.”<sup>66</sup>

The following letter from the Headquarters of the Maaselkä Group sheds even more light on the matter:

“... As can be seen from the adjoining transcript, those returning from their leave – in particular- have rendered themselves guilty of stealing. This must be prevented and those who have been found guilty must be held responsible and control over those returning from their leave must be strengthened.

The Detached Unit of the Military Police carried out a general raid on trains starting on the 18<sup>th</sup> and lasting until the 25<sup>th</sup> of July in 1943 when they inspected the belongings of altogether 57,080 persons. 621 persons, i.e. 1.09 % of those inspected, were arrested. The corresponding figures during the raid that was carried out from the 9<sup>th</sup> till the 15<sup>th</sup> of May in 1943 were 51,038, 262 and 0.51 %. The increase in the number of caught persons by over 100% is mainly due to the fact that men returning from their leave were also inspected during the July raid.

The following observation must be made: those who were arrested and were on their way home had too much so-called state property that had not been put down on their leave permit while those returning from their leave lacked equipment that had been written down on their permit. Altogether 313 items of equipment were confiscated and 840 objects reported missing – or about 243,000 marks in total value (in 1943, 37,150 • in today’s value)- during the above raid. Based on these figures, it can be said that the persons who managed to wriggle their way through the controls that were carried out in the troop units misappropriated state property worth at least a million marks on a monthly basis.

Chief of the Maaselkä Group’s Quartermaster  
Section  
Colonel U. Jonkka.”<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Quartermaster Section/ Wartime General Headquarters, number 596/Logistics/4/17 secret/June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

<sup>67</sup> Headquarters of the Maaselkä Group, number 3746/IV/8 c/secret/September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

The men were of the opinion that army property belonged to everyone who served in the military. Some item was only by chance in a certain unit's possession. If there was a need to get hold of some sought-after material that was at someone else's disposal, action was taken without any greater scruples. When the battalion replaced another unit at Stalin's canal in July 1943, its officers and men were upset by the selfishness of the relieved unit whose men confiscated all movable property that they had acquired and was their personal property but that – in the battalion's men's opinion – belonged in the bases.

However, when the battalion was rotated, it showed itself to be equally selfish and took along all useful items from the dugouts – even things that belonged in the buildings: twelve cookers, two cooker rings, fourteen lamp holders, wiring from two dugouts and the wallpaper.<sup>68</sup> To the great annoyance of the battalions' quartermaster supply officers, the men lifted potatoes wherever they could when the company was stationed in Pindusi. It hardly paid off to put guards in the potato fields, because they could not resist the temptation to lift some potatoes for themselves and because they were unable to guard the lands effectively in the autumn darkness.<sup>69</sup>

Neither could civilian property escape the light-fingered men. Notwithstanding the bans, the men shot both reindeer and sheep and confiscated onions and tobacco for themselves during the War of Lapland. Many people disapproved of this plundering and those who engaged in this activity tried to avoid being uncovered by others than men in their own tent group. Neither did the men have any scruples at Virkinniemi on the Karelian Isthmus where fellow countrymen's property was involved. Anyhow, this property would be delivered over to the enemy in connection with the armistice; so the men took with them what they found. If booty was involved, the men gladly took what they came across. It is true that such things belonged to the state and should have been delivered to the collecting depots.

However, nobody cared about this order if something useful to be had. The men immediately took possession of pistols, map cases, officers' belts, cockades and everything that was edible and thought of such trophies as most highly personal spoils. When sergeant 566 was ordered to hand over a Russian Browning to the company armory, he got so angry that he rather threw the pistol into a swamp than delivered it to the army's use. In order to retain the war-trophy weapons for their own use, the men had to keep them with great care. The men could seldom keep the weapons if they were once put down in the company register.

---

<sup>68</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 544/I/4 a/July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

<sup>69</sup> Compare with page 87 above and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 937/I/12 a/secret/September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

A lot of precious material was destroyed when the men began their looting. They grabbed for themselves optical instruments and parts of machinery that they soon threw away and broke such material that would not be of use to them. The divisional order that was given immediately after the conquest of Kiestinki reports how some rapacious men broke into a pharmacy and then spoiled it.<sup>70</sup> The men often took big risks if the looting paid off. After the attack at the Lohilahti line had been repelled, they began to crawl through the barbed-wire obstacles to search and empty the battlefield, even though the enemy lay only a few hundred metres away and the terrain was mined.<sup>71</sup> Even this danger from mines in Lapland could not scare the most anxious men to whom, for example, soldier 180 belonged. He eventually stepped on a mine during a looting expedition.

When these men's attitudes towards army property are clear to oneself, it is easy to understand that the men did not draw much distinction between their own and other people's property. A group member's property was respected and also, as a rule, things that were "in their right place" in the billets. On the other hand, unattended coats, bread bags, bicycles - yes, practically everything - could suddenly disappear from canteens, railway stations or from the roadside. Thefts flourished in places where men from different units mixed with one another - mainly on leave trains in Eastern Karelia or in different rear areas.

The general opinion of the men was that this state of affairs had arisen because the criminal element in the army was capable of exploiting the chances that were offered to them. Not only army property disappeared in such assembly areas; entirely personal belongings such as rucksacks, suitcases and parcels fell victim to the light-fingered persons' desire to hoard. The company's men deeply disapproved of this state of affairs. The activity was no longer regarded as permissible and innocent hoarding but as theft. Many men attempted to make excuses for their misappropriations by explaining that thieves from other units had stolen their equipment - an explanation that was seldom approved.

The propaganda on the part of the superiors for honesty and care with army property did not meet with much response among the men. The occasional inspections did little to improve the situation. The men seldom lacked anything and usually had too many different items of equipment in their possession. They grew accustomed to getting hold of equipment they desired and - to the best of his ability - the staff sergeant would procure the sought-after equipment from the battalion's stores. His registers must have been rather fictitious, because he was a poor penman and at times had difficulty in clearing the battalion's quartermaster supply officer's inspections. Because neither the latter nor the regimental quartermaster supply officer could control how the bookkeeping matched with reality, the staff sergeant never took any pains to have conformity in

---

<sup>70</sup> Group J, number 88/III/6/August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1941; War Archives 11945.

<sup>71</sup> Compare with the looting in Rovaniemi, page 92-93 above.

his bookkeeping. The main thing for him was to keep the men from complaining and keep the equipment store in order.

In a company-like community, every man had a guaranteed income: he was provided with a place to live, heating, lighting, clothing, food, tobacco and a small amount of pocket money (depending on their rank, soldiers and NCOs received from 16 to 35 marks a day). A small amount of the half-monthly salary went weekly to pay for the extra tobacco ration that every man could buy from the company sergeant major ("*ostotupakka*", 50 cigarettes a week). A man received all these benefits regardless of how he attended to his service (those under arrest, however, got neither tobacco nor salary). Therefore, it did not make any difference how much diligence the men showed.

First and foremost, the men needed money for their private pleasures. The salary was fairly reasonable for most of the men, but some tried to make it last longer with winnings at cards. In order to get some additional starting capital – after having gambled away all his cash – a man had to borrow or earn more money in some way. Tobacco was an article that always sold well: a man could get four or five times the purchase price that was set by the company sergeant major. All the non-smokers gained a fairly big extra income by selling both their basic and extra rations of tobacco. Some sold their tobacco at the front and others saved it and sold it at home back in Finland where one could get a better price. Corporal 206 knew how to trade well in tobacco: he sent his cigarettes home, received baccy in exchange from the family farm and then sold it at a good profit in the company.

By and large, the tobacco price was fixed and was always lower when traded between acquaintances. The men talked on all fronts about the price between brothers-in-arms ("*asevelihinta*"). It often referred to the excessive price of tobacco that was traded between soldiers previously unknown to each other. In 1942, when the battalion returned to Finnish provisioning (where tobacco rations were smaller than in the German one), the tobacco price rose twofold, i.e. to the same level as on the other fronts. The price had been low in Kiestinki and in Röhö where pipe tobacco was sold off for almost nothing. If someone did not smoke in a mess kit group, the group's smokers willingly tried to enter into a contract for the non-smoker's tobacco. The person who struck the bargain received the non-smoker's daily rations and settled the accounts when his salary was paid.

The smokers were very familiar with the non-smokers in the company and tried to order their extra rations of tobacco in advance. Usually, this worked only between very good friends or with those who did not look upon tobacco selling as a business. The latter usually saved their tobacco and sold it at home or outside their own group for a better price. Also, it was common for someone to place a pack of cigarettes as a victory in a Swedish card game called *femkort* ("*last trick*") where all the other players could place stakes so that the entire pot corresponded to the



price that was charged between brothers-in-arms. In this way, the owner – if he was lucky – could get a multiple price for his tobacco.

Players who needed new starting capital, those craving for liquor and those hungry for tobacco sold their equipment to get more money: sweaters, map cases, pistols, card decks, accordions and their own handicraft. Since the prices were not usually particularly high, many men thought it better to raffle off their property. They went from one dugout to another and sold lots, usually 99 chances. After all the lots had been sold, they were drawn in the presence of witnesses. The lottery organizer's squad comrades often felt they were obliged to buy lots even though they were not the least bit interested in winning. Therefore, the same item could be raffled off several times in a row like, for example, corporal 610's accordion in Nyberg Forest.

Foodstuffs were seldom sold and were not placed as winnings at cards either. Soldier 282 was probably the only person who ran a business with food. He received butter and flour from his home and traded them for tobacco or sold them for hard cash. He sent the cigarettes home and got more food in exchange and so on. Most probably, he earned rather well this way; at least he was never short of any butter and often made pancakes, some of which he sold. However, he never served any to his comrades and was therefore nicknamed "the Miser" (*Saituri*).

Those who did not have anything to sell or did not know how to do business could sometimes earn a few extra marks by taking over the guard shifts of those men who were better situated. They could also – in exchange for a payment – chop the cubic metres of wood required to be able to go on leave. The payment for these services was poor: 50 marks or a pack of cigarettes for an hour's shift and the same amount for a cubic metre of wood.

There were often loan transactions; however, no securities were required and no interest was paid. There were some isolated incidents when someone who was really hungry for tobacco engaged himself to pay for a pack of cigarettes with cardboard mouthpieces (*pillitupakka*) with a pack of cigarettes without cardboard mouthpieces (*pöllitupakka*), but these were exceptions. When the men went on leave, they willingly borrowed clean equipment from those who had it. Really good coats could be reserved a long time in advance. However, there was never any talk about collecting rent. Instead, the card players used to pay rent for their deck of cards or – rather – a small amount of money (*korttisätti*) for the wear on the cards. The owner of the deck took this amount from the pot even if he played himself. If someone had difficulty finding kerosene, he took a little sum (*valosätti*) from the pot, too.



I think I can easily claim that tobacco ate up most of the men's salary and that liquor came next. It was easy to obtain liquor in Kiestinki and in Röhö. On the one hand, the men occasionally received liquor with their provisions and, on the other hand, the Germans had plenty of rum that they willingly traded for rubber boots, fur coats and – like at Lammaslahti – for moose meat. Even crisp bread (*"näkkileipä"*) was good enough payment when the Germans' rations of bread grew scantier at one point. The supply of liquor was guaranteed also in Karhumäki, because the supply and maintenance personnel had put up a well-functioning supply and distribution system.

The local agents bought the liquor back in Finland (i.e. on the home front) and sent it in boxes of ammunition or clothing to Karhumäki to be resold to the men at the front. The price was threefold compared with the price in an ALKO (the Finnish state alcohol monopoly) store. Those who had money did not have to worry about getting thirsty; however, it was wisest to taste before paying, because the middlemen often diluted the nectar with water.

In the opinion of some men, hard liquor (spirits) was too expensive, so they bought cheaper motor spirit (denatured ethanol) from drivers. Some thought it was better to distill one's own spirits, but it required extensive preparations and was practiced on only a few occasions in Karhumäki. Access to the raw materials (flour, sugar and yeast) was so limited that there was not enough of the final product for sale. Greater quantities were distilled on the Karelian Isthmus and in Lapland and the own brew of the company ran for about the same price as the monopoly's spirits cost out there. The brewers only kept the first bottles, i.e. the cleanest and the strongest distillate (*"nose drops"*), for themselves.

Visits to the canteen, movies, notepaper etc. did not cost much. As a result, those who did not play cards or did not drink or smoke could put aside a considerable amount of money. According to the company's book for registered mail, remittances sent from the company at the end of the war can be seen from the following table:

**Table 13**

Remittances sent from the company at the end of the war

Month	Number	Sum (FIM)	Average sum of the remittances (FIM)
1943			
August	35	16 551	472.88
September	25	14 573	582.92
October	30	16 248	541.60
November	28	16 755	598.39
December	28	27 710	989.64
1944			
January	33	19 676	596.24
February	20	13 065	653.25
March	28	15 743	562.25
April	15	9 000	600.00
May	24	9 955	414.79
June	33	27 841	843.66
July	58	54 295	936.12
August	43	31 650	736.04
September	21	17 200	819.04
October	18	13 210	733.88
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>303 508</b>	<b>691.34</b>

As can be seen from the table, the remittances from the company were smaller and fewer during those months when the company was at rest (September-October 1943 and April-May 1944), and bigger and more common during the months the company was engaged in combat (July-August 1944).

Since the sender's name does not always become clear from the book of registered mail, it is hard to state how many senders were involved. On the other hand, as far as remittances into the company are concerned, this is possible. During the periods October 1942– March 1943 and January-October 1944, altogether 71 field post money orders for 51 different recipients arrived in the company – a total of 46,497 marks. The distribution of these orders can be seen from table 14:

**Table 14**  
Field post money orders in 1944

Month	Number	Sum (FIM)	Average sum of the orders (FIM)
1944			
January	3	850	283.33
February	4	2 300	575.00
March	1	1 100	1000.00
April	4	1 900	475.00
May	9	3 350	372.22
June	2	630	315.00
July	5	1 461	292.20
August	2	400	200.00
September	7	6 000	857.14
October	2	1 100	550.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	39	20 591	527.94

These figures show that – for the most part – the men got along with the salary they received from the company.

The men often received parcels from their homes. The company's register of parcel mail from 1944 (the only one left) shows that altogether 246 parcels arrived in the company in January, 256 in May and 498 in August. In other words, an average of 7.9, 8.2 and 16.0 parcels a day arrived during those months in 1944. The parcels contained mainly foodstuffs, clothes and homegrown tobacco but – to my knowledge – never any money.

### 3 Alcohol and sexuality

I can only approximately indicate how widespread drinking was and content myself with pointing out the fact that there were very few teetotallers and that there were not many cases of severe alcoholism either. Staff sergeant 269, who went through some really wet periods – the worst of them in Pindusi – can be regarded as the most habitual drunkard. In between the drinking bouts, however, he was a teetotaller for a long time and was regarded by the officers as one of the most trustworthy and competent NCOs. (He was only a corporal at the outbreak of the war. Then he rose in the ranks and was later commanded to the Reserve Officers' School in August 1944.)

However, those who were heavy consumers – i.e. almost all the men in the company – could seldom afford to buy sufficient quantities of liquor. For most of the men, therefore, getting drunk became an infrequent pleasure. Most of all, liquor was an intoxicant whose taste was of secondary significance. They drank motor spirit (*"velaketju"*) that smelled of gasoline (*"he can take as much as a 30 ton tank"*) and

homemade brew with high fusel content. These drinks were preferred to the red wine that was received with provisions in Kiestinki or the champagne that could be got by barter with the Germans. The most highly valued drink was German rum that was both strong and sweet; next came German brandy and Kümmel as well as our own blended brandy ("*jaloviina*" or Eau-de-vie).

The small rations that were distributed with provisions in Kiestinki were considered childish and totally insufficient. Therefore, in order to get at least a little drunk, the men tried to buy as many rations as possible. Since so many wanted to buy and only a few could sell, the problem could be solved along the lines of picket 5: those who wanted to get drunk pooled their money in a pot after which they played cards ("*last trick*") for the liquor. The winner got the bottle and the rest of the men shared the pot.

On the whole, as stated above, access to liquor was good. In addition to the liquor that could be bought from bootleggers, the men had at their disposal the liquor that had been brought by those returning from leave. It was almost part of the thing to bring a bottle when one returned from leave and serve it to one's group pals and to the closest friend. However, many of those who were returning from home with liquor in their rucksack could not wait to get all the way to the company. Instead, they drank the nectar already on the train and could only provide their comrades with descriptions about how drunk they had been. Many men evaluated their leave on an alcohol scale, too. In order to reach as high as possible on that scale, the men did not shy away from misappropriating state property, from selling their watches or something of the kind.

The men did not show much consideration for the time or the place if enough liquor was available. All the men of a picket or a base could lie drunk without sentinels – as once happened in Kuukkeli in Röhö. In a similar manner, a tent group could start drinking together during hours of duty and lark about the garrison area – like the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon once did in Pindusi. The men were very understanding towards such cases. If a group of men drank too much at a base and could not take care of their guard duty, they were let alone. The others only checked that no accidents with firearms would take place and that it would not attract any enemy attention. Were any harm on the part of the officers to be expected, the drunken comrades would be kept out of their way. Getting drunk was by no means considered shameful. Rather, it was a sign of manliness. The company officers did not interfere with ordinary cases of drunkenness either, but if the men made serious mischief or were involved in mischief outside the company area, they had to be brought to justice.

Table 16 (see p. 200) gives a very vague picture of the frequency of drunkenness, because only the cases that attracted the officers' attention could be included in it. They ignored or did not know about the great majority of the cases. Therefore, the cases that have been put down in the table as "solely drunkenness" correspond

to “drunkenness and making noise”. In other words, the figures show that the officers seldom resorted to disciplinary measures against drunken men. The most common offences in connection with drunkenness were absence without leave (or French leave), fights (brawls) and various neglects on duty.

At the end of the war, the senior officers could no longer ignore the alcohol problem in the army. This does not have to mean that drunkenness increased in comparison with the early years of the war, but it started to become evident that alcohol played an important part in the social life of the military establishment. Therefore, along with the tightened control of the baggage of men on leave, monthly purchases of liquor (from March 7<sup>th</sup> 1943 in the 6<sup>th</sup> Division) were allowed to decrease the amount of bootlegged liquor. In accordance with an official letter from the Wartime General Headquarters<sup>72</sup>, the commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, major general Vihma, stated in the division order:

“Even though the use of spirituous liquors, especially in the field, is already in itself a disquieting matter and must absolutely be reduced to the minimum, it is possible – on the responsibility of the commander concerned – to allow the purchase and use of smaller amounts of liquor in exceptional circumstances and also when it does not disturb the maintenance of general law and order.

On a monthly basis, it is possible to buy – if the commander in question thinks it is possible - the following quantities of liquor: officers are allowed to buy 1 litre, NCOs half a litre and men half a litre, too. It is self-evident that the commander in question grants this right to purchase only to those persons who have continuously proved with their good and responsible behaviour to be able to consume spirituous drinks without breaking discipline. I do not allow this right to be given to those – be they officers, NCOs or men – who have previously been punished for drunkenness, unsoldierlike conduct or dishonourable crimes. If it emerges that others in some unit have made use of the teetotallers’ right to purchase, the entire unit in question may be deprived of its right to purchase.

Spirituous drinks must be kept in some guarded store or in some other safe place where they can be taken out and delivered only with the permission of the commander concerned. Naturally, all serving and consumption of liquor is strictly prohibited during combat action. Otherwise, it is permissible to serve drinks only during quiet periods and even then in parts of the unit that are at rest. —.”<sup>73</sup>

But the army command was incapable of bringing about any major improvement by rewarding proper behaviour with the right to buy liquor sometimes. In the

<sup>72</sup> Wartime General Headquarters, number 165/Personnel Section 2/31/Secret/January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1941.

<sup>73</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Division, number 573/1/2 secret/March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

men's opinion, everybody should have had an equal right to purchase, especially since the army had now given up on the idea of teetotalism. According to the executive order – to which the company had to adapt itself – only 25 % of the company strength could be granted the right to purchase liquor. This meant that most persons did not have access to legal liquor for several months. The battalion's contract of liquor purchase shows that the company bought in the following quantities: 8.5 litres of brandy and 16.5 litres of spirits in June 1943 (four officers, 38 NCOs and men), half a litre of brandy and six litres of spirits in September (13 NCOs and men), one litre of gin and 7.5 litres of spirits in October (one officer, 15 NCOs and men), two litres of brandy and five litres of spirits in November (14 NCOs and men).<sup>74</sup>

Because the number of lucky persons per month was so low and because distribution depended also on the circumstances, nobody could know for sure when he would have access to bought liquor ("*ostoviina*"). And since thirst did not conform to the superior decrees, the men thought they still had to resort to smugglers.

The alcohol policy of the Army Staff aimed at increasing abstinence, as can be seen from the following official letter by lieutenant general Laatikainen:

“— The right to buy liquor on a regular basis does not by any means mean that all persons should exercise it. On the contrary, younger soldiers in particular should be guided towards abstinence: some, however, will make use of their right to purchase. As for these men, I command that the following is observed:

The purchased liquor must not be consumed immediately. Instead, it must be stored by the company sergeant major. Two or three occasions for informal social intercourse are arranged every month. On such an occasion, two or three men can share half a bottle of liquor with their meal and under the supervision of the company commander. If possible, some sort of program – community singing in particular, – must be organized. —”<sup>75</sup>

Such fraternal gatherings were not arranged in the company (experiences from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion were not particularly encouraging) and they would most probably have become a fiasco. On the one hand, the men thought the allowed ration per person was too small and, on the other hand, the idea of drinking as part of one's duty – something that the above excerpt directly suggests – would have robbed the drinking of all its charm. Experience had shown this already a long time ago.

<sup>74</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 406/I/12a/secret etc.; War Archives 3390.

<sup>75</sup> Personnel Section/Headquarters of the Maaselkä Group, number 1802/XV/1 secret/August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

During the march to Hyrynsalmi, the company commander – then lieutenant 257 – once put the men in a queue in front of the office tent and – one by one – made them drink their ration of liquor that was delivered with the food supplies. The men were irked at his whim and thought they might as well not take their drink, because all they got was a thimbleful and because it had to be done by order and under the supervision of the commander. However, in order to prevent the officer and the commander from getting even one ration, the men had to take out their rations.

However, instead of applying the above order about the serving of liquor also to fraternal gatherings at Christmas, when the men were in the mood for such celebration, all noisy rejoicing was forbidden:

“HEADQUARTERS OF THE MAASELKÄ GROUP	Dec. 16 <sup>th</sup> , 1943
Personnel Section	128/EP/LL
Number 9265/I/17	
Matter: Celebration of Christmas	
Reference: Initiative	
Company record 3438	

Because Christmas is celebrated as the big common feast of Christendom, no kind of noisy rejoicing is allowed during the festive season. On account of that, I forbid all consumption of liquor (even rations) on Christmas Eve and on the first Christmas Day.

Commander, Headquarters of the Maaselkä Group  
Lieutenant General T. Laatikainen

Chief of Staff  
Colonel Kai Savonjousi.”<sup>76</sup>

This order was supplemented with an official letter some days after:

“— I forbid all consumption of liquor on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day with the above letter. Now, the Wartime General Headquarters has stated in a telegram (number 4005/Personnel Section 2/29/December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1943) that censorship has established as a general fact that those who did not get a Christmas leave intend to arrange binges during the festive season. Therefore, I urge all commissioned and non-commissioned officers to see to it that my order is obeyed and take all necessary measures to maintain good order during Christmastime and during the New Year’s period.

---

<sup>76</sup> War Archives 3390.

Commander, Headquarters of the Maaselkä Group  
Lieutenant General T.Laatikainen

Chief of Staff  
Colonel Kai Savonjousi.<sup>77</sup>

The orders, so long as they concerned men at the front, were justified for security reasons, but they showed that the officers did not – or were unable to – understand the men’s views about liquor. Christmas was regarded less as a Christian celebration of peace than as a big midwinter feast. The official Christmas celebration at the canteen – where all the men could not go in any case – was not valued as highly as private feasts. In addition, neither the tightened field post censorship nor the increased eagerness of the train patrols was enough to suppress the men’s Christmas joy.

\* \* \*

First of all I want to mention that – as far as I know – there was no homosexuality in the company despite the markedly masculine environment. The existing cooking teams were there to facilitate the supply of provisions and were free of all sexuality.

In all their conduct, the men were pronouncedly heterosexual and they often evaluated their furloughs on a sexual scale – alongside the alcohol scale. “Did you get any?” (*Saitko naida?*) was presented almost as a standard question to soldiers returning from leave. This question also suggests the men’s conception of a woman: first and foremost, she was a sex object.

The men started from the assumption that all women in the proximity of the front were of easy virtue (decent women did not set off on such adventures); nevertheless, the women were distinguished into three categories that had different moral standards: members of the women’s auxiliary services – or “Lottas” – who were posted to the front, soldiers-home sisters (in the service of the Soldiers Home Organization), and washerwomen, shop assistants and women of the native population.

Without exception, women in the last category were regarded as prostitutes and, in general, the great majority of the soldiers-home sisters as easy (*“if they give, they give out of love”*). In contrast, the Lottas were looked upon with greater respect and treated more courteously. For the most part, they were regarded as “officers’ girls” with whom the men did not have any chance. The men had hardly arrived at this conclusion through prior personal experience, because they had seldom been in contact with Lottas – and even then in passing. Only in Pindusi, where there was a Lotta canteen a few hundred metres from the company billets, could some of

<sup>77</sup> Personnel Section/Headquarters of the Maaselkä Group, number 9350/I/17/December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1943; War Archives 11945.



the company's men achieve a certain degree of success with the "Beautiful Lotta with Dentures".

The company's men had all the more chances to observe of the battalion's four soldiers- home sisters at close range. It was almost part of the game to flirt a little with them over the counter, but only some men seemed to aim at closer contact. The men talked considerably more about the sisters' everyday life than they empirically tried to check up on it. Generally speaking, the men did not hesitate to brag about their conquests or to show their lust openly. Therefore, one can hardly expect that publicity would have deterred them from open flirtation with the canteen girls. They had a wide selection of men to choose from and reject, and did not have any reason to earn a reputation for easy virtue with their lifestyle. They always knew very well what the men thought of them and would never have been at peace with their conscience if they gave cause for the slanderers' tales.

Because there was limited access to women in the battalion and in its close vicinity, the men had to search for partners in the surrounding civilian population. The women in the service of the civilian or military administrations who had come from Finland or Eastern Karelia can also be included in this category: washerwomen, shop assistants, barber assistants and so on. These women were difficult to approach when the battalion was stationed at the front, because they could be found in the bigger garrison towns such as Karhumäki. This meant that the men were sentenced to long periods of abstinence. Only furloughs and periods of rest provided the men with the opportunity to break their celibacy and – if their stories are to be believed – they thoroughly availed themselves of these opportunities, too.

The forced abstinence at the front was compensated with particularly obscene conversation. "Pussy and its properties" ("*Vittu ja sen ominaisuudet*") always provided an interesting subject of conversation. Besides, it was completely neutral. A common habit to avoid an imminent quarrel was to suggest "let's talk about pussy so there won't be any quarrelling" ("*puhutaan vitusta, niin ei tule riitaa*"). Each and every man contributed to the conversation with dirty and instructive stories about their sexual experiences. Even the obscenity and potency that one could demonstrate became yardsticks by which the men were measured. Sexual athletes – such as staff sergeant 201 – and tellers of obscene stories – such as soldier 18 - were as appreciated as the drinking mates, liquor distillers and quarrel pickers.

