

# KOLLAA AND SIMO HÄYHÄ-MUSEUM

## Miettiltä's historic reserve barracks area

There have been soldiers and army operations in the area for hundreds of years. The first barracks in the area were built at the end of the 18th century. There is nothing visible left of these buildings, only the stone foundations of the buildings etc. can be found underground. Of the current buildings built in the early 1880s, the quartermaster's apartment along Miettiläntie and the non-commissioned officer's/commissioned officer's apartment can still be seen. These have residents at the moment.

The place of the yellow-walled two-story house was originally a barracks building, but it was demolished in 1938 and a fine Suojeluskunta building was built in its place. However, this was destroyed at the beginning of the Continuation War when the enemy attacked the area. The house was hit and caught on fire, the fire was put out and the next day it caught fire again and burned down to the ground floor. At the same time, the kitchen/canteen building (artelli in Finnish) facing here and some auxiliary buildings on the right side of Kuntalanraitti were destroyed. After the wars, the former Health Hall (Terveystalo) of the municipality, which is visible today, was built on the site of the destroyed Suojeluskunta hall with the help of Gandef, the Swedish godmother. Among others, a dentist, midwife and health nurse worked here.

Behind Terveystalo, the house of the head of the company is blurred, he lived in the area all year round. After the wars, the Rautjärvi municipality's office functioned in the house and, for example, the council met there. In addition, the villagers and local associations could organize their meetings in the house. The building has now been restored and the so-called Military History Center and the Homeland Exhibition will open in it. In addition, it is possible to rent premises for various events.

The Kollaa and Simo Häyhä museum is located in the former small hospital (Sairastupa) of the barracks area, and in front of it there used to be a training field where the reservists were given drills. The shooting range in the barracks area would be located directly on the other side of Miettiläntie.

When you go to the shore of Lake Vekarus, you can still find the gazebo of the officers or their wives, where afternoon teas were probably enjoyed. In addition, there is a sauna building in the barracks area on the shore of the lake, awaiting renovation. The pistol shooting range is known to have been located on the right side of the road leading to the beach.

## Museum presentation

The Kollaa and Simo Häyhä museum began in the early 1980s, when Kollaa veterans from Rautjärvi read an interview with Lieutenant General Aaro Astola in the local newspaper Kaakkoisseutu, in which he talked about the material he had collected related to the Miettilä reserve barracks area where his father Edward Astolan (formerly Aschan) had served. Ukko Könni, HR manager of the Simpele factories and an enthusiastic local history enthusiast, and Soini Salo, a former Kollaa fighter from the Kollaa veterans' side, joined us. After many twists and turns, the so-called Kollaa rooms on the upper floor could be opened in the former hospital building of the barracks area in 1984, the two rooms on the lower floor were dedicated to other local history, e.g. artefacts were on display in the second room. Over the years, the original Kollaa veterans gave up the pulling responsibility and a new generation stepped into charge. As the activities partially faded,

those active in the museum's activities decided to renew the museum for the 100th anniversary of Finland's independence in 2017, when the museum moved to its current mode of operation. Regular opening hours and expansion of operations and exhibitions. It can be said that now there is a third or fourth generation continuing the legacy left by the men of Rautjärvi.

The museum's operation runs entirely on the work of volunteers and active people. We do not enjoy state support, the municipality is involved in the operation by owning the buildings and taking care of electricity etc. payments. In addition, the municipality organizes school children for summer jobs at the museum, a valuable addition.

## Hallway

In the hallway there is a ticket office and the history of the barracks area is presented with pictures and maps. The map drawings show, for example, the locations of barracks from the 18th century, as well as the activities of the Rautjärvi Civil Guard (Suojeluskunta), which operated in the area after independence before the war.

Souvenirs and other products are also available for sale at the ticket office.

## Simo Häyhä exhibition

The majority of our guests come to the museum specifically for Simo Häyhä, he is perhaps the most famous Finn who participated in the Winter War (Talvisota). Many of our guests only know Talvisota and Simo Häyhä about Finland. After visiting the museum, hopefully they will also know a lot more about Finland and the men of Rautjärvi.

Simo Häyhä was and is the world's most famous sniper, his equals will surely never be seen again. The winter war lasted only 105 days and Simo did not even act as a sniper during that entire time, and Simo's record of more than 500 shot enemies without scope is unbeatable.

Simo was born at Rautjärvi Kiiskinen village, December 1905. The homestead was about 5.5 kilometers from the museum. The village of Kiiskinen is located on the side of present-day Russia, and there is nothing left of the village's buildings. The homestead, Mattila, was a 100h forest farm where there were domestic animals for one's own needs, as well as crops. There was a total of 8 children in the family, Simo was the second youngest. His nature was quiet and withdrawn, so moving in the woods and hunting suited him well. Already as a little boy, as soon as he was dared to put a rifle in his hand, he started hunting for so-called nuisance animals. Mainly foxes, crows, badgers, etc. Hunting and moving in the forests became lifelong hobbies for him. A few photos taken during the Continuation War are on display.

