

## Radoslaw Grabowski, Bjørnar Olsen, Þóra Pétursdóttir & Christopher Witmore TEILLAGER 6 SVÆRHOLT: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF A WORLD WAR II PRISONER OF WAR CAMP IN FINNMARK, ARCTIC NORWAY

### Abstract

This article presents the results of fieldwork undertaken over the last four summers at a World War II prisoner of war camp at Sværholt in northernmost Norway. The labour camp for Soviet prisoners was established in 1942 as part of the construction of the German coastal battery at Sværholt, a fortification within the Atlantic Wall. In late fall 1944 the camp, the coastal fort, and the local Norwegian hamlet were abandoned and destroyed in step with the massive and abrupt German retreat from this northern region. This paper describes the remains of the camp and the coastal fort, as still manifest in the barren landscape, and presents in detail the findings of excavations and associated investigations conducted in the camp area. Analysing these findings, particular emphasis is placed on the question of what an archaeological approach can divulge concerning the camp, its construction and conditions, and the 'trivial' details of everyday life often passed over by historical accounts. Ultimately, we suggest that the things found challenge our common assumptions about the relationship between prisoners, guards, and locals, and further discuss to what extent the forced encounter at Sværholt also may have included some measures of sympathy within the yet hostile context of war and occupation.

Keywords: prisoner of war camps, landscapes of war, Atlantic Wall, archaeology of the recent past, memory, things, contraband exchange

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### INTRODUCTION

Construction of the extensive German defensive line known as the Atlantic Wall (*Atlantikwall*) began in 1942. Although never fully completed, more than 1500 fortifications were built along the 2600 km stretch of Atlantic coastline from Arctic Norway to the French–Spanish border.<sup>1</sup> *Festung Norwegen* came to host close to 300 of these coastal forts, many of them built in the northernmost regions. The main rationale for the Atlantic Wall was to prevent allied invasion of German

occupied land and the relatively high priority assigned to its northern branch is probably indicative of Hitler's fear that a major attack might take place in northern Norway. While the latter never happened, the consequences were nonetheless dramatic and lasting for remote places chosen to serve as venues for the Wehrmacht's build up in the far north.

Sværholt was one such remote place. A small fishing hamlet situated at the northernmost coast of Finnmark in Arctic Norway, Sværholt was selected to host *Heeres-Küsten-Batterie 1/971* (Fig. 1). In

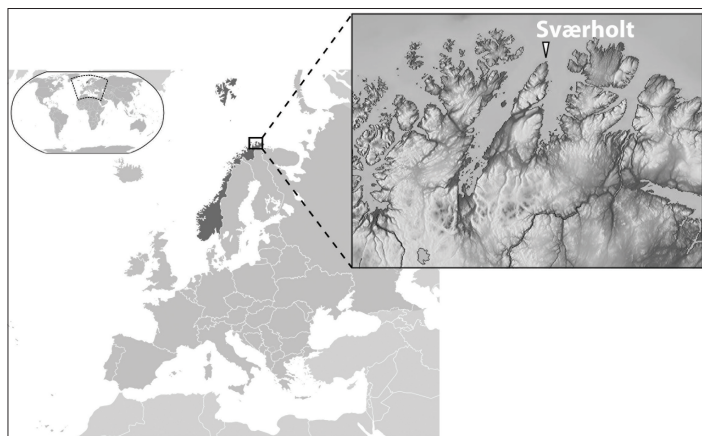


Fig. 1. Map of Norway, Finnmark, and Sværholt. Source: Wikimedia commons.

the course of some spring and summer months of 1942 the place was radically transformed. New things and practices were introduced and the small hamlet, along with the surrounding headland, was irreversibly altered to accommodate bunkers, gun emplacements, trenches, tunnels, minefields, barracks, roads, and expanded port facilities. The local population, counting less than 40 individuals, was outnumbered nearly five to one by the Germans, and far more so during the actual months of construction.

Building the coastal battery required a considerable workforce, especially considering the challenging natural conditions here. *Organisation Todt*,<sup>2</sup> the German military (and civil) engineering institution commissioned to undertake such construction work (Seidler 1987), usually mobilised engineer troops (*Bau-Bataillone*), prisoners of war (henceforth POWs), and other forced laborers, as well as local entrepreneurs and paid workers in these construction projects. At sparsely populated places like Sværholt, accessible only by boat, they could hardly rely on local or ambulant workers. So, in order to secure a reliable work force, POW camps were often established in association with the coastal forts. Upon completion these camps would serve future needs related to daily supply and maintenance. A small camp for Soviet POWs was therefore incorporated at Sværholt from the beginning. The camp had the status of an auxiliary camp or *Teillager* and an average of 50 to 60 men is stated to have been kept in the camp during its more than two years of operation (Gamst 1984: 119).