It was self-evident that obscene songs were very popular and the men did not shy away from singing songs like "Korholan tytöt" ("*The Girls of Korhola*", see p. 52) or the company's favourite marching song "Mustan meren laulu" ("*Black Sea Song*") when they marched through a village or when womenfolk were within hearing distance. Certainly there were men who did not approve of this and tried to make their comrades stop using coarse language when women or children were nearby. Those military songs that had been written by popular song writers – "Lili Marleen",

“Orvokki”, “Tellervo”, “Kaarina” (in German “Erika”) – could never compete in popularity with, for example, “Black Sea Song” (where all popular names of private parts and their functions were enumerated) if the aim was to raise spirits and sing cheerfully during a long and tiresome march.

The men felt equally compensated by their correspondence with unknown women. Letter writing speeded up, especially in the absence of other pleasures, when conditions stabilized in winter 1941–42 and boredom began to creep in. The men began to look for new pen pals through advertisements. This happened so that the men either made the ads or responded to them. The letters were by no means written to any choirboys. Such “letters from unknown girls” (“*tuntemattomien tyttöjen kirjeet*”) were often read aloud for the amusement of the entire group and the men also responded to them together. Many men agreed to meet their unknown beauties on leave and told about their adventures when they returned. They were well aware of each other’s girls and keenly followed how the contacts developed.

In order to guard themselves from unpleasant surprises, the men asked for a picture from their correspondent. In exchange, they might send a picture of some comrade if they thought they were not handsome enough themselves. It was by no means uncommon for a man to have ten such “unknown brides”. Those men who had several gave them up to or traded them with an interested comrade (this is the way soldier 38 found his wife). This activity subsided already in autumn 1942. The military authorities tried to constrain it, because they suspected that it was used for espionage. Also, there was very little interest in these unknown correspondents at the end of the war.

So-called pin-up girls attracted the men less than the “unknown brides”. It is true that almost every issue of a magazine at the front had pictures of beautiful women that the men duly admired, but it never became a widespread custom to clip out and nail up such “pinups”. The reproductions were probably too poor to give room for any illusions: the girls either had too much clothing or the dugouts were too dark. Not even the exquisitely coloured and rather refined pictures that a German corporal (who billeted at picket 5 for a few days) hung on the wall over his place interested the men very much. They were surprised that he looked after his collection with such great care and packed and kept it when he set off. Neither did the men attempt to decorate their living quarters with homemade erotic products.

It seems that the compensation the men got through verbalizing their sexuality was sufficient for them. Naturally, it is difficult to determine to which extent they practiced masturbation, because - if it existed - it was carried on in secret. However, if that was the case and if it was widespread, it is difficult for me to comprehend that masturbation could have been kept secret. The total secrecy that dominated the men’s autoerotic experiences was in stark contrast to the manner of speaking that they used in describing their heterosexual adventures. To me, this seems to

signify that the men disapproved of masturbation and considered it an unmanly habit; because of their pronounced heterosexual approach, they even despised it and condemned it as a symptom or a form of homosexuality. The existence of masturbation can be taken for granted – already on physiological grounds – and is manifested by a song that was born at the front in Kiestinki. The men made mockery of the Finnish women's weakness for the Germans in the following manner:

“ A German is a canteen hero,  
 (“*Saksalainen on sankari kanttiinissa*)  
 lion-hearted and powerful with our women,  
 (*urho mahtava naistemme seurassa*)  
 meanwhile, the boys of Finland are fighting in the wilds  
 (*Suomen pojat korvessa taistellen*)  
 and with dirty hands they have to masturbate”  
 (*nokikouralla runkata saa*)”

Even when the company was at rest in Nurmes, Pindusi, Ristilampi or Kontiomäki, the men had to resort to their sexual compensation, because the demand for women always exceeded their supply. The entire regiment was together in Nurmes, which was a small population centre – just like Kontiomäki. There were plenty of military personnel from other units in Karhumäki. As a result, only the luckiest men could expect to be rewarded for their hunting. One could not be particularly choosy in such circumstances and that manifested itself in the relatively high prevalence of venereal diseases. Therefore, without being sneered at, some thought it was better to abstain than to be infected. Even the most callous Don Juans admitted that the worst sluts (“*räkähuorat*”) were not particularly enjoyable. For that reason, the men talked almost with a giddy admiration about the conquests of sergeant major 201 among the civilian population in Sunku where women prostituted themselves for bread – or their daughters if they were too ugly themselves.

During their furloughs, the men had altogether different possibilities to get suitable partners and to protect themselves from diseases. Those who returned from leave with an infection attempted to present their misfortune as a sign of manliness. However, the majority of men did not entirely approve of this interpretation and even felt respect for gonorrhoea. They made a little fun of the infected (who were given – as a medicine – suspension of leave for some time at the end of the war) and tried to make them seek medical attention. Otherwise, they were let alone. Being infected was almost like getting into an accident. There was not anything shameful about it, because even fine ladies and married women carried seeds of the diseases. In 1943, antiseptic packages (i.e. condoms) started to be delivered to men on leave, but they were almost always returned unused.

The married state was no guarantee of a decent lifestyle, and the men thought it was altogether natural that married men sought small adventures. However, the men talked with admiration about married men who remained faithful to their wives.

## 4 Religion, Superstition and Information

Every battalion had a priest who looked after pastoral care and was solely responsible for it. Over the years, the priests who served in the battalion took care of their duties in a routine manner and did not cause any religious revival.

When opportunities arose, the battalion gathered for a field service. This took place during the march to the breakthrough battles, in Nurmes and when the battalion was at rest in Ihantala in 1944. In Pindusi and Ristilampi, where the company quarters were more spread out, the pastor held the service in the companies. Participation in these services was obligatory, but the men did not express any dislike for attending them. They adopted a somewhat surprised and slightly disapproving attitude towards the men who belonged to the civil register and refused to take part in the church parade.

Services could not be held at the front line. It is true that services were held in the canteen during bigger church holidays, but only one or two men from each base could participate in these ceremonies. Instead, the battalion priest had to pay visits to the different bases and hold hours of devotion that consisted of hymn singing, a prayer and a short religious discourse.

Two of the priests who served as the battalion's preachers during the war were very popular because of their frankness and good speech delivery ("*hyvä ulosanti*"). Their reputation increased further since they visited the front also during the battles and even took part in patrolling. The two other priests were not liked as much; one because he called the war a crusade and prophesied a quick conquest of Eastern Karelia and the other because he was awkward and had a poor speaking style. Some men even mocked the latter.

It is difficult to say what the state of the men's piety really was, because they seldom talked about religious matters. Many of them had brought along a bible and a hymnal – and even read them – and some (very few) even subscribed to religious magazines. However, one could not detect any kind of religious fervour or any effect of religion on everyday life.<sup>78</sup>

\* \* \*

---

<sup>78</sup> It can be expected that there were believing laestadians (a protestant sect prevalent in northern Finland and Sweden), but because no revivalist meetings ("*seuroja*") were arranged, they never got the opportunity to display their faith.

Roughly speaking, superstition could be observed just as little as religion in everyday life. Most of the men believed in ghosts and signs just as firmly as in the God and the Devil. This could be noticed in many discussions about supernatural things. Certainly, most of the men had not seen ghosts but people in their home district had. These superstitions were of an ordinary nature: dead people who were calling out or interpreters of signs who foretold justice.

At the beginning of the war, all kinds of predictions circulated about its length. Those prophecies that rested on the Book of Revelations – everyone could check them from the original text – met with a certain degree of confidence on the part of the men. However, most men lost their faith in such biblical prophecies around 1943. If someone related a new prediction about when peace would come, he was usually given the following answer: “Peace will break out on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1958”, or something of the kind.

\* \* \*

The fact that the field post functioned impeccably was much more important than regular service. On that account, the company’s postmaster – soldier 347 for a long time – was an important and trusted person and, to a high degree, the company’s good spirits depended on his conscientiousness.

Naturally, letters and parcels were the most important. About 50–100 letters and about a dozen parcels arrived every day. The common saying went that “the home front is failing” (*“kotirintama pettää”*) if the expected consignments did not arrive. Unlike the letters from unknown brides, letters from the home front were not common property.

The men asked their comrades what the news was, but usually they only referred to news of general interest. If someone wanted to tell about his joys and sorrows, he could be certain about getting a sympathetic audience – but it was his decision whether to start.

Newspapers attracted the men’s interest, too. Each company received a certain number of papers for free from the Army Information Office and the postmaster delivered them to the different bases. However, the papers that came through the authorities were rather few in number – from one to two copies per base – and they were not always those that the men would have preferred to read. With respect to the received papers, the company accounts look as follows:

Table 15

	Feb.19 <sup>th</sup>	Aug.12 <sup>th</sup> (1943)
Helsingin Sanomat (Edistyspuolue, <i>Progressive Party</i> , Helsinki) 3 [The paper had an independent policy line]		3
Uusi Suomi (Kokoomuspuolue, <i>Conservative Party</i> , Helsinki)	3	3
Sosialidemokraatti (Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, <i>Social Democratic Party</i> , Helsinki)	1	1
Kaleva (Kokoomuspuolue, <i>Conservative Party</i> , Oulu)	3	4
Liitto (Maalaisliitto, <i>Agrarian Party</i> , Oulu)	-	4
Pohjolan Sanomat (Maalaisliitto, <i>Agrarian Party</i> , Kemi)	3	4
Lapin Kansa (Maalaisliitto, <i>Agrarian Party</i> , Rovaniemi)	3	1
Rovaniemi (Non-party, Rovaniemi)	3	2
Pohjois-Raja (Kokoomuspuolue, <i>Conservative Party</i> , Kemi)	-	-
Kaiku (Kokoomuspuolue, <i>Conservative Party</i> , Oulu)	3	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	22	26

We can see that there were almost as many copies of newspapers from the metropolitan area (i.e. Helsinki) – which interested the men very little – as copies of Lapin Kansa, Rovaniemi and Pohjolan Sanomat that were published in Lapland and were the most sought after. Therefore, the men subscribed to papers from their home districts: mostly Lapin Kansa, which came in a quantity of 15–20 copies – if not more – in late winter 1944. Very few men stuck to pictorial magazines such as *Seura*, *Suomen Kuvalehti* and *Elokuva-Aitta* of which the authorities sent only a few copies.

When the battalion was stationed in Nurmes, a small circulating library was put up in the canteen. Later, it followed the battalion to Karhumäki. Lending was never very active and the number of books was always very small – about 50 copies – even though the information officer tried to make the men hand over those books from the dugout that were not anybody's personal property (the men seldom cared to read these books). Love of reading was satisfied with war news or local news-items in the papers as well as stories in *Jännitys* (“*Thriller*”) and *Seikkailu* (“*Adventure*”) magazines; the men brought these publications to the company when they returned from leave. The men read a lot on guard duty, but as has been stated before, mostly newspapers and weeklies. Very few men read books.

Interest – though somewhat limited – in private studies through correspondence arose towards the end of the war. About ten men in the company started to take different kinds of courses; most of them were young and belonged to the 1922 and 1923 age classes. The oldest men in this group were probably lance corporal 462 who was born in 1918 and corporal 440 who was born in 1920. Both men came from the Tornio river valley and studied Swedish. The intermediate (or grammar) school course that started in Nurmes and later continued in stages had twenty students in autumn 1944, of whom four came from our company. The

main stress in these courses was on subjects of practical interest: written composition, arithmetic and the German language (!). Soldier 604 attended the front lyceum of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division in winter and spring 1944.

The men who showed interest in studies and had a wider knowledge of things were held in respect. However, in order not to lose face in front of the others, they had to be able to answer all sorts of questions. Soldier 307, a 30-year old lumberjack, had a very good memory and a large encyclopaedic knowledge. He supplemented his knowledge from *Pikku Jättiläinen* (“*Little Giant*”, a pocket-size Finnish encyclopaedia). He was regarded as a very learned man and was often chosen to represent the company in the favourite radio quizzes in Karhumäki.

The post of information officer, which was created in early summer 1943, was designed less for actual information than for propaganda. At the turn of the year 1942–1943, the higher quarters started to pay a certain amount of attention to “the fighting spirit” or as is stated in the regiment’s order:

*“It is every superior’s responsibility to raise their subordinates’ fighting spirit by all possible means. — It is characteristic of good fighting morale that the men are aware of the objectives of the war and convinced that rescuing all our people and its individual members from destruction requires that every man fulfills his duty without any hesitation. A victorious war demands that every man fulfills his duty without hesitation. (Themes: 1. The enemy’s aim is to exterminate the Finnish people from the world. 2. Confidence in the country’s legal powers and belief that the parliament and the government lead our people’s destiny in the best possible manner. 3. Trust that their family members are being looked after as long as the war lasts).”*

According to the order (shortened version below), these aims can be achieved in different ways:

“1. *Personal discussions.* The fact that the right word is expressed at the right moment is of utmost importance. — Men’s thinking is directed the right direction in personal conversations. The information officer must not force his opinions on anyone but he must not accept the men’s false opinions either.

2. *Group discussions.* When such discussions are arranged, the discussion must be well considered and planned so that it does not give any reason for political debates. *Service matters and politics must not be discussed under any circumstances.*

3. *Situation reports.* On such occasions where the actual situation is explained, never fail to show reasons why the war is not over yet and – what is most important – prevent false rumors from spreading. — One

must absolutely stick to the truth in situation reports and *explain the situation in an encouraging and confidence-inspiring spirit*.

---

5. *Presentations, speeches, causeries (i.e. light articles) and recitations*. — Causeries benefit the objectives of information activities when they ridicule enemy propaganda as well as phenomena and qualities in our troops — such as bragging, talkativeness about war matters and spreading of rumors — that weaken our morale. —.”<sup>79</sup>

It could soon be noticed that the company commanders and the squad leaders did not always meet the requirements. Therefore, a special information officer's post was established (shortened version below):

“There are too few people to address the problems that arise from men's opinions and morale in our defense forces. — However, the longer the war lasts, the more energetic and purposeful information activities are required to keep the men confident and in high spirits and retain the fighting spirit and capability of the troops.

1. I order the following to guarantee enough *manpower* for information activities: according to the previous order, a permanent information officer's post must be created in every infantry regiment —. Each battalion appoints an information and sports officer who is exempted from all other duties and fulfills the following qualifications:

- has experience at the front and preferably holds the rank of lieutenant,
- has literary education and ability to meet the men in the proper psychological manner,
- is strongly patriotic and morally impeccable and
- has experience as a sports leader.

2. The commanders' and unit leaders' responsibility to observe men's opinions in their respective units has been previously addressed in different connections, but all those concerned have not followed these orders sufficiently. Thus, they have complained in their opinion reports to the higher echelon about such fallacies and negative opinion factors among the men that the commanders and leaders in question should have been able to avert or correct. The superiors must intervene in such omissions, and it is possible to turn to the higher echelon only when such faults cannot be removed with available means.

---

<sup>79</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 223/3c/Information/February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.



The common tasks of the information officer were:

- to map out all the psychological and physical factors that had a positive or negative effect on the morale, to acquire knowledge about the circulating rumors and about the views that are prevalent among the men – as well as to keep the commander concerned informed about these things,
- to present one's commander with projects that can be seen to promote information activities,
- to execute the orders given by the commander to him,
- to plan, direct and oversee the information activities of the lower echelons in accordance with the regulations and guiding principles given by his commander and the higher information officers and
- to independently apply and develop the experiences gained in information activities.

—

The information officer's work is educational and ethical; it implies spiritual leadership and edification that is closely connected to the spiritual work of the field pastors. Therefore, they both have to strive for good mutual understanding and support for one another's work.

4. — Reports about suitable information officers have to include the following personal information:

1. Name
2. Age
3. Family relations
4. Military rank
5. Military experience
6. Interests in civilian life
7. Suitability as a sports officer
8. Motivation for suitability as an information officer (e.g. membership in the Academic Karelian Society, experience as a speaker in a Civil Guard District... etc.)
9. Level of education.

—

Chief of staff	Chief of operations section
Lieutenant colonel V.Karanko	Major T.Turtiainen <sup>80</sup>

Both officers and men soon realized what this information activity aimed at, and information officers were called politruks from the beginning. The men were

<sup>80</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Division, Operations Section, number 749/Sports/secret/June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3900.

conscious of the fact that the spiritual nourishment they received from above included a lot of propaganda, but they were unable to determine how strongly colored such accounts were. They discussed rather with one another than with their commanders and information officers (who concerned themselves very little with the men). They held their own views about Eastern Karelia and its people that were based on their personal experiences, and the only person who expressed any willingness to settle there was staff sergeant 201. He was a carpenter by profession and valued good earnings. Most men were afraid of the Russians and understood that we had to defend ourselves against their attack, but they were dubious about the expediency of our policy and regarded the war as a “masters’ war” (*herrojen sota*) that did not actually concern them.

However, stronger expressions of war-weariness or opposition to the war could not be noticed at any point, because the men did not combine their everyday annoyances with politics in their attitudes towards camp life. They tried to adapt themselves and get the most out of a situation that they could not influence. They thought it was useless to speculate about it – especially because they could not determine what was true and what was propaganda. Thus, they listened as sleepily and uninterestedly to lectures on the “strategic importance of Eastern Karelia”, “the geography and people of Eastern Karelia” and “the latest war events” as to lectures on the care of equipment and arms.

Even on the Karelian Isthmus – where the situation really gave reason for reflection – there was no theorizing to the extent that it would have influenced the handling of the men. The men were so deeply involved in their actual situation that they lost contact with the larger picture. They often discussed the long duration of the war, but did it in a resigned manner and with little faith that Finland would get clear of the war – regardless of when and how it would end. Rumors about a separate peace were followed with great interest and the disappointment was great when the negotiations ended fruitlessly in February 1944. However, the official explanations calmed their feelings, especially the account of the significance of war reparations.

The men had more confidence in German armor than in German soldiers whom they had seen in action in Kiestinki. They had also seen how persevering the Russians could be. Therefore, the Germans’ failure in Stalingrad – something that the men followed with great enthusiasm – was no great surprise to them.

The officers were rather poorly informed about the morale in the company and in the battalion. Reports on the prevailing opinions that were forwarded to higher instances were often rather colored, but for the most part were truthful when, for example, they stated: “The morale is still extraordinary; in fact, it seems to have improved in some places.”<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 438/I/12a/secret/June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

On the average, the mood was good if we exclude the boredom and all sorts of smaller occasional irritations, and there was no need to resort to any greater propaganda measures than those that were served in the papers and in the battalion's entertainment programs. The men knew that censorship kept its eye on them (and had a hunch that there were agents of the military police in the company). Thus, having been warned by a few cases in the battalion, they exercised a certain amount of caution when they ventilated their opinions. In fact, they had very little to conceal.

## 5 Discipline

It was quite common that external signs of discipline were followed rather poorly. The men were nonchalant about saluting, seldom acted in a soldierly manner when they talked to their superiors and did not show much precision when they followed given orders. The company – just like the rest of the army – must have looked like a surprisingly undisciplined group to an observer who was unacquainted with the circumstances.

Saluting was a constant source of annoyance to the men. According to the regulations, all men and NCOs were obliged to salute officers<sup>82</sup>, but most men considered it too strenuous a duty. The view that “you don't salute at the front” was prevalent already at the outbreak of the war and could never be rooted out. The regiment's commander states in an order given on August 18<sup>th</sup> 1941 – in other words, at a stage when the front lines were still moving – the following:

“—— Such an excuse ‘that one does not have to salute’ must be altogether rooted out from the men. Their superiors must not let such childishness and aversion to regulations flourish, and I shall hereafter adopt the most rigorous measures against such superiors who are caught allowing such lack of discipline.”<sup>83</sup>

Such strict orders were given quite often but without any significant improvement to the situation. Everyone had his own perception of the “front”: to some men it encompassed the whole of Eastern Karelia and to others it only covered the actual front. The latter perception was more widespread, and very few superiors – apart from the battalion commander and higher officers – demanded that the men salute them. However, some company commanders – such as lieutenant K in the 6<sup>th</sup> Company – sometimes red-handed men who did not salute, but that was extremely petty behavior in the men's opinion.

---

<sup>82</sup> Barracks duty manual, §§ 95–97.

<sup>83</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Division order number 4/41; War Archives 11945.

The men were expected to salute in Kiestinki, Pindusi and Karhumäki as well as on the roads in their vicinity, and there were often reports of negligent men. To a certain degree, the men saw this negligence as a sport: some drew the line at not saluting a major (at least) and others a captain. The NCOs were never saluted. That sport often led the men into difficulties, because those who returned from leave with a remark “nonchalant about saluting” on their leave permit could be certain of getting suspension of leave for some time to come.

The manual also states that subordinates must be taught to stand at attention when they talk to their superiors<sup>84</sup>, but the men were just as negligent of this order as of the one to salute. The NCOs and subalterns of the company were not honored with standing at attention. However, the men knocked their heels together when they addressed their company commander and other company officers, but they seldom managed to stand at attention throughout the entire conversation. The better the men knew a superior, the less formal they were; however, they could easily – mostly as a demonstration – forget all military etiquette when they came across an officer that was previously unknown to them.

This lack of formal discipline irritated all the officers, especially the senior officers, who could only see the formal side of discipline. The men felt that the formalities determined in the manual were strenuous, mainly because they emphasized their lack of freedom, or as was said in a letter seized by the censorship from the 4<sup>th</sup> Company:

“— As a guy of the old bunch, you must know that I am about to go ballistic. One cannot overvalue the price of freedom. To me, it is everything; I suffer hellishly here, but it is best and safest to remain silent.” (October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1942).

And in another, somewhat earlier letter, the same writer states:

“— We don't have to worry about the Russians here, but we have to be afraid of the masters all the time. Their orders are strict and everything seems to be heading towards the peacetime style. It is altogether unjust, because then the men begin to feel like slaves and unsuitable for everything. This war has already lasted so long that their morale should rather be raised, but the masters do not seem to understand this. One can see from everything that the guys won't have the ability to fight if the situation turns bad. I know that the men are not afraid, but their fighting spirit has been squeezed out of them with all sorts of enslavement and bullying.”<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Barracks duty manual, § 102.

<sup>85</sup> Appendices to the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 2747/1/2a/secret/... 1943; War Archives 11945.

The mood that exudes from this letter is an embittered version of the men's normal attitude. They hardly watched over one another's private lives and could not understand why the officers wanted to interfere with their matters. The men knew very well what was important and adapted themselves to one another's and the officers' control over their shared and special duties in so far as their own well-being depended on such control. Saluting and corresponding pettiness were considered bullying (*"vittuilu"*) that the masters themselves had invented and belonged to the same category as many of the tasks that had to be performed. Much of the laziness that the men showed was an expression of their antipathy towards tasks forced on them by the authorities, e.g. building the field latrine during the march to Hyrynsalmi, chopping wood to get leave and building field fortifications in Pindusi. In their opinion, such tasks were unnecessary and had only been arranged to put them down and "keep them in deep shit".

The men adopted the same attitude towards close-order drills. When those platoons of the battalion that were kept in the reserve were ordered in April 1942 to an hour of formal exercise every morning, soldier 382 and lance corporal 494 refused to line up one morning. They were of the opinion that formal exercise was unnecessary at the front. The entire platoon had discussed the exercise a few days before and shared their view, but nobody dared to share their open refusal. Moreover, it could already be seen that the fate of these guys would be to become martyrs. However, things did not go that far, because the battalion commander conceded that the exercise - according to the men's proposal - could be replaced with arms handling and terrain exercises. These activities would be more useful and were thus less objectionable.

Almost all tasks were performed unwillingly, but the men obstructed in one way or another to such work that was totally useless in their opinion. Such obstruction, "shirking", was not only permissible but was even considered praiseworthy (negligence of the duty to salute, for example, represented this kind of obstruction). In particular, the NCOs came to notice this, because usually they did not have enough authority to make the men obey their orders immediately. Thus, in order to get something accomplished, they first discussed the orders with the men and then let the internal control of the group determine who would be in turn or the most suitable for the task at hand. The men thought they were eventually responsible for fulfilling the given orders<sup>86</sup>, and often responded to impatient NCOs: "Take it easy, we will see to it that it gets done." It could take a long time and renewed reminders were sometimes necessary, but only seldom did the men leave sensible orders unfulfilled. They were not always executed literally, because the men often found more practical and work-saving solutions when construction work, guard duty or something of the kind was involved.

Based on the system that was practiced in the company, the men became accustomed to quite a lot of independence. The officers' impact on them was

<sup>86</sup> Compare with discussion about guard duty and tasks at picket Kuukkeli, page 111–112 above.

rather limited, because the company was always spread over a vast area at the front: they only directed and coordinated the action and left the detailed solutions to the NCOs and the men. Therefore, to a certain extent, the NCOs' authority became dependant on their practical skills. This concerned the officers too, and a half-platoon leader of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon – sergeant major 40 – enjoyed more authority than lieutenant 22, because the former had more practical sense and interfered less with details. Thus, one can call into question the following letter from the 5<sup>th</sup> Company's commander:

“—— It has turned out that the officers' authority suffers if a young sergeant – no matter how competent he is – takes care of an officer's duties for a long time. After a period of time, the men become accustomed to discussing the given orders and start to criticize them. They also become accustomed to orders that are given in the form of an urgent request and begin to shirk their jobs. If young, though competent, NCOs serve as platoon leaders, discipline and willingness to serve will suffer. At least at the front, the officers must be kept at full strength. ——.”<sup>87</sup>

Naturally, the officers had more authority and the men's attitude towards them was different from their attitude towards the NCOs. But that did not make the problem quite as simple as the commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Company seemed to think.

As has been stated at another point above, it could be noticed that the men's attitudes towards the officers changed over time. The primary attitude was always the same: partly fear and partly curiosity. The secondary attitude varied depending on how fast and thoroughly the men became acquainted with their commander; however, this would determine their eventual attitude. There were officers who did not have any authority. For example, second lieutenant 368 or second lieutenant R in the 4<sup>th</sup> Company did not try to keep any distance between themselves and the men. The result was that the men did not obey their orders and even forced them to do guard duty, but that was an exception. The power that arrived and rested in the rank of officer gave support at least at the beginning, but it would disappear if there was nothing behind it. The authority had to be based on respect that depended on personal courage, practical judgment, care of one's subordinates and consideration of the men's opinions.

If we look at the relationship between the men and the three demanding company commanders – lieutenant 257, lieutenant 350 and captain 301 – we find out the following: lieutenant 257 was only feared and not liked, lieutenant 350 was feared and generally respected and captain 301 was both respected and liked by the men. The first wanted to decide everything alone in a detailed manner, drilled the men when he met them and almost never showed up at the front. The second was very precise about the execution of orders but did not give unnecessary orders and

---

<sup>87</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Company of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, number 293/3 b/secret/November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

allowed discussion about the men's performance; he showed great personal courage, too. The third gave his subordinates great personal freedom in the execution of orders, tried to repair the men's failures himself, seldom meddled in details and was regarded as one of the most courageous men of the battalion. The men's mourning for him was great and sincere when he fell in January 1944.

To my understanding, authority did not depend solely on one's rank or official standing. Primarily, it depended on the superior's personality. There were machine gun leaders, such as corporal 13, and half-platoon leaders, such as sergeant 486 and staff sergeant 269, whom the men obeyed almost without question. Those leaders and commanders who were capable of reconciling the morality codified in the manual with the morality that the men had developed succeeded in maintaining good discipline. This amounted to more than blind obedience (to which the 5<sup>th</sup> Company's commander clearly referred to).

