

LATVIA HISTORY: REPORT OF RESEARCHING FOR ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE IN AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES ABOUT NORWEGIAN SOLDIERS LOST AND FORGOTTEN DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN LATVIA

INTRODUCTION

During the Second World War Latvia was occupied by Soviet Union and Germany. When Germany launched a military attack on Soviet Union in 1941, Latvia was liberated from the occupation of Soviet Union. The German liberation of Latvia did not last long. Latvia was again occupied by the German armies- no freedom for the population of Latvia. The occupation of Latvia by Nazi- Germany was completed on July 10, 1941. The official policy of Nazi-Germany was not to make Latvia an independent state. The political situation for Latvia was critical. The main enemy was Soviet Union. Latvian politicians believed in a military victory for German like many other politicians in different European countries- even politicians in Norway. Latvians support to Nazi-Germany fight against Soviet Union was a political guarantee to reestablish an independent Latvia state. Approximately 180,000 Latvian soldiers were involved in German military forces during World War II believing that they all fought for the liberation of Latvia. Almost one third of the soldiers were killed in actions fighting the Russian soldiers. No independent Latvian forces were accepted by the Germans. Latvian men had no choice but to serve in military formations established and commanded by the Germans. Latvian men were drafted into the Latvian Legion of the Waffen-SS and other German forces.¹

LATVIA 1940: THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN LATVIA

In 1940 Latvia was not a democratic country. Even if a parliamentary democracy was introduced in 1920 after the Latvian War of Independence 1919-1920, all political parties and the parliament were dissolved in 1934. Prime Minister in 1934, Karlis Ulmanis, with support from the army and units of the national guard made a coup by proclaiming a state of war. Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis ruled the country for four years by decrees without a parliament. He introduced a personal paternalistic dictatorship. All political parties were outlawed. All newspapers owned by political parties or organizations were closed. Censorship of public information and publications were introduced. No free press anymore.

LATVIA 1940

Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis did not oppose the Soviet Union's occupation of Latvia. On June 17, 1940, Latvia was completely occupied by Soviet Union without any military resistance from the military forces of Latvia.

THE RESISTANCE IN LATVIA

¹ The Three Occupations of Latvia 1940 -1991. Soviet and Nazi take-overs and their consequences. The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. 2016

The Soviet Union conscripted soldiers from sections of independent Latvia's military units after having occupied the country. When Germany attacked Latvia many Latvians deserted the army of Soviet Union. The Nazi-Germany army did it too, conscripted young Latvians.

The majority of the Latvian people did not accept the forced imposition of Communist ideology. Resistance against the occupation power began immediately after the Red Army entered Latvia on June 17, 1940.

THE GOAL

Norway was also occupied by Nazi- Germany in 1940. Due to the fear of an occupation of Norway by Soviet Union, many young Norwegians wanted to participate in the fight against the communist regime of Joseph Stalin. They believed in a military victory for the Nazi-Germany . The fight for an independent Norway was not finished in 1940. The Norwegian Royal family and the Norwegian government elected by the people of Norway left the country to go on with the fight against the German occupation of Norway by supporting the fight of Great Britain.

The Norwegian soldiers had to fight together with Latvians in Latvia during the war. It was not an official policy to fight for Latvia as a state. No. The Norwegian soldiers were recruited to wage war against Soviet Union. Therefore the soldiers were brought to Latvia. The goal of my paper is to evaluate the importance of the Norwegians soldiers fighting against Soviet Union and at the same time fighting to support the Latvians .My aim is limited to study the time when the Norwegian soldiers fought within Latvia from about October 15,1944 to January 26, 1945.The main question is: How to evaluate the political and military situation for the future history of Latvia? The sources for my study are published books, newsreels, movies and radio recordings made about the Norwegian contribution to fight against the Russians included the fight for Latvia as a state.

A second question is: Are the Norwegian soldiers killed and buried in Latvia regarded as war heroes worth a war memorial site in Latvia? A war memorial is set up in Estonia where the Norwegians soldiers are included.

THE NAME OF THE NORWEGIAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN ACTION IN LATVIA

LATVIA DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR: NORWEGIAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN ACTION IN LATVIA.

The content of the list: Name, age and the site in Latvia where they were killed in action or buried.

Harry Andreas Olsen. Age 20. Priekule, Rudolf Oskar Olsen.Age 23.Riga, Gunnar Kjell Andersen. Age 21. Vecvagare, Kåre Torleif Bakken.Age 28.Kekava forest south of Riga, Arne Vilhelm Becker.Age 22. Riga, Anton Jenssen Berg.Age 25. Vecvagare, Roald Berntsen.Age 19. Vecvagare, Olav Herstad Christiansen.Age 19. Riga, Magnus Dale.Age 23. Vecvagare(buried at Saldus), Knut Erichsen.Age 27. Stanaskrogs(buried at Bunkas), Erling Hjalmar Eriksen.Age 34. Vecvagare, Halvard Espen.Age 20. Mizci (buried at Saldus), Sverre Følstad.Age 23. Paplaken (buried at Heldenfriedhof Nordland Izriede), John Gahrmaker.Age 27.Vilcini (buried in Riga), Thomas Hersleb Gurholt.Age 22. Asenberg (buried in Riga), Arild Haugen.Age 19. Riga, Edvard Julius Hermansen.Age 37. Zarini, Ørnulf Hontvedt.Age 19. Izriede, Povel Huitfeldt.Age 46. Priekule (buried at Saldus), Kristian Håkonsen.Age 21. Paplaken(

buried at Robezjnieki), Kirill Karpow.Age 18. Priekule, Ulf Otto Killingmo.Age 26. Kurili, Arne Holger Krogstad. Age 20. Kurland, Osvald Paulin Langeland.Age 21. Liepaja, Knut Larm.Age 29. Vilcini (buried in Riga), Hjalmar Wilhelm Larsen.Age 19. Purmsati, Rolf Singdahl Larsen.Age 33. Lodini, Harris Lund.Age 18. Vecvagare, Harry Lunde.Age 29. Kurland, John Lyngstad.Age 24. Vecvagare (buried at Robezjnieki), Thorvald Martinsen.Age 20. Vecvagare, Nils Meland. Age 30. Kurili, Harald Georg Holter Mokastet.Age 25. Ozoli, Leif Nilsen.Age 20. Vecvagare, Eugen Viktor Olsen.Age 30. Vecnegari, Harry Andreas Osnes.Age 20. Indriki, Peter Thomas Sverre Sandborg.Age 37.Baldone/ Riga, Frank Osvald Sevaldsen.Age 25. Vecnegari(buried on an island in a river close to Priekule), Eivind Syversen.Age 26. Vecnegari (buried on an island in a river close to Priekule), Sven Sørensen.Age 18. Kurland (buried at Saldus), Kjell Tobro.Age 24. Vecvagare, Stefanus Margido Trusen.Age 20. Priekule, Lars Værland.Age 19. Liepaja, Rolf Normann Westlie.Age 23. Kurland, Peder Wetteland.Age 25. Vecnegari, Johan Gustav Jæger.Age 29. Pilpuki, Rudolf Oskar Olsen.Age 23. Riga, Rolf Stark Sanne.Age 20.Liepaja (buried at Saldus), Johannes Burckenmejer.Age 44. Talsi, Bjørn Herwart Endemann.Age 25.Kurland.²

