

The Ghosts in the Archive: World War Two Photography and Landscapes Crafted by the Nazis in Finland

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Abstract

The Finnish wartime landscape was altered by Nazi troops who were stationed there during World War Two. This paper examines wartime sceneries through Finnish Army Information Company's photographs from the period of the war known in Finland as the Continuation War (1941-1944). The images reveal a completely different side to the Nazi co-belligerence to what is traditionally acknowledged in Finland. I discuss the ways the Nazi troops altered the Finnish landscape, adding 'German-ness' to their surroundings and more specifically, how Nazi ideology manifested in the northern Finnish landscapes. The Finns have been completely oblivious to the symbolic messages the Nazis crafted in their surroundings. Photographs as haunting representation addresses in this paper both the difficult memory of German presence that frames these pictures and the specific potency of these photographic encounters. Haunting as a theory deals with the evocative ways an image can convey information about the past.

Keywords: Photography, haunting, material culture, World War Two, Finland, Nazi Germany

Introduction

Finland was co-belligerent with Nazi Germany during World War II (WWII henceforth), when the two countries joined forces to attack the Soviet Union. Over 200 000 Germans were stationed in northern Finland where they lived side by side with the Finnish locals. The Finns' conception of their co-belligerents was generally quite good since the Nazis behaved well and provided Finns with much needed aid in military operations and supplies. It was not until the end of the war when the issue became a matter of shame in Finland because of the post-war revelations of what the Nazis had done elsewhere in Europe. Issues surrounding the Nazi co-belligerence have been somewhat marginalized in Finnish heritage narratives and the material legacy of cooperating with them largely erased from everyday consciousness (cf. Mullins 2017).

The image collection at hand includes images that have not seen daylight in museums or the media and have the ability to shake authorized and commonplace 'memoriscapes', visual landscapes formed by museums, memorials and other mnemonic objects (Edensor 2005).ⁱ To speak about photography's 'hauntings' essentially theorizes on their potential to create disruption, trigger shock or evoke otherwise poignant memories with scenes of a troubling past that provokes anxiety rooted in the past, specifically unresolved anxiety from the war and its aftermath (Roberts 2012, 397-398). It is not a naïve attempt to glorify the photographs' inherent qualities, nor an attempt to deny the abuses of images and their involvement in distorting visions, but rather a plea to recognize their *potential* for altering perceptions and create vivid encounters with difficult pasts (Roberts 2012, my emphasis). In the museum context, photographs should rightfully be considered objects that can change our perception of the past, giving insights into landscapes and materialities since lost (e.g. Collier and Collier 1987; Edwards and Mead 2013).

I am not the first to raise the question about the haunting quality of Nazi Germany's material traces in Finland. Vesa-Pekka Herva (2014) has argued that the German military's materiel littered in the landscape of Finnish Lapland can be encountered in a markedly spectral way. This is due to the way material culture in general bears evidence of the agency of the people

who have come in contact with it, and the 'pristine' wilderness landscape that makes them seem otherworldly. Of course, the difficulty to come to terms with cooperating the Nazi's means that 'on a figurative national level, the German material remains haunt the memory of the entire nation, due to their unsettled character' (Seitsonen 2018, 126).

This paper considers the material culture of the Nazi's in Finland and discusses how they altered the Finnish wartime landscape according to Nazi ideology. The photographs illustrate a side to the co-belligerence that has been largely erased from Finnish heritage narratives. I will first introduce the memory and experience of German presence in Finland which is quite different from the areas occupied by the Nazis, for instance. I will then discuss three different types of material culture that the Nazi's crafted in Finland: the everyday materiality of the average soldiers, their field burials and lastly architecture. The material culture reveals on the one hand the soldiers' attempt to cope in the Finnish environment and on the other, the Germans' quite obvious and intrusive project to change the Finnish landscape and even symbolically challenge the traditional Finnish seats of power in the landscape with their architecture.