Both the men's own morality and the codified morality aimed at maintaining the security and comfort of the community; however, the morality of the manual was never sanctioned by the men – at least not to its full extent. This led to a situation where the men and the officers often had differing views about what benefited the community's security and comfort. In addition, the men's morality showed more flexibility. (In principle, the manual did not recognize any “space of tolerance” between what was right and what was wrong; however, this space existed in the form of the superiors' sensitivity to excuses.) The men's morality judged every action by using the community's immediate advantage as a norm (greater or smaller value) whereas the codified morality had the superiors' orders as a norm (right or wrong) and regarded every action as part of the entity Group's Discipline.

In addition, even though the community would not be exposed to immediate danger if someone broke or was nonchalant about orders, the discipline nevertheless suffered from this (and indirectly the community, too). Thus, according to the codified morality, violation of orders could not be judged solely by their immediate effect. The men did not or could not understand that the manual aimed at instilling among them an attitude of shared obedience that suffered from every breach that was allowed to pass as thenished. They judged an offence only by its immediate effect on the community. Therefore, most expressions of morale in the manual sounded like masters' bullying (*“herrojen vittuilu”*). They were truly of the opinion that it did not matter if you were neglectful of saluting, drank too much and made noise or went AWOL to Karhumäki.

It is possibly wrong to say that the men did not comprehend the reasoning of the codified morality, because it was evident from many of those discussions about discipline (that were often evoked by the frontline papers' obedience propaganda) that most of the men understood after some closer reasoning that if the officers let an AWOL go unpunished, every man would soon be planning to take off. However, this understanding was of purely theoretical nature and the men very seldom

applied it to actual cases. In practice, this meant that they did not sanction the codified morality. Certainly, they were forced to accept it as an existing fact, but were not interested in observing its orders. Internal social control – exercised in compliance with the manual – started to function only when the entire group could be made to observe its orders. It was common in peacetime garrisons that the officers attempted to create “group discipline” (*sakkikuri*) by letting the entire group suffer from one man’s neglects. However, this method was not resorted to at the front, because the only suitable methods of punishment – suspension of leave and drill as a punishment for the entire group – could have caused a mutiny if they had been applied there.<sup>88</sup>

This difference in viewpoints between the men on the one side and the officers on the other was particularly clear when it concerned furloughs. The men were of the opinion that they were entitled to regular leaves in the same way as those who were employed had regular vacations. This view was in stark contrast with the manual, according to which home leaves were rewards for bravery and good performance. Those suspensions of leave that were issued when the situation was critical were often looked upon as unnecessary bullying (*turhaa vittuilua*). This was only natural, because the men could not know the motives that dictated the suspension of leave. However, it must be said that the army command tried to keep the furloughs running as long as conditions allowed it, sometimes even in rather threatening situations.

The men’s limited interest in the codified morality could in my opinion be seen from their attitude towards those who were punished in the company. Arrest and jail sentences were not considered disgraceful as such; rather, the men felt sympathetic towards those who had been sentenced. This was clearly noticeable at the main picket in Pindusi where the men on guard would let the arrested men take all the liberties they dared without the duty officer noticing it. The men approved of the superiors’ measures only when the person in question had offended their own morality: for example, when soldier 448 was punished for neglecting food transportation in December 1943.

However, such neglects were few and far between and when they did take place, the men would first try to force those who had failed into improving their behavior. It was considered utterly nasty to snitch on one’s comrade, because the men’s morality called for a spirit of solidarity against the officers; not, however, to the extent that many men would have to suffer for one man’s crimes. Those who had stolen butter from the regiment’s store at the Jääski railway station understood this. When the company organized itself in the evening, the guilty men stepped forward – though a little hesitantly – when they were asked to, because the innocent

---

<sup>88</sup> The entire battalion was given suspension of leave after a failure in Jelettijärvi and that caused great and deep indignation in the machine gun platoon, which had not been in Jeletti at all. Suspension of leave was cancelled also in other companies except in the 4<sup>th</sup> Company that had disgraced itself really badly.



had ventilated their thoughts about the morning's events during the march and had clearly shown that they did not want any harm for themselves because of other men's appetite for hoarding.

The tables below show what kind of negligence led to penalties. The total amount of punished men makes up about 10 % of those who served in the battalion and in the company. Negligence on duty and insubordination were the most common offences; thereafter came absence without leave.

**Table 16**

Penalties for offences, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company

	1941		1942		1943		1944		1941-1944	
	B	C	B	C	B	C	B	C	B	C
Cowardice, desertion, self-mutilation	3	-	8	1	-	-	16	1	27	2
Mutiny, insubordination, negligence on duty	9	7	22	7	22	10	8	3	61	27
Neglect of guard duty	1	1	3	-	10	-	1	-	15	1
Failure to appear	-	-	14	2	35	8	8	4	58	15
Fraternizing with the local population	-	-	-	-	15	2	-	-	15	2
Crimes against property	2	-	4	-	4	-	4	-	14	-
On leave:										
Drunkness & late return	2	-	4	3	1	1	2	-	9	3
Drunkness	-	-	-	-	2	-	15	-	16	-
Late return	2	-	12	1	12	-	10	4	36	5
Assault	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	3	-
Solely drunkness	1	-	10	-	19	5	12	3	42	8
Drunkness and assault	1	-	2	-	1	-	2	2	6	2
Drunkness and negligence on duty	-	-	11	-	8	-	3	-	22	-
Drunkness and failure to appear	-	-	10	-	3	-	10	-	23	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>65</b>

**Table 17**

Penalties in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company

	1941		1942		1943		1944		1941-1944	
	B	C	B	C	B	C	B	C	B	C
Arrest, simple	3	1	50	7	39	5	31	4	123	17
Arrest, hardened	6	6	11	2	72	20	45	11	134	39
Demotion	-	-	1	-	3	-	11	1	15	1
Imprisonment	10	1	26	5	15	1	1	1	52	8
House of correction	2	-	13	-	3	-	1	-	19	-
Death sentence	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>65</b>

**Table 18**Distribution of penalties in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company

	1941		1942		1943		1944		1941–1944	
	NCO	M	NCO	M	NCO	M	NCO	M	NCO	M
Arrest, simple	1	-	1	6	-	5	2	2	4	13
Arrest, hardened	-	6	-	2	-	20	1	10	1	38
Imprisonment	-	1	1	4	-	1	-	1	1	7
Demotion	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	1	7	2	12	-	26	4	13	7	58

**Table 19**Distribution of the penalties in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company according to their length

	1941	1942	1943	1944	1941–1944
Arrest (simple) 1–7 days	1	5	5	2	13
8–14 days	-	2	-	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	1	7	5	4	17
Arrest (hard.) 1–2 days	6	-	13	5	24
3–4 days	-	1	7	1	9
5–6 days	-	1	-	1	2
7– days	-	-	-	4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	6	2	20	11	39
Imprisonment – 0,5 yrs.	1	2	-	1	4
0,5–1 yrs.	-	2	1	-	3
1–4 yrs.	-	-	-	-	-
4– yrs.	-	1	-	-	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	1	5	1	1	8

The short sentences did not have a particularly deterring effect and their effect was probably mitigated by the men's sympathy towards those who had been punished. Not even such neglects as falling asleep on guard duty or fleeing from a combat situation could arouse enough indignation in the men to make them approve of the severe penalties that the superiors sanctioned in such cases.

Suspension of leave was the penalty that the men feared the most. During the latter part of the war, a man who had returned late from leave or who had a remark on his leave permit could be almost certain about having to wait a few extra months for his next leave. If someone returning from leave had red notes on his leave permit or if he returned late, his inexorable fate was to be caught red-handed. If, on the contrary, one had some other mischief on his account, he could clear the situation with luck and cleverness and not be uncovered. If one was

unlucky – was caught and sentenced to imprisonment – he could postpone the execution of his sentence to the indefinite future. Therefore, the men were little afraid of jail sentences.

I think it is appropriate to touch on the men's diligence in this context. At the front, the platoons seldom had any work that is worth mentioning, because the battalion could almost always take over positions that had been built already. In places where that was not the case, at Sintosenlahti and at Lohilahti, the construction work proceeded rather fast until a simple barbed-wire obstacle, open machine gun nests and sufficiently many dugouts were ready. The men did not pay much attention to these structures; for example, the dugouts and the nests did not have any sanitation so they had to be rebuilt after the snow had melted.<sup>89</sup>

In Karhumäki, the battalion received ready positions that in some places, e.g. on Pirunsaari, were rather deficient. In spite of the exposed location of the base, the previous troops had not bothered to improve the positions, and only with the assistance of lieutenant 350's energetic pressure did the men get them into condition. Nonchalance on the island of Boks has been addressed here before. In Salmijoki, both the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon got an order to reinforce their base with armored cupolas. The supply and maintenance unit transported them to the front but they were not mounted on their positions. The pits were only half-ready when the battalion was rotated a month later.

There were not positions of any kind on the Karelian Isthmus. The men had to dig themselves into the ground during combat action, and the heavy firing meant that they dug themselves foxholes very fast. The men made the most of the possibilities that the terrain provided and just about nobody dug more than was necessary. Corporal 206 was the only one who thought about his comfort; after he had found a spring mattress, he dug a foxhole that was big enough for the mattress.

The men had been kept in regular work – usually in timework – during periods of rest, but this system was no longer efficient. It did not make any difference to the men whether they worked or loitered, because they had to spend a certain amount of hours at the working site anyway. The officers could not avoid observing how working time was squandered with the following system:

“—— It has become evident in repeated inspections that the troop units do not make use of the working time with sufficient efficiency. In particular, the following unsatisfactory state of affairs must be observed:  
– the men make coffee (from their own surrogate) during working hours between morning tea and breakfast and also between 1 PM and dinner and drink it with their sandwiches without any particular haste; as a

---

<sup>89</sup> Compare with page 148–149 above.

result of such coffee breaks, at least from half an hour to an hour of working time of a group of 3–8 men is wasted (a particularly favorite habit in the 36<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion)

– without the supervisor intervening in the matter, the men leave their working place without permission to drink coffee in the soldier's home building or in the canteen

– the working pace is slow, partly because of poor management and idling with coffee drinking and partly because of poor working discipline and atmosphere

– the men's fatigue duty is neither supervised nor directed (the men do not receive any new assignments after they have completed the previous ones) and their performance at work is left to their own care and enthusiasm

– in order to improve discipline and efficiency at work, I forbid all coffee making and canteen visits during working hours and allow it to take place only during the breakfast hour and after the dinner from 6 PM to 9.30 PM. I order all commanders and unit leaders to improve the work discipline by every means available, of which the most effective is: unyieldingly firm demands, tireless vigilance and exhortations that are given in the right manner.

Commander

Major General

E.A. Vihma

Chief of Staff

Lieutenant Colonel

V.Karanko.”<sup>90</sup>

The men themselves were not particularly happy with the timework-based system, because they got more free time if they were allowed to do the inevitable work by contract. So, they asked for a contract when the company was building a causeway of tree trunks in Röhö, and it was granted to them. But the contract system was carried out in the battalion in a consistent manner only in Ristilampi. This was done on an order from the division headquarters. It had clearly been noticed at headquarters that timework did not bring about the desired results. Even though the contracts were rather big in Ristilampi, the men carried them out in a relatively short period of time and thereby had plenty of free time.

For the most part, the men had plenty of free time. Most of them used it for sleeping, especially at the front, and after that their most favorite pastime was cardplaying. They played poker, blackjack, “last trick” or casino whenever they had the opportunity for it, and there were very few who never touched the cards. The men usually played for money, and even though the pots were mostly small – from 100 to 200 marks – the winnings for one man could rise to rather big

<sup>90</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> Division, number 490/I/2 secret/March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943; War Archives 11945.

sums in one day. In Kiestinki, one man in the battalion was said to have won 11,000 marks in one night. As has been previously mentioned, the men also played for tobacco and in some cases also for foodstuffs.

Some of the free time was used for letter writing - "Now N.N. is showing cardboard to his old woman again" (*"Nyt N.N. taas lykkää pahvia muijalle"*) - reading papers or making coffee. There were not very many who engaged in handiwork, and only very few men - such as soldiers 28 and 30 - committed themselves entirely to such hobbies. The interest in handiwork fluctuated, and one could observe how the fashion changed: in spring 1941, almost the entire platoon made birch-bark items; in spring and summer 1942, all kinds of ornaments were made from light-alloy metal: rings, bracelets, watch chains and knife sheaths (as was said back on the home front, the metal came from planes that had been shot down, even though the metal actually came from water bottles and packages). Metal handiwork was very popular for some time, but interest subsided towards the autumn, when the authorities' propaganda for wooden handiwork started to gain ground. However, interest in wooden handiwork never became as widespread. Those who occupied themselves with wooden handiwork were clever with their hands without exception, but usually they did not like the models published in the frontline magazines (they were mainly old folksy models). Instead, they tried to imitate all sorts of factory-made notions. Utility goods such as axe handles, saw bows, wooden dishes or scoops were made hardly at all. In order to get a good price, they had to be ornamental or fancy goods such as hand-mirrors, photo frames, carved boxes or bears.

## 6 Helpfulness

It has been stated above how precise everyone was about getting the fallen to an honorable funeral in their home parish's graveyard and how the men could demonstrate totally unselfish valour in bringing the wounded comrades to safety. They were considerably less helpful towards the living and the healthy, because they could take care of themselves.

The men helped their group comrades and personal friends with little favors, but it hardly ever happened that someone took over another man's duties, e.g. guard duty or wood chopping, without being compensated for it. Changing shifts and buying oneself free were possible, but it did not pay off to try to talk somebody into doing another man's work for free. If someone needed to borrow a coat or a rifle, he usually got it, but if one wanted to trade something, the situation was immediately different: he would have to pay something in exchange. If someone did not have any tobacco, he could be certain about getting a cigarette from someone. He had the best chance if he turned to his platoon comrade: "You as a member of our platoon..." (*"Sinä meidän joukkueen miehenä..."*). If the person in question had cigarettes, he was almost compelled to give one to his comrade.

One did not sponge foodstuffs or civilian packages from one's own comrades, but sometimes the men borrowed sugar or butter. These loans were always paid back. Members of mess kit groups usually gave one another pieces to taste from their packages. One was not looked upon as a miser if he did not offer to his other comrades in the tent. Only soldier 282, who never entertained his comrades, only sold, was called "The Miser".

The men hitchhiked a lot on the Petsamo road, but the truck drivers seldom stopped to take passengers. Therefore, the men had to be on their guard and climb onto a truck when it slowed down due to the poor condition of the road. Those who succeeded in getting on the platform could ride along. However, it was not always easy to get there, because those who were already there tried to prevent too many men from climbing on. They were afraid that the driver would refuse to drive if the load became too heavy. Lance corporal 401, who was the company specialist in hitchhiking, used to say: "Cut their fingernails off with the axe!" (*"Kynnet poikki kirveellä!"*), and did not care a bit if they were men from his own company who tried to climb onto the platform where he already was.

Just like other units, the regiment had a fund for brothers-in-arms where contributions were collected on payday. It was common to give a day's salary every month, but every time the subscription lists were put up, there were many who thought they had too little to contribute anything. They were of the opinion that the collected funds were spent on "masters" liquor and that they would not get any delight from them. However, the collections brought rather remarkable results: in June 1943, 10,058 marks were collected in the battalion and the following amounts were distributed to the close relatives of the fallen soldiers: 35,000 marks in December 1942, 32,000 marks in April 1943 and 24,500 marks in August 1943.

The collections to the regiment, division and army commanders' presents brought considerably less. The men were clearly unwilling to donate even a few marks: "Why should we give presents to that man killer?" (*"Miksi nyt sille miestentapattajalle lahjoja annetaan?"*).

## VI ATTITUDES TOWARDS OUTSIDERS

### 1 Other Front Units

The company's men often got into close contact with other units of the battalion, because the machine gun platoons were always subjected to rifle companies at the front. However, the separatist attitude that the different groups adopted towards one another at the bases did not mean that the company's men would have had some aversion for the battalion's other companies. On the contrary, their attitudes towards battalion comrades were throughout benevolent: they all belonged to the same bigger community.

The fact that machine gun men did not want to be entirely subjected to rifle companies or that they involuntarily submitted to their transfer to some of the battalion's machine gun companies does not mean that they thought their own company was better. They were rather well acquainted with the conditions in the other machine gun companies and knew that guard duty was almost as strenuous, that provisioning was the same and that possibilities to go on leave were equally good – or bad – there. They would only unwillingly leave the community – where they had become acknowledged members – to get acclimatized in another community. One could never become equally “old” in another company. Each company had its own peculiarities to which one would have to habituate oneself in a transfer. In addition, the machine gun men sometimes showed weak signs of “professional pride”: they were specialists who did not have to go on patrol. It is possible that - to some extent - this attitude contributed to their dislike of transfers to rifle companies: the transfer would have signified a change in their branch of service.

When men from different companies talked about their units and commanders or leaders, they tried to outdo one another in boasting about their own company's excellence or in cursing its poor management. The main thing was that one's own company stood out as more notable; it mattered less if it was better or worse. In a similar manner, the men even tried to outdo one another with stories about who had been in the worst shellfire, who had experienced the worst bullying or who had been in the worst booze-up. In other words, they tried to bring out their own or their group's superiority by boasting about extraordinary experiences. The fact that the men in such a manner wanted to give prominence to their own community's distinctive character indicates that they harbored a certain interest in it. Also, the fact that they (even though they often cursed it) quite seldom wanted to leave it indicates that they actually felt at home there – or at least preferred it to the other communities in the army.

I consider it very probable that the men who were transferred from the company reacted in much the same manner as the replenishments that arrived from the 1<sup>st</sup> Machine Gun Company and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Machine Gun Company of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. During the beginning of their service in our company, they constantly compared it with their old companies – to the disadvantage of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Company. However, the comparisons became more infrequent after some time. They probably realized that the differences between their previous units and the company were not that big after all.

In the above case, the men who came to the company probably did not have any understanding of the company, only a generally vague idea of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. Namely, a certain rivalry existed between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions. [In the opinion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's men, the regiment's commander favored the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion after the trip to Jeletti (*"Jeletin reissu"*) that had performed considerably better than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion there and was therefore called the "commander's favorite battalion" (*"Komentajan lempipataljoona"*). In their view, for example, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had been given better billets in Nurmes. When it was mentioned in the division's order of the day in July 1943 that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion had performed well in Pirunsaari – where the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had previously failed – the delight over the humiliation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was great. The same thing happened in Ihantala where it held out and where the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was badly scattered.] Thus, the attitudinal model of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's men was to look down upon the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. This attitude became weaker in the long run, because the men came to see that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion did not differ particularly from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

The battalion's last commander tried to strengthen by all possible means the men's idea that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was better than the other units. In field services, on entertainment occasions and in patriotic festivities, he urged his men to do the utmost to improve the battalion's already excellent reputation. His consistent aim was to create and instill a "battalion attitude" – instead of a "regimental attitude" – in his men and was probably clever in that, because the men seldom had any chance to demonstrate some kind of "regimental attitude". It is true that a distinction was drawn between the "dozen's men" (*"Tusinan miehet"*) from the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and all the others, but no difference was made between men from the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment (*"Vitosen miehet"*) and men from the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment (*"Piikin miehet"*) who were all regarded as strangers or outsiders.

When the men were at home or on a train on leave, they possibly felt more affinity with comrades from their own front sector, and even though they talked about "the biggest possible unit" ("our platoon" with company comrades, "our battalion" with regimental comrades and "us on the Kiestinki front" with altogether strange men), it was quite common – especially towards the end of the war – to slip into a conversation that one came from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in distinction to the other "dozen's men" from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion or the "Santa Claus Battalion" (*"Joulupukkipataljoona"*, i.e. the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion).



The men often emphasized that infantrymen always had the most difficulties, not only because infantry service was heaviest but also because infantry regiments had to content themselves with all kinds of surplus equipment. In infantrymen's opinion, other branches of service were favored in clothing and billeting matters – and this altogether undeservedly because their service was much lighter and less dangerous. In particular, the infantrymen's envy was directed at artillerymen. Every now and then, one could hear the men sigh with a hope that they be transferred to an artillery unit where they would be relieved of long guard duty, where it would be peaceful way behind the front and where everybody could be better equipped. But nobody even asked for a transfer, because everyone knew that it would be futile. They had to content themselves with regarding artillerymen as “men from the home front” whose arguments would not be recognized when men from the front spoke. Therefore, they could laugh heartily when the front magazine *Pohjan Poika* reported sensationally: “The front's gallant artillerymen in the Uhtua sector” (*“Etulinjan uljaat tykkipojat Uhtuan suunnalla”*) and they often cited the following phrase: “An artilleryman on leave is always a fire observer”.

Based on the company's men's statements about other branches of service – armored, engineer, signals, flight or transport troops – only the last-mentioned had any greater appeal to them. However, the army had plenty of drivers so nobody even tried to put in an application for transfer. Soldier 413 became an object of derision when he applied for transfer to the air force in autumn 1942. In addition, when he was sent back as unsuitable half a year later, he had to bear even more mockery and was thereafter called airman 413 (*“lentosotamies 413”*). In a similar manner, the men made mockery of soldier 273 who for several months applied for transfer to the jaeger battalion in Petsamo: in their view, both these men made unnecessary trouble.

## 2 Home Front

Home front, which included everything that lay behind the battalion headquarters, had a strange appeal to many, perhaps most men. If one can judge from what the men said, few of them would have stayed in the company if transfers to the home front had been granted. The fact that there were always volunteers when a supply and maintenance driver's job became vacant points to the attractiveness of the home front. Likewise, it is manifested by the fact that some men tried on leave to get a certificate from their home district's civil guard and have it attached to their application for transfer to the home front. This practice seldom worked and the higher quarters often sent official letters that forbid such private actions. All in all, three men may have been granted a transfer to the home front; the brothers of two of these men had fallen and according to the regulations, they were relieved of service at the front.

So long as the men themselves could not get to the home front, they despised it and all who served there. They thought they were not obliged to show any kind of respect for officers who served on the home front and disapproved of the formal discipline that had to be observed there. They thought that as soldiers on leave they were entitled to the same freedoms as at the front: after having roughed it for several months and finally being on leave, it was well-deserved to enjoy oneself and feel like a civilian again. In my opinion, the unconcern about dress and conduct that the men often showed on leave appears to a large extent to have been obstruction to discipline in general and directed towards men on the home front in particular.

Even between their furloughs, the men maintained good connections with the “civilian home front” through letters, papers and the news brought by men who had returned from leave. Most of them spent the greater deal of their leave at home, working hard in the field or in the forest. They would have a fling on their way home or on their way back to the front: in Rovaniemi, Oulu or in some other place where there were liquor and women. It was during these days in particular that they were provided with the opportunity to protest for discipline on the home front and to get red notes on their leave permits.

\* \* \*

The men’s attitudes towards the German “brothers-in-arms” did not always correspond to the wishes of the army command. The men noticed already during the first months of the war how confused the Germans were in forest terrain, and that looked ridiculous to the battalion’s men who were experienced woodsmen. The men got along well with the Germans they had met at the front, but that was mainly due to their big stocks of liquor. In general, people did not tolerate the Germans. In particular people from Lapland could not put up with the Germans after they had seen from a close distance how these carried on amidst the civilian population. In particular, the Germans’ success with the female sex irritated the men who – already in autumn 1941 – sang with great emphasis a satirical song about women at home who only cared about the Germans.<sup>91</sup> It aroused great indignation at the entire Kiestinki front in February 1942 when some Germans raped a nurse, and all stories about how Germans had been stabbed by jealous Finns were received with cruel delight. One could not notice any dislike for the operation when the battalion marched against the Germans in September 1944, and the further north the men progressed, the more intense their bitterness grew.

---

<sup>91</sup> Cited partly above, see p. 186.

### 3 Enemy

The men had an opportunity to see something of the East Karelian civilian population only for a few months when the battalion lay in charge of coast guarding in Sunku. All interaction with civilians was strictly forbidden, but because there were women who sold themselves for bread, some took the risk and made acquaintances. The general impression of this half-Russian civilian population was unfavorable and was not improved by the Russians the men could see at work at the railway stations in Petroskoi and Kontupohja or by the buildings and cultivation in the Karhumäki area.

In September 1943, a popular religious festival (*“praasniekat”*) was arranged with a propaganda purpose in Selkki, where every company that belonged to the Maaselkä Group was ordered to send one man to see real East Karelians.<sup>92</sup> When the official letter was read out loud, it took a while before anyone volunteered; however, the man who went to the festival was totally satisfied when he returned and thought there were beautiful girls in Selkki and that it had all been good propaganda (*“hyvää ropakantaa”*).

\* \* \*

The official propaganda in daily and weekly papers, in front magazines, in radio and in marching songs written on the home front could not appreciably change the men’s attitudes towards the enemy. It cannot be said that they hated the enemy – rather, they harbored undifferentiated fear. They found some of its ways of fighting ridiculous (eagerness to dig oneself into the ground) as well as some of its equipment (bayonets and quilted jackets), but talked with respect about the enemy’s tenacity and patience. The border battalion that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion had faced in Röhö mainly aroused the men’s admiration and the Russian artillery in Ihtala their fear.

Even if the men’s notions of the Red Army and its internal conditions were generally quite weak, they were nevertheless familiar with their temporary opponent’s peculiarities to the extent that they knew what to expect in the near future. This was the reason for their apparent nonchalance at the front. The men cursed the Russians when action increased at the front but admitted they had their full right to fire and responded with what they could: “let’s give him a licking” (*“Annetaan sille vähän Eetvarttia”*). But the fact that Russian partisans made raids far into Finnish territory – Savukoski, Salla, Kuusamo and Suomussalmi – where they killed women and children revolted the men deeply. They approved undividedly of the summary hanging of a partisan that took place on the Kiestinki road even though the men were very kind towards all prisoners. A prisoner was no longer an enemy but a companion in misfortune. Then, he was an “Ipu” (*“Ivan”*) or a “Vanja” – but he was “a bloody Russian” (*“Ryssä”*) when he was shooting or sneaking behind the barbed-wire obstacle.

<sup>92</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Division, Personnel Section, number 4491/I sel./3 sec./September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1943; War Archives 3390.

# LAPLAND

## I THE LAND

### 1 History of the Settlement

Even though the older history of settlement provides much of interest, I shall treat it very shortly only to show how young Finnish settlement is in Lapland and how colonization all too well follows traditional patterns.