THE SITES IN LATVIA WHERE NORWEGIANS FOUGHT, DIED AND WERE BURIED

Priekule, Riga, Vecvagare, Saldus, Bunkas, Paplaken, Vilcini, Kurland, Liepaja, Purmsati, Robezjnieke, Ozoli, Vecnegari, Indriki, Pilpuki ,Talsi, Lodini, Kurili, Baldone,Ventspils, Dobeles,Vainude, and Asenberg.

The final number of soldiers killed in actions within Latvia depends on the sources used. With reference to the book written by Harry A. Ellingsen: Regiment Norge. Historien om en frontkjemperhet.2011., the list of missing Norwegians contains the following numbers:

38 soldiers killed, 69 soldiers were reported wounded, 4 soldiers were reported as prisoners of war by Russians and 2 soldiers deserted to the Russians. The number of officers killed in action was 6.

REGIMENT NORGE

Regiment Norge was set up as a part of III. SS- Panzerkorps, on March 30, 1943. "11.SS- Freiwilligen – Panzergrenadier-Division Nordland" was called Div. Nordland. Regiment Norge was an infantry regiment within Div. Nordland: "SS-Panzer- Grenadier-Regiment 23 Norge" that was named Regiment Norge.

The number of Norwegian soldiers who were conscripted to Regiment Norge were about 621.The young boys joined the regiment voluntary. The main reasons for joining the regiment were not to take part in a fight to liberate Latvia from Soviet Union but to fight the regime of Soviet Union. They all believed that Nazi-Germany will win the war- like many other professional political observers in many countries did too.

How was the quality of the Latvian soldiers evaluated by the Norwegian Front fighters? A public statement about the issue has been made by the Norwegian Front fighter Bjarne Dramstad in the

² Veum,Eirik i samarbeid med Geir Brenden:De som falt. Nordmenn drept i tysk krigstjeneste.Vega forlag.Nrk Aktivum 2010.

book: "Hitler's Vikings- The History of the Scandinavian Waffen-SS: The Legions, The SS Wiking and the SS Nordland , page 160". Bjarne Dramstad was of the opinion that the Latvian soldiers fought hard because they all hated the Russians. The soldiers were very motivated for the battles. The main motive was hatred towards the Russian soldiers and the Russian occupation of Latvia.

THE BATTLES OF KURLAND

Regiment Norge took part in the battles of Kurland. Six battles took place between October 27, 1944 to March 28, 1945. The Norwegian soldiers had a hard time fighting the first and the third battle of Kurland lasted from October 27, 1944 to November 7, 1944 and on the third battle from December 21, 1944 to December 31, 1944.³

Regiment Norge were retreating from the battlefields fighting the Russian soldiers. The Norwegians arrived in Latvia/Kurland on October 15, 1944 and left Kurland on January 26, 1945. The soldiers were brought to the seaside city, Liepaja. Then they were brought by ship to Stettin.

The German army together with allied forces went on fighting until an official retreat was decided. This means that the German army did not suffer a final military defeat fighting the battle of Kurland. The German officers were of the opinion that the fighting was in vain. The soldiers should have been moved to sites closer to Germany at an earlier stage.

According to the report of casualties, about 2 132 soldiers were killed or wounded during the six battles of Kurland.

A SELECTED LIST OF SOME NORWEGIAN OFFICERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE FIGHTING IN LATVIA

"...Treason: Treachery to one's king and country; an attempt to overthrow the government of one's country by illegal means or to help the enemies of one's country in time of war (Source: The Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English)..."

Anton Jenssen Berg

Born August 16, 1916. He came from the City of Bodø. On October 27, 1944 he was killed during the fighting close to Vecvagari. Anton Jenssen Berg was chairing a direct attack on the Russian soldiers when he was killed. No information of where he was buried in Latvia.

Peter Thomas Sandborg

Born September 1, 1907. He lived in the City of Ålesund. He lost his life in the fighting close to the City of Baldone. He was buried in Riga.

Tor Svenneby

Born March 6, 1917. He came from Grue. He took part in the fighting in Kurland. Later on he was killed in Pommern.

³ Ellingsen A. Harry: Regiment Norge. Historien om en frontkjemperenhet. Pax forlag, Oslo 2011. Side 99-120.

Bjarne Sveen

Born February 16, 1921. He was living in Rendalen close to the City of Gjøvik. During the battle in Kurland, Vecvagari, he was wounded. He was reported killed in Choszczno in Poland.

Asbjørn Jager Wiik

Born June 20, 1920. He was living in Børsta. He survived the fighting in Kurland but he died later on during the final battle of Berlin in 1945.

Inge Håkon Windingstad

Born May 25, 1924. The City of Fredrikstad was his home town. He took part in the fighting in Kurland. After the war he was sentenced by the court for three years and six months for treason.

(Treason: An attempt to overthrow the Government of Norway by illegal means or to help the enemies of Norway in time of war)

Ralph Hansen

Born April 5, 1925. Oslo was reported as his home town. He was taking part in the fighting at Mitau where he had to get assistance at the hospital.

After the war he was sentenced by the court for two years for treason.

Harald Røer

Born March 2, 1923. His home town was the City of Oslo.

Few information about him has been published but he was reported having fought in Kurland.

Sverre Linde

Born December 12, 1918. He was living in Fåberg. After having fought in Kurland, he deserted to the Russians. After the war he was sentenced to one year and eight months in prison for treason.

Knut Erichsen

Born August 21, 1917. He was living in Skjeberg. Killed in action in Kurland and buried in Bunka situated about nine km from Preekulen.

Bjarne Arnt Olsen

Born September 22, 1920. His home town was the City of Bodø. On October 23, 1944, SS-Untersturmführer Bjarne Arnt Olsen was wounded at Vecvagari. In 1946, he was sentenced for treason.

Odd Seljelid

Born February 23, 1921. His home town was Mo I Rana. On January 1, 1945 he was wounded during the fighting in Kurland. After the war he was sentenced to prison for four years and six months for treason.