During the last four summers a small team of archaeologists has conducted fieldwork at the site

of the POW camp, including surveys, soil science analyses and most notably excavations. Our aims in undertaking this fieldwork centre on a series of questions related to what an archaeological approach can reveal or bring forth about the POW camp, the place hosting it, and about the everyday life and circumstances of those imprisoned here. How did the prisoners live and cope under these conditions? What can the things and traces left behind reveal about consumption, routines, leisure and hardship, or about contraband, exchange and interaction across the fences? In this paper we shall present some of our results.

In its scope and orientation our work joins in with the growing body of research on World War II (hence WWII) archaeology (e.g. Theune 2010; Myers & Moshenska 2011; Seitsonen & Herva 2011; González-Ruibal 2012; Jasinski et al. 2012; Mytum & Carr 2013; Jasinski 2013; Ylimaunu et al. 2013). Due to its extreme and isolated location, and the unique local demography that was created, Sværholt still represents a rather exceptional case; one where the richness of the material allows for new and alternative interpretations within WWII archaeology.

## BUILDING AND DESERTING AN ATLANTIC WALL OUTPOST

Before moving on to the archaeological material, however, let us draft an outline of Sværholt and the coastal fort, and briefly recall its construction and desertion. As mentioned, Sværholt is situated on the coast of Finnmark, Norway, at a latitude of just below 71 degrees north. Here the Sværholt Peninsula, which separates the fjords of



*Fig. 2. Aerial photograph of Sværholt. The battery foundations, bunkers and remains of the blockhouses are well-visible at the northern summit of the cape (Sværholtklubben). Aerial photo: Norwegian Mapping Authority.*



*Fig. 3. The exploded carapace of the command and control bunker at Sværholtklubben. Photo: B. Olsen.*

Porsanger and Laksefjord, terminates in a steep and dramatic cape, Sværholtklubben (Fig. 2). South of the cape, buttressing its natural ‘bastion’ appearance, the land descends more or less evenly into a low isthmus connecting Sværholtklubben with the main Sværholt peninsula. To each side of this isthmus are two small bays, the western is known as Eidsbukta and the eastern, where the hamlet is situated, is Sværholt proper.

The fort’s artillery battery was placed at the summit of Sværholtklubben. Comprising six 145 mm, long-range guns, each capable of delivering shells at a distance of 18 000 m (Gamst 1984: 119), these

guns fringed the heights of the cape. Perched just a few meters from the steep northern wall, the battery controlled a veritably wide stretch of sea and the coastal fairway to the north. Constructions at the heights of the cape also included bunkers, lighter gun positions, large surveillance spotlights, a radio link and communication infrastructure, a cable-lift station, tunnels for storage and protection/escape purposes, as well as numerous buildings, mostly blockhouses used as warming shelters, quartering and mess/kitchen facilities for soldiers on duty. Accessed by a winding road built from the harbour in the Sværholt hamlet, all heavy weapons, equipment and building material were brought to the fortified heights on carts pulled by POWs; lighter materials were transported to the summit by a cable lift running steeply from the north side of the harbour.

The main facilities for the German garrison were built in the fishing hamlet. The harbour area was developed with several landing piers, various workshop facilities, a stone quarry, and crushing station, while buildings for quartering, administration, storage, medical treatment, and for communal gatherings were set up in the immediate vicinity of the hamlet houses and buildings. In the bay at the west side of the isthmus, Eidsbukta, the Germans established the camp for the Russian POWs along with watch posts, trenches, gun emplacements, barbed wire obstacles, and an extensive minefield



where nearly 1800 land mines were laid. Another 800 naval mines were moored in the sea around the cape (Gamst 1984: 119, 227). A German force of about 150 soldiers and officers manned the coastal battery during its years of operation. Apart from an unsuccessful allied air attack in 1944, the coastal fort was little involved in active combat. Though severe allied attacks were launched against domestic Norwegian and German vessels in the waters around Sværholt, these did not target the battery itself.

In the fall of 1944 the German occupation of Finnmark came to an abrupt end. In October the Soviet troops launched a massive attack on the German frontline in the Litza valley, 50 km east of the Norwegian–Russian border where their northeastern *Platinfuchs* campaign had been deadlocked for three years. The Germans were forced to flee and on October 28th Adolf Hitler issued a *Führerbefehl* ordering the complete and forced evacuation of Wehrmacht personnel, POWs, and also the entire local population from the region. In anticipation of an invasion by the Soviet army into Finnmark (which never occurred), the directive included the additional order to implement the tactic of scorched earth (Hauglid et al. 1985; Gyllenhaal & Gebhardt 2001; Gorter et al. 2005).

Less than one month later 50 000 local people had been evacuated, while the remaining 23 000 sought out refuge in the barren mountains. Scorched in the course of this month were 10 563 homes, 4711 barns, c 350 bridges, piers and lighthouses, 106 schools, 471 shops, 53 hotels and guesthouses, 21 hospitals, 27 churches, 141 chapels and assembly buildings, and 229 factories and workshops. Boats and roads were destroyed; 22 000 telegraph poles were chopped down. Livestock and family pets were killed. As the troops retreated nothing of advantage was to be left for the enemy, including those locals who had escaped into the mountains (Sandvik