Simo was able to attend school for four years at the Miettälä public school, the school is located along Variskenkyläntie, about a kilometer from the museum. Four years of public school is quite a lot for a small boy from a country house at the beginning of the 20th century, the military ID cards of Simon's peers have mentions of school education: 1 or 2 classes of public school, 1 year of circuit school, can read and write, or just a dash.

Simon's first rifle was not of high quality, so it's no wonder that after turning 17 he joined the Rautjärvi conservancy, because then there was an opportunity to get a better rifle. However, the situation did not improve, at that time it was satisfactory with the weapons that were available.

However, Rautjärvi had a reasonably large Suojeluskunta, founded as early as October 1917. The Lotta organization for women was not founded until 1922. Rautjärvi was a farmer area with no manufacturing industry, so Suojeluskunta and the Suojeluskunta idea had a suitable growth platform. The Suojeluskunta had taken over Miettälä's former reserve barracks area, for example the Suojeluskunta's office was in this building. Some pictures from the time of Suojeluskunta are on display.

In the Suojeluskunta, men get to know each other and each other's ways of working. This made it possible later during the Winter War for the Finnish army to survive in harsh battles against a superior enemy.

After turning 20, Simo resigned from the Suojeluskunta and left to complete his military service in the 1st and 2nd Bicycle Battalions.

Simo's time in the army obviously went well, he got into non-commissioned officer school and completed it with a passable certificate - There's a dozen to be found, it's not internal service but 'surprise': shooting. There are other good numbers for e.g. machine guns and light machine guns (pikakivääri). Simo wasn't terribly tall when he joined the army, his height was 152 cm, so it's easy to find him in e.g. the skiing group as well as in the potato theater.

As a corporal, Simo ended his conscript service, this was normal in the 1920s, the opposite of today. The corporal picture has been taken maybe in Terijoki, the young man does not yet know where the world will take him.

In the group photo, Simo is an assistant trainer on the right of Teodor Rita from Rautjärvi, who is holding a teddy bear.

After returning from the army, Simo rejoined the National Guard and got a new rifle, now a model 28. This was a good rifle and results started to come in competitions. A selection of Simon's shooting and ski competition spoon prizes are on display. The skier statue is the prize of the team skiing competition, Simo was part of the winning team. The other awards are other awards of the Rautjärvi Suojeluskunta.

Simo wanted to be in the background in the pictures, so he is in the background in the two outdoor pictures on display, although easily recognizable. The photos were taken on the steps of the demolished barracks building. In the third picture, Simo is placed in the middle of the group in the front row, in 1936 the group in question was named the team of the Rautjärvi Suojeluskunta for 30 km skiing and 10 km biathlon. Simo seems bothered by being in the front row.

Simo managed to get a new rifle before the wars, an improved version of the Suojeluskunta rifle, the M28-30. The individual was excellent and the shooting results in the competitions improved considerably. The army also noticed this and invited Simon to refresher training in Utti, where he received sniper and spotter training. In this picture too, Simo is in the front row, comparing the men's heights...

Simo practiced on shooting ranges as well by doing dry training, i.e. loading and aiming exercises, whenever it was possible. In 1938, the competitions in the Viipurin Suojeluskuntapiiri (Civil Guard District of Viipuri) did not go well for Simo, and he became so upset that he decided to win the next competitions, in the fall of 1939. Victory would come with intensive training, all free time was used for training. For example, in the summer of 1939, when after working in the fields they had eaten and the rest of the people went for a meal

break, Simo started aiming practice from the window of the hut. Targets at different distances had been placed in the yard. Even this short rest period was used for training.

However, the autumn 1939 games could not be held, at the beginning of October there was an invitation to an extra training, YH, which was a cover for launching a movement. Along with the other Rautjärvi men, Simo left after receiving an invitation to the designated meeting place, the already familiar Miettälä folk school. From there, they moved by march and train transport to the Huuhanmäki barracks area in Jaakima, where units were formed. The people from Rautjärvi were assigned to the second battalion of the Infantry Regiment (JR 34) (II/JR 34), the main part of the men to the sixth company (6/JR 34), some of the men to other companies and the column. The sixth company was led by reserve lieutenant Aarne Juutilainen, a man known as the Terror of Morocco. A troublesome man in the eyes of superiors, demanding of his subordinates and himself. A very aggressive soldier who served in the French Foreign Legion for 5 years.