Håkon Sundby

Born February 5, 1923. His home town was the City of Oslo. On August 9, 1944, SS-Untersturmfuhrer Håkon Sundby was reported killed in action at Talsen .

Christian Nikolai Lassen Sundlo

Born January 6, 1919. He was living at Mosjøen. After having taking part in the battles of Kurland he was captured by the Russians.

John Peter Balstad

Born September 9, 1924. He was living at Koppang. During the fighting close to Baldone he became famous for having destroyed two Russian tanks. After the war, he was sentenced to prison for two years and six months for treason.

Njaal Bjørkelid

Born March 3, 1924. He was living in Marnardal. He took part in the battles of Kurland. Reported killed in action in 1945 and he was buried in Poland in the City of Szczecin.

Hallvard Svelle

Born April 14, 1918. He took part in the fighting n Kurland. He was sentenced to prison for two years for treason.

Reidar Riise

Born February 20, 1920. Oslo was his home town. On October 27, 1944 he was reported wounded during the fighting in Kurland. After the war, he was sentenced for treason.

Richard Ole Nils Børesen

Born January 1, 1922, His home town was the City of Halden. He fought in Kurland. On October 12, 1947, he was sentenced to prison for seven years and six months for treason.

Thomas Hersleb Gorholt

Born January 3, 1922. He was living in Tuddal. He was reported killed at Asenberg on September 23, 1944. Buried in Riga.

Ole Andreas Sommerhaug

Born August 14, 1923. His home town was the City of Narvik. He was wounded during the fight in Kurland on October 16, 1944. He lost one leg. He was sentenced to prison for seven years for treason.

Olav Wendelboe Jøntvedt

Born March 27, 1921. He was living in Brevik. He was reported wounded during the fighting in Kurland on February 2, 1945. He joined the French Foreign Legion after the war.

Alf Seeberg

Born November 11, 1895. He was living in Holla/Telemark. He was reported having taken part in the fighting in Kurland. If he was sentenced for treason, there was no information reported?⁴

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION HAS TO BE ASKED CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF NORWEGIAN SOLDIERES FIGHTING IN LATVIA: ANY PUBLIC INFORMATION GIVEN TO PEOPLE IN NORWAY ABOUT THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION IN LATVIA?

When I was searching for archival footage in the Norwegian newsreels about Latvia, I found footage dealing with an official meeting in Oslo. The archival footage was presented in 1944. The meeting took place in Klingenberg Cinema in Oslo. The Norwegian newspaper " Morgenposten" published a report of the meeting April 11, 1944. Alfred Roja who was President of the trade union of Latvia and Dr. Wiswald Sanders who was a former priest in the seaside city of Libau(German), Liepaja , took part in the meeting. Speeches were given contenting alarming information about the brutal Russian occupation of Latvia. No information about the German occupation was given, but negative information about how Russians treated the Jewish population in Latvia.

⁴ Brenden,Geir, Tommy Natedal,Knut Flovik Thoresen: Norske offiserer i WAFFEN –SS. Forlaget Historie og Kultur. Oslo.2013.

full ikke er så helt ringe har bare hatt vantro skuldertrekninger tilovers for disse alvor- og maningsord. Særlig har dette blitt tilfelle etter at bolsjevikene ble anglo-amerikanernes allierte. Da ble man jo simpelthen programforpliktet til å godta de røde som fullverdige demokrater.

Alle den senere tids avvisninger av bolsjevismens sanne vesen, blir av disse mennesker møtt med ett, det er bare propaganda, hvilket i deres anglo-amerikanske terminologi vil si det samme som - løgn.

Bolsjevikene har ikke gjort oss noen ondts, sier de. «Vi kan ikke tro det ders påstår. - Bolsjevikene har da aldri forgrepet seg på Norge».

Men Finland, Randstad.



Fra det store møtet i Klingenberg kino i går kveld.

Hva vi kan vente i Norge hvis bolsjevismen skulde seire.

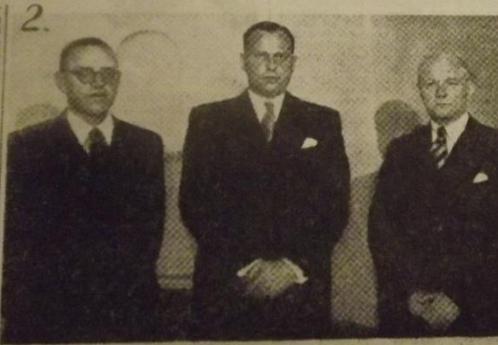
Alfred Roja og dr. Wiswald Sanders forteller fra den sovjet-russiske besettelse av Latvia.

Presidenten i Latvias faglige landsorganisasjon, Alfred Roja, og den tidligere prost i Libau, dr. Wiswald Sanders, var i går til stede ved en uttalelse i Presseklubben. Blant de tilstedeværende merket en søg minister Fuglesang og konsul Steen. Avstiltingsleder P. H. Møse fra Reichskommissariatet, Pressesabte-lung, og representanter for Oslo-pressen og Kulturdepartementet.

Redaktør Doery Smith ønsket som Presseklubbenes formann velkommen, og minister Fuglesang introduserte de latviske gjester. Så grep dr. Sanders ordet.

Jeg vil ikke holde noe foredrag om bolsjevisk teori, men om hva bolsjevismen er i praksis, slik vi i Latvia lærte den å kjenne under den sovjetrussiske besettelse. Innledet dr. Sanders sitt foredrag.

Vi hadde jo tidligere stiftet økjen-skapskyp med bolsjevismen. Etter forrige verdenskrig fikk den nye lære, som hadde seiret i Russland, også innpass hos oss. Alt ble nasjonalisert, de mennesker som ikke passet likvidert og vi levte under umenneskelige forhold. Da vi barst om traktaten mellom Latvia regjering og Sovjet tok vi det nok så rolig. En kide-



Fra sammenkomsten i Presseklubben i går. Fra venstre: Presidenten i Latvias faglige landsorganisasjon Roja, minister Fuglesang og dr. Wiswald Sanders.

viste seg at det ble ikke hevet en finger for å hjelpe oss, og jeg tar ikke minnen for full når jeg sier at England solgte oss til bolsjevikene.

— Hvordan var det med jødene i Latvia?

— Jødene hadde det bra hos oss før den sovjetrussiske besettelse. De hadde større stillinger og var ikke utelukket fra noe embete. Da Sovjet kom, trådte de med en gang i forgrunnen. De meldte seg frivillig til Tsjekkaen og virket som spioner. Andre ble hevet opp i landets ledende stillinger, og det er bevis at det var 2 jøder som kleetet ut alle de bestalkte torturstrumensens letterne ble pluk med.