Collaborating with Evil: History and Memory of the Nazis in Finland

In 1941, Hitler's Operation Barbarossa, the offensive against the Soviet Union, began with the help of his Finnish co-belligerents. The Germans were stationed in Finnish Lapland during the years 1941-44, where they were responsible for the northern frontline and the reclaiming of Petsamo, an area that Finland had to cede to the Soviet Union in the prior period of the war known in Finland as the Winter War (1939-40). The Finns and Germans were brothers-in-arms during the Continuation War, although no official alliance was ever formed. The Finnish government was eager to detach themselves from German operations to try to avoid negative publicity and reaction from the Allied powers, and hence evaded any official pacts. The cooperation between Finland and Germany ended abruptly in 1944 when Finland secured a peace treaty with the Soviet Union in the face of an inevitable German defeat, and as a result the Finns fought their former German allies as they retreated from Finland. The ensuing Lapland War in 1945 between Germany and Finland claimed the lives of some 1,000 German soldiers and almost 800 Finnish soldiers.

The Finnish Information Companies (IC henceforth) operated under direction of the Finnish military documenting the war primarily for propaganda purposes, ultimately forming a collection of about 160,000 images. The photographs have been stored in the Military Museum's archive in Helsinki, Finland, and they were also made available online in 2013. The extensive photograph collection includes photographs from the wars fought both with and against Nazi Germany (periods known respectively as the Continuation War in 1941-1944 and Lapland War 1944-1945). The military officials decided to archive the photographic collection for posterity and no images were destroyed prior to curation, making it an unusually comprehensive catalogue of the war (cf. Kleemola 2014).

The Finns were not eager to underline their cooperation with Nazi Germany because they did not want to antagonize the Allied forces in any way, and therefore did not photograph their co-belligerents in abundance. A search with the word '*Saksa**' (German*) yields some 2,650 images out of 160,000 in the online gallery.ⁱⁱ The images feature scenes with the Finns' co-belligerents in everyday activities, battle, and visits between the countries' officials. The collection is interesting for several reasons, for instance Finnish photographers captured an

abundance of images of German field burials when photographic propaganda would typically avoid images illustrating vast numbers of deaths among 'own' soldiers (e.g. Beurrier 2004; Kleemola 2016, 67-68). The Nazis' photographic propaganda often included scenes where the Germans destroyed cultural heritage in the occupied areas and this is of course something they did not do in Finland given their co-belligerent status (Kleemola 2016, 224). This status changed in the Lapland War when the former brothers-in-arms turned against each other. Many images illustrating the damage the Germans left behind in the wake of the Lapland War in northern towns originate from these archives. The images illustrating the devastation of the German's scorched-earth tactic in Lapland have become repeatedly published and almost iconic images of the Finnish war experience (Seitsonen and Herva 2017, 181-182; Jokinen 2007; Jokisipilä 2007; Seitsonen 2018, 54-56). The images of destroyed buildings have been used to paint Finland as the apparent victims of the retreating Germans, and war commemoration has largely clung to this interpretation, ignoring the Finns' close relationship with the Nazis against the Soviet Union during the Continuation War.

After the war and until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country was involved in a period of 'Finlandization'; i.e., the era of Soviet-friendly politics that deeply affected the war historical narrative. Finns were reluctant to say anything that might harm the relationship with the Soviet Union and accept and emphasize their guilt over the wars (Jokisipilä 2007, 153; Kinnunen and Jokisipilä 2012). After the Soviet Union collapsed, public and official memory of the war witnessed a radical transformation and a so-called neo-patriotic commemorative turn took place in Finland (Kinnunen and Jokisipilä 2012; Vares 2007). After the late 80s' and early 90s' then, the wars were glorified and any aspects of it that did not fit the nationalistic war interpretation were neglected, including the co-belligerence with Germany during the Continuation War. The shame and guilt of allying with Nazis made the topic marginal in heritage discourses, and emphasis was put on Finnish victimhood and how the small country was facing a lack of options that seemingly overrides any possibility of critical analysis of problematic wartime events (Sundholm 2013, 35). This framing allows the Continuation War to be viewed through a morally pure lens that glorifies the war as the heroic battle of the small country against a massive Soviet enemy. The realities of the mutual war effort have been misrepresented even in scholarship (Herlin 1998; Jokisipilä 2007; Kinnunen and Jokisipilä 2012; Soikkanen 2007). Problematising Finnish cooperation with Nazi Germany has been long avoided in museums (see Thomas and Koskinen-Koivisto 2016, 73), and public memory of German presence has been rather marginal.