Authorities have taken an interest in the colonization of Lapland ever since medieval times. In a letter from 1328, ruler Knut Jonsson gives all “siue Birkala fuerint siue alii quicunque” right to “extrema pars Helsingie versus aquilonem, qve ad amnem dictum Wlo et stagnum Wlotraesk usque protenditur, inhabitari et vtique coli”.<sup>91</sup> Magnus Eriksson confirmed this letter in 1340 and Erik Magnusson in 1358.<sup>92</sup> Even later Swedish kings, especially Gustaf Wasa and Carl IX, were interested in the eastern parts of Lapland. Of the latter’s interest testifies his “Directions and instruction in what... H.R.H.’s loyal servants Isaach Behm and Gabriel Thomaszon should carry out in Kemi Lapland. Stockholm Act of 6 October 1601” (*Instruction och undervisning hwad ... H.K.M:tz trogne tienere Isaach Behm och Gabriel Thomaszon uthi Kemi Lappemarck skole bestelle. Actum Stockholm then 6 Oktobris Åhr 1606*), where it is said: “Finally, so should H.R.H’s representatives give permission to settle Lake Kitki Jerfwi, as H.R.H. has been informed that there is room to build and live, and also to go and see the other Lakes situated above Kemi, from where the River Kemi originates. And what they cannot do now, they should do in the coming summer.” (*Till thet sidste: Så skole H.K.M:tz utshickede lathe besättiie Kitki Jerfwi tråsk, effter H.K.M:t förnimmer att the är legenheet till att byggie och boo, såsom och besee the andre Tråsken, som ofvan för Kemi ligge, the Kemi Elff hafwer sin ursprungh utaff. Och thet som the nu icke kunne göre, skole the göra i tillkommande Sommar.*)<sup>93</sup>

But we can hardly talk about the colonization of Kemi Lapland before the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Until then, Finnish immigration was very small-scale and did not cause any discord between the Finns and the Lapps. Those Finns that visited Lapland in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were most likely only travelling traders and farmers from river mouths who made their way inland for fishing.

Otherwise, colonization was allowed only under the condition that “quod homines siluestres et vagos, vulgariter dictos Lappa, in suis venacionibus nullus debeat

<sup>91</sup> Isak Fellman: Handlingar och uppsatser angående Finska Lappmarken och Lapparne I–IV, part III, p. 336.

<sup>92</sup> Isak Fellman: *ibid.*, part IV, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> Isak Fellmann: *ibid.*, part IV, p.127.

impedire”<sup>94</sup> which in established practice had meant prohibition of all colonization, because the Lapps’ hunting and fishing rights were too close while settlers on the whole were not allowed to hunt and fish in Lapland at all. But because the Crown did not – or pretended not to – know the actual circumstances and the Lapps’ complex system of hunting rights, the paradoxical thing happened that, on the one hand, the willing were encouraged to settle in Lapland (whereby the Lapps’ rights were violated) and, on the other hand, “they were seriously ordered not to cause the Lapps any interruption or detriment regarding their forests or fishing waters” (“*befaldes alfvarligen*” that “*ingalundha tillfogaföre:ne Lappar något inpass eller förfong upå deras skogar eller fiskevatn*”).<sup>95</sup>

At the end of medieval times and at the beginning of the modern era, the settlement crept slowly up the rivers’ lower reaches and especially along the big and fertile valley of the River Kemi where settlement had reached as far as Rovaniemi towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Based on Jakob Fellman’s information, we can figure that there were approximately 75 assessment units of land between Lautiosaari and Rovaniemi in the 1590’s.<sup>96</sup> However, it took another fifty years before some pioneers settled along Lake Kemi, and only after 1673 when king Carl XI issued the so-called Kalmar Notice (*Kalmarplakatet*) did settlement speed up.

The king says the following in the notice: “...so that both the Lapps may be given adequate education for their souls and the country itself be populated by more people and the waste and untilled land be made useful and cultivated in Our and the Realm’s service, particularly by Swedes and Finns on hereditary lease (åborätt), who could cultivate the land – which the Lapps according to their means of living cannot take advantage of – into meadows and pasture and get other necessary food from forests, streams and lakes; not to mention the benefit that can be expected by including the numerous mines, and for the promotion of which We issue a Gracious Privilege: that Lapland be separated from the Swedish and Finnish congregations and be divided into separate parishes and two deaneries with deans, vicars and assistant vicars” ( “*...på thet så wäl Lapparne måge medh en nögachtigh underwijsning til theras Själars salighet blifwa försörgde, såsom och sjelfwa Landet af flere Inwånare besättias och uptagas, och thet, som nu ligger öde och obrukadt, ther igenom gjöras nyttigt och uparbetas til Wår och Rijksens tjenst, enkannerligen förmedelst Swenska och Finske åboor, hwilke then Jordman, hwar af Lapperne, effter sin näringsahrt, nu ingen nytta eller fördeel sig kunna gjöra, til Ängsmarck och Muhlbete sampt annan tarfwelig föda af Skogh, Strömmar och Siögar, bruka och nyttia kunne; at förtiga then båtnadt, som genom åthskillige Bergwercks uptagande thersammastädes kan stå att förmoda, och til hwilkas befordran Wij et särskildt Nådigt Privilegium gifwe och uthgå låte: Förthenskull hafwe Wij för godt och rådhsamt erachtat, först, til then reena och saliggjörande Gudztienstens förkäfning, både ibland Lapparne sjelfwe,*

<sup>94</sup> Knut Jonsson’s letter from year 1328/Isak Fellman, *ibid.*, part III, p. 336.

<sup>95</sup> Landsh. Melcher Wernstedt’s official letter, July 21st, 1638/Jakob Fellman, *Anteckningar under min vistelse i Lappmarken, I–IV*, Helsingfors 1906, part III, p. 534.

<sup>96</sup> Jakob Fellman, *Anteckningar* part IV, p. 500.

*så och the andre, hwilke sigh här effter ther warde nidhsättiandes, at sjelfwe Lappmarcken ifrån the andre Swenske och Finske Församlingarne skiljas och uti särskilte Socknar och twenne Prowesterier fördelas skal, hwilke medh sine wisse Prowester, Kyrckeherdar och Kapellaner blifwa försedde..*).<sup>97</sup> He also promises fifteen years of exemption from taxation as well as discharge from military service to those who settle in Lapland. This notice was later confirmed with a similar one in 1695.

It seems that the monarchs' economic and political motives played at least an equally big role as their concerns for the salvation of the Lapps, or as Queen Christina says in a patent from year 1640 concerning the construction of churches in Arjeplog, Arvidsjaur, Siblojok and Nasafjäll: "...since an abundant silver deposit – by God's blessing – has been discovered in Piteå Lapland, and that many other fine metals are still hidden there, which with God's help will probably be discovered in the course of time, and be excavated for the benefit of Us, the Crown and our Subjects living in that countryside. This means that churches be built in Lapland, where our subjects until now, unfortunately, have known little of the words of God, and there they could come together and be given an opportunity to practise (in) the Divine Service..." ("*... at effter såsom uthi Pithå Lappmark sigh för någre åhr sedan ett ymnogt Silfverstreck, förmedilst Gudz nådige välsignelse, yppat haffwer, och intet twifvel är, at ännu åskillige fleere sköne Metaller liggia fördolda, som näst Gudz tillhjälp förmodeligen medh tijden kunna uppenbarade blifwa, måtte tillbörligen warda drifne och fortsatte, Gudz helga namn till ära, Oss och Cronan och enkannerligen våre Undersätare ther i Landzorten boendes, till nytto, upkomst och förkofning: Och som thetta näst Gudz milderijke välsignelse, deels består theruppa, at Kyrkor på tienlige orter i förbem:te Lappmarck måge uppbyggas ther våre undersätare aff Lapperne, som här til dagz, ty werr, fögo hafwa vetat af Gudz ord och deres Saligheetz medel, måtte komma tilsamman, och hafwa tillfälle och lägenhet at öfwa sig i Gudztiensten..*").<sup>98</sup> In order to convert the Lapps and bring them under Swedish sovereignty, churches were built even in Kemijärvi and Inari in 1648. The borders in the north were most incompletely drawn up, and tax collectors came in both from Norway and from Russia; from Russia until 1809.<sup>99</sup>

But even if immigration grew after the Kalmar Notice was issued, we cannot say that people would have moved in on a large scale. In all nineteen colonies, fourteen of them in Tornio and five in Kemi Lapland, were named in land and tax collection registers from 1698.<sup>100</sup> However, this inconsiderable start was enough, because it gave rise to permanent settlement, for cattle raising and farming. In 1738, according to the bailiff Anders Hackzell's "Writings about Torneå and Kemi Lapland" ("*Beskrifning om Torneå och Kemi Lappmarcker*"), there were twenty-four colonies

<sup>97</sup> Kongliga Majjt:tz Placat, angående Lappmarckernes bebyggjande, Dat. Calmar Slått den 27 September Åhr 1673, Jakob Fellman: Anteckningar III, p. 133 ("*The Swedish Government's Notice, concerning the settlement of Lapland, dated September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1673, at the Kalmar Castle*")

<sup>98</sup> Jakob Fellman, *ibid.* part III, p.26.

<sup>99</sup> Compare with A. J. Sjögren: Anteckningar om församlingarne i Kemi-Lappmark, Helsingfors 1828, pp. 64-.

<sup>100</sup> Isak Fellman, *ibid.* part IV, p.C.

in the former and seventy-five in the latter<sup>101</sup>, most of these in Kuusamo. At that time, Kemijärvi was not considered to belong to Lapland any more, and its citizens did not pay any “Lapp tax”. Instead, they were taxed according to the same rules as farmers in Kemi and Ijo.

According to Wahlenberg, there were 89 settlers in the village community of Kittilä, 71 in Sodankylä, 35 in Sompio and 10 in the village community of Kemikylä in 1802.<sup>102</sup> There were seventy-three taxable homes and twenty crown-homes in the parish of Kemijärvi in 1805<sup>103</sup> This, combined with Wahlenberg’s information, means that there were 298 homes in an area that covers the present parishes of Kemijärvi, Salla, Savukoski, Pelkosenniemi, Sodankylä and Kittilä - in other words, the number of homes built in 150 years amounted to no more than 300. These figures, however, can only be taken as an approximation, because a comparison with other sources testifies to rather big discrepancies.<sup>104</sup> To me, however, they appear as illustrative enough of the first phase of the permanent habitation of Lapland.

Two things are characteristic of the earlier settlement: it kept exclusively to the river valleys and was, to a great extent, built on stock raising. One should not be able to find a single farm from that era that would not have been located next to a watercourse. According to Hackzell, there was only one house that did not have more than one cow to feed (Vuontisjärvi in Enontekiö) and only three houses that had three cows to feed at the most (in Teno and Enontekiö). Most of the houses had from six to thirty-six cows and were surrounded by peat-land meadows and sedge (*af myrängar och starrhöö*). To me, these two features appear as characteristic of what we can call the Lapp pioneer culture. They have been clearly evident all over Lapland, both in older and in more recent times, and we can find information about them from the works of Deutsch<sup>105</sup>, A.J. Sjögren, S.Paulaharju<sup>106</sup>, O.P. Pettersson<sup>107</sup> and G.Hoppe<sup>108</sup>. In addition, these features can even today be found in the many colonies that are going up in practically every parish of Lapland.

This pioneer life was – or is – extremely tough. Deutsch has described it in a very pessimistic manner: “The settler’s fate is hard. During the time he is engaged in building houses and clearing land for cultivation, he is compelled to go hunting

<sup>101</sup> Isak Fellman, *ibid.* part I, pp. 113–.

<sup>102</sup> G. Wahlenberg: *Geografisk och Ekonomisk Beskrifning om Kemi Lappmark i Vesterbottens Höfdingadöme*, Stockholm 1804, pp. 65–

<sup>103</sup> *Special-Jordebok för Uhleåborgs Norra Fögderi*, ULA.

<sup>104</sup> A.J.Sjögren, *ibid.* pp.118– and p.158; *Kemi Härads Jordebok för År 1830*, ULA; Uppg. av Zach. Cajaner, *anf. i Isak Fellman: Handlingar II*, p.338.

<sup>105</sup> H. Deutsch: *Oeconomiska Anteckningar rörande Norra Delen af Uleåborgs Län, under resor derstädes, på Hans Erlaucht, Riks-Cancelleren m.m. N.P. Rumänzoffs omkostnad och Kejs. Finska Hushållnings-Sällskapets försorg gjorde åren 1814 och 1815, Kejs. Finska Hushållnings-Sällskapets Förhandlingar III*, Åbo 1819.

<sup>106</sup> S.Paulaharju: *Wanhaa Lappia ja Peräpohjaa*, Helsinki 1923 and *Sompio*, Porvoo 1939.

<sup>107</sup> O.P.Pettersson: *Gamla byar i Vilhelmina I–III, I–III, Etnografiska Källskrifter I*, Stockholm 1941–1944.

<sup>108</sup> G.Hoppe: *Vägarna inom Norrbottens Län*, *Geographica*, Skrifter från Upsala Universitetets Geografiska Institution Nr. 16, Upsala 1945.



and fishing, which is treacherous in character. Berries and straw bread are the main nourishment for many. The inspection is made in the new cottage and taxation is determined according to the parliamentary decision of 1800. The settler cultivates the sparsely growing patches of peat-land, gives his name for crops, quarrels with the bear over his only cow and usually loses his bad horse. The number of children increases, there is often a bad harvest and no extra income for living in a remote area. Any loans from the Crown or others must be paid with interest. Half of the basic interest after 15 years, and the parish and the clergy have the right to take what is theirs. His arable land can now be 2 acres, feeding 3 cows and 1 horse, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> year he pays full tax etc. This system is very common in parishes belonging to the province of Uleåborg (Oulu), based mainly on the fact that the late Governor Carpelan determined the tax to be 1/5 mantal (assessment unit of land; GB hide). A milder principle is observed in Torneå (Tornio) parishes subordinate to the province of Western Bothnia, and most settlers get along. Livelihood can seldom be improved by compulsion. Well-being guarantees state income in the best way.

Experience has taught that it is of no great benefit for the cultivation of land that those who get married have the unconditional right to settle in far-away forests. Most of them build a hut, cultivate – for the sake of appearance – a small land patch to get crops, go poaching fish and birds from others, and steal reindeer. When tax should be paid, the place is abandoned in a way. I say ‘in a way’ as the settler preferably settles in the neighbourhood, and both sowing and gathering in of hay can be done in silence with the Crown and the culture as losers.” [*“En nybyggarens öde är svårt. Under den tid han lägger hand vid byggnader och en jordlapps uppbyggnad, nödgas han hålla sig till de svekfulla näringsgrenarne jakt och fiske. Bär i skogen och halm till bröd, som på släta stenar gräddas, utgöra härunder fleres mästa näring. Synen förrättas nu i den nybyggda stugan, (fordom efter Nybyggarens uppgift allena, hvarunder hänt, att äldre utsyningar, tillhöriga andra, som tåga till odlingen är gjord, blifvit Nybygget anslagne, jemte trakter som på Sekler icke stå att odla) och skatten fastställes provisionellt enligt 1800 års Riksdagens beslut. Nu tillgriper Nybyggaren sina gles beväxta myrfläckar, anmäler sig till understöds-spannmåln, hvaraf Landtmätaren för refnings besväret någon gång tagit hälften, tvistar med björnen om sin enda ko, och förlorar sin vanligtvis dåliga häst. Barn hopen ökas, missväxter inträffa tidt och ofta, och ingen biförtjänst är för aflägsenheten att tillgå. De lån han af Kronan och enskildta njutit, måste med ränta återbäras. Efter 15 års krasslande påkommer halfva grundröntan, och Socknen samt Presterskapet äga att uttaga sine rättigheter. hans åker kan vid denna tid vara 2 geometriska tunnland, och ängen gifva foder för 3 kor och 1 häst, hvarmed han vid 20:de året mötes av full skatt, rote-vacande afgift en öfversvämmning af insokneskyldigheter och Kapptagare, och måste sålunda ofta olönt öfvergifva ett arbete hvarpå han tillsatt sina vackraste dagar. Denna gång är i synnerhet allmän i de Socknar, som af ålder tillhört till Uleåborgs län, och orsaken hufvudsakligen den, att skatten af framledne Landshöfdingen J. Fr. Carpelan provisionellt bestämdes til 1/5 mantal, hvarunder ingen antogs. I torneå Socknar, som underlydde Westerbottns Län, har en lindrigare princip varit följd, och de flesta nybyggare bärga sig. Genom*



*tvånget torde det sällan lyckas att upphjälpa näringarne. Som föröfrigt deras trefnad är säkraste grunden för Statens inkomster, äro alla fördelar skenbare, som hindra deras uppkomst och flor.*

*Erfarenheten har föröfrigt lärt, att landets uppodling icke särdeles vinner af den ovillkorliga frihet hvarthjonelag äger, att som Nybyggare nedsätta sig i aflägsna skogar. Större delen af sådana bygga en koiija, gräfta för syn skuld en liten åkertäppa, för att åtkomma understöds spannmåln, underhåller sig emellertid med snatterier i andras fisken och fogelfängen, smat genom Rentjufnad, och då skatten skall åkomma, lämnas stället i en slags ödesmål. Jag kallar det en slags, ty Nybyggaren nedsätter sig gerna i närmaste granskap, och någon så väl sådd som höbergning får i tysthet (så länge gärdesgårdarne stå uppe) passera, Kronan och kulturen till förlust. ”].<sup>109</sup>*

Sjögren agrees with Deutsch to a great extent: “Since all of Lapland – except for Lake Kemi – still has to pay the so-called Lapp Tax, the payments for the old farms are perhaps too small; but as to new farms, according to Deutsch, their usual fate is to end as uninhabited farms of the Crown, and that of the settlers is to become crofters selling spirits or criminals under compulsion” (“*Då hela orten [Lappmarken] ännu, utom Kemiträsk, är under den så kallade lapps-katten, så äro för de gamla hemmannen utlagorna måhända, på sina ställen, numera snarare för små än för stora; men hvad deremot Nybyggen beträffar, så har Deutsch, jemte det han uppgifvit orsakerna dertill, med ganska träffande drag skildrat deras vanliga öde, att sluta som öde kronohemman, och nybyggarnes såsom brännvinsmånglande backstuguhjon eller nödtvungna brottslingar*”).<sup>110</sup>

Even Jacob Fellman gives a rather sombre picture of pioneer life in Sompio<sup>111</sup>, but Paulaharju’s reconstructions from Sodankylä, Sompio and Kittilä contrast with them.<sup>112</sup> The latter has – because of its romantic bent and the increased enterprising spirit during the past decades – been enticed to portray a very poor, true, but also a very honest and industrious picture of these settlers. However, the evidence of original documents indicates that the settlers were backward and rather unenterprising until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Deutsch’s view that colonization in those parishes that had previously belonged to the province of Oulu (amongst them Rovaniemi and Kemijärvi) was restrained by harder taxation does not seem very likely, because if we compare population figures from Kemijärvi with corresponding figures, for example, from Sodankylä, we find (something that Sjögren already stated) the population increase was greater in Kemijärvi in spite of the harder taxation there. Indeed, we can no longer take population increase as an index of the intensity of colonization. Since we know, however, that the possibility to cultivate – during somewhat older times in particular – was a necessary

<sup>109</sup> Deutsch, *ibid.* pp. 355–.

<sup>110</sup> Sjögren, *ibid.* p. 64.

<sup>111</sup> Jacob Fellman, *ibid.* part I, pp. 239–.

<sup>112</sup> Compare with Paulaharju: Sompio ja Wanhaa Lappia ja Peräpohjola (“*Sompio and Olde Lapland and Peräpohjola*”)

prerequisite for people's existence, we can reckon that a population increase led to more intensive colonization. This is evident from the tables that Sjögren presents. They show a fairly firm correlation between the population and the amount of dwellings,<sup>113</sup> a correlation that continues at least until 1900.<sup>114</sup>

This is evident even from the appended map (map supplement 6) that covers the existing villages in Lapland. For comparison's sake, all villages and homes that can be found in Wahlenberg's book have been drawn in, and we can see that all of them still exist and that many of them are important communities in Lappish conditions. Several Lappish villages have originated from one or a few original farms that have been split up in connection with the distribution of the farm, and in many cases one can find farms that have been passed on in the same family ever since the progenitor came here. The oldest family farm of this kind – that I know of – is Talvensaari in Vuostimo (Kemijärvi). It has been handed down in the family since the beginning of the 1700's.

As I mentioned, it seems to me that the placing of settlements along waterways and stock raising are characteristic of the Lappish pioneer culture and that, this being the case, it seems totally natural that waterways have until very recent times been the most convenient – and the only – means of transportation in that part of the country, at the same as they have been natural suppliers of food. Likewise, due to the size of natural meadows, stock farming has not required any time-consuming preparatory work. Thus, hunting, fishing and cattle breeding have with little labour provided the settlers enough subsistence during those years that they have needed to build their houses and clear land for their fields.

In principle, the conditions were the same as they are today, even though we have passed from a natural to a cash economy. Instead of hunting and fishing, the settlers now have recourse to forest work that together with premiums for state reclamations provides them with possibilities for existence until they have built their farms and have got their patches in arable condition. Nowadays, colonization does not follow waterways to the same extent as before. Instead, it expands along roads, partly because suitable places for settlement can no longer be found along waterways and partly because the road network is so developed that the waterways have lost their importance as first-rank means of transportation. Owing to the increase in settlement and the presence of superior authorities, the colonists no longer have the same freedom to choose the locations for their houses. Nowadays, they are placed systematically in fixed settlement areas, and based on my experience the demand for homesteads on reclaimed land was great, particularly during and after the war.

---

<sup>113</sup> Sjögren, *ibid.* pp. 119– and 158–

<sup>114</sup> Lapin komitean mietintö 1905 (*Report by the Lapland Committee, year 1905*), p. 375, table I, and p. 27–.

## 2 Demographic Conditions

Before I begin to describe the present economic and social conditions in Lapland, I want to touch briefly on its demography, because in some respects it differs from the rest of the country.

In this connection, we can first observe that the percentage of people living in the countryside is somewhat higher in Lapland than in the country as a whole; in 1940, they made up 83.08 percent of the entire population in the province and 77.33 percent of the country's entire population. There were only two towns in the entire administrative province, and the bigger communities with compact populations – the market town of Rovaniemi and the parish villages of Kemijärvi, Sodankylä, Ylitornio and Kittilä – were largely agrarian. True, they were important nodes of traffic and trading centres, too, but they were not industrial centres.

In this connection, it is above all the rural population that interests us. Therefore, I shall only deal with them. First, if we compare the birth rate in the Lappish countryside with the birth rate in the rural parts of the entire country, we find that it is considerably higher in Lapland than elsewhere in Finland. From 1910 to 1940, the curves that show that the percentage of those born alive in Lapland and in the rest of the country follow each other quite closely; however, the downward trend is somewhat stronger in the entire country. On the average, while the curve of Lapland was 0.6–0.7 percent above the national figure right after 1910, it was 0.7–0.8 percent above the national figure just before 1940. Moreover, the same trend is discernible even when we go further back in time: between 1880 and the turn of the century, the curve of the birth rate in Lapland was only 0.3–0.4 percent over the national curve. However, during that period the birth rate was high – from 3.8 to 4.2 percent – compared with the years just before 1940 when it was from 2.5 to 3.0 percent in the entire country. As for the mortality rate, the distance between the corresponding figures holds well: the national curve is somewhat below that of Lapland.

A well-known fact is that the country's population pyramid has become all the more unfavourable, because the birth rate has declined while the mortality rate has remained fairly unchanged. Since the mortality rate in Lapland – at least since the 1870's – has been the same as elsewhere in the country and the birth rate constantly higher than elsewhere in the country, Lapland can demonstrate a considerably more favourable population pyramid than the country as a whole. Thus, the total increase in population has been greater in Lapland than in the entire country; so the people of Lapland made up merely 1.8 % of the total population in 1860 against 3.8 % in 1940.

Even the proportion between the sexes is somewhat different in Lapland. In general, men made up from 50.1 % to 50.7 % of the rural population from 1910 to 1940, but in Lapland they constituted from 51.8 % to 52.5 % of the rural

population. If we study curves of the excess of births over deaths – divided between men and women – we find that, both for Lapland and for the entire country, the excess is bigger among women from 1926 onwards. However, the difference between sexes is smaller in the country as a whole than it is in Lapland.

The greater population increase in Lapland, however, does not depend only on higher nativity. A study of people's mobility shows that there was almost a constant surplus of immigration into the Lappish countryside from 1910 to 1940 whereas, in general, there was a constant surplus of emigration from the countryside. As a rule, the surplus of immigration had amounted to 0.4 % of the population in Lapland; in other words, it was almost as big as the surplus caused by emigration from the countryside as a whole. According to the 1940 census, 98.9 % of the existing population in the Lappish countryside had been born in Finland. In Lapland, 11.6 % of the population had been born in some other administrative province against 10.8 % in the entire country.

12.8 % of the population in Lapland and 19.3 % of the entire country's population had been born in some other municipality in the same province. These figures show that immigration from other parts of the country into Lapland is greater than the corresponding immigration into other parts of Finland. However, mobility in the province is smaller than elsewhere in the country.

### 3 Economic Conditions

Due to the climactic and geographic circumstances, the rural population of Lapland has a somewhat different character from the rural population in other parts of the country. Therefore, it is difficult to make a detailed comparison between the countryside in Lapland and in the rest of the country. Even the person who has treated the matter with the greatest expert knowledge, K.T. Jutila<sup>115</sup>, has refrained from doing it, has let the figures speak for themselves and has left it to the reader to draw his own conclusions. For the most part, I shall refer to Jutila's results, but whenever possible I have also replaced his figures with fresher data.

Settlement in Lapland is very sparse; according to the 1940 census, it amounted on the average to 1.2 persons per square kilometre. The population density was highest in the little parish of Karungi, 13.2 persons per square kilometre, whereas in Kemijärvi it was 2.6 pers./sq. km., in Sodankylä 0.6 pers./sq. km., in Kittilä 0.7 pers./sq. km. and in Rovaniemi 3.0 pers./sq. km. It has been stated above that for the most part settlement followed river valleys, a fact that is very clearly evident from population maps in the atlas of Finland 1925.<sup>116</sup> According to map number

<sup>115</sup> K.T. Jutila: Tutkimuksia Perä-Pohjolan ja Lapin talous- ja asutusoloista I–IV (*“Studies of the economic and living conditions in Perä-Pohjola and Lapland”*), a sample covering about 200 farms in the parishes of Turtola, Ylitornio, Kolari, Kemijärvi, Sodankylä, Salla and Inari).

<sup>116</sup> Atlas of Finland, 1925, maps 2 and 13–14.

two, the population density was 50-100 pers./sq. km. at the mouths of the Rivers Kemi and Tornio and 10–50 pers./sq. km. along their valleys up to Rovaniemi and to Ylitornio as well as between the church villages of Kemijärvi and Pelkosenniemi. The population density was 2–10 pers./sq. km. around the church villages of Sodankylä, Salla, Kolari and Kittilä as well as around Lake Raanujärvi; along the other big waterways it was 0.5–2.0 pers./sq. km and the rest of the land was empty of people.

According to Jutila's studies of certain parishes, only 0.8 % of the land was cultivated there in 1910: 3.1 %, or the most, in Kemijärvi and 0.1 %<sup>117</sup>, or the least, in Inari. According to the Statistical Yearbook, the farmed area in Lapland covered 100 765 hectares, or 0.9 % of the total area of the province, at the time of the agricultural survey in 1941<sup>118</sup>. As we can see, the land consisted for the most part of forests and wasteland. The rough soil has led to the assessment units of land being big in the Lappish parishes: 6 000 hectares per assessment unit of land in Inari – which is three to four times the normal in the province – and 1 600 hectares per unit in Pelkosenniemi. With the exception of Utsjoki, Inari and Enontekiö where the great distribution of land holdings is presently in progress, land has changed hands fairly recently.