— Sviktet matforsyningene i Latvia under besettelsen?

— Vi merket fort en varskningsbøl men Latvia er et rikt agrarland, så det skulde meget til for å få oss til å sulte. Daglig kom det lange tog fra Sovjet, og på hver jernbanevogn stod det plakater: «Mat til den sultende lettiske befolkning». Faktum er at samtlige vogner var tomme, men når de gjørte tilbake, var de lastet med alle slags varer. Slik foregikk «matforsynngen» fra Sovjet.

— Er det noe spesielt De har på

LESNES AVIS

far v om Det største sjø-slag i historien. Flysveit to skib møre.



Henvendelse NØKK-Gruppe, Tors, Blindern Studentehjem, Barakke 1, vnr 9.

Tirsdag 11. april 1944

Abonnement Kfr 2.75 pr måned

Oslo Nyheds- og Avertissements-Blad

To rystende vitnesbyrd om to redselens år.

1. President Roja om sovjetrussernes stadig økende terror i Latvia, de „hjemmelige“ valg og umenneskelige bortførelser.

Dr. Sanders: Gud gi at Europas folk blir klar over at det ikke finnes større oppgave enn å beseire bolsjevismen.

Nasjonalsinnede og klartseende nordmenn har i en årrekke advart mot det bolsjeviske system som fra Sovjet-Samveldet forsøkes bredt ut over hele verden, også over vårt land. Men, en viss kategori nordmenn, som dessverre i antall ikke er så helt ringe har bare hatt vantro skuldertrekninger tilovers for disse alvor- og maningsord. Særlig har dette blitt tilfelle etter at bolsjevikene ble anglo-amerikanernes allierte. Da ble man jo simpelthen programforpliktet til å godta de røde som fullverdige demokrater.

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Kransnedleg på Eke

I anledning for Nor telse fant i april sted høytideligh kirkegårds berg. Etter sert de op linger fry marinen i Haber i Generale kenhorst ved mir de faine en kran til de på «Al myrde den. oberst foran fra til i min falm

Nasjon overt

The brutal execution of Jews that took place in Liepajas in 1941 was not on the information agenda of Alfred Roja and Dr. Wiswald Sanders. The execution of the Jews in Liepajas was attended by Heinrich Himmler.



The meeting is a confirmation that information about the threat of the Soviet Union and the brutal policy of the Russians were given to the soldiers who wanted to fight the Communist regime in Latvia and Soviet Union.

SOURCES:

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ABOUT RESEARCH AFTER ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE FROM WWII EVENTS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF LATVIA IN AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES, MOVIES, DOCUMENTARIES, OFFICIAL REPORTS AND SOUND RECORDINGS

I must admit that I took it for granted that worldwide television series and documentaries dealing with The Second World War contented information and archival footage about the historical events of the state of Latvia. I was wrong. After having viewed the videos published by Thames Video Collection about the WWII in 1980, I was surprised not to find any archival footage dealing with the occupation of Latvia of Soviet Union and the occupation of Latvia made by Nazi Germany and later on the second occupation of Latvia by Soviet Union. The events were mentioned by the reporter only.

When I viewed the videos of the international documentary : “ The Century of Warfare “, 1994, I expected to find archival footage dealing with the history of Latvia- but again my searching was in vain. No archival footage used - only some information given by the reporter.

The BBC documentary: “ WORLD WAR II BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. STALIN, THE NAZIS AND THE WEST”, was released in 2008. Playtime: Eight hours. No information about the history of Latvia was given. The documentary was made by Laurence Rees.

The NAZIS-A WARNING FROM HISTORY : A five hours documentary was viewed searching after information about Latvia and WWII. The result was negative. No archival footage available dealing with Norwegian soldiers, Latvia and WWII. The documentary was produced by Laurence Rees in 2007.

The BBC documentary : “ WAFFEN SS-GLADIATORS OF WWII”, which was released in 2001 contented no archival footage of the events of Latvia- only information given by the reporter.

SVT: KRIGSÅREN 1939-45.GULDKORN FRÅN 1939-45.

A selection of Swedish newsreels from 1939 to 1946 has been made available for public use. I approached the newsreels with a positive attitude hoping to find archival footage dealing with Latvia. The result was negative. No films of Latvia were presented. The documentary was made in 1995 by Sveriges Television AB. The editor was Jan Bergman.

The presentation of the newsreels preserved by SVT was made by Jan Bergman. The films were released in 2016 as DVD/video contenting three DVDS. The presentation was made in Swedish.

BUNDESARCHIV- KOBLENZ 1984

Because I was working with the search for archival footage for a documentary some years ago, I was forwarded copies of the catalogue from the archive.

Wochenschauen und Dokumentarfilme 1895- 1950 in Bundesarchiv- Film archiv.

The result of study of the catalogue was positive. I found archival footage dealing with Latvia during the WWII.