Quite recently, the topic has received a surge of interest in heritage scholarship. Northern Finland, and specifically the area of Lapland, has been the main focus of research, since it was the most heavily influenced by German presence (Ylimaunu et al. 2013; Herva 2014; Seitsonen and Herva 2017; Herva et al. 2016; Seitsonen and Koskinen-Koivisto 2018; Seitsonen et al. 2018). This scholarship has been an important factor elevating the prominence of the Lapland war experience. The locals' and Germans' shared experience in Lapland was also introduced photographically to the public in a recent exhibition, *Wir Waren Freunde* ('We were Friends') held in the provincial Museum of Lapland, Arktikum, from the 27th of April 2015 to the 10th of January 2016. The exhibition illustrated everyday scenes and the banality of life of locals alongside the Nazis in Lapland and it was the first exhibition of its kind in Finland since the war (Alariesto et al. 2015). The chosen themes raised some controversy. While most reacted positively to the exhibition, some of the international guests were surprised about Finnish honesty about their wartime relationships with the Nazis and

some of the locals felt that these topics should not be publicly discussed (see Seitsonen 2017, 130-135; Seitsonen et al. 2018b, for a more detailed discussion on public responses to the exhibition).

The exhibition 'Wir Waren Freunde' allowed visitors to witness the ease with which the Finns dealt with their now notorious brothers-in-arms, and by tapping into the quotidian aspects of life in the frontlines, the exhibition managed to humanize the Nazis in an unusual way (Mullins et al. 2016). While the honesty of the humanizing portrayal of the Finns and Nazis' experience in Lapland may have been surprising for international audiences, the images that hint to the ideology of the German soldiers are conversely potentially more disturbing to the Finns. The local Finns in Lapland who dealt with the German soldiers did not discuss matters of ideology with them and were under the impression that the Germans, for the most part, were not sympathetic to extreme National Socialism. While not undermining the local Finns' experiences, the tendency to distinguish between the German troops in Finland from the Nazis elsewhere in Europe (Jokisipilä 2005, 47; Kivimäki 2012) does obviously risk misrepresenting the wartime realities the Finns were facing, as I hope to illustrate in the following. Having said that, the 'Wir Waren Freunde' exhibition managed to pave the way for discussing the neglected wartime issues and was a successful way to introduce the uniqueness of Finnish war narrative.

Strength through Ideology: The Everyday Materiality of the German Troops

The images reveal a great deal about the mindset of the German troops. An image of a Soviet PoW decorating a German barracks hints to the way Germans used various ways to make them feel comfortable in their new surroundings in Finland (JsDia766). Many felt out-of-place in the northern fronts and material culture was one crucial way to maintain a sense of homeliness in a strange environment (Seitsonen et al. 2018a; Seitsonen et al. 2019). The PoW is decorating the barracks and he is naming the street sign according to the German captain's home address. Such practices have been documented widely, for instance in the context of the First World War where soldiers named trenches with familiar names (e.g. Seal 2013). The motivation behind many of the Germans' arts and crafts undoubtedly illustrates the Germans' sense of dislocation and their effort to ease their daily life in Finland but a sense of purpose was also sought in the ideology.