According to Jutila, the state owned 86.3 % and private persons 13.4 % of all the land in 1910 in the parishes that he has studied. However, the state owned only a small portion of the farmed land, of which 90.8 % was privately owned.<sup>119</sup> According to the report given by Lapin Komitea ("*The Lapland Committee*") in 1938, the state owned approximately 90 % of all land in Lapland<sup>120</sup>, which indicates that conditions had become rather constant. Thus, we can assume that the proprietary circumstances regarding farmland had become fairly stable. (Namely, the hitherto published statistics do not shed any light on that matter). As has been stated above, the assessment units of land were big in Lapland, and the Lappish homesteads were large. According to Jutila, 59.6 % of all the homesteads in his study area in 1901 were from 250 to 1000 hectares in size, which is a lot in comparison to the conditions in southern Finland. According to the Lapland Committee's report in 1938, 40.3 % of all homesteads in the parishes of Muonio, Enontekiö, Kittilä, Sodankylä, Pelkosenniemi, Savukoski, Inari, Utsjoki and Petsamo were in the 250-1000 hectare class, 23.2 % in the 50-100 hectare class, 6.4 % in the 10-50 hectare class and 2.2 % in the 1000+ hectare class.<sup>121</sup> If we study homesteads with regard to the area of farmland, we find that 55.2 % of them fall in the class of 10–25 hectares whereas 30.4 % fall in the class of 25–100 hectares and 14.2 % in the class of >100 hectares.<sup>122</sup> On the average, the area of farmland per homestead is bigger than in southern Finland, because the land

<sup>117</sup> Jutila, *ibid.* part I, p.65.

<sup>118</sup> Statistical Yearbook 1944, table 73.

<sup>119</sup> Jutila, *ibid.* part I, p.74.

<sup>120</sup> Lapin komitean mietintö 1938, p.29.

<sup>121</sup> Lapin komitean mietintö 1938, p. 30.

<sup>122</sup> Jutila, *ibid.* part I, p. 77-.

in Lapland consists for the most part of wilderness, not fields as in southern Finland. (Unfortunately, the 1941 agricultural account does not give any similar information. Thus, comparisons with existing circumstances are not available).

According to Jutila, proportions between fields and meadows were 1:7.3 in Alikylä in Kemijärvi, 1:9.4 in Ylikylä in Kemijärvi, 1:12.5 in the church village in Pelkosenniemi in 1910. According to the 1938 report by the Lapland Committee, the average was 1:5.1 in the more northern parishes of the province.<sup>123</sup> In general, the actual field area was rather small; according to Jutila, 86.6 % of all the fields in his study area fell in the class of 0.5–5 hectares,<sup>124</sup> and according to the Lapland Committee, 96.2 % of all the fields in the northernmost parishes were in the same class in 1938. According to the committee's calculations, the field area was 2.10 hectares per home and 0.16 hectares per inhabitant.

Barley is the most cultivated cereal, and over half of the field area is sowed with barley whereas rye and oats are cultivated sparingly. Small amounts of wheat have even been sown in some places (Deutsch reports attempts at growing wheat in Kuusamo and Kemijärvi), but in general the attempts have not turned out particularly well. The further north we go, the more difficult it becomes to cultivate cereals. As far back as in Inari, potato takes up most of the fields. During the period from 1901 to 1944, the yield per person in Lapland was as follows: 3 kilograms of rye and wheat, 27 kilograms of barley and 36 kilograms of potato,<sup>125</sup> which is a considerably lower yield than in the other parts of Finland. These figures show that people in Lapland are obliged to buy a great deal of the consumed cereals.

Farming has become more mechanized during recent years. According to agricultural statistics from 1910, there was a total of one sowing machine, 180 reapers, 27 horse rakes, 26 threshing mills and six other machines in the parishes studied by Jutila. This induces him to the following reflection: "This insignificant mechanization shows, among other things, how negligent and unimportant as well as bound by tradition farming is in that area."<sup>126</sup> According to the 1941 agricultural accounts, there were 321 sowing machines, 3080 mowing machines, 1733 horse rakes, 441 threshing mills and 671 other farming machines.<sup>127</sup>

As has been stated above, stock raising was extensive in Lapland in the older times. According to Wahlenberg, most of the colonies had from ten to twelve, several up to twenty, cows in 1802.<sup>128</sup> Jutila estimates, with the help of information provided by Fellman, that the people of Kemijärvi – who were already then rather well off – had an average of 7.5 cows per house at the beginning of the 1800's. He

<sup>123</sup> Jutila, *ibid.* part I, p. 80 and Lapin komitean mietintö 1938, p.31.

<sup>124</sup> Jutila, *ibid.* part I, p. 82.

<sup>125</sup> Statistical Yearbook 1944, table 78.

<sup>126</sup> Jutila, *ibid.* part I, p.95.

<sup>127</sup> FOS III: 38: 1 Allmänna lantbuksräkningen år 1941 (*"The General Agricultural Account, year 1941"*)

<sup>128</sup> Wahlenberg, *ibid.* p.73.

also states that the normal amount of cattle per home seems to have varied from one to five cows.<sup>129</sup> The Lapland Committee reports that 27.3 % of all homes had between four and five cows, 20.0 % between six and nine cows, 18.7 % three cows, 17.1 % two cows and 6.0 % none at all in the northernmost parishes in 1938.<sup>130</sup>

According to Jutila, there were 23.3 cows, 19.1 sheep and an insignificant number of pigs per 100 hectares of farmed land in 1917 in the seven parishes of his study.<sup>131</sup> According to the agricultural statistics from 1941, there were 7.1 horses, 33.0 cows, 12.3 sheep and an insignificant number of pigs per 100 hectares of farmed land in the entire province; in other words there was a noticeable relative increase in the breeding of cattle from 1917 to 1941. According to Jutila, there were 6.5 horses, 32.1 cows, 26.4 sheep and an insignificant number of pigs per 100 inhabitants in his study area in 1917. In 1941, there were 6.3 horses, 20.7 cows, 11.4 sheep and an insignificant number of pigs per 100 inhabitants in the entire province.<sup>132</sup>

In Jutila's study area, 42.1 % of all households did not have any cows, and since the number of farm animals per head in Lapland in 1941 was lower than what Jutila reports, we may assume that the percentage of households without any farm animals is even higher in the province. Thus, a great amount of the rural population is reduced to buying even their butter and milk. Milk producers should not have any problems finding a market for what their cows produce, because there are only three dairies in the entire Lappish countryside (in Kemijärvi, Ylitornio and Turtola).

As can be seen from the table below, those who lived by farming made up somewhat more than 70 % of the entire rural population whereas those who lived by industry and handicraft constituted almost 17 % of the population. (All forest workers are included in this category). Those who obtained their livelihood from traffic, trade, the public sector or professions together made up 7.4 % of the active population.

<sup>129</sup> Jutila, *ibid.* part I, p.93 and part IV, pp.12-.

<sup>130</sup> Lapin komitean mietintö 1938, p.35.

<sup>131</sup> Jutila, *ibid.* part I, p. 97.

<sup>132</sup> The Lapland Committee (p. 35) draws attention to the great amount of cattle in Lapland and states there are three farm animals per field hectare in the northern parishes against an average of 0.9 animals in the rest of the country.



Table 20

The division of the active rural Lappish population based on their professions.<sup>133</sup>

Agriculture and subsidiary livelihoods .....	71.28 %
Industry and handicraft .....	16.92 %
Traffic .....	2.08 %
Trade .....	2.72 %
Public sector and free professions .....	2.63 %
Workers and day-labourers without above-mentioned professions .....	1.92 %
People without professions .....	2.45 %
	100.0 %

If we examine the group of farmers (active population) more closely, we find that 94.7 % were farmers while only 5.4 % were people who obtained their livelihood from horticulture, dairy business, forestry (excluding forest workers), reindeer herding, hunting or fishing. 88.1 % of the farmers were “independent land owners, leaseholders, peasants, land- or crown crofters”, and 11.9 % were “barley crofters or men (handymen), independent farm-hands, stewards, bailiffs, foremen, masters’ servants or other kinds of farm workers.”<sup>134</sup> The Lapland Committee states that 89.4 % of all homesteads in the northern parishes were independent and that 10.4 % were leased out.<sup>135</sup> Since the Lappish tillages, as has been pointed out above, are small, it is only natural that there were so few farm labourers.

Those who have entered the statistics as forest workers constitute the bulk, i.e. 71.5 %, of the class “Industry and handicraft”. Percentage-wise, they make up 12.1 % of the entire active population of the province. Those who live on agriculture with its subsidiary industries and on forestry make up 83.4 % of the entire active rural population.

Since agriculture on the whole is weak and cannot always provide a reasonably secure and sufficient subsistence, many of the Lappish farmers are forced – at least every now and then – to try to eke out a living in one way or another. On that occasion, the forest plays an important role.

Because the farms are often so big, many farmers have a lot of timber to sell. When the timber business began to flourish in the 1870’s and 1880’s, a lot of forest was sold in Lapland, just like elsewhere, at bargain prices with the consequence that many homesteads – especially in Muonio and Kittilä – were quickly ruined. According to the Lapland Committee’s report from 1905, the timber felling in Muonio had at that time proceeded so fast that only nine homesteads out of 101 had enough timber left to sell whereas 44 homesteads did

<sup>133</sup> FOS VI: 98: 2, the 1940 population census, p. 16-.

<sup>134</sup> FOS VI: 98: 2, table 3 b.

<sup>135</sup> Lapin komitean mietintö 1938, p. 30.



not have any forest left for their own use.<sup>136</sup> However, this wastefulness was on the decline at the time of the committee's work, but when we think that the forests in Lapland need from 180 to 240 years to grow to log dimensions, we can understand that the consequences were all too obvious in some places at the turn of the century.

The governor of the province of Oulu, E.Y. Pehkonen, criticizes the ruthless exploitation of forests in northern Finland in an article from 1928. He gives the farmers' ignorance of forestry and the value of forests as the main reasons for the exploitation but also admits that it is a consequence of the general economic weakness of farming in northern Finland.<sup>137</sup> The following statement in the Lapland Committee's report from 1938 gives a hint of how heavy this exploitation has been: "The sawmills and pulp mills along the mouths of the Rivers Kemi and Tornio have fetched their raw material from forests along the water systems of these rivers, as well as from forests along the Rivers Ijo, Kuivajoki and Simojoki. Based on calculations, at least half of all the wood for paper and pulp that these industries have consumed in recent years has been brought from private forests. However, since approximately 70 % of all forests along the river systems of Tornio, Kemi and Ijo are owned by the state and since state forests are taxed only so much as is suitable for a thriving economy, we can see that private forests are taxed all too heavily."<sup>138</sup>

The committee emphasizes that this state of things is even more deplorable, because the profits from these forest bargains are usually not invested but consumed. These big and easily made profits have even led to a situation where farming has been neglected in many places, a fact that both the Lapland Committee of 1905 and Pehkonen complain about.

However, only a limited number of Lappish farmers can sell their forests in bigger lots. Most of them have to find additional income through different kinds of gainful employment, mainly through logging. According to a study made in the middle of the 1930's, logging was the primary source of income for 88 % of the people in Kemijärvi, 86 % in Sodankylä, 82 % in Salla, 82 % in Posio, 80 % in Rovaniemi and for 86 % of the people in Kuusamo.<sup>139</sup> The following figures from 1923 give a hint of how even the landed farmers sought earnings from logging:

<sup>136</sup> Lapin komitean mietintö 1905, p.133.

<sup>137</sup> E.Y. Pehkonen: Taloudelliset olot Pohjois-Suomessa sekä eräitä ehdotuksia toimenpiteiksi niiden parantamista varten (*"Economic conditions in northern Finland and some proposals for actions to improve them"*), *ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Lapin komitean mietintö 1938, p.40.

<sup>139</sup> Suunnitelmia Kainuun ja Perä-Pohjolan talouselämän kohottamiseksi (*"Plans to improve economic life in the provinces of Kainuu and Perä-Pohjola"*), Committee report, number 10, 1938, p.58.

Table 21

Labour recruitment at Lappish logging sites:<sup>140</sup>

	Loggers and other forest workers	Drivers	Total
Landed	48.5 %	87.0 %	61.4 %
Landless	51.5 %	13.0 %	38.6 %
	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

The other chances of earning money through heavy work – forest ditching, road building, construction work and so on – are exploited even by the propertied population, but compared with logging they are limited, and as far as I can see, they do not have the same appeal.

Other livelihoods – reindeer herding, hunting, fishing and trading – were the main source of income for very few people. Therefore, I do not consider it necessary to have a closer look at them – also because I shall touch upon these questions in a case study below.

#### 4 Crime

Up until now, northern Finland has enjoyed a relatively low level of crime. As far as crimes against persons are concerned, the province of Oulu (including Lapland) has demonstrated very low figures for Finnish circumstances since 1831: 1.85 persons per 100,000 inhabitants per annum, or the second lowest figure for all the country's provinces, until 1898. When violent crimes increased during the 1900's – in order to culminate during the years of Prohibition – the figures rose also in the province of Oulu to 5.73 violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants during the period 1920–32. However, this figure was low compared with the other parts of the country during the same period: only the province of Kuopio demonstrated lower figures of crime per person, i.e. 4.60 per 100,000 inhabitants. (The province of Viborg had the highest figure, 12.87).

Crimes against people decreased all over the country during the years after the end of Prohibition until 1940. However, the decrease was relatively speaking smaller in the province of Oulu than in other parts of the country, the figure being 4.26 violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants during this period. The newly established province of Lapland showed a figure of 4.71 against 3.18 in the rest of the province of Oulu during the period 1938–1940.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Lapin komitean mietintö 1938, p. 49. Forest workers' conditions based on the study made in 1923.

<sup>141</sup> V.Verikko: Väikivaltarikollisuuden maantiedettä, Suomalainen Suomi number 5/1945, pp. 314-; Kansamme heimo-ominaisuudet uudessa valaistuksessa, *ibid.* number 7/1945, pp. 486-.

Even in the case of crimes against property, the province of Oulu (including Lapland) demonstrates low figures: among people over the age of fifteen, there were 125–150 crimes against property per 100,000 inhabitants in the beginning of the 1920's. The average was 199 in the rest of the country and as high as 250 in certain areas of the country.<sup>142</sup>

## 5 Religion

The oldest churches in Lapland – Kemijärvi, Inari, Sodankylä and Utsjoki – were built already before there was any permanent settlement, and these congregations were established, as has been stated above, probably for political reasons. Since colonization spread even to the more remote areas during the 1800's, the old and vast parishes were divided and the former chapels such as Kittilä, Salla (Kuolajärvi), Turtola and Kolari got their own priest. This process has continued up until very recent times; the youngest congregations are Pelkosenniemi and Savukoski, which broke away from Sodankylä, and Posio, which broke away from Kuusamo in 1923.

It is evident from all older visitations that the country people of Lapland were surprisingly capable both in recitation by heart and in reading from a text. Distances to the priest and the church were long and the people who lived in the most remote areas went to church a few times a year at the most.<sup>143</sup> We can find even from the parish meeting protocols from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century how villagers tried to remedy with heavy fines all kinds of sins such as dancing and nightly entertainment.<sup>144</sup>

It is possible that these measures to strengthen morality were taken under the pressure of the Laestadian movement, but this is by no means self-evident. Jakob Fellman tells that the people in Utsjoki and Inari who lived by agriculture and subsidiary livelihoods strongly disliked adultery and reported such offences to their vicar.

As is well known, Laestadianism originated in the Tornio valley but – through Laestadius' apostles expansive preaching – it soon spread over the entire northern Finland and even reached the eastern parishes in Lapland. Confession of sins in front of the congregation and forgiveness by the faithful is an important part of the Laestadian theology. Hereby, as well as by the preachers' active preaching, many improvements could be brought about in the people's everyday lives – most of all in their drinking habits. The Laestadians have not left the established church so the population statistics do not provide any figures about their numbers. However, based on what I have heard from various priests in Lapland, almost all

<sup>142</sup> Atlas of Finland, 1925, map 37:13.

<sup>143</sup> Jakob Fellman, *Anteckningar*, *ibid.*; Isak Fellman, *Handlingar*, *ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> G.A. Andersson: *Kemijärven pitäjän waiheita*; *ibid.* *Sodankylän ja Kittilän pitäjät*, *ibid.*; *Rovaniemen pitäjä*, *ibid.*

the people who are interested in matters of faith should regard themselves as Laestadians. Those big meetings (*seurat*) that are held in various places in the summertime still gather big crowds and many people travel long distances to participate in these occasions. The younger generation, however, seem to be rather indifferent about these matters of faith.<sup>145</sup>

## 6 Political Views

Based on electoral statistics, people's interest in politics is approximately as strong in Lapland as in the other parts of the country. With the exception of the parliamentary election in 1936, the turnout percentage has certainly been the lowest in Lapland, but there is not much difference if we allow ourselves to think that poor transportation has prevented many people from voting in Lapland. The electoral statistics show that the level of participation in the sparsely populated parishes (that have even poorer transportation) is considerably lower than in the more densely populated parishes along Lake Kemi and at the river mouths. So, only 12.7 % of the enfranchised in Utsjoki, 16.2 % in Enontekiö, 20.1 % in Inari and 14.5 % in Muonio voted in the 1927 parliamentary election. Meanwhile, the turnout percentage was 66 % in Simo, 61 % in Ali-Tornio and 51.4 % in Kemijärvi.

As can be seen from the table below, the “red-green block” – according to today's terminology – has accumulated the overwhelming majority of the votes between 1919 and 1936. The Agrarian Party has regularly received most of the votes while Social Democrats have at times lost votes either to Communists or to Smallholders. The figures for the Conservative Party and the Progressive Party have been rather constant during all these years while the Patriotic National Movement does not seem to have gained ground for its ideas.

---

<sup>145</sup> Concerning the history of Laestadianism, compare with Havas: *Lestadiolaisuuden historia* (“*History of Laestadianism*”).

**Table 22**  
Distribution of votes in Lappish electoral districts

Year	Cons. & PNM	Progr.	Agr.	Smallhold.	Workers & Small- hold.	Soc.Dem.	Comm.	Rest	Total	Turnout %
1919	4.34	14.18	51.87	-	-	29.59	-	0.02	100	58.29
1922	10.94	6.88	48.86	-	-	33.31	-	0.01	100	54.78
1924	19.97	4.63	46.45	-	24.89	4.03	-	0.03	100	51.26
1927	15.33	4.20	45.83	-	-	4.21	30.41	0.02	100	48.35
1929	7.18	4.27	54.40	-	30.71	3.41	-	0.03	100	57.72
1930	8.56	5.04	62.25	4.08	2.76	12.54	-	4.77	100	58.00
1933	14.09	4.13	60.38	11.43	-	9.52	-	0.45	100	56.16
1936	11.79	2.79	54.91	8.77	-	11.02	-	10.12	100	63.13

The above figures portray the situation in a way that can be expected. The fact that agrarians and socialists – as well as communists in some cases – got plenty of support in these poor farming areas is by no means any surprise.

## II HIETASUVANTO

### 1 The Settlement

The village of Hietasuvanto, or more commonly Suvanto, is situated in the parish of Pelkosenniemi in the province of Lapland, on the northern shore of Kitinen, which is the most western tributary of the River Kemijoki. It is twelve kilometres west-northwest from Pelkosenniemi as the crow flies.

Since 1938, there has been an eighteen-kilometre long village road to the parish village and since the turn of the century a winter road (that is trafficable with a bicycle in the summertime) to Aska by the Petsamo road. A telephone line has been built along the latter-mentioned road from Sodankylä to Pelkosenniemi. The only telephone in the village can be found in the Simuna inn. Joopila takes care of the mail, which arrives three times a week. In the village itself, there are three farms, six small (parcel) farms and an elementary school (since 1928). The buildings are situated in a rather dense group on a long sloping and cultivated riverbank; only Kiiskilä, Perälä and Räisänen are situated a little apart from the others. Most farms are closed on three sides, only Vilkkula and Junttila are entirely closed. In Takala, Kivelä and Penkkula, there are two long houses facing each other. As for the small farms of Kiiskilä, Perälä, Puistola, Ollila and Räisänen, each has only a small dwelling house and an outbuilding.<sup>146</sup>

The fields are concentrated around the farms; only Apula has newly cultivated (cleared) land of 2.5 hectares outside the village. The fields are not big, on the average from two to three hectares. In a good year, they yield enough for one's own use. The meadows are on the riverbank or on swamps in the forest and are as far as fifteen kilometres away. The farm woodlands are rather well concentrated on the northern side of the village. In addition, the pioneer farms of Veikanmaa, Joopila and Sirppala have a shared woodlot along the upper reaches of Kemihaara. The biggest shares of woodland are from 300 to 400 hectares, and the villagers think they are poor in woodland.

Due to the impressments and difficulties in evacuation during 1944, the livestock was abnormally low in summer 1946; even the biggest farms had only two or three cows and the landless none at all. However, there was space for five cows in Simuna's new cowshed and the farmer of Harjula was just expanding his cowshed for four cows. There was also a shortage of horses, but based on what was told the farms usually had two workhorses. Only the farmer of Kataja and reindeer herder Selmi Ollila owned significant numbers of reindeer: the former more than 300 and the latter about 50.

---

<sup>146</sup> See map supplement 7.



The village has grown from these three (or more correctly, two) farms. This development is a natural consequence of the villagers' fertility and a study shows that only two of the existing farms have been taken up by villagers who are totally unrelated immigrants; three by living-in son-in-laws and the rest together by brothers. Simuna, which was split from Vilkkula in the 1890's, ended up in the hands of Simuna Juhonpoika who came from Arvola downstream, and Sihveri Räsänen who had moved into the village during the previous world war took up Sippala as a new farm on crown-land. Both these men were already married when they moved into the village. Vilkkula was split again in the 1860s when Olli Ollinpoika Mettiläinen moved in as a son-in-law in Pekkala. Mattila became crown-land when Kaaperi Emanuelinpoika Salmi from Sodankylä married one of the daughters from Junttila in the 1840s. Kataja, for its part, was split from Pekkala in 1912 when Kaaleb Hannunpoika Kaunisvaara married a daughter of the then owner of the Pekkala farm.

Every such splitting of a farm has resulted in increased farming land in the village. According to the old villagers' stories, only the area bordered by Junttila, Saunala, Vilkkula, Aapula, Takala and Pekkala was cultivated at the turn of the century. Later, when the settlement spread towards the periphery, more and more land was cleared for cultivation.<sup>150</sup>

## 2 Inhabitants

There were 29 families in Suvanto in August 1946: 76 men and 68 women, i.e. altogether 144 persons. The youngest age groups predominated, because the birthrate – as will be shown later – was rather high and because half of the villagers were below the age of twenty.

The average age of marriage in these 29 families that have been formed between 1890 and 1945 is 28.8 years for men and 24.8 years for women. The highest age for marriage is 46 years for men and 38 years for women and the lowest ages, correspondingly, 20 and 19 years. (The men's high average may be a bit misleading, because the distribution table shows that men below the age of 26 have contracted 50 % of the marriages; some grooms above the age of 40 increase the average.) On the average, there are 4.65 children in a family and the number of children is divided as follows:

---

<sup>150</sup> See map supplement 7 and diagram 2.



**Table 23**  
Types of families in Suvanto

Number of children per family	Families	Number of children per family	Families
0	2	7	2
1	5	8	4
2	5	9	3
3	1	10	-
4	4	11	1
5	1	12	1
6	-		

Infant mortality was low: only five boys and three girls have died in these families before they turned five. The fact that population growth is not any bigger, despite the relatively high fertility rate, is mainly due to the occasionally quite big number of people who have moved out. For example, six whole families have moved out of the village over the past fifteen years, most of them to the Aapajärvi colonization area that is situated halfway to Kairala. Likewise, young men and women have left the village after marrying and becoming living-in sons-in-law and daughters-in-law in other villages. Only half a dozen girls and even fewer men have left the village in search of work in towns.

**Table 24**  
Types of marriages in Suvanto

Type of marriage	Live in Suvanto in 1946	Origins in Suvanto, now living elsewhere	Never lived as a couple in Suvanto	Total
Man and wife from Suvanto	5	4	-	9
Man from Suvanto, wife from elsewhere	17	2	7	26
Man from elsewhere, wife from Suvanto	4	-	14	18
Man and wife from elsewhere	3	-	-	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	29	6	21	56

The above table shows that it is more common for a woman to move to her husband's place and, second, that one cannot talk about any pronounced contracting of marriages inside the village; on the contrary, marriages with outsiders are in the majority: 44 against 9. The small number of marriages between villagers may have been due to the fact that they were so often related to one another. The children of the youngest present generation can think of themselves as relatives, though not always as blood-relatives in direct descent. In a similar manner, as all

farms in Suvanto can be traced back to two original farms that existed already before 1830, one can also point out that all living families (except for Kiiskinen and Kujala) belong to two big “clans” who have been related to one another for the past four generations (see appended diagram 1) and who have taken up all immigrants (except for two).

\* \* \*

**Table 25**  
Birthplaces of marriage partners

Husband's or wife's birthplace	Couples in Suvanto	Couples moved away in 1946	Couples never lived in Suvanto	Total number of couples in Suvanto
Pelkosenniemi:				
Village of Suvanto	5	4	-	9
Kairala	5	1	2	8
Pyhjärvi	2	1	-	3
Saunavaara	2	-	-	2
Oinas	1	-	-	1
Aapajärvi	-	-	1	1
Parish village	-	-	3	3
Sodankylä	2	-	6	8
Kemijärvi	2	-	-	2
Salla	3	-	1	4
Rovaniemi	-	-	3	3
LAPLAND	22	6	16	44
Toholampi	2	-	1	3
Ristijärvi	1	-	-	1
Ylivieska	-	-	1	1
Kauhava	1	-	-	1
USA	-	-	3	3
<hr/>				
<b>TOTAL</b>	26	6	21	53

The above table shows where the people of Suvanto have chosen their partners. It clearly shows that the great majority of them have married next-door neighbors from the river valley. Therefore, one could think that, even though marriages between villagers were in the minority, the population of the village is anyhow rather homogeneous with regard to its origin, upbringing and growth milieu.

As far as I know, there have not been any divorces in Suvanto. However, it is not uncommon to remarry after one's partner's death; one woman has been married three times.

Extramarital children are not uncommon and they are regarded as a totally normal phenomenon. Unmarried mothers and illegitimate children are not considered

socially inferior. According to the parish register, there were 12 illegitimate children and nine unmarried mothers – who had always informed of the child’s father – in the village in 1946. Sometimes illegitimate children were legalized. So, one of these nine women had married the child’s father whereas three were still unmarried, three had married another man and one had married a man who had a child with another woman, too. Two of the women had moved out of the village: one to Kemijärvi and the other to Sodankylä.

The children were allowed to grow up relatively freely, but – as was common in the countryside – had to take part in suitable work as soon as they were considered strong enough. The boys began to take part in forest work already at the age of twelve or thirteen, and this more or less marked their admission into young men’s circles. However, they were mainly used as assistants, because they could not do men’s full day work at that age. On that account, they were not treated as members in full standing of the community. Their views were taken into consideration only after they could independently clear a plot of trees. Until then, they were treated jokingly or with pretended seriousness; however, they always knew their place. The same attitude was observable also on Saturday evenings in the village where they tried to demonstrate their manhood by begging for cigarettes and small drinks and by eagerly swinging themselves in dances. The older boys pretended to take the younger ones seriously until they became too self-assertive and were given a good dressing-down.