DEUTSCHE WOCHENSCHAU

-16.4.1941: Deutscher Einmarsch in Riga

-11.6.1942: Rosenberg in Riga

-10.7.1941: Angriff auf die Sowjetunionen-deutscher Vormarsch- Riga

-DW 743, 50, 1944: Ostfront: Kurland

-DW 743, 50, 1944: Nachschub für die Kurlandfront

-DW 744, 51, 1944: Ostfront: Abwehrkämpfe in Kurland – und auf den Balken

-DW 745 ,52, 1944: Abwehrfront in Kurland

-DW 746, 1, 1945: Abwehrkampfe in Kurland

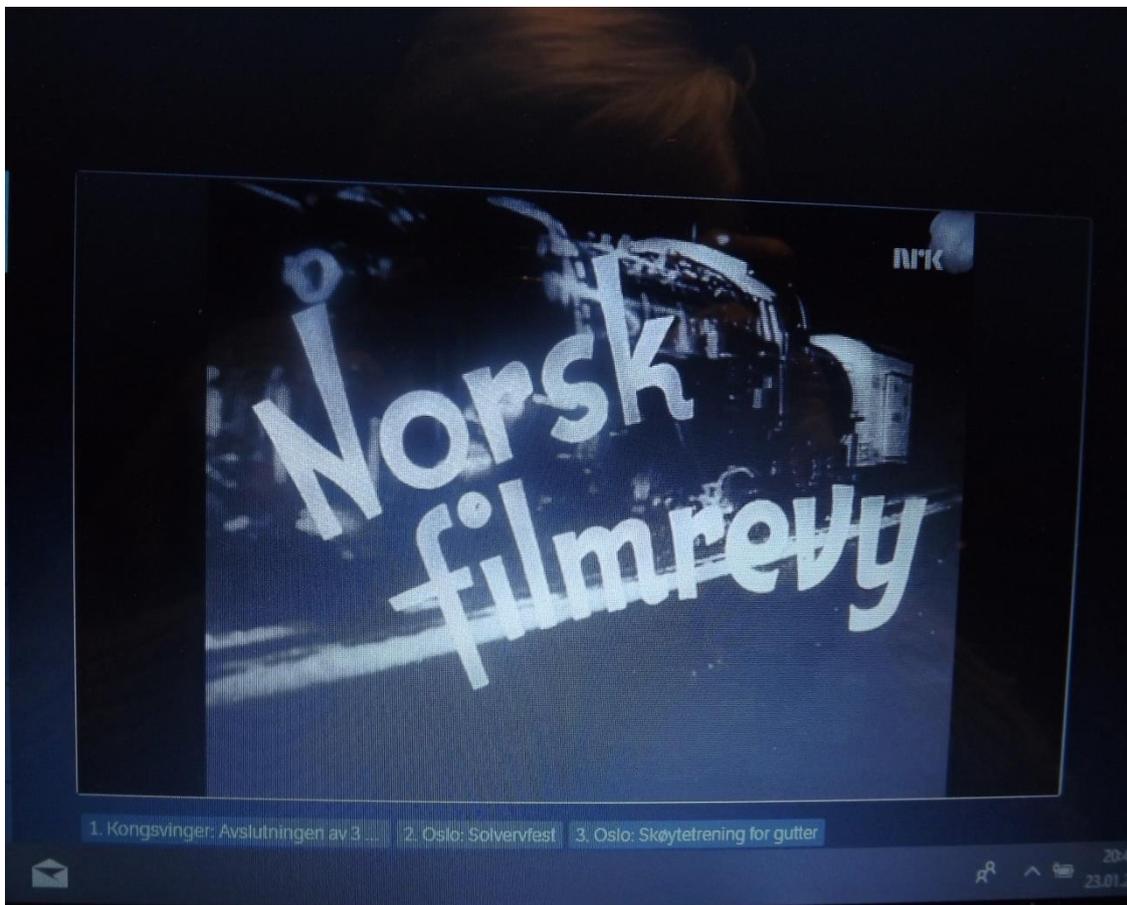
-DW 748, 3, 1945: Abwehrkampe : Kurland

-DW 754, 9, 1945: Ostfront: Abwehrkampe in Kurland

AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES – RESEARCH REPORT

THE RESULT OF SEARCHING AFTER ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE FROM NORWEGIAN NEWSREELS FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND DOCUMENTARIES IN AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES

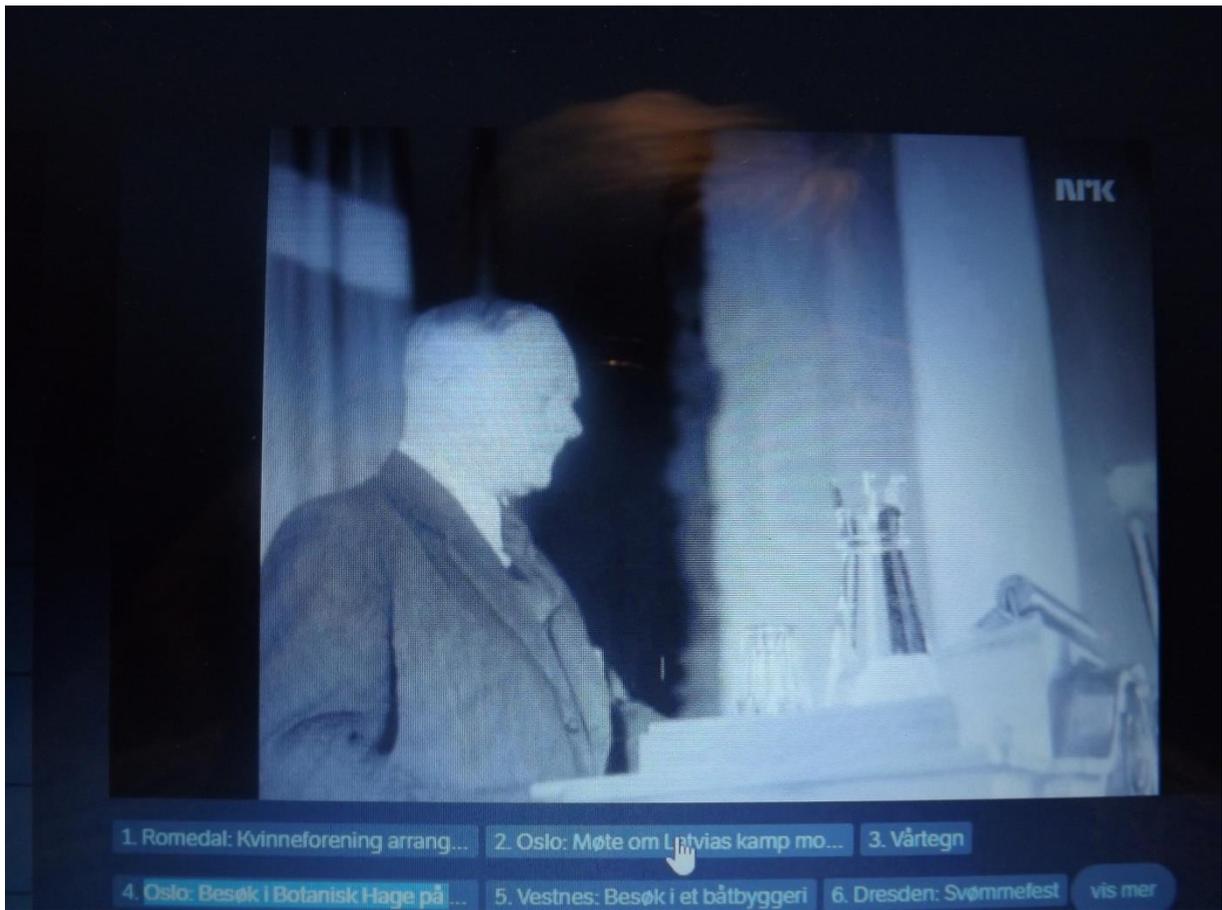
FILMAVISEN, NORSK FILMREVVY and UKEREVYEN are the official titles of the German controlled public newsreels released to the Norwegian people during the Second World War. The newsreels presented from 1941 to 1945 were German propaganda films made by the occupation power of Norway. The production was made by Norsk Film A/S.