An image of a German field wedding illustrates the dedication to the leader cult among average soldiers. It depicts a German soldier getting married to his fiancée on Adolf Hitler's birthday on 20 April 1942 (SA-84939-40). A wreath made of spruce cuttings represents the bride who was presumably in Germany when the long-distance wedding took place. Given the date of the wedding, and the ceremonial table that features a swastika flag and an image of the Führer, it is obviously arranged in honor of Adolf Hitler. The countless pictures of Hitler that the German soldiers had were somewhat perplexing for the Finnish locals as they did not understand Nazi ideology and the impressive personal cult that Hitler was able to create (Junila 2000, 167-180). The timing of the image is interesting given that the soldiers would have had a very long Finnish winter behind them. Although it could be an orchestrated propaganda event, it may also be an attempt to correct faltering faith, and to convince oneself of the meaningfulness of the cause.

The Germans were eager to craft their own mythical iconography where they were stationed, and this included more mundane arts and crafts. The photographs feature some obvious Nazi

paraphernalia, such as swastikas and eagles (SA-50472; 89203; 96798; Fig. 1) that have obviously gained an iconic status as Nazi symbols. The abundance of such symbols is due to the party's conscious limitation and simplification of their symbols so that they would be easily understood among the public (Koshar 2000, 120). The arts and crafts of the German soldiers include well-designed craft pieces but also more spontaneous examples such as the one decorating the side of a breadbox, suggest that these expressions were not in any way forced. These were, at least judging by the images, carved by average soldiers (SA-80921-22).

[Insert figure 1 near here]

Some less obvious propaganda was carved a wooden well handle by a German soldier in Rukajärvi, the frontline between Soviet Russia and Finland, with iconography referencing the 'Nibelungen-legend' that invoked visions of a mythical and medieval Germanic past (Fig. 2). The 'Nibelungentreue' – the loyalty of the heroes of the legend – was mobilized for Nazi purposes and used to strengthen the loyalty of their armed forces and brotherhood-in-arms, and also to heighten willingness to battle (Ganter 2008, 129; Stoehr 2000, 168). The face of one of the characters, the Burgundian King Hagen, decorates a well that has been built in the soldiers' living quarters (SA-80925; 96792). By drinking from this well, the soldiers perhaps were symbolically imbuing courage and loyalty drawn from mythical ancestry. The material culture of the German soldiers were manifestations of the rigorous political grip to which the German soldiers had been subjected (Junila 2000, 166-180, 186). Such ideology was one aspect motivating the troops in their fight against the Soviet enemy and making it seem meaningful.

[Insert figure 2 near here]

The Nazis' material culture introduces a complication to the local narrative that sanitizes the Germans of indoctrination. The soldiers appear as liminal and vague and resist simple evil versus human dichotomies: it is easy to see their humanness and the attempts to cope in unfamiliar surroundings. As the exhibition 'Wir Waren Freunde' illustrated, the Nazi troops did not appear like an automated mass of an evil army in Finland, but basically as humans (Mullins et al. 2016). Yet one can clearly see that ideology played a part in the German troops' combat motivation. The images are revealing about the mindset of the German troops in Finland, and about things that have gone amiss in the postwar historical narratives. The Nazis were crafting their own 'mythscape' in Finland, drawing from mythical history and making it visible in their surroundings (Knuuttila 2003). The images are a haunting revelation, having the 'blind spot' of wartime narratives come to view and challenge any simplistic readings of ideology and how it manifested in the Finnish landscape (Gordon 2008). They craft an 'anti-mythscape', challenging the national way the Finns perceive their war history.

Burial Grounds – The Heroic Landscapes of Nazism

'Those thousands of fallen German soldiers who have been buried in the Finnish soil are in fact interned in Finland and the price that Germany has paid as ransom for Finnish freedom'. Eduard Dietl, March 1944. (Mikkonen, 2016: 44, translated by author).