As far as I know, there were not any organized youth groups in the village, and if it is possible at all to talk about age groups, they were either totally unorganized or agglomerated occasionally when a common interest – work or pleasure – brought together young people of the same age. It will later clearly appear that one could distinguish between two “gangs”: one that amused itself more with drinking and fighting and another that occupied itself with sports. In particular, the first-mentioned was totally informal – without leader, organization and goal – and could be observed only on Saturday evenings when the youth gathered at a dance. Its members were barely aware of the fact that they formed a gang. The other gang, the sports gang, was somewhat more organized; it was led by two of the Kujala brothers, and only because they knew the most about sports and were the most energetic in their training. Its core gathered for training when it was suitable: several times every week in the summertime, though without any formalities or notices to attend. However, this gang exercised just as little control over its followers as the other gang did.

The parents did not exercise any stricter control over their children when these were growing up. The boys began having paid jobs outside home early in life – even if they continued to live at home – and were seen to be capable of making it on their own. The girls were under sufficient control since they lived at home in the village where people followed one another’s doings very closely. In my opinion, the villagers’ understanding attitude towards unwed mothers seems to indicate

that they did not hold strictly to premarital chastity, and the rather great number of illegitimate children shows that premarital sexual relations could be established.

According to various sources the young people had great freedom in choosing their life companions; the limited role of family or property interests seems to appear from the fact that daughters who were living at home often got married to poor jacks (*“jätkäät”*). It was said about a few farmers that they had married for money, and it cannot be denied that many had wedded wisely to farms in Suvanto or elsewhere. However, no disapproval is attached to the term “living-in son-in-law”, which is a widespread institution here.

The fact that there have not been any divorces in Suvanto can be taken as a manifestation of good matrimonial harmony, and in my view that was the reality, too. It can be reckoned that there were few reasons for conflict, because in most cases the partners came from similar backgrounds that conditioned their attitudes when they grew up. It is true that spouses have in many cases grown up in different financial circumstances, but I am not inclined to attach great importance to economic conditions in attitude building, because the differences in living conditions are not remarkably big between those who are economically better off and those who are worse off. Only those who are economically very competent can make their farming pay its way without earning any additional income outside their farm, and as far as I can see, there is only a difference in degree between a farm-owner and a landless lumberjack.

It is often difficult for newly married couples to establish their own household in the prevailing circumstances. They usually take lodgings at a farm with enough space if they do not want to live with the husband's or the wife's parents. Many people do not care about going in for farming; instead, they prefer to live entirely on the income they get from the forest. Others try to find a homestead, because it is often difficult to split a farm if there are many siblings in the family and because the parent property in itself does not guarantee any secure income. But, as has been said, original farms have to some extent been divided.

Suvanto is a village of small farms without any occupational divisions and accentuated classes based on financial circumstances. Because farming is not very profitable, many villagers have to seek additional income from forest work. It suits them very well, because both farming and forest work are seasonal by nature. Hunting and fishing are pursued more for fun than as an actual source of livelihood. Previously, stock raising has been rather popular – just like reindeer breeding – but interest in these lines of occupation seems to have diminished. Now, stock raising is subordinate to farming and reindeer breeding is almost a memory.

Due to the climate, the farming season is quite short and possibilities for cultivation rather limited. Barley and potatoes are the most cultivated crops and rye and turnips come next – even tobacco was cultivated during the war. Oats, wheat and other root crops are cultivated on a very limited scale. Spring plowing can seldom be started before June. The sowing takes place just before midsummer and is carried out exclusively by hand. At the end of July starts haying, which is very hard work. The villagers' meadows are on the riverbank and in swamps in the forest and only some of them can be mowed with a machine. In addition, they are usually situated about 5–15 kilometres from the village. Therefore, people living on the farms – possibly strengthened with a few temporary day laborers – are compelled to set out on haymaking trips that last for weeks. They take bread, butter, potatoes, coffee and salt – maybe some salted fish or dried meat – with them and pursue camp life in the hay fields.

The working day starts at about 5 AM and ends only at 9 PM. However, there are three meal breaks, one of which is an hour-long siesta and sleeping break at noon. The people sleep on hay in the barns, or perhaps more often in a little tent (*"rankinen"*) that first and foremost serves as a protection against mosquitoes. In addition, they take along some fishing equipment – a rod and line for angling grayling, trolls and fish traps – and so provide themselves with fresh food. The hay is collected in the barns on the meadows and is brought from there to the farms in the wintertime.

Thus, haymaking can last for weeks, and almost immediately after it starts the harvest time. Nowadays, most people harvest with machines. However, the fields are somewhat uneven and stony – some of them not even drained – so quite large areas are reaped with a sickle, but not with a scythe. Additional labor is hired for harvesting and the days are long, just like in haying.

After the crop has been reaped – at the beginning of September – the people take a short break before potato lifting and threshing. The first-mentioned has to be carried out before the frost hits the ground, and that can happen already at the end of September. Threshing has been done by machine for the past twenty years and is done by older farmers and women. The logging companies start to look for workers already late in the summer, and at the turn of August and September – when the most urgent farming work has been done – the men start forest work.

So long as the ground is bare, the men occupy themselves solely with cutting trees, mainly props and paper wood. The transport of timber begins when snow hits the ground, often already in October, and then starts the large-scale logging, too. At this time, even the older farmers appear at the logging sites to earn money on timber transport after threshing. Logging continues all through the winter until snow starts melting and finishes the sleighing season. The farmers then return home to set about spring tillage; only the jacks (*"jätkäät"*) – younger men

and landless men – stay on until the logging ceases and floating starts at the break-up of the ice.

Quite a lot of labor is needed when the floating booms are put in place and the men have logs and props to throw in the river. Later in June, however, when the bulk of the timber has found its way to the river along its upper reaches, only a few men are needed to clear the riverbank of logs that have floated ashore. Further downstream – between Kemijärvi and Kemi – more men would be needed, but the men from Suvanto do not want to set off on journeys in search of work. Every year, there are plenty of logging sites in the vicinity of the village, along the river Kitinen and its tributaries, or Luiro or Kemihaara.

\*

When the last patches were mowed at the end of August in 1946, the farmers of Ruha and Harjula – who were foremen in the Kemijoki Company – began to recruit men for a small forest work site (“*savotta*”) about 15 kilometres up the river where the company had purchased a small lot for cutting props and wood for papermaking. The men had talked about this felling amongst themselves already for a week and many were ready to set off. The men were called to a meeting at the Ruha farm at 9 PM to discuss the matter and possibly to sign a contract. The men of the village got together on the given evening; they arrived one by one, sat down in the small room of the farmhouse and talked about the harvest and the price of props. At about 8 PM everyone was present and the men moved to the main room of the house. Ruha briefly explained what everyone already knew: the location of the work site, the nature of the forest and the salaries that would be paid for the work.

After that, he put out the contract for signing. Those who signed it bound themselves to cut the area and were thereafter jointly responsible for carrying out the work. The men were a bit diffident and nobody wanted to be the first to put his name to the contract; however, the other men followed after Valde Uusitalo – always a happy fellow – took the initiative. There were seventeen signers: fourteen from Suvanto and three itinerant lumberjacks (“*kulkujätkä*”) from the south. Of the fourteen Suvanto men, seven men were married and had children. Except for one man, all of them were landless and young. Three of them were adolescents and the only farm-owner had the smallest farm in the village and seven minor children. The oldest man, old Perälä, was 64 years of age and the youngest, his grandson, was thirteen years old; together, they would cut down a lot.

After this formality had been taken care of, the men began to discuss the practical arrangements. In the immediate vicinity of the cutting area was a solitary house, Hyötylä, whose housewife came from Suvanto. The lumberjacks had lodged there during previous years. However, most of them preferred to live in tents, because they knew there were bedbugs in the house. The company had some old army

tents at the workers' disposal. Ruha knew a girl from the neighboring village, Pyhäjärvi, who was willing to take up the post of cook and all the men agreed that she should have the job. Valde Uusitalo, who was good at writing and mental arithmetic was chosen by common consent to be the master (*"isäntä"*), over keeping accounts of the consumption of food supplies and the men's purchases. The departure was fixed for the following morning; the men would gather at the Ruhala house at 8 AM and jointly transport the tents and the food supplies from his shop to the shore. Some were of the opinion that it did not pay to go at the end of the week: they would not have more than one proper working day before Sunday and in any case would come back to the village to take a day off (*"rokulia pitämään"*). One could do as he pleased and two of the men did decide to stay at home for the weekend.

So, the men went to Ruha's shop to make the necessary purchases: saw blades, saw files, barking irons, work gloves, trousers, tobacco, butter – all that a lumberjack could need for a two-month-long stay at a forest work site. The logging company kept the store for its workers. Nobody paid in cash – instead, all purchases were put down to one's account and debited on payday. After a moment's talk about saw blade marks and files, the men scattered to sharpen their axes and barking irons.

Those who intended to go got together the following morning. Ruha and Valde Uusitalo weighed the flour and potatoes and margarine and made an inventory of everything that was delivered. Everything was then loaded on a horse and driven to the shore where the cook was waiting. After everything had been stowed, three heavily loaded boats went on the river. The boats arrived at the destination after a few hours of rowing and poling upstream. Tents, sacks and rucksacks were speedily carried ashore, and while Ruha and some other men rowed across the river to Hyötylä to fetch grindstones, a stove, water tubs, tables and benches, the others quickly erected the dwelling and supply tents.

After all this had been done, the iron stove put in place and the welcome coffee drunk, the men went out to divide the lots. They spread out in a chain along a boundary, with a 50–100 metre distance between each man, and hammered down numbered stakes. The men were shouted to move on (*"liikkeelle"*) after everyone had taken his place and the chain began to move perpendicular to the boundary. In order to keep the distance better, the men shouted to one another and moved quickly forward while they marked tree-trunks for cutting. The men hammered down similar stakes when the chain reached the outer boundary of the area. After that, they all gathered at the left wingman's position, formed a new chain in a similar manner and marked a new line of lots. Now, the area was divided and the men gathered to allot the lots. The youngest man could draw for those absent, and the men returned to the tent to have dinner after everyone had gotten his lot (*"palsta"*). As they waited for the food to become ready, the men filed their saws, tightened them and fixed the saw bows, cut measuring sticks for

props and improved the wedging of their axes. All this took place while they compared the lots they had drawn.

The diet is always good at a work site: porridge, pea soup, meat soup, potatoes with fried pork gravy, sausage or reindeer meat in huge portions. Three solid meals a day was the standard. The master, the cook or the company procured the ingredients and the cost was divided on payday in proportion to how many meals one had eaten. (It sometimes happened at the bigger forest work sites that itinerant lumberjacks tried to evade payment, so the cook had to have her eyes open on payday). The men got themselves cold food – bread, butter and salted fish – to have something to eat during the frequent coffee breaks. It was one of the cook's responsibilities that the coffee pot was always warm and ready.

The men began to organize their sleeping places in the tent after dinner. Good friends and companions chose places next to another along the tent's wall and the cook lay down a little apart from the others next to the door. Urpo Halonen and Ale Hiltunen, two of the youngest in the group, tried to make her choose the sleeping place between their places. However, the older men raised objections, because an old practice at forest work sites (*"kämppälaki"*) forbids all sorts of wooing the cook; one can try his luck only when the felling is drawing to a close, but even that is not tolerated everywhere.

The men did not care to have someone keep guard over the stove even though it was already quite chilly. The men agreed that it would soon be too cold to live in a tent. Dead trees could naturally be used as firewood and the men had to take turns in order to see that there were enough chunks of wood.

The cook was up and about already at 5 AM the following morning and put fire under the coffee pot and the saucepan. Nobody went to work without eating properly first. However, that was done fast, and the saws soon squeaked in the drizzling rain. Most of the men chose to cut their lots alone; only the Halonen brothers and the grandfather of Perälä and his grandson worked together. Cutting props consists of four phases of work: felling, lopping and crosscutting, barking and piling up. Some time and energy can be saved if one cuts down, lops and crosscuts and another one barks and piles up. However, most men were of the opinion that the most profitable way is to work alone, because so much time would be wasted on tobacco breaks and chatting.

Rather big performances, over 100 props a day, are needed to reach reasonably good incomes. Really healthy and strong men could get close to 200, but that was considered unnecessarily strenuous, especially because one can manage with smaller daily performances with the present (1946) salaries. In the 1930's, during the depression and Svinhufvud's presidency (*"Vinhuutin aika"*), one had to get up to about 150 props to earn enough money for food. In those days, work was harder than nowadays, because foremen made a point of barking the props well,



of exact measurements and of having the trees cut down at right angles. Otherwise the company would not pay but would keep the trees all the same. Nowadays, the quality does not matter that much, and according to what the older men said, only a portion of the props that passes today would have been approved in president Svinhufvud's times.

So, the work continued until darkness fell: it was interrupted by a midday meal at 1 PM (in addition, some men had a few coffee breaks), and in the evening the entire group convened for the evening meal. The men sharpened their axes and barking irons after the meal, and someone who had enough energy left went to the river to lay fish traps or to spear with a jacklight.

The weeks passed by in this manner. On Saturday evenings, most of the men went to the village to have a sauna, to go the Saturday dance or to fetch cold food from home. The piles of props grew – just like the accounts increased – and the men estimated that the contract would be completed at the end of October. At that time, there would be snow on the ground, timber logging would begin and the horse owners could earn big sums of money.

To a great extent, life at the logging camps is similar to that at the forest work sites (as described above). However, the men do not live in tents but in log cabins (*"kämppä"*) that serve both as lodgings and as stalls. They are quickly put up, low, drafty and windowless quarters where the ceiling often leaks. The men sleep on bunks along the wall; a blanket serves as a covering and a reindeer skin, a blanket or spruce twigs serve as a cushion. At night, they only take off their boots and their fur coat. Usually, a female cook prepares the meals, but it sometimes happens that the men prepare all their food. Even at the biggest logging sites, there are not more than 30 men in the same cabin, because the cabins are spread over the entire area in the vicinity of the working party's forestry district.

Logging itself is less strenuous than cutting props, because neither lopping nor barking is needed. Instead of piling up, though, there is loading, which is equally heavy. On a good road, a strong horse can without any problem pull a load of 10-12 logs, which can easily be two metres in height. This makes loading a laborious undertaking that requires both experience and thought.

It would be impossible – with only one horse for a sleigh – to transport such loads from the logging site to the float way if there were not such good roads. Therefore, a lot of effort is put into building good roadways. Roadbeds are ploughed from the unloading areas, "launches" (*"lanssi"*), along the float way to the logging areas. Two tracks are driven on the roadbeds and water is poured over them. A load weighing twelve tons can easily be taken along these frozen tracks if there are no steep rises along the way. Such "track roads" are then carefully maintained as long as the transportation of logs continues.

One can observe a weak indication of social divisions at such a logging camp. At the lowest end of the scale are loggers, and upwards of them come drivers, bookkeepers, measuring men, food suppliers and foremen. Cashiers, forestry officers and other masters are at the upper end of the scale. However, the difference between loggers on the one hand and drivers on the other hand is anything but pronounced. In order to become a horse driver, one had to have some capital in the form of a horse. Indeed, as the statistics on page xxx show, there were significantly more drivers who were farm-owners than there were landless drivers. Many of the landless drivers worked in Rovaniemi and other population centres in the summertime and found their way to the forests in the winter. However, many of the farm-owners do not work as drivers, and class divisions – in so far as one can talk about them – are not dependent on farm-ownership but on whether the person in question owns a horse.

The above is meant to provide a picture of how the villagers of Suvanto lived in the wintertime. The village was then almost empty of menfolk; only the sons of Simuna, the shoemaker and the farmers of Vilkkula, Joopila and Aapula stayed home – sometimes the farmer of Kivelä, too. All the others were out in the forest, except for reindeer herders Selmi Ollila and the farmer of Kaunisvaara who were out with their herds. The villagers did not go to distant working places, or as the farmer of Veikanmaa said: “Why should one go far out, since there has always been enough work here along the river? But if we begin to run short of work, we may have to find our way further out, even though that is not such a good thing”. The oldest boy of Kiiskilä was probably the only one who had worked outside the (home) area, beyond Martti in Savukoski. The men in the village thought it was in every way more advantageous that the working place was close to home, because even if one lived there, it was possible to go home to have a sauna, to see the wife and to fetch more cold food on Sundays. “The food becomes so monotonous at a distant forest work site”, mentioned one of the Kujala boys as a justification for preferring to work close to the home village.

The men’s attitudes towards forest work varied quite a bit. In the first place, it was the same as their attitude towards work in general: a necessary evil that was physically tiring, too. If we relate this seemingly reluctant attitude to their attitudes towards other types of work, we can see that many, after all, preferred forest work to farming or some other type of heavy work. Forest work rewards a man with pay for his real performance (even though the pay was always considered to be below the average), while a farmer always has to toil as much and, at best, gets only tolerable compensation. Besides, a lumberjack can take time off when he sees fit whereas a farmer is always bound to his soil; in other words, a farmer does not have the same freedom of movement as a lumberjack. Judging from everything, this freedom was held in high esteem, and the same also applies to one’s freedom to adjust the working pace and to the foremen’s broad-minded supervision of the men’s performances. The quality that was valued highest in a foreman (*“pomo”*) was a combination of straightforwardness, decency and reasonability (*“reilu”*) in contrast

to small-mindedness. All this freedom that could - in the view of these men - only be enjoyed in forest work placed it in a category of its own, above farming where the compensation was too small and above other heavy work where foremen all too often made remarks.

Distaste for farming was clearly observable in Asser Mettiläinen's, Armas Perälä's and Kiiskinen's sons who lived by forest work: they talked about the pitiable people who bound themselves to holdings formed through the settlement policy in Aapajärvi. These people would have to toil for several years: in construction work and clearing new land for farming in the summertime and in forest work in the winter before they could even claim their houses. And their aim - their own piece of land - was not that much worth striving for, because the land did not yield enough for their own needs. In any case, a farmer has to do forest work and can never have a day off (*"pitää rokulia"*). Therefore, a landless man is always better off: he can earn enough during the logging season to laze, have an idle time, fish, rest and be his own master for a few months in the summer.

However, it is difficult to determine to what extent this attitude only involves an acceptance of an existing fact, because those who expressed this attitude in Suvanto were all landless people - neither was there any land they could expect to inherit. But the similar attitudes of Veikko Uusitalo, the oldest son in Aapula, and the brothers of Kujala, who jointly owned Mattila, made me believe that their actual situation was not the only attitude-building factor.

If we leave aside this factor, i.e. dislike for work, that was inherent in these guys in all circumstances, we can see that for the most part they were content with their existence. None of them showed any willingness to change their work; it seemed altogether clear that this was practically the only conceivable way of life to them.

Standing in contrast to this fatalistic attitude was the farmers' somewhat different attitude. They tried to make their farming profitable, in which they seldom succeeded, and at least three farmers had lost their house and home. (Later, one of these had succeeded in buying back his farm and the other two had taken up holdings formed through the settlement policy in Aapajärvi). Farming can pay here with the help of sensible forestry, at least for one generation without the farmer being otherwise gainfully employed. Vilkkula, Simuna and Joopila are evidence of that, but they seem to be an exception, and most men have to do forest work, to which they adopted a more or less reluctant attitude. They admitted that otherwise they would not manage and thought that the farmer of Kivelä - still a young man - was somewhat proud, because he did not do forest work during the wintertime. The farmer of Penkkula adopted a somewhat similar attitude with the landless men: "There is not much difference between farming and forest work, they both have their own time."

Almost without exception, just like the landless young men, the farmers' boys started forest work at the age of thirteen or fourteen. They usually kept the pay to themselves, but worked without compensation at home during the farming season. It was not always necessary for the sons of wealthier farmers to do forest work, but staying away was regarded as a sign of pride and pampering; I heard these insinuations at least about the youngest son in Simuna and the oldest son in Joopila.

\*

The other miscellaneous jobs – repair and upkeep of buildings, hunting and fishing – had to fit in between these two main occupations. There was no circular saw or shingle machine in the village, so all that could not be made by hand had to be fetched from the parish village. Some thought it better to have their planks sawn in the parish village, which was more expensive but was faster. Others, on the other hand, sawed their planks at home, in the traditional way with a handsaw. According to what the villagers said, most of the planking used in the village was sawn by hand, and some of the roofing shingles were planed by hand, too. Most of the building and repair work got done unaided, but if suitable manpower - for example, a passing jack (*"jätkä"*) – happened to appear, he was hired until the work was finished.

Nowadays, hunting and fishing are of little significance to housekeeping and are practiced more for pleasure. In Lapland, both hunting grounds and fishing waters are undivided and open to all, but in general they are not particularly productive. The older generation complains that the game and the fishing stock have decreased in recent years. It is true that the river nowadays does not provide fish even for household requirements. All households have to buy salted fish for the wintertime. The really keen fishermen can, however, get together two or three firkins of grayling during the summer, but there are very few idle lumberjacks who achieve that. For the sake of variety in their diet, most of them are content with catching some fresh fish from time to time. However, nearly all of them lay fish traps for pike and perch and angle for grayling and brown trout during their free time. In addition, when the autumn darkness begins to thicken, they spear burbot during the new moon.

For the most part, people hunt to sell their quarry whereas fishing is carried on solely for one's own needs. The prices of game have always been so high that even fairly small bags have more significance for the households if they are turned into cash than if they are consumed. Especially squirrel hunting and catching forest birds can provide not an altogether insignificant source of income for keen huntsmen. These men, however, are few and far between and hunt less for the sake of earnings than for pleasure. One of them, Kiiskinen's oldest son, said that someone who really understands hunting and gets himself good equipment can

possibly live solely by hunting and fishing. However, such a livelihood would be very hard and uncertain.

Arts and crafts are not practiced much any more. However, many utility goods and tool parts – axe handles, saw bows, rakes, sleighs and different kinds of wooden dishes – are produced at home, but the workmanship is not particularly elegant and in fact one cannot find any handicraft in Suvanto that lays stress on the artistic side. Matti Perälä, the shoemaker, makes the villagers' shoes and has inherited his profession from his father. Some mothers make clothes for their children, but there is neither weaving nor any leather tanning in the village.

There is not particularly much to say about the division of labor between the sexes. It is almost the same as elsewhere in the countryside: the kitchen and the cowshed constitute the women's domain whereas the stalls and outdoor work are the men's territory. However, the women do help in haymaking and harvest, but seldom in slaughtering and never in fishing.

---

Hunting, fishing and handicraft constitute something between the actual work and leisure activities, in the same way as picking blueberries and cloudberries, to which the villagers usually devote a lot of their time on summer Sundays. However, apart from this, the only remaining free time activities are visits – to neighbors and neighboring villages – reading newspapers and dancing.

The people go to see other villagers almost daily. An attempt to count the frequency of these contacts between the different farms turned out to be impossible simply for practical reasons; however, the following suggestions could be of interest. Joopila had undeniably the highest number of visitors. That is natural, because the farmer takes care of the postal service and is the villagers' representative on the municipal council. A common rush broke out in the village when he came up the riverbank with his mailbag; for the most part, children were sent to fetch the mail, but many grown-ups arrived at the scene, too. The farmers of Kivelä, Simuna and Pekkula, his closest neighbors, almost always fetched their mail – just like Kiiskinen's and Asser Mettiäinen's sons – but this was more seldom the case with the farmer of Aapula and Kujala's boys. Usually, one stopped for a while to listen to rumors from the parish village, to read magazines and to comment on the news.

Another such "centre of rumors" was situated in Matti Perälä's (the shoemaker) house. He lived in Vilkkula and kept his eye on the village all day long from his corner window. The villagers diligently paid visits to his house, even though they did not have any particular errands to run, and willingly stayed on to gossip. There was less traffic in Aapula, but half a dozen old farmers quite often gathered there to talk about things. At least in the summertime, the back building of Saunala seemed to be a rather popular meeting place – maybe mainly because the

idle lumberjacks Asser Mettiäinen and Eeli Halonen lived in Saunala and willingly stopped passers-by for a little chat. Mattila was first and foremost a meeting place for the young, because Kujala's boys who owned the house went in for sports and used to train in the high jump and javelin throw in the evenings. The other young people of the village used to take part in these exercises. Simuna and Kivelä saw each other almost exclusively (the farm-owners were brothers), and – especially in Simuna – one could very seldom see visitors there from the village. That was the case with Veikanmaa and Kataja, too. Kaunisvaara's brothers, who owned these houses, could seldom be seen in the village and were not visited by others either. Even the farmer of Takala led a very isolated way of life on his somewhat dilapidated farm.

Contacts with other villages – mainly with the parish village – were fairly lively. The mail was delivered three times a week, but in addition to that there was almost daily someone who went on errands to the parish village, to Kairala, Aapajärvi or – less often – to Pyhäjärvi. The villagers of Suvanto had relatives in these neighboring villages, but they seldom took more than a weekend off to visit their kinsfolk. Any insignificant errand could serve as a reason to pay a visit.

Longer trips than those made to the vicinity were uncommon. It is true that every now and then one had to travel to the parish village of Kemijärvi or to Rovaniemi on business, but there could be years between such trips. In the old days, around the turn of the century, when the parish village of Kemijärvi was still an insignificant place, a bigger sleigh caravan drove to the market in Rovaniemi every year, or further down to Kemi, to sell hides, butter and sometimes tar and to get flour, coffee, liquor and tobacco in exchange.

As has been stated above, the villagers do not leave for distant workplaces. Thus, they seldom get in contact with other people than the inhabitants along the river valley, because – due to the isolated location of the village – the frequency of visits paid to the village is low, too. In the wintertime, passing strangers stay for one night at the most. To my understanding, the villagers were not particularly willing to break their voluntary isolation.

Every Saturday evening, even on Sunday evenings, the young of the village got together to dance – in Aapula's drying barn in the summertime and in some farmhouse living room in the winter. Not only did the unmarried young people participate but the middle-aged married farmers and their wives also arrived on the scene to take a few swirls.

People began to gather outside the drying barn at about 9 PM on Saturday evening after they had enjoyed their dinner and had gone to the sauna. If the musician was late, some young boys were sent off after him. The dances continued with zest until 2 or 3 AM in the morning when the people took up a collection for the

musician. Almost every Saturday evening someone brought liquor and then offered the nectar behind the drying-barn.

According to what was told, it was not always advisable for visitors to show too much interest in the girls of the village, because some of the youngsters were keen on fighting and would welcome such behavior as an excuse. According to various sources, it had been common until the outbreak of the war in 1939 to pick a quarrel just for the sake of having a good fight at these Saturday dances. That was usually not very difficult, because most of the men had enjoyed liquor. Both older farmers and younger forest workers participated in these fights; in particular, Mr K, who was later stabbed, distinguished himself and fought with his sons and sons-in-law as well as with strangers. Possibly it was not that uncommon at the dances in earlier years that drunken men ran through the village screaming and waving different kinds of weapons – axes, knives or spears – in search of the person who had irritated them. Stabbings were not uncommon, but most often not dangerous. There were men who always carried a browning pistol in their pocket, but firearms were seldom used in these fights.

The above-mentioned custom disappeared entirely during the war, and small attempts to pick a quarrel – that I was able to observe – never developed into fights, because those who were dancing would intervene.