The troops of JR34 belonged to the IV Army Corps (IV AK), which was responsible for the defense of the northern side of Ladoga, and moved during the late autumn of 1939 to the area south of Suvilahti, the central town of Suojärvi, near the so-called Hysylä bend. After the Soviet Union invaded Finland on November 30, 1939, the JR34 troops were immediately involved in the fighting. During the first week, we had to retreat from Suvilahti via Piitsjoki to Kollaajoki. In the beginning, Simo worked as a team leader in the fourth team of the Juutilainen company, and it wasn't until Kollaajoki that Juutilainen assigned a certain sniper, Simon, to act as a sniper. At the same time, Simo was mostly freed from other normal team leader duties.

Simo, or as he was commonly called Simuna, left early in the morning for the assigned shooting mission or location. The morning activities included the selection of cartridges and receipt from the company's gunsmith. Of course, morning tea etc. was part of the program.

Simo's equipment is illustrated by the wooden statue made by an artist, based on the only known cast photo of Simo taken on the front lines. In that, Simon's equipment includes binoculars, which he used to observe the terrain ahead and the changes that have come to it. The frost was generally over 20 degrees, at worst over 40 degrees. On his feet, Simo wore his own boots as they were better than regular army boots. There were also newspapers as additional insulation.

Simo carefully prepared the shooting positions, the snow in front of the rifle's barrel was frozen so that the snow wouldn't blow up when shooting. He kept snow in his mouth, which prevented his breath from evaporating. It is also said that, if necessary, the rifle was wrapped in gauze so that it would not stand out from the fresh snow. There are two well-known shooting locations, determined by Simo himself, one is from a cave in the rock, and there are a few photos on display. The other, less well-known one, can be found on the rock ridge between Kollaajärvi and the so-called unnamed pond. From here, Simo shot the soviet sniper, who had already shot several Finns. Company manager Juutilainen ordered Simon to do something about it. Simo went to the place where these contacts had happened and waited. Only as evening fell did the light of the setting sun reflect in the east, in the scope of the soviet sniper. Simo shot immediately and knew he had hit. Moved to Juutilainen's tent and announced 'that man won't bother you anymore'. The distance was 490 meters, with an open sight. Simo never used a scope. Even the army only had 16 samples of these from different factories. As spoils of war, we did get sniper rifles from the soviet army, which many then used, e.g. in Kollaa.

Juutilainen didn't believe in the results after the first week, so he ordered Simo to have an assistant. After a few days, after the helper confirmed Simon's spills, Juutilainen was forced to believe the numbers Simo

reported. Simo cleared let's say 20 cartridges in the morning and when he returned he reported 16 used, 14 hits.

In February, Simo received an honorary or gift rifle from the commander of the 12th Division, purchased with the funds of a Swedish businessman, at the division's headquarters in Loimola. Simo arrived the day before and the other officers changed Simo into a new coat and a snowsuit jacket, as journalists and photographers were coming. Simo tested the rifle he received after the event, but stated that it didn't hit anything and never used it afterwards. The weapon can currently be found in the collections of the Military Museum in Helsinki.

On February 18, 1940 JR 34 got to the rest shift in Loimola and frontline responsibility was taken over by JR 69 at Kollaajoki. Simon's information about the rest shift is conflicting or lacking, possibly at least part of the time he was on the front lines. However, Juutilainen organized a few promotion and reward ceremonies during the rest shift, in one of them Simo was promoted to sergeant. The date was not written down by Juutilainen, so the date of Simon's promotion is unknown, Pictures from the occasion are still on display.

## Personal history of fighters in Kollaa room

In this room, the Rautjärvi fighters of the Winter War in Kolla and their fates are presented. The men of Rautjärvi, who had already before the war, right after independence, worked in the Suojeluskunta went to the unit formation destination assigned to them after receiving the YH invitation. Their destination was Huuhanmäki barracks in Jaakkima near Sortavala. People from Rautjärvi were assigned to Infantry Regiment 34 (JR 34), its second battalion (II/JR 34) and most of the men to its sixth company (6./JR 34). Some of the men were placed in other companies of the battalion and in the column. At that time, Simpele was its own municipality and its men were mainly conscripted into the artillery, forming the body of Field Artillery Regiment 12 (KTR 12) from the third battery (3./KTR 12), some of the men transferred to the infantry, e.g. 6./JR 34.

On display is the personal list of Rautjärvi men who were sent to JR 34, which shows which basic unit (company, etc.) the man was sent to, and after that a few columns are reserved for different events. There are a total of about 390 names in the list.