The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) has made the collection of newsreels from the Second World War accessible for public use. The newsreels were given to Nrk in 1976. The viewing of the films can be done in your home. I have viewed all the preserved films from 1941 to 1945. I did not find many shots dealing with Latvia. But the fighting between Russian soldiers and German soldiers in Kurland/Latvia are presented but no Norwegian or Latvian soldiers are mentioned in the

films. Latvian soldiers are presented in a film in 1944. The soldiers are training in handling anti-aircraft guns. Besides the official meeting in Oslo that has been mentioned above.





HITLER – A CAREER: DOCUMENTARY FILM

The documentary: “HITLER-A CAREER” was released in 1977. Archival footage of the execution of Jews in the seaside city Liepajas in 1941 has been used in the documentary aiming at making a biography of Adolf Hitler but without any further information about when and where the killing of Jews took place. At the end of the war about 1,400,000 of the 2,000,000 prewar inhabitants of Latvia had left the country. Archival footage dealing with refugees from Kurland at the end of the war has been used in this documentary. About 30,000 Latvian soldiers were prisoners of war of Allies in Western Europe.



Flyktninger fra Kurland i Latvia.



I øst var fronten kommet
over den tyske grensen.

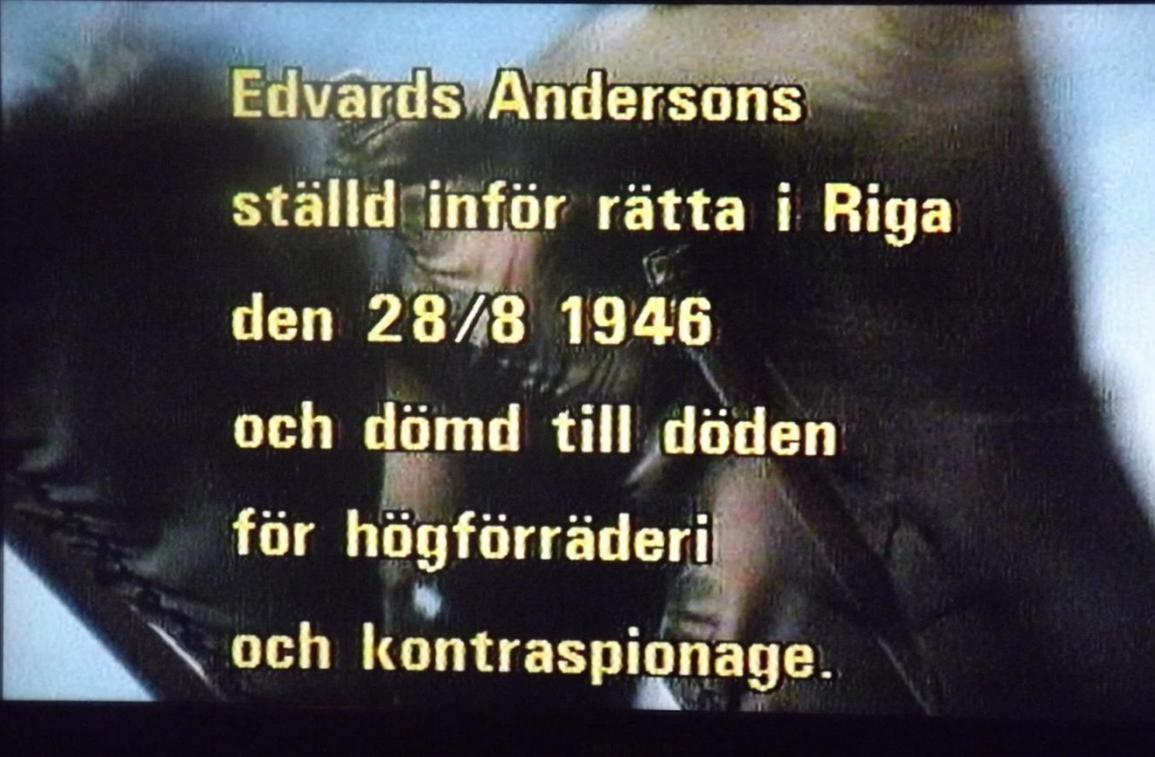
SISTA BÅTEN TILL JURKALINE (Eng.title: The last boat to Jurkaline)

In 1991 Sveriges Television AB, 1. Dokumentar , produced and transmitted a very interesting television programme with the Swedish title: “ Siste båten till Jurkaline “ (Eng.Title: The last boat to Jurkaline). The programme is dealing with the close contact between secret service of Sweden and resistance groups in Latvia during the Second World War. Refugees from Latvia were brought by small boats from Latvia to Gotland/Sweden. Swedish secret agents were set ashore in Latvia by Swedish Secret Service to give military and political information to the Secret service in Sweden. After the war, the activities continued in secret. One person lost his lived due to his espionage work after the war: Edvards Anderson was captured by Soviet Secret Police (The KGB). He was sentenced to death on August 28, 1946 for treason and espionage supported by Swedish Secret Intelligence Service. No Norwegian refugees or soldiers are mentioned in the programme or by Latvians who were interviewed about the wartime activities- a risky business.

The National Archives of Latvia has released in late 2018 a full alphabetical index of some 10,000 people recruited as agents – as informers by Soviet Secret Police (The KGB). The list of soldiers who were killed and buried in Latvia as “German soldiers “ contents of about 1700 names . The Norwegian soldiers who fought for Germany might be on the list?



The television programme used archival footage about the German invasion of Latvia. Many of the events dealt with in the programme have been presented by making use of professional actors and actresses. The story was written by Hans Villius. The editor of the programme was Olle Hager.



**Edvards Andersons
ställd inför rätta i Riga
den 28/8 1946
och dömd till döden
för högförräderi
och kontraspionage.**





*Längs denna gata flydde sovjetarmén
i panik.*





In June 22, 1941, Nazi-Germany invaded Soviet Union. As seen on the above photo, the German soldiers were greeted as friends arriving to liberate Latvia from the brutal suppression of Soviet Union. Later on Norwegian soldiers took part in the military and political battles against Soviet Union. Many of the soldiers were killed in Latvia fighting against the occupation of Latvia but supporting the Nazi- Germany occupation of the country. But did they all fight for an independence of Latvia?

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF LATVIA

RIGA

On June 18, 2019 I paid a visit to National Archives of Latvia. The reason for my research visit to the archives situated in Riga was an attempt to search for information about Norwegian soldiers who fought, died and were buried on unknown sites in Latvia. Assisted by Deputy Director of National Archives of Latvia, Gatis Karlsons, I had to read many books contenting lists of soldiers who died during the fight for Latvia during the Second World War. The research was concentrated on reports from 1940 and October 1944 to January 1945. Information wanted was not yet digitalized. The work had to be done in the old way: Viewing papers, books and written documents which were stored in the archive not situated in the center of Riga. The archive was not easy to find because no sign was set up for foreign visitors. I had to view papers about 1.700 names of soldiers from different countries who lost their lives during the hard fighting against the Russian soldiers. Each book which I had to study contented a list of those who had studied the list. I had to put my name on the list too. The staff of the archive made splendid work assisting me to understand the lists. Even if I did not find any names of Norwegian soldiers, I got new information about what to do and how to get more

information about my work.