Sports are evidently on their way to replacing fighting but have not made a total breakthrough yet, and one can distinguish a certain tension between the supporters of sports on the one hand and the supporters of fighting on the other. The sports association (which exists only as a loose and unorganized hobby circle) had gathered for training outside Mattila one Saturday evening in 1946 and almost all the young men from the village were there. The dance was about to begin soon, and Kiiskilä's boys, Matti Perälä, Veikko Uusitalo and Ilmari Hiltunen, who were all somewhat older – from twenty to thirty years old – arrived on the scene. They stopped to look at the sports fans and made derisive remarks on their ridiculous activities. The sportsmen were not offended; instead, they asked the slanderers to participate in their training but only succeeded in getting Veikko Uusitalo along. The others continued with their sneering and sent a few young boys to fetch the musician. The dance started soon, and – like on weekdays – one could not notice any animosity between these two groups there. Those who did not go in for sports occasionally stepped outside and took sips from the spirits they had brought along.

---

The villagers of Suvanto, as can be seen, have fairly few free time activities; in fact, apart from the ones mentioned above, there are not any. Indeed, they could sometimes go to the parish village to dance or to see movies, but it was a long way there. They could borrow books from the municipal library, but their inclination



for reading was weak and the lighting poor in the wintertime. In spite of that, I could not notice any dissatisfaction with the circumstances, and towns or population centres did not seem to have any great appeal for them. Also, this may have depended on the poor living conditions and the scarcity of food that prevailed in towns in 1946. In my opinion, table 25 on page 195 gives proof of this understanding: if we leave aside those who emigrated to the United States at the turn of the century, only three of those who married people outside the village have moved to Rovaniemi and one has moved to Ylivieska. Most of these have settled in the countryside in Lapland, and a smaller amount in the northern part of the Ostrobothnian countryside. The only villager who expressed plans to move to a town was the 24-year-old Valde Uusitalo; he had served in the army as a medic and hoped to become a nurse in Helsinki. He talked somewhat wishfully about movies and places of entertainment. A couple of his cousins of the same age in Aapajärvi had begun to explore possibilities to move to America.

During the winter 1944–1945, the entire population of the village was in evacuation in Toholampi in central East Bothnia (*Ostrobothnia*), and during this time the villagers had the opportunity to see somewhat different circumstances from what they had been used to. There were a lot of things that astonished them, but there was little that won their approval. The best that Toholampi had to offer was a daily bus connection with Kokkola. They had hoped for such daily connections at home, too. However, nobody seemed to be willing to stay in Toholampi; the land yielded too little and there were no forests to provide extra income. In addition, the landless thought that chances of earning one's bread were few and poor. The refrain in almost all discussions about the evacuation time was: "All the time, we longed for home".

This can naturally be regarded as a manifestation of a certain attitude towards the home village and its circumstances. Hence it may be concluded that comfort and well-being were generally speaking good in Suvanto and that their visit to Toholampi was filled with hardships. One perceives that the villagers' existence in Toholampi was extraordinary, because they lived on other people's charity. However, they unanimously agreed that they were taken care of with great kindness. Therefore, one has to assume that they got a fairly unembellished picture of how everyday life worked there, in a direction whose climate they may have imagined to be milder and in an area they may have thought of as more productive. The difficulties that arose from the bad times were probably more accentuated than would normally have been the case. That is how I have understood the situation and am inclined to take their statements about the conditions in Toholampi as a fairly adequate expression of their attitude towards everyday life in Suvanto.

As has been stated above, their comparisons went in favor of their home village. These comparisons, based on economic grounds, can be seen to be free of sentimental reasons, and Toholampi got the worst of it (fewer chances for hard work, lower wages and equally heavy farming); in other words, if the villagers kept



their old work and had to choose between Suvanto and Toholampi, they would prefer Suvanto. Naturally, apart from these rational reasons, there were emotional grounds that made them choose Suvanto: for example, they complained that the absence of forests let the wind blow freely over the open plains and that the closeness of the sea made the cold damp and more bitter. Also, they missed the rivers, fells and swamps in Pelkosenniemi.

All these circumstances taken together: in my opinion, the insignificant emigration to the south and to towns and the clearly expressed dislike of Toholampi seem to indicate that the villagers of Suvanto were in general content with their existence, even though amongst themselves – and in front of strangers – they quite often groused about poor Lapland.

#### **4 Attitudes towards the Authorities and the Community**

The villagers' attitudes towards the church and religion were rather indifferent, and one could not discern any greater attachment to the church. Some, mostly older people, went to church during the bigger holidays, but if we omit wedding ceremonies, the people's contacts with the church were very limited. The parish priest did not come more than once a year to the village.

It is difficult to determine how interested the villagers were in nonconformist activities, because the Laestadians expressed their religious fervor when preachers arrived to hold religious meetings (*"seuroja"*), and these were not held during my stay in Suvanto. According to the parish priest, Laestadian preachers came annually, usually during Easter, and held religious meetings in the villages for big audiences. These preachers were warmly welcome by the believers and treated as dear guests. According to various sources, some of the older people in the village were keen readers while the young ones were usually uninterested. I did not notice people being judged for their religious interests.

---

The district's police, forest foremen and other foremen represented the authorities with whom the villagers were in contact. The police seldom had to intervene, because thefts, murders and manslaughters were rare. There was one murderer who about fifteen years ago had stabbed his brother because of jealousy – as was told – and a thief who was in jail for a minor theft. The fact that the authorities intervened in such cases was considered totally justified, but those criminals who had done their time were not treated with resentment; at least the above-mentioned fratricide was treated as if nothing had happened.

But as if notion by the authorities into smaller transgressions, such as home distilling, knife fights and ill-treatment or unlawful hunting and fishing were

regarded by the villagers as unnecessary pettiness. Because it was a long way to the liquor store and because it was expensive to buy from there, it could not do anybody any harm if one distilled a little for his own needs; indeed, that had always been the custom. If someone wanted to fight, so be it, because a man has to be able to look after himself and keep his opponents at arm's length. Because necessity does not think about hunting seasons or catching methods, it is cruel not to let people catch some game. The people thought that many of the laws would be good in other areas and under different circumstances, but up here in the north, "behind God's back" (*Jumalan selän takana*), one did not have to follow them literally. That was sometimes made clear even to the district police superintendent; for example, a few years ago when torch fishing was prohibited, he made a raid to confiscate all torch fishing equipment from the village. The villagers kindly handed over all the equipment that the superintendent found but told him that his zeal would do no good. In any case, they would all get themselves new equipment, because in their opinion torch fishing was a necessary business. I think that the district police superintendent's or the local policeman's personality did not play any big role in such cases; such minor breaches of the law were just as common during the previous superintendent's term, although – as was told – he was a really mean man (*oikein häijy mies*) who tried to keep good order in his district.

Informing because of jealousy occurred to some extent, but it was looked upon with repugnance, because in most cases it concerned something that should be settled in private. For example, emptying other people's traps, ill-treatment or something else that was punishable by law was not so much an offence against someone else but against the whole. Informing was belonged to an entirely different category than litigation, about whose justification one could disagree in every separate case but which – as such - was correct. According to the district police superintendent of Pelkosenniemi, however, litigation was rather uncommon.

One was honest with other people's property. However, it did happen that someone went through other people's traps, took wood from their forest or "found" a fish-spear or something of the kind. The owner seldom made any great fuss if something was missing, but he tried on his own to track the guilty person to give him a thrashing. The matter was brought to a conclusion with that. If the guilty person was a villager or came from a neighboring village, it was not usually difficult to track him. This may have contributed to the fact that such small pilfering was regarded more as a dumb trick than as actual dishonesty. One evening, I was with some villagers when they wondered who had cut away the tar peaks from the Kairala villagers' trees that they had cut down for use in the winter and lay piled up some distance upstream. We guessed that it was a few keen spear fishermen and stated dispassionately that the entire undertaking was stupid, because the people of Kairala sooner or later would find the guilty person. However, it was no moral condemnation.

There were no thefts in forest work sites. One could openly, without risk, leave things unattended on the shelves or on the bunks. Stealing from one's comrades would have been regarded as unheard-of.

The villagers seldom got in contact with the other "masters", forest foremen, land surveyors etc., and were only vaguely aware that these groups contrasted with them. The villagers started from the assumption that the masters always tried to fleece them and that they were always paid too little. Therefore, when they could, the villagers were not shy about charging dearly for all kinds of small services and thought it was totally justified to cheat the employer when the opportunity arose. However, this must not be understood to mean that dishonesty, misappropriation and cheating would have been admired by the people. Rather, they thought they had the right to take advantage of the masters' insufficient knowledge, supervision or ability to stand up for themselves. If one cheated the masters, then one also cheated some logging company – or the National Board of Forestry – but did not have any scruples about that.

Actually, the people knew very little about the masters' way of life – and what they owned – and had reservations about strangers, too. While people welcomed a jack straight off and kept company with him in an unconstrained manner, they hesitated before they would house a traveling foreman, because they assumed that masters had to be served and that they could not eat the same food as the common people did. However, they were on familiar visiting terms with masters whom they knew and who were decent (*"reiluja"*) and folksy fellows, men of the people (*"kansan miehiä"*), and turned to them to get an explanation for everything possible that they could not sort out themselves.

---

There were limited possibilities to study cooperation in the prevailing ownership and working conditions. Only two farms, Mattila and Junttila, were farmed together by several owners. Four brothers, all unmarried men, own the Mattila farm and have a joint household. Likewise, the younger brother in Junttila is a bachelor and is included in the older brother's household. Cooperation on these farms works totally normally, even though there is no master who supervises work and the division of duties. Role differentiation is traditional in such working communities, and the conditions for maintaining harmony are good as long as the partners do not establish their own households. Therefore, the sense – or attitude – of cooperation that could be studied on these farms cannot be regarded as relevant for studying cooperation in general.

One bigger undertaking of common interest, namely the construction of the road to Pelkosenniemi, has been done thanks to the villagers' cooperation, and another one, obtaining a ferry for crossing the river Kitinen, is being planned. But according to what was said in a neighboring village, Pyhäjärvi, and on farms further upstream,

the villagers of Suvanto were not interested in cooperation; for example, it was mentioned that they had not got a sawmill or a mill built in their village. The following is another example of the people's deficient cooperativeness: in 1938, the state offered to draw a telephone line from the parish village to Pyhäjärvi if the villagers together obtained the poles. That would have meant fifteen poles per farm, but the villagers reasoned that the farm where the telephone central would be located would benefit the most and therefore let the offer fall through.

To my understanding, those who denied that the villagers of Suvanto had any pronounced willingness to work together were for the most part right. Those farming machines and forest lots that were jointly owned (and the nowadays dilapidated water mills below Akankoski) and were situated in the village do not presuppose any direct cooperation, only some mutual understanding. The absence of cooperative attitudes can possibly be explained by the fact that cooperation is not necessary outside of one's household, because farming here is small-scale and can be done without any outside help. Earnings from forest work are based on everyone's own performance; he who tries to cadge on someone else's results is regarded as a poor and unsuitable fellow-worker. This may even have contributed to the strengthening of the individualist attitude that I have observed: equal pay for equal work – whether farming, hunting, fishing or forest work.

## CONCLUDING WORDS

From the text above it has become clear that the social structure of the Company was considerably more complex than it appeared if one read only the regulations. In chapter four it becomes clear that all the Company's men belonged simultaneously to six different groups: to a rank group, military group, local group, age group, home district group and (most, if not all) to a mess kit group. In each group every single soldier had a certain social role; together these roles formed a man's role set. His sense of cohesion and loyalty towards these groups existed always, although they were usually latent. The sense of loyalty to some of these six groups was aroused in certain situations and affected his behaviour.

Although it has been mentioned before, there can be reason to say in connection with this that, of these six groups, three had a different structure than the rest. Military, local and home district groups had a structure where each smaller group formed a subgroup in hierarchically constructed larger groups, such as for instance a platoon was a subgroup in a company, which in turn was a subgroup of a battalion, and so on. It depended on the situation which military, local or rank group the men chose as their in-group. In some situations the machine gun group was the in-group and others were outer groups, in some situations the whole Company was an in-group.

Of the other groups two groups, rank groups and age groups were also hierarchically constructed, but in these, the specific rank and age groups excluded each other. A soldier could rise from the lower to the higher group, when the promotion from one rank group to another meant that a man was transferred from his present membership group to the next group above it. Rising in the age scale took place in such a manner that all the men in one age group became "old" simultaneously, which happened when the Company received replacements in the form of a group of conscripts.

It is a little difficult to place the mess kit group within this formula, because some of these were in fact subgroups of the smallest military groups, while others were subgroups of the smallest local groups.

The most important membership group of the soldiers was no doubt the machine gun group, which was the lowest military group. This was not just because a man's identity in the army was determined by the unit in which he served; also his own sense of wellbeing, safety and finally his life depended on how well he got on with his buddies in the machine gun group. As has already been described in detail above, the loyalty of the men towards their own military group was clear, and not only in relation to differences between machine gunmen and infantry riflemen in the same local group, but also in relation to the division of labour between the machine guns of the platoon or between the platoons of the Company.

This did not apply to only privates, but also to other ranks and probably also officers. As was described in more detail in the chapter about rank groups, the leaders of machine gun groups and half-platoons felt that they were primarily members of their military group and only secondarily or thirdly members of their rank group. How it was with the officers I cannot say for sure, because officers were in a way a cohesive group with their own special norms. I cannot, however, recall a single incident where the loyalty of one of our officers towards his own platoon on the one hand, and towards other officers on the other hand, would have been conflicted. I can, however, say that no-one had any complaints concerning the solidarity of platoon commanders and the commanders of the different companies towards their own men – not counting perhaps Lieutenant 257, who tried to “burn” the Company’s men for being absent without leave in Nurmes. To this solidarity felt by NCOs and officers towards their own in-groups, the privates usually, although not always, responded by being loyal to their own leaders, even though they belonged to a different rank group. Furthermore, it must be emphasised, that the loyalty towards the local group to which a man belonged, followed in importance directly after the solidarity felt towards one’s own military group. This is not surprising, because the base or the picket, where a man was stationed, was in fact his home, which he attempted to make as comfortable as possible. If in the first place, a man’s own safety depended on his own military group’s ability to function, it was in the second place determined by how the other groups of the base acted. That is why it was completely natural to feel solidarity towards the men of the whole base.

Feelings of solidarity towards age groups and home district groups were notably less than the corresponding feelings towards military and local groups. They were clearly awakened less frequently and usually only in relation to competition concerning special rights. But membership in a certain age group or home district group did colour a man’s whole role set: in my experience at least, in their mutual dealings, different parties did to some degree take into consideration whether they were in the same age in the Company or whether they came from the same home district.

These observations support the results that other researchers, such as Shils, Janowitz, Stouffer and Moskos, have found, namely that membership in primary groups is extremely important for soldiers’ well-being and combat efficiency. But even though every now and then the different primary groups in the Company may have been in a internal competition situation, neither permanent out group attitudes, nor stereotypic attitudes towards other out groups emerged as they did in Sherif’s famous boy experiments<sup>1</sup>. The machine gun groups, platoons, the Company, even the whole battalion, saw themselves as loyal in-groups in relation to other machine gun groups, platoons, companies and battalions, but formed only weak, unclear negative, stereotypic attitudes towards different out groups. This probably resulted from the fact that the military groups of the Company (which usually lived isolated from others) on the one hand did not have the

chance to get frustrated with each other (like the boy groups did in Sherif's experiments) and on the other hand, every now and then, they would come together and live in a bigger in-group.

Already when I started working on my book "Company", I formulated a hypothesis that the behaviour of the men at the front reflected their civilian attitudes. Since a big part of the Company's men were from Lapland, I imagined that the attitudes that they had brought to military life were similar to the ones that they had adapted while working in forest work sites (so-called savottas). I thought that being used to life in the forest contributed to their becoming adjusted to being at the front, because working in the forest, at least as far as outer circumstances are concerned, resembles ordinary daily life at the front quite a lot. Especially in relation to the following aspects do these two situations resemble each other:

1. Primitive living conditions; temporary and quickly built accommodation
2. The twenty-four hour daily rhythm consists of few forms of action
3. Lack of pleasures and hobbies
4. Connections between home and workplace exist rarely and accidentally
5. Certain kind of discipline
6. People have been put together by necessity
7. Mainly male population
8. The population is assembled of people who are strangers to each other with regard to their origin and the place or region where they live.

In my book "Company", in the very explicit comparison that I made between life in a forest work site and at the front, I observed that my hypothesis is hardly tenable. Closer observation showed that life in the forest work site differed in so many important aspects, that those differences clearly disprove the similarities listed above. This is why I had to conclude, that most features that were common to a forest work site and a company were such, that one can find anywhere, where a heterogeneous group of male labourers come together to accomplish a relatively large task. I can only state with relative certainty that life in the forest work site created in them attitudes, and taught them readiness, which made it easier to adjust to life at the front.

In sociological literature there are several examples of a situation where people who live or work within total institutions shape the rules that exist in these social systems in different ways. Usually, the purpose of these changes is not to replace the institution's goals by new ones, but to change such modes of operation, which people feel are unnecessarily limiting and impractical. In such cases they often find themselves at odds with the leadership of the system, which either cannot or does not want to understand their point of view.

I hope that my research has shown that the abovementioned is true also when talking about the second machine gun company of IR 12 and probably when

talking about the whole army. By creating their own system of norms, our frontline soldiers acted in the same way as soldiers in other armed forces, inmates of nursing institutions, or civil servants in large bureaucracies. Their informal behavioural pattern, as often occurs in cases like this, did not lead to a weakening of the system's ability to function; I am rather inclined to believe that on the contrary it became stronger. With good reason, one can ask how the men of a field army would have survived many years at the front, if they had not moulded the formal norm system into such a shape, that they themselves considered to be just.



## LITERATURE

(Works without asterix formed the list of literature in Pipping's original Swedish edition from 1947. Works marked with asterix \* formed the list of literature in the Finnish language edition (1978) of Pipping's book, together with some sources which appeared in both editions, here marked with #.)

The American Journal of Sociology: Special Issue Devoted to the Social Psychology of Military Life, Vol 51, No 5, March 1946. #

Andersson, G. A.: Katsaus tukkityöläisten työlakkoihin Perä-Pohjolassa 1906, Kemi 1907.

Andersson G. A.: Perä-Pohjolan ja Lapin asutusvaiheita, Kemi 1911.

Andersson G. A.: Kemijärven pitäjän vaiheita, Kemi 1912.

Andersson G. A.: Tietoja Sodankylän ja Kittilän aikaisemmista ja myöhemmistä vaiheista, Kemi 1914.

Andersson G. A.: Rowaniemen pitäjä, Kemi 1915.

Atlas över Finland 1925, Helsingfors (Helsinki) 1925.

Bain, R.: An Attitude on Attitude Research, in The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 33, No 6, May 1928, pp.940-.

Beiträge zur Militärsoziologie. Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, Sonderheft 12/1968. \*

Bengtsson, F. G.: De långhåriga merovingerna, Bonniers, Stockholm 1941.

Carnap, R.: Testability and Meaning, in Philosophy of Science, Vol. 3, No 4, October 1936, pp. 420-.

Coates, C. H. & Pellegrin, R. J.: Military Sociology. The Social Sciences Press, University Park, Maryland, 1965. \*

Deutsch, H.: Oeconomiska Anteckningar rörande Norra Delen af Uleåborgs län, under resor derstädes, på Hans Erlaucht, Riks-Cancelleren m.m. N.P. Rumänzoffs omkostnad och Kejs. Finska Hushållnings-Sällskapets försorg gjorde åren 1814 och 1815, Kejs. Finska Hushållnings-Sällskapets Förhandlingar III, Åbo (Turku) 1819.

Faris, E.: Attitudes and Behavior, in The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 34, No 2; September 1928, pp. 271-.

Fellman, I.: Handlingar och uppsatser angående Finska Lappmarken och Lapparne I-IV, Helsingfors (Helsinki) 1910-15.

Fellman, J.: Anteckningar under min vistelse i Lappmarken, I-IV, Helsingfors (Helsinki) 1906.

Finlands Officiella Statistik.

Ginzberg, E. & al.: The Ineffective Soldier I-III, Columbia University Press, New York 1959. \*

Goffman, E.: Asylums. Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates, Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York 1961. \*

Granö, J. G.: Suomen maantieteelliset alueet, Werner Söderström, Borgå (Porvoo) 1932.

Haanpää, P.: Yhdeksän miehen saappaat, Otava, Helsinki 1945.

Havas, W.: Laestadiolaisuuden historia pääpiirteissään, Oulu 1927.

Homans, G. C.: The Small Warship, in The American Sociological Review, Vol. 11, No 3, June 1946.

Hoppe, G.: Vägarna inom Norrbottens län, Geographica, Skrifter från Upsala Universitets Geografiska Institution Nr 16, Upsala 1945.

Huhtala, P.: Ryhmänjohtaja, Otava, Helsinki 1937. #

Jalkaväen Ohjesääntö I-II, Otava, Helsinki 1939. #

Janowitz, M.: Sociology and the Military Establishment, New York 1959. \*

Janowitz, M.: The New Military. Changing Patterns of Organization, New York 1964. \*

- Jutila, K. T.: Tutkimuksia Perä-Pohjolan ja Lapin talous- ja asutustiloista I–IV, Helsinki 1920–23. #  
 Kenttöohjesääntö II: Teknillinen osa, Helsinki 1931. #
- Koffka, K.: Principles of Gestalt Psychology, Kegan Paul, London 1936.
- Korsusta korsuun. Kiestingin ja Uhtuan suuntain korsu- ja marssilauluja, Oulu 1942. #
- Köhler, W.: Gestalt Psychology, New York 1929.
- Lang, K.: Military Organization, in Handbook of Organizations, ed. by J. G. Marsh, Rand McNally & Co., Chicago 1965, pp. 838–878. \*
- Lawrence, T. E.: Letters, ed. by David Garnett, Jonathan Cape, London 1938.
- Lapin komitean mietintö, Helsinki 1905.
- Lapin taloudelliset olot ja niiden kehittäminen. Komiteamietintö No 8–1938, Helsinki 1938.
- Lewin, K.: Principles of Topological Psychology, translated by F. and G. Heider, Mc Graw Hill Book Company, New York 1936.
- Lewin, K.: The Conceptual Representation and the Measurement of Psychological Forces, in Contributions to Psychological Theory, Vol. 1, No 4, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina 1938.
- Lewin, K.: Field Theory and Experiment in Social Psychology: Concepts and Methods, The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLIV, No 6, May 1939, pp. 868–.
- Linna, V.: Tunteen soittaja, Werner Söderström, Porvoo/Helsinki 1954. \*
- Lippitt, R.: Field Theory and Experiment in Social Psychology: Autocratic and Democratic Group Atmospheres, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLV, No 1, July 1939, pp. 26–.
- Little, R. W.: Buddy Relations and Combat Performance, in The New Military, ed. by Morris Janowitz, 1964, pp. 195–224. \*
- Lyhennykset ja taktilliset merkit, Otava, Helsinki 1934. #
- Marshall, S. L. S.: Men Under Fire, William Moorow & Co., New York 1947. \*
- Merton, R. K.: & Lazarsfeld P.F. (ed.): Continuities in Social Research. Studies in the Scope and Method of “The American Soldier”, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois 1950. \*
- Moskos, C. C.: The American Enlisted Man, Russel Sage Foundation, New York 1970. \*
- Moskos, C. C.: The Military, in The Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 2, 1976, pp. 55–78. \*
- Muutokset ja lisäykset JO I:een ja JO II:een, Helsinki 1941.
- Nyman, A. & al. (ed.): Sotasavotta, Otava, Helsinki 1974. \*
- Paulaharju, S.: Wanhaa Lappia ja Peräpohjolaa, Kirja, Helsinki 1923.
- Paulaharju, S.: Taka-Lappia, Kirja, Helsinki 1927.
- Paulaharju, S.: Sompio, Werner Söderström, Porvoo (Borgå) 1939.
- Paulaharju, S.: Kuva sieltä, toinen täältä, Werner Söderström, Porvoo (Borgå) 1944.
- Pehkonen, Y. E.: Taloudelliset olot Pohjois-Suomessa sekä eräitä ehdotuksia toimenpiteiksi niiden parantamista varten, Oulu 1928.
- Personalvårdshandbook 1944, publ. by Försvarsstabens personalvårdsavdelning, Stockholm 1944.
- Pettersson, O. P.: Gamla byar i Vilhelmina I–III, Etnografiska Källskrifter I, Stockholm 1941–44.
- Pipping, K.: Den finländske soldaten i litteraturen, in Finsk Tidskrift, No 5, 1947. \*
- Pipping, K.: Nytt ljus över fortsättningskriget, in Finsk Tidskrift 1976, pp. 560–581. \*
- Saari, E. E.: Pioneerin opas, Otava, Helsinki 1931. #
- Sherif M. & C.: Groups in Harmony and Tension, Harper & Bros, New York 1953. \*
- Shils, E.A. & Janowitz, M.: Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II, in Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 12, No 2, Summer 1948, pp. 280–315. \*
- Sisäpalvelusohjesääntö, Otava, Helsinki 1937. #
- Sjögren, A. J.: Anteckningar om församlingarne i Kemi-Lappmark, Helsinki (Helsingfors) 1828. Statistisk Årsok.
- Stouffer, S. A. & al.: The American Soldier I–II, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1949. \*

Suunnitelma Kainuun ja Perä-Pohjolan talouselämän kohottamiseksi, Komiteamietintö No 10–1938, Helsinki 1938.

Säilä, S.-L. & Mäkelä, K.: Totaalisia yhteisöjä on erilaisia, in *Sosiologia* 1967, pp. 114–121. \*

Thomas, W. I. & Znaniecki, F.: *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, Richard C. Badger, Boston 1918.

Thurstone, L. L.: Attitudes Can Be Measured, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 33, No 4, January 1928, pp.529–.

Wahlenberg, G.: *Geografisk och Ekonomisk beskrifning om Kemi Lappmark i esterbottens Höfdingdöme*, Stockholm 1804. #

Warren, R. L.: The Naval Reserve Officer, in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 11, No 2, April 1946.

Weber, M.: The Essentials of Bureaucratic Organization: An Idealtpe construction, in *Reader in Bureaucracy*, ed. By Merton & al., The Free Press, New York. \*

Verkko, V.: Väikvaltarikollisuuden maantiedettä, in *Suomalainen Suomi* 1945, pp. 314–, Helsinki 1945.

Verkko, V.: Rikollisuus, väkijuomat ja kansanluonne, *ibid.*, pp. 428–.

Verkko, V.: Kansamme heimo-ominaisuudet uudessa valaistuksessa, *ibid.*, pp.486–.

Young, K.: *A Handbook of Social Psychology*, Kegan Paul, London 1946.

Young, K. (ed.): *Social Attitudes*, Henry Holt & Co., New York 1931.

Young, P. V.: *Scientific Social Surveys and Research*, Prentice Hall, Inc., New York 1942.