Sites of death that have been repressed in a specific culture are especially haunting and produce powerful ghostly encounters (Freud 1985 [1919], 364; Pile 2005, 140). The pictures

of German burials seem especially unsettling for public display in Finland. An image of a Nazi field burial appeared in a book called *‘Sodan Värit’* (Keskinen and Pekari 2000, 80-81) that was subsequently turned into a museum exhibition. The image of the burial was avoided in all four museums that illustrated the colorized war images in their displays.ⁱⁱⁱ Finns have not been eager to praise their cooperation with Nazi Germany and German presence has taken up a liminal position in Finnish historical consciousness. The interpretations of the impact of the German troops for Finnish battle success vary, and although the Germans mostly failed to accomplish any missions in the Finnish fronts, it has been argued that their mere presence in Finland was enough to significantly affect the Finns’ fortunes in the war (Jokisipilä 2005, 24-25; Jokisipilä and Könönen 2013, 555-556). The aid Finland received from Nazi Germany in the fight for *‘national survival’* has indeed been a political ghost for decades, and due to it, it is materially practically invisible: apart from a few areas in Lapland, the traces of the brotherhood-in-arms are marginal at best. Finns have knowingly effaced the meanings of the Nazi past from visible material sites (Ylimaunu et al. 2013), and there are very few memorials for the approximately 15,000 German soldiers who fell in the Finnish frontlines, or for German co-fighters overall in Finland (<http://www.sotamuistomerkki.fi/sivu.php?id=438>).^{iv} The Germans’ death is relatively non-existent in the Finnish *‘memoryscapes’* given that there are not many places in the Finnish landscape where the public can come across monuments reminding of it (but see Herva 2014; Koskinen-Koivisto 2016). The deceased Nazi foot soldiers linger in a half-remembered position in the contemporary moment because, and this anxiety comes from the contradiction between the Finns wartime experience of the Nazi’s which in general was quite good and the postwar realization of their horrific deeds. The images of Nazi burials produce an uncertain but somehow troubling encounter with the past, and perhaps even an uncomfortable reminder of the way *‘the present is always indebted to the past’* (Keller 2015, 8; Fig. 3 and 4). Ghostly experiences arise as a result of memory that is incomplete and unresolved issues that have left gaps in commemoration (Gunning 2013, 232; Schmitt 1998, 6). The uneasiness of siding with the Nazis has meant that the issue has been cast side in heritage narratives and the topic is an abject aspect of Finnish cultural imagining.

[Insert figure 3 and 4 near here]

Ideology played a part in the construction of the German burial grounds and they expressed the glorification of the Nazi cause. While some burials were probably done in haste, several field cemeteries seem to have gotten a lot of attention and it is obvious that care was put into most of these constructions in the isolated forests of Karelia and Lapland.^v Some of them are fenced off from their surroundings, likely as a way of demarcating the sacred area, but perhaps not dissimilarly to the way some of the Germans’ surroundings were fenced off from the surrounding wilderness, keeping the deceased firmly separated from the areas that made them fearful (see Seitsonen 2018; Seitsonen et al. 2018a; SA-108779; 114122; 121313).

Information Company writer Olavi Paavolainen (1946) wrote in Karelia on the 6th of August, 1941:

A long walk on the German cemetery located near our tents. It is of the same classical design, familiar from the images of the world war. A white barked birch tree frame circles each grave and each grave has a white barked birch cross. Behind the rows of graves is an enormous birch cross that blesses the resting with its huge arms. The old words *‘O Crux, ave spes unica’*, come to

mind effortlessly. Diligent hands decorate the flatly raked sand into most rich arabesque designs. Grey lichen, Magellanic bogmoss and green moss form into most skilled patterns – triangles, bands, iron crosses and swastikas. In the corners of the sand square common brackens and dense heathers have been planted; even flowers from afar have been brought to the graves of their best comrades. Fuchsia on the grave of Hubert Eichert and a late Primula on the grave of Eitel Fritz Cartus...