VALKA'S BRETHREN CEMETRY

Valka's Brethren Cemetery in Latvia was built as a monument for all who were killed during the battles of Latvia – all included: The liberator, the occupier and the invader of Latvia. Norwegian soldiers killed in Latvia must also be included in the monument set up in the cemetery?

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL- MOVIES AND STATEMENTS

The British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill was known to make changes in his political opinions dealing with matters of international interests. But in 1941 he made statements about the borders of Soviet Union: "...the frontiers of Soviet Union were acquired by acts of aggression in shameful collusion with Hitler. The transfer of the peoples of the Baltic States to Soviet Russia against their will would be contrary to all the principles for which we are fighting this war and would dishonor our cause. There must be no mistake about the opinion of any British Government of which I am the head, namely, that it adheres to those principles of freedom and democracy set forth in the Atlantic Charter...". So far, statement made by Winston S. Churchill in December 1941.

RICHARD LAMB: CHURCHILL AS WAR LEADER –RIGHT OR WRONG? 1991.

QUOTATIONS from the book:

"... Churchill had wanted to insist that Stalin restored these states' independence after the war, and had this in mind when he drafted the Atlantic Charter...".

"... In the event the States of the Baltic States never appeared on an agenda at Potsdam, and neither Eden nor Churchill raised it ...".

"... Successive Labour and Conservative Governments after the war treated the states as " de facto" but not " de jure" part of the Soviet Union and were still doing so at the time of the dramatic declaration of Lithuania's independence in 1990...".

MOVIES : WINSTON S. CHURCHILL ,LATVIA AND WWII

This is a list of movies evaluated dealing with WWII where Winston S. Churchill played a dominated part.

-DARKEST HOUR. 2017

-CHURCHILL. 2017

-WORLD WAR II: WHEN LIONS ROADED. 1994

-WINSTON CHURCHILL- THE WILDERNESS YEARS. 1981

LATVIAN LEGION

INTRODUCTION

The review is a late study of the book which was published for the first time about 33 years ago. The second edition was published about 13 years ago. What is the main reason for me to wake up the interest for the report about the Latvian Legion in year 2019, you may ask?

“ ...to a great part of the Western World it is still incomprehensible why the Baltic people- in this particular case- actively participated with the German Army in the Second World War ...”

Quotation from the introduction of “ Latvian Legion” written by Arthur Silgailis the author of the book. The question can be asked in year 2019 too about the reasons for young Norwegian soldiers who fought and died for the freedom of Latvia and for the support of Nazi-Germany?

THE GOAL OF THE RESEARCH

I asked myself some critical questions about why I should read the book at all. Before I made an attempt reading the book, I contacted a former Norwegian officer who is making a living publishing new books about the Second World War, about Norwegian soldiers who join the French Foreign Legion and who had worked with Latvian soldiers: The Norwegian historian Knut Flovik Thoresen. Then I read the book searching for information about Norwegian soldiers who fought, died and were buried in Latvia during the Second World War. While reading the book I repeated my private questions again and again not wanting to forget the main reason for my study: The story of those young Norwegian boys who lost their lives in Latvia

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

-Did the Latvian soldiers believe in the information given them that they fought for the freedom of Latvia?

-Did those who were in charge of the Latvian Legion – the officers- believe in the goal of the fight making Latvia a free country?

-What about the Self- Administration of Latvia? Did they all fight for the independent state of Latvia?

-What was the main policy of Nazi-Germany towards the wish, the hope and the dream of the Latvian people to live in an independent state ?

-What about those Norwegian soldiers who fought, died and were buried in Latvia?

WE BELIEVED IN THE FIGHT FOR THE FREEDOM OF LATVIA

The author of book, Arthur Silgailis, has no doubt concerning the reasons for young Latvian joining the Legion: The majority of the boys believed in the fight making Latvia free from Russian suppression. “...infantry leader Staf. Lobe made an ardent appeal to the Latvians to join the Legion for the defense of their homeland. There was a great response to his appeal. With volunteers and previous recruits, the VI SS-Corps set up a training camp at Zoseni and named it “ Feld Rekruten Depot (Field Recruits Depot). Staf. Lobe was placed in charge of the depot...” . So far, information given at pages 108-109, by the author.

THE OCCUPATIONS OF LATVIA

Latvia was occupied by Soviet Union on June 17, 1940. Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 and occupied Latvia. The country was re-occupied by the Soviet Union. On August 21, 1991, Latvia regained independence. The result of the Second World War and the occupations of Latvia was a tragedy for the people of Latvia. The country lost about one third of its population. The holocaust, the actions of political murders, the inhuman conditions in the Gulag and in Nazi concentration camps reduced the number of Latvian people. Many left Latvia at the end of the war fearing the brutal regime of Joseph Stalin.

BETRAYED BY THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF LATVIA, BETRAYED BY THE SOVIET UNION, BETRAYED BY NAZI GERMANY AND ABOVE ALL: BETRAYED BY THE WESTERN COUNTRIES

The people of Latvia suffered. Betrayed by all countries. The choice was not easy for the population. Why did so many young Latvians joined the German Army fighting and supporting the brutal Nazi regime of Germany and the brutal occupation of Latvia? The main enemy was the Soviet Union. The author who had joined the Latvian Legion, gives an honest report of the fight. The Latvian officers knew that the German generals and politicians misused the young Latvian soldiers making them all believe in the story of a free Latvia. The official policy of Germany was not to establish independent states within the German empire. The Norwegian soldiers were told the same story: Fighting for Norway against the Soviet Union would make Norway an independent state but ruled by Germany.

The members of the Latvian Self-Administration made attempts to protect the country from being ruled by the German political and military leaders of Latvia. But the result was negative.

The young Latvian boys joined the German Army hoping to prevent the second Russian occupation of Latvia. The fight and suffering were in vain. The political choice was a risky business. Some supported the Russian occupation, some supported the German occupation and some set up an independent army fighting them all. They all lost the fight. About 110- 115,000 Latvian soldiers were involved in German military forces during the Second World War. To set up an independent Latvian army was forbidden by the Germans.