### Unprinted Sources

Sota-arkisto (War Archives), Helsinki

II/JR 12:n arkisto (the archives of II/IR12)

JR 12:n päiväkäskyt (daily orders of IR 12)

Sotatapaturma-arkisto (War Casualties Archives), Helsinki

Luettelo 2 KKK/JR 12:n tuntolevyistä (identification tag list of 2. Machine Gun Company of IR 12)

Oulun maakunta-arkisto (Oulu provincial archives)

Oulun läänin maakirjat (land registers)

Kairalan ja Hietasuvannon henkikirjat (population registers)

Pelkosenniemen pitäjän arkisto (Pelkosenniemi parish archives)

Kirkonkirjat 1917–46 (parish registers)

Sodankylän pitäjän arkisto (Sodankylä parish archives)

Kirkonkirjat 1860–1920 (parish registers)

## Diagrams and Map Supplements

Map 1 II/IR 12's track from Saija to Sodankylä

Maps 2,3 The composition of MGC/IR 12 with regard to the men's homes

Maps 4,5 The composition of MGC/IR 12 with regard to the men's homes

Map 6 The Finnish inhabitants in Lapland according to Wahlenberg's map and the present-day inhabitants in the same area

A village of at least 3 houses in Wahlenberg (1802) and in the general map (1941)

A village of at least 3 houses in 1941

Single houses in 1802, a village of at least 3 houses in 1941

Single houses in 1802 and 1941

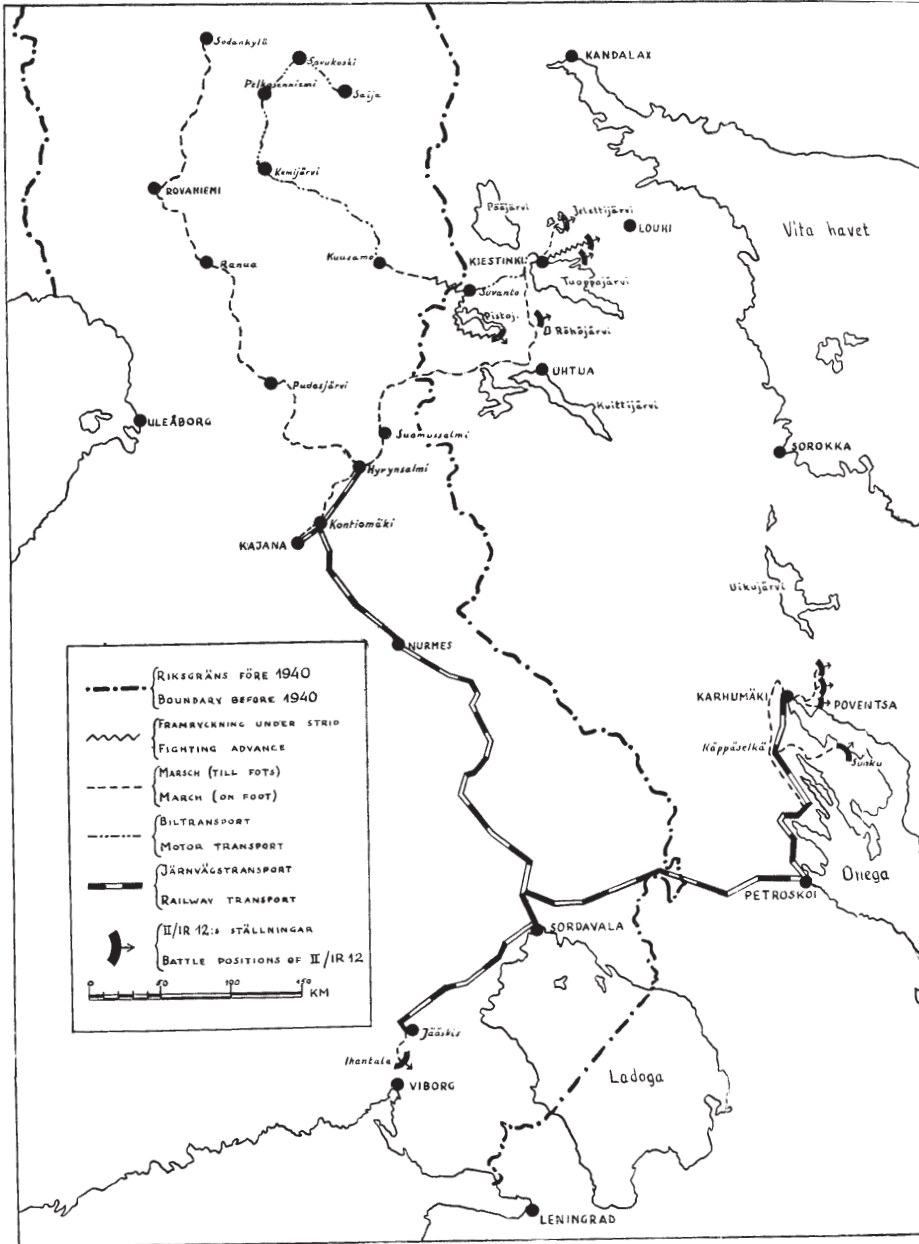
Single houses in 1941

Diagram I. Families living in Suvanto in 1946

Diagram II. Houses in Suvanto in 1830–1946

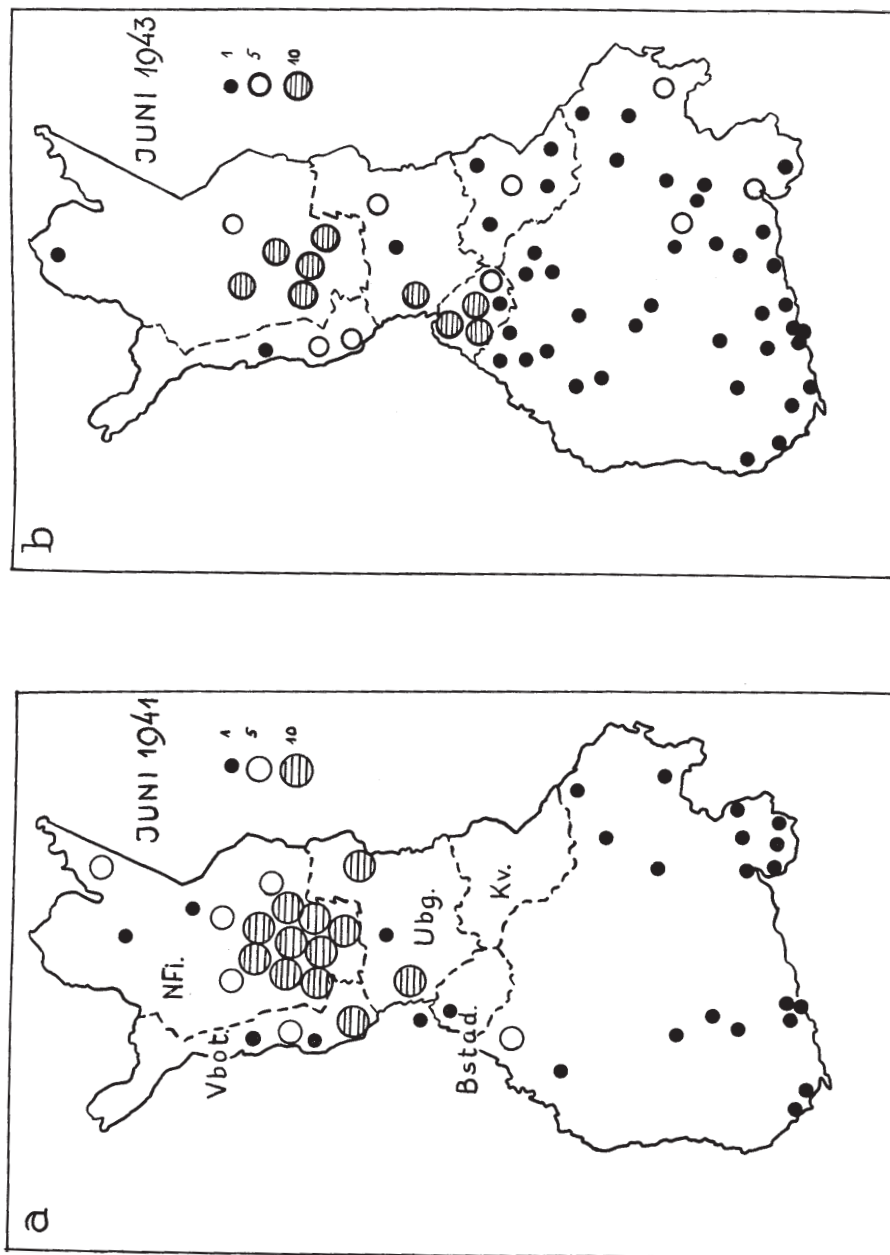
Map 7 A map scetch made in 1946 by the author. Only houses with men are drawn (not according to scale). The numbers of the houses the as in diagram II.

Map 1 II/IR 12's track from Saija to Sodankylä



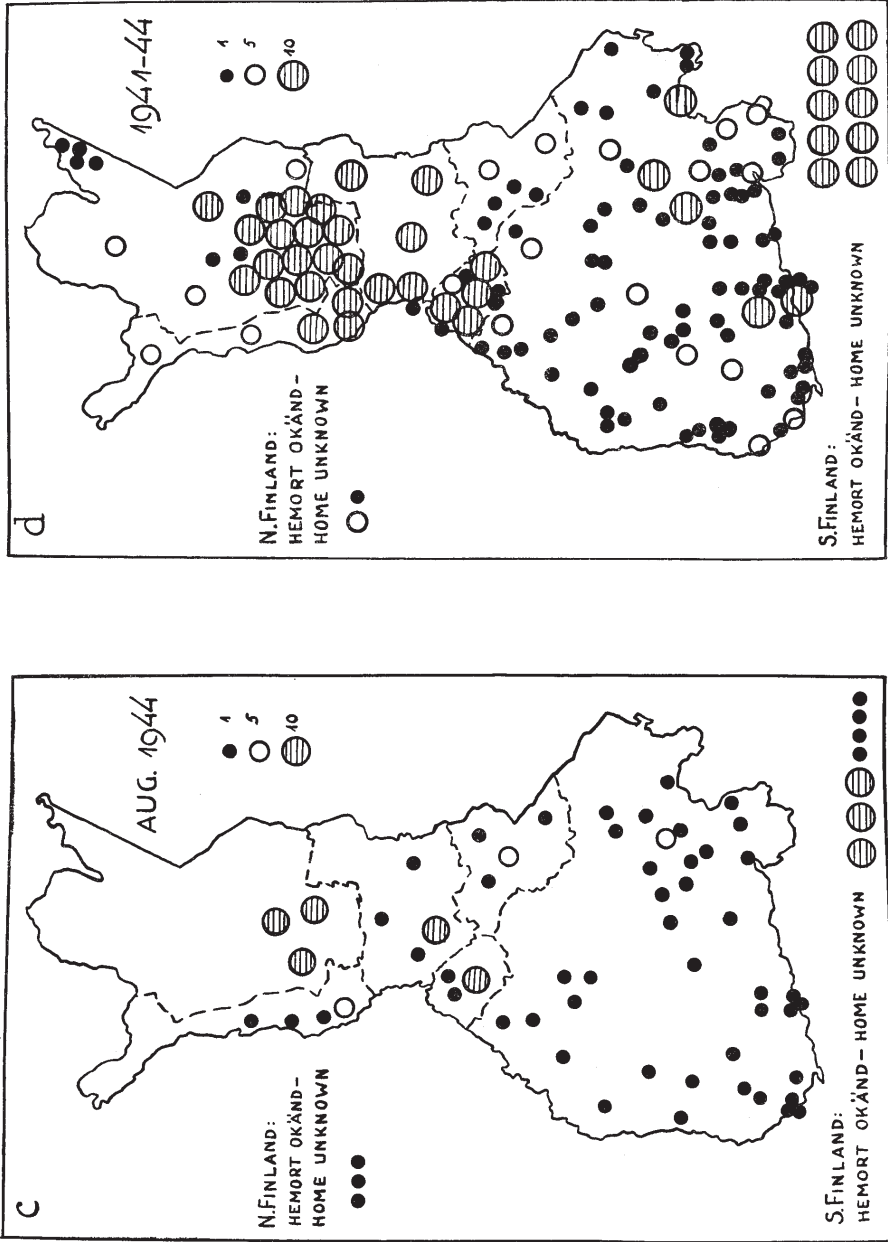
Karta 1. II/IR 12:s väg från Saija till Sodankylä.  
Map 1. II/IR 12's track from Saija to Sodankylä.

## Maps 2,3 The composition of MGC/IR 12 with regard to the men's homes



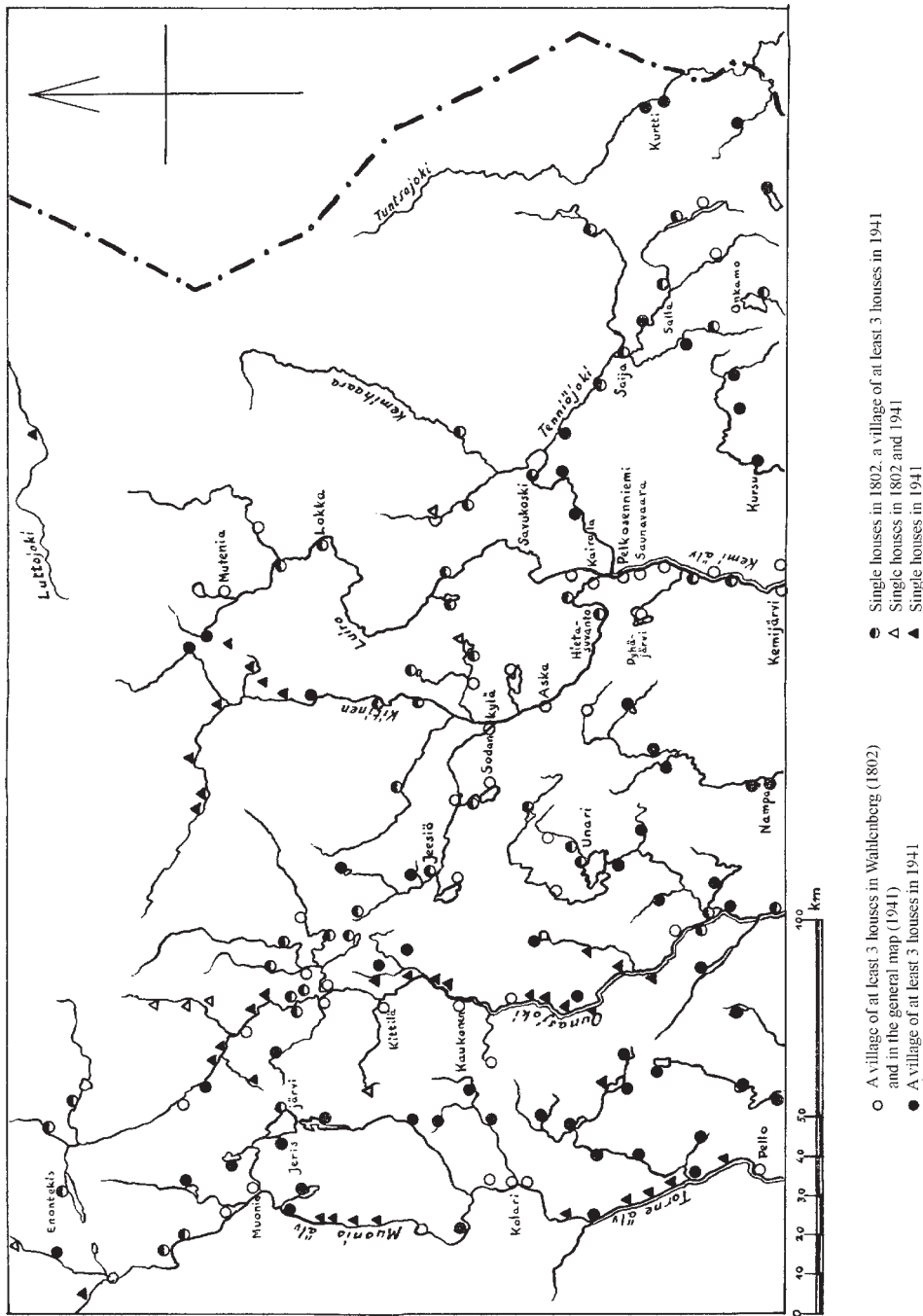
Karta 2—3. 2. MGK/IR 12:s sammansättning enligt manskapets hemorter.  
 Maps 2—3. The composition of 2. MGC/IR 12 with regard to the men's homes.

Maps 4,5 The composition of MGC/IR 12 with regard to the men's homes



Karta 4—5. 2. MGK/IR 12:s sammansättning enligt manskapets hemorter.  
 Maps 4—5. The composition of 2. MGC/IR 12 with regard to the men's homes.

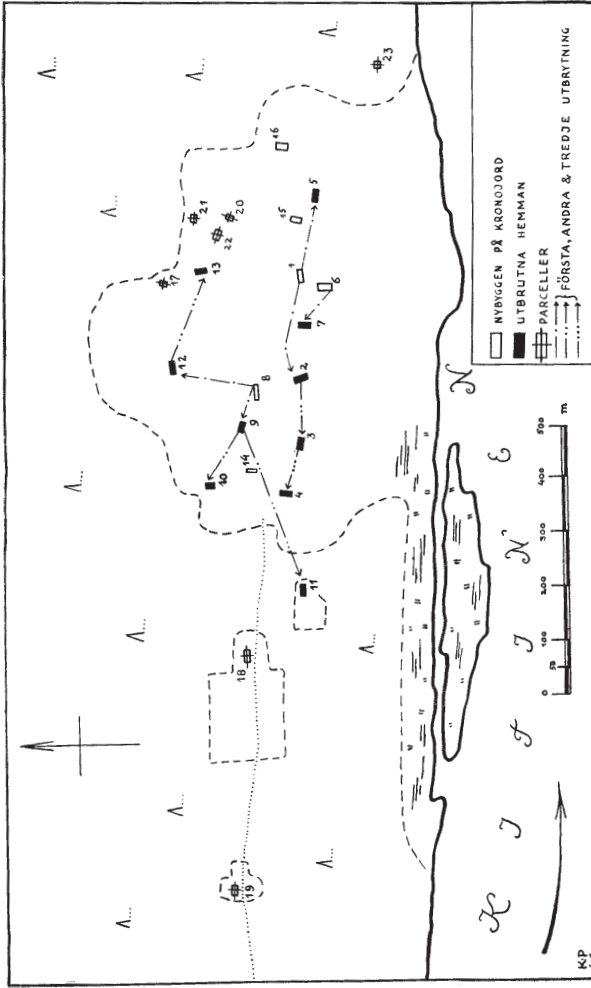
Map 6 The Finnish inhabitants in Lapland according to Wahlenberg's map and the present-day inhabitants in the same area





Map 7 The Village of Hietasuvanto

A map scetch made in 1946 by the author. Only houses with men are drawn (not according to scale). The numbers of the houses the as in diagram II.



Karta 7. Hietasuvanto by.  
Kartskiss upprättad av förf. i aug. 1946. Endast manbyggnaderna utritade (ej skatlenligt). Gårdarnas nummer samma som i diagram II.

**Hemman:**

1. Pekkala	Alaperä N:o 71: 1	0,1500 mantal	14. Joopila	Alaperä N:o 92	0,0800 mantal
2. Viikkola	" 72	0,2500 "	15. Veikanmaa	" 93	0,0800 "
3. Simuna	" 73	0,2500 "	16. Sippala	" 94	0,0400 "
4. Kivellä	" 71: 2	0,1250 "	<b>Parceller:</b>		
5. Katajammaa	" 74	0,1500 "	17. Notkola.		
6. Jurttila	" 75	0,1250 "	18. Perälä.		
7. Saunala	" 76	0,1250 "	19. Kiiskilä.		
8. Mattila	" 77	0,1250 "	20. Ollila.		
9. Aapula	" 78	0,1700 "	21. Puustola.		
10. Penkkula			22. Skola.		
11. Uusitalo			23. Räsänen.		
12. Takala					
13. Harjula					

Diagram I. Families living in Suvanto in 1946

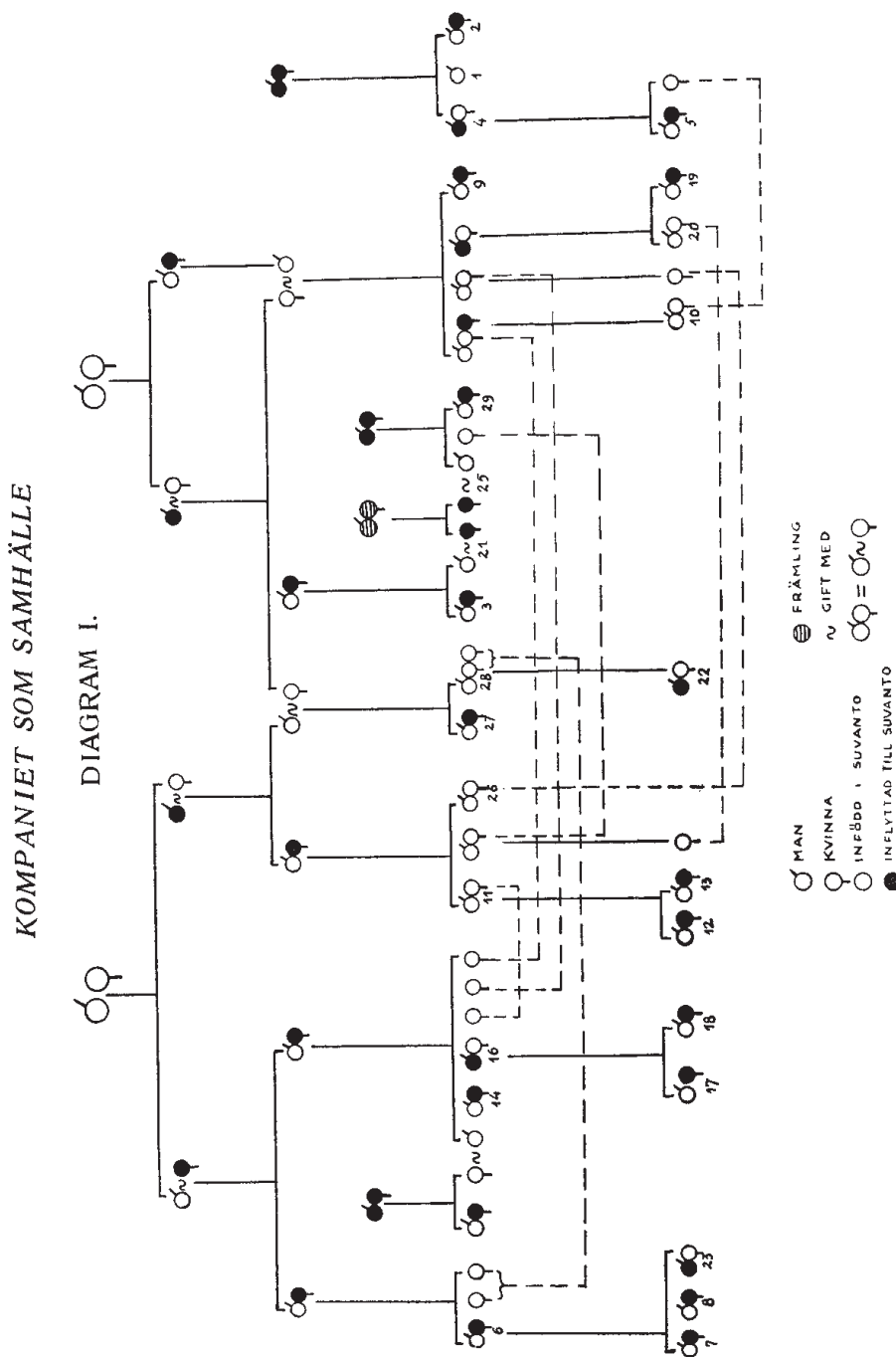
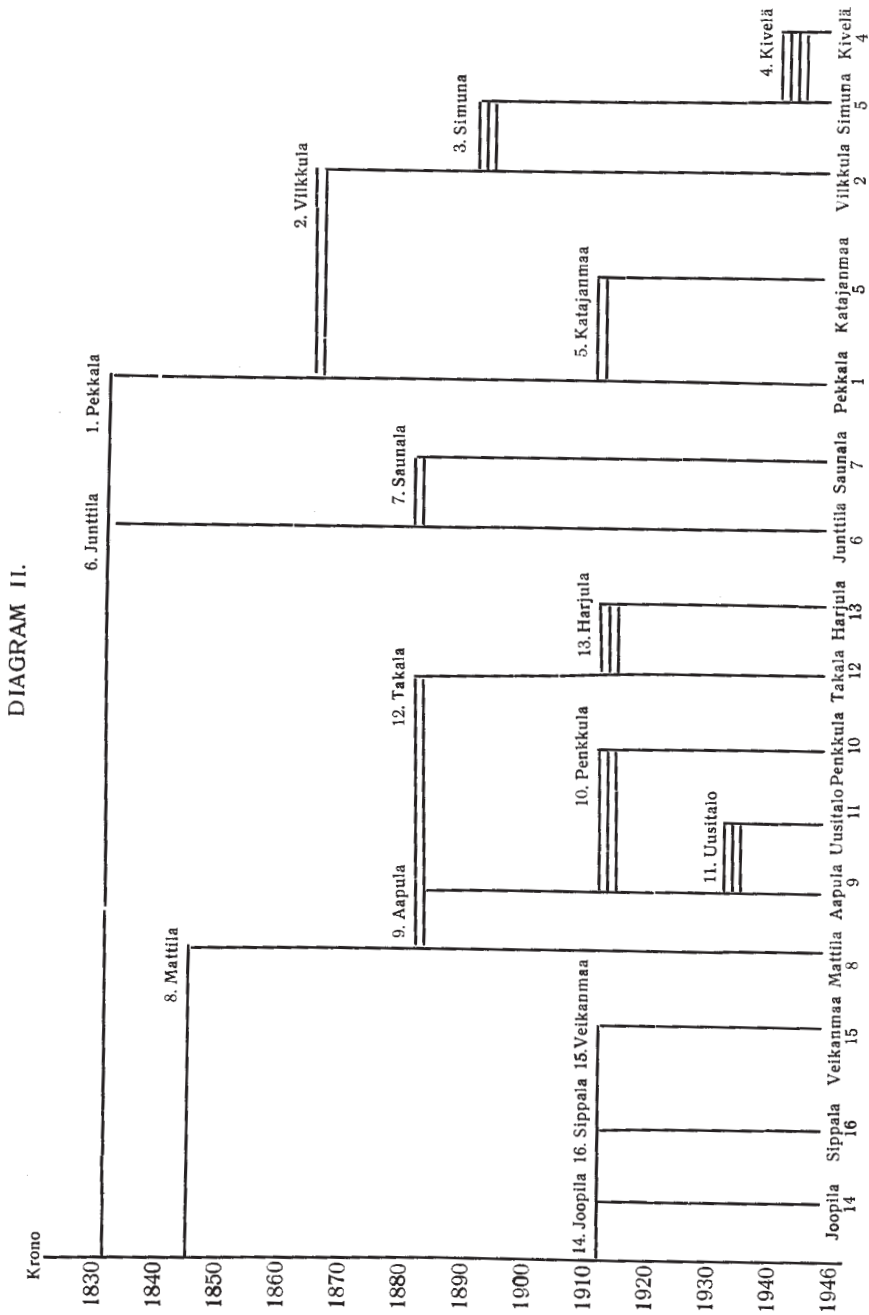


Diagram II. Houses in Suvanto in 1830–1946



Schematisk framställning av hemmansdelningarna i Suvanto by åren 1830—1946.

ISBN 978-951-25-1892-0  
ISSN 1796-671-x



National Defence University  
Department of Behavioral Sciences  
P.O. Box 5  
04401 Järvenpää  
Suomi ▶ Finland

Tel. (09) 181 62741  
Fax (09) 181 62742  
forename.surname@mil.fi  
www.mpkk/mil.fi

▶ [www.mil.fi](http://www.mil.fi)