Pictures of the men from Rautjärvi and Simpelee who fell in the Winter War have been compiled. The guests can thus get an idea of the impact of the winter war on the municipalities (Rautjärvi and Simpele were therefore different municipalities at that time). The effects are still visible in the area, after all, the relatives of the men who fell in the war still live here. Rautjärvi lost 104 men during the Winter War and Simple 12 men.

On display are small objects and original documents that local veterans have handed over to the museum right from its foundation.

Some local Kolla fighters are also presented with pictures and short stories. Let's mention Tauno Näränen, who fell in Kollaa, the letters and cards he sent home were received from his daughter Kaija Mattila, who also gave permission to display them the way we wanted. Now on display are copies of three letters, as well as their transcribed versions, along with his military ID card and photo. The letters have been the subject of interest of numerous guests, as they tell that the men were more concerned with the household's well-being than with life at the front. Of course, because of censorship, I couldn't say anything more about that.

The story of Aarne Luumi's wounding and the brothers in arms who came to save him is on display. Two rescuers perished in the fierce enemy fire, but Aarne was saved. The story of Ensio Jäppinen, who disappeared in the war, right at the end of it, is told with letters, photographs and other documents. Eino Rautio's memoirs written after the war are on display in this personal history room as well as in the battle history room. The text has been divided into suitable entities and they have been placed in suitable places in the surrounding materials. The texts are also numbered, so they can also be read in chronological order.

There are also some books related to the battles and fighters of Kollaa, which the museum thinks are highly recommended. Unfortunately, most of these have to be found in antiquarian books, since most of them were published shortly after the Winter War.

A small part of the material in the personal history room also deals with the founding phases of the museum, the founders are presented with a couple of photos and a text based on the original presentation by Ukko Könni, an important influential figure in the founding phase.

## Kollaa's battle history rooms upstairs

Battle history is on display in the two rooms upstairs. In the first room, the focus is on combat equipment, which is presented as objects, photos and texts. Both Finnish and Soviet weapons are on display, as well as other so-called war scrap, i.e. shell casings, shrapnel and soldiers' equipment. The purpose is to give guests an image of the weapons used as well as the differences in quality and quantity of the equipment of the Finnish and Soviet Union armies that prevailed during the war.

The war flag of the commander of the II/JR 34, Carl von Haartman, is also displayed here, which is placed in a display case. After all, the flag was in his command tent when the enemy's mortar (small 50mm 'Naku' mortars) concentration hit the area. The flag was damaged in that attack, and the commander himself was slightly wounded after getting a fragment in his 'sit', but no one fell in that attack. The ticket was delivered to the museum by Hannu Narsakka, who while collecting information about the Kollaa veterans from Rautjärvi went to Spain to interview von Haartman's daughter and got the ticket to be delivered to the museum.

The second room focuses more on the presentation of the war events themselves. The main part of presentation is a panorama built from several photographs, which depicts the terrain of Kollaa as seen from positions of the men of Rautjärvi towards the east. The photos from which the panorama is built were taken during the Continuation War, and it shows clearly how the enemy's artillery fire ground the terrain. For comparison, the most important photographs from the same area taken during the Winter War, in its early stages, are on display. Comparison with a large panorama speaks well of the harsh effect of war.

On the other wall, there is a large map of the Kollaa battle area, from which you can easily locate both the large panoramic image and the other photographs on display. All the images that we have been able to place on the map are numbered and the corresponding number can be found on this map.

The large photograph shows perhaps the most famous picture of the winter war, pastor and MP Rantamaa holding a Christmas Eve service for a small group of 6./JR 34 men. Behind Rantamaa stands the head of the company Juutilainen, the 'Terror of Morocco'. Only one of the men has been identified, Erkki Rautio is standing in the middle of the front row. The others might be men who came as reinforcements, possibly from Merikarvia, for example, but there is no certainty.

The battle of Ulismainen has been presented in text and the attack formation of the Finnish troops on March 6, 1940 has been placed on the map. The place where Simo Häyhä was wounded, or rather the area where he was wounded, is marked on this map.

## Exhibition hall

A reasonably impressive display of the equipment used in Kollaa has been collected in the hall. Among the donkeys used by the Finnish troops, let's mention the 81mm mortar and the Maksim machine gun with a tripod. The field artillery is represented by the 76RK27, but this exact model of the 76mm cannon was not in use at Kollaa, but the older 76LK13 was in use. However, this model is no longer available anywhere. The Soviet equipment is represented by a 45mm anti-tank gun, which we also got as spoils of war at Kolla, and a Maksim machine gun on a so-called Sokolev mount.

Both a Finnish fighter with a Suomi submachine gun and a Red Army soldier in a top suit with a piper and rifles are on display in their own showcase.

Lieutenant Aarne Juutilainen and Simo Häyhä (pictures SA-kuva)