When the Russian soldiers invaded Latvia for the second time, many Latvians fled the country. Small Latvian societies were set up around the world after the war. Some Latvians went on fighting in the forest of Latvia hoping for a support by the Western countries. In vain. No support was given. The Latvian legionnaires who did not surrender to the Red Army continued to fight the Communists as guerrillas. According to the author, about 4,500 men went on fighting in the beginning. The guerrilla groups continued the fight at least to 1948.

THE NORWEGIAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN LATVIA

REPORT FROM GEIR BRENDEN

What about those Norwegian soldiers who fought together with Latvians making an attempt to stop the Russian occupation for the second time? Forgotten by all in Norway and in Latvia? 38 soldiers are reported killed in action, 69 soldiers were wounded, 4 soldiers are reported as prisoners of war by Russians and 2 soldiers deserted to the Russians. The number of officers killed in action was 6. In May 2019 a group of people from Norway chaired by Geir Brenden went to Latvia searching for the

forgotten soldiers who are buried in different cities of Latvia. No Norwegian soldiers are mentioned in the story of the Latvian Legion.

Geir Brenden has collected photos of Norwegian Front Fighters for many years. He has made research about the stories of the Norwegian Front Fighters who fought, were killed and buried in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania during the Second World War. Geir Brenden has been consulted by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) in connection with documentaries about the Second World War. Photos collected by Geir Brenden have been published in many books dealing with Norwegian Front Fighters.⁵

GEIR BRENDEN - LAST REPORT FROM HIS RESEARCH IN LATVIA

In order to update the research report of Geir Brenden dealing with lost Norwegian soldiers in Latvia I arranged a meeting with him in Oslo on August 9, 2019. Geir Brenden is living in the City of Gjøvik. We evaluated the list of missing persons again to update the information about the persons. The result of his work so far did not make any change of the list. No persons were found during his last stay in Latvia searching for Norwegian soldiers. He is going to make new research in audiovisual archives in Germany. The Norwegian families who lost a member in Latvia were informed about the event by the German army or by the Norwegian Nazi-party in Norway. Geir Brenden has digitized his photo and documents archives paid mainly by himself. No access to his archives without a formal permission granted by himself. Anyway, historians and those who are working with Second World War issues have been granted permission to use his archives. He has no plans in giving his private collections to the National Archive of Norway. During his stay in Latvia searching for lost soldiers he was treated very nice by people in Latvia. Geir Brenden told me that few photos were taken during the fighting in Latvia. No time for private photos of the Norwegian soldiers during the fighting due to lack of time. It was more important to survive than to take photos or movies during the hard fighting.

Geir Brenden (b.1971) has no military or academic education. He has done research about the life of the Norwegian Front Fighters for years as a private business only. He is of the opinion that the history of Norway of the Second World War, needs to be updated by making use of new information stored in audiovisual archives. Facts about the war are not always positive facts. Photos are important sources for research for historical facts too.

⁵ Tore Pryser: Hitlers hemmelige agenter, Bjørn Westlie: Fars krig, Marc J. Rikmenspoel: Waffen SS Encyclopedia, Lars Gyllenhaal and Lennart Westberg: Svenskar i krig 1914-1945.



Geir Brenden to the left of the photo and Tedd Urnes to the right. Oslo August 9, 2019.

The list of persons buried in Riga. After the war a civilian graveyard was built on top of the military graveyard.

Bakken, Kåre Torleif

Becker, Arne Wilhelm

Christiansen, Olav Herstad

Gahrmaker, John

Gurholt, Thomas Hersleb

Gurstad, Tor

Haugen, Arild

Larm, Knut

Sandborg, Peter Thomas

List of soldiers buried in Saldu

Dale, Magnus (gravlagt under ukjent soldat)

Espen, Halvard registrert grav med gravstein

Huitfeldt, Povel registrert grav med gravstein

Larsen, Rolf Singdahl (gravlagt under ukjent soldat)

Sanne, Rolf registrert grav med gravstein

Sevaldsen, Frank (gravlagt under ukjent soldat)

Syversen, Eivind (gravlagt under ukjent soldat)

Sørensen, Sven registrert grav med gravstein

List of soldiers who are missed. No graves are recorded in Latvia.

Andersen, Gunnar Kjell savnet Vecvagare Priekule

Berg, Anton Jessen savnet Vecvagare Priekule

Berntsen, Roald savnet Vecvagare Priekule

Erichsen, Knut (feltgrav ved Bunka)

Eriksen, Erling Hjalmar savnet Vecvagare Priekule

Hermansen, Edvard Julius savnet ved Zarini

Håkonsen, Kristian gravlagt Robezjnieki

Hontvedt, Ørnulf gravlagt Izriede

Følstad, Sverre gravlagt Izriede

Karpow, Kirill savnet Priekule

Krogstad, Arne Holger savnet Kurland

Larsen, Hjalmar Wilhelm savnet Purmsati

Lund, Harris savnet Vecvagare Priekule

Lunde, Harry savnet Kurland

Lyngstad, John gravlagt Robezjnieki

Meland, Nils savnet Kurill Latvia

Mokastet, Harald Georg savnet Ozoli

Nilsen, Leif savnet Vecvagare Priekule

Olsen, Eugen Viktor savnet Vecvagare Priekule

Osnes, Harry Andreas savnet Indriki

Tobro Kjell savnet Vecvagare Priekule

Trulsen, Kjell Stefanus Margido savnet Priekule

Wetteland, Peder savnet Vecvagare Priekule

CONCLUSION

If those Latvians who joined the German Army making a dramatic attempt to avoid the second Russian occupation of Latvia get an official recognition by the Government of Latvia, those few Norwegians who were killed in actions must get the same treatment as the Latvian soldiers. Above all: All foreign soldiers who died for Latvia must be treated on equal terms.

For your information only: The Norwegian soldiers killed, lost and forgotten had joined the Norwegian Nazi party of Norway, and they supported the German occupation of Norway. Returning to Norway after the war, the soldiers who fought for German occupation of Norway and fighting for Latvia, were treated as war prisoners in Norway according to Norwegian laws.

The research for more information of the unknown graves of Norwegian soldiers in Latvia presented on this list of missing soldiers, is still a task for historians: Harry Andreas Olsen(20), Rudolf Oskar Olsen(23), Ulf Otto Killingmo (26), Osvald Paulin Langeland(21), Thorvald Martinsen(20), Lars Værland(19), Rolf Normann Westlie(23), Johan Gustav Jæger(29), Johannes Burckenmejer(44), Bjørn Herwart Endemann(25) and Tor Gurstad(20).

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Tedd Urnes

Board member: Baltic Audiovisual Archival Council (BAAC), teddnord@gmail.no,
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