[Insert figure 5 near here]

The management of such sites may have served a double purpose to secure the soldiers' own anxieties over one's possible death on foreign soil (Fig 5.; Junila 2000, 100-101; Seitsonen et al., 2017), and expressing propagandist messages and celebrating heroic Nazi symbolism. Hitler demanded that the field burials of Nazi soldiers be immediately identifiable as German (Janz 2017b, 152), and the organized formulation of the Germans' burial sites suggests that they were designed to emphasize the heroic deaths of the Soldiers for their leader and people. The German Military Graves Commission underlined the need for individual graves that nonetheless needed to be in groups, emphasizing frontline comradeship in death (Janz 2017a). The troops stationed in the Finnish frontlines likely could not follow all the official designs for grave markers and specified plants (see Janz 2017a; 2017b, 155-156), but each marker had to be the same and the graves organized neatly in rows, symbolizing soldierly formations marching (Janz 2017b, 154). While other soldiers got traditional Christian crosses on their graves, the SS-troops plots have been marked with the rune signaling eternal life, the *leben* rune, distinguishing them from the 'average troops'. Jokipii (2002, 267) recognizes some of the markers the SS-troops used in Finland as the *toten* rune, signaling death, but they lack the fourth, upwards pointing branch (e.g., SA-29939). The markers could symbolize the *t*-rune for the war god Týr and the 'eternal struggle'.

[Insert figure 6 near here]

Where possible, the burial grounds have been placed on hills and scenically attractive spots, like on the shores of lakes and on hilltops (Fig. 6; SA-156235; 34049; 87424; 94294-25). What was sought with such placements was a symbolic dominance and victory over the landscapes; the burial grounds represented the ideological stance of Nazi Germany and symbolically claimed these remote areas in the sphere of the Greater Germanic Reich (Janz 2017b). Such placements were sought for burial grounds also in Finnish areas, such as Karelia. Like Nazi architecture, the burial grounds were meant to be political statements that occupy the landscapes in which they were placed. I will examine this ideology in more detail through the images illustrating the buildings that the Nazis had constructed in Finland.

In the post-war landscape Finns had to deal with several German field burial sites and their placement was solved by building a Mausoleum in the city of Rovaniemi that houses some 2,500 relocated German soldiers' bodies. The initiative to build a mausoleum came from a German organization and it was finished in 1963. The visitors, however, are mostly Finns, and amount to some 10,000 annually (Herva, 2014; Koskinen-Koivisto, 2016). In local folk tales, the mausoleum is known for haunting experiences. The Germans had apparently brought Edelweiss flowers from their homeland to grow in the surroundings of the

mausoleum. One person, visiting their summer cottage in the area, recounts how he collected some of these flowers and brought them to their own yard across the lake. The next morning the flowers were gone because the ghosts from the mausoleum had come to claim their flowers back (Harjumaa 2008; Herva 2014). These narratives illustrate the unresolved tensions that linger around the issue of military cooperation with the Nazis.

Buildings: Future Visions in Architecture

The Germans did not feel at home in the northern environment, and this is reflected in their photographic gaze. In the eastern front there were academic photography projects that documented the ‘German-ness’ of the area’s cultural heritage (Manikowska 2018, 157-163). In Finland, the specific features of the northern landscapes were examined only in popular publications. These illustrate the confused gaze of the photographer that may even reflect the way the Nazis regarded Finland in the future. The northern landscape appears almost as blank, empty, and bleak, lacking any meaningful material presence (Seitsonen et al. 2019). The view perhaps implies the way Finland was imagined on a larger scale; merely there to serve the Reich’s needs (Jokisipilä and Könönen 2013, 506-507).

While most of the constructions the Germans built in Finland were of practical and military use only, a few structures served ideological purposes as well. Structures of more permanent nature were built in the Finnish landscape, such as classically inspired, and medieval-styled buildings (SA-140925-26; Ylimaunu et al., 2013). In the spirit of Nazism, these building styles were to convey messages of unity, tradition, and grandeur to the public (MacDonald 2006). In fact, all of the Nazi architecture, even in the occupied territories, had to be properly politicized and propagate German presence (Koshar 2000, 137). For example, the alpine-style SS-officer’s club is still standing in the city of Oulu, and Finns have subtly tried to downplay the structure’s Nazi past by changing its name (Ylimaunu et al. 2013; Figure 7). The building was placed on a small hill in the town that is mostly flat ground (cf. Mullins 2017).

[Insert figure 7 near here]

Haus der Kameradschaft (House of Camaraderie) in the city of Rovaniemi was commissioned by the *Kraft durch Freude* organization (translated: Strength through Joy). It was built to house entertainment events for soldiers, and the Finnish residents participate in the activities that took place there. The locals remember these events and have reminisced on the good times they had with the Germans. For instance, seeing a movie in wartime Finland was not an everyday-experience and they appreciated the opportunity even though they were not always able to follow the German pictures without Finnish subtitles (Junila 2000, 332). From an ideological standpoint, the motivation of the Strength through Joy events were likely similar in Finland as they were in the German occupied areas. Not only did they make the soldiers feel like they had some contact to familiar and homely activities, the concerts, movies and other entertainment was meant to elevate the German-ness and cultural quality of the area (Baranowski 2007, 209). The Finns would have been oblivious to the political messages involved in having German culture introduced in the area.

The structure burned down in the wake of the Nazis’ retreat from Rovaniemi, when they set fire to the city and subsequently much of Lapland. Although the majority of the *Haus der Kameradschaft* building was done in wood, perhaps to accommodate the structure to the local landscape, it still had a stone façade, clearly visible in the image that depicts its ruins in the

wake of the Lapland War (Fig. 8). While they adapted the building materially to the Finnish landscape, clearly monumentality and impact was still sought. The building was 31 meters long and could house 350 people (Mikkonen 2016, 84-85). The building was facing the Rovaniemi church and placed on an important road, *Valtakatu*, ('Main Street') that used to be the center of administration and trade (Stadionark 2010, 7-9). Ideology and power played a role in the construction of the *Haus der Kameradschaft* given its placing that challenged the traditional seats of power in the Finnish landscape.

[Insert figures 8 and 9 near here]

There are haunting experiences related to the street where the building used to stand. A woman reportedly saw a ghost detachment of German soldiers marching along *Valtakatu* and singing the Erika march in the 1970s' (Harjumaa 1994, 189). While the structure was destroyed by fire and the remains torn down from the landscape after the war, the IC images can reanimate the now absent building's presence in the Finnish landscape. The images depicting Nazi architecture in the Finnish landscape can mobilize the imagination of the viewer and create both temporal and spatial disjointedness (Gordon 2008, 55). One image is particularly vivid since it features the white structure behind a Finnish road sign, pairing Nazi materiality with the landscape that is instantly recognizable as Finnish (Fig. 9). The haunting metaphor in relation to photography illustrates the way we face historical knowledge and materiality. Through photographs, uncomfortable pasts appear vividly given photography's temporal dimension, in the sense that images face us with 'the return of the past not as memory or history but as a contradictory experience of presence' (Gunning 2013, 232). They allow viewers to imagine what the Finnish landscape would look like today had the Nazis won the war. What kind of future would have awaited the Finns? Despite their unique wartime relationship with Nazi Germany, the material culture, the arts and crafts of the German soldiers, the burial grounds, and the architecture all speak to a well-designed ideological statement in the Finnish landscape. The realization of the presence of power that was inscribed in the Finnish landscape changes the reading of these images and introduce another kind of haunting that questions Finnish uniqueness in the political scheme of the Nazis (Gordon 2008, 25). The co-belligerence is not painted so much as a joyous co-existence in an ideologically neutral territory but reveal the larger scale political motivations behind material culture. The Finns future would likely not have been much different to the occupied countries' fate in Hitler's plans. The photographs' ability to produce apparitions, visions of alternative futures, can be mobilized to create countervisions of German presence in Finland and for rethinking the complexities of the national wartime experiences. The images can move audiences away from interpretations emphasizing national exceptionalism and allow audiences consider the position of Finns in the larger European narrative and the Nazi project.

Concluding Remarks

Finns have been keen on emphasizing certain patriotic interpretations of the war and of German presence, and photography has played a crucial role in their history making. Finns have wanted to be seen as victims of the Germans as well and the countless 'chimney stack - images' from the Lapland War have visualized Finnish victimhood in the conflict, by emphasizing the tragic destruction of many of the northern Finnish towns in the wake of the Lapland War. However, the Continuation War holds very different narratives and memories that can challenge these conceptions. To discuss photography's hauntings is recognizing the

potential of these encounters and their ability to vividly shake commonplace and canonized notions of troublesome histories. These photographic encounters have the potential to become an important form of countermemory and they can bring forth an alternative way of seeing the past and offer different wartime memories for display.

A critical reading of the materiality of Nazi Germany's soldiers can shed light on the mindset of the troops. Ideology was an aspect of their daily lives and illustrates a commitment to the Nazi cause. The cemeteries and architecture also propagated Nazi ideology in the Finnish landscapes. As there is no certainty about what type of fate was facing the Finns had the Nazis won the war, these images conjure up phantasm futures that does not downplay the realities of the wartime situation. These pictures bring the past much closer and can create distress about traditional memory and identity politics; specifically, they paint the co-belligerence not so much as a joyful companionship but hint to Finland's position in the wartime political schemes. The untapped potential of haunting photographic encounters allows knowledge acquisition in a vivid manner and alter the 'memoryscapes' that have become normalized in contemporary Finland.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Figure captions

Figure 1. A road sign with familiar Nazi symbols, carved by a German soldier.

Figure 2. SA-80925. A well pole carved by a German soldier featuring the Nibelungen iconography.

Figures 3. (33600) German field burials in Loimola, Karelia.

Figure 4. (JsDia074) German burial ground in Syväri, East Karelia. The details of light in these images make them seem particularly lively. In the 19th century, such phenomena were interpreted as 'ghost lights', apparitions of the dead (Hill 2010).

Figure 5. SA- 51224 Brothers-in-arms decorating a grave.

Figure 6. SA-87424. The burial ground of the German 163rd division who fought alongside Finns in Karelia.

Figure 7. The Alpine style officer's club in Oulu (photograph by author).

Figure 8. The House of Camaraderie burned down in 1944.

Figure 9. On the right, the wartime photograph of the House of Camaraderie, 'Haus der Kameradschaft' in Rovaniemi in 1943. On the left the House of Camaraderie where it would be located in Rovaniemi today (author / SA-140926).

Biographical note

Tuuli Matila is a PhD candidate in archaeology in the University of Oulu. Her research focuses on the representation and commemoration of World War Two in Finland, with a special interest in wartime photography.

ⁱ The SA-images have not been utilized in museums very often save for a recent exhibition that focuses on wartime images; a display called 'Sodan Värit' (Colours of War; see Keskinen and Pekari 2000 for the pictures), and in the museum that curates these images: the Military Museum in Helsinki, that focuses on aspects of wartime events.

ⁱⁱ This includes a vast number of pictures that do not directly illustrate the Nazis, but for instance pictures, where Finns are fighting with weapons bought from Nazi Germany (Elo and Kleemola 2016, 160).

ⁱⁱⁱ All of the information about the exhibition content was received from personal communication with the museums in question: Samuli Fabrin from the Militaria Museum in Hämeenlinna, Satu Ståhlberg from the South-Karelia museum and Leila Stenroos from the Rosenlew museum in Pori.

^{iv} The database in www.Sotamuistomerkki.fi lists Finnish war monuments is not entirely comprehensive but provides a reasonable overview of the commemorative situation. One memorial was erected for the German co-fighters in Kuusamo, Finland in 1997.

^v All of the Germans' burials are illustrated in images: SA-151165-69, 25279-80, 27298, 29938-39, 31474, 33440, 33600-01, 33736-41, 33800, 34049, 35758, 43675, 45661-62, 47223-25, 51223-25, 52886, 61217-19, 62970, 72767, 72769-70, 77646-48, 87422-30, 94293-95, 99452, 101594-95, JsDia699, JsDia734, 114122-25, 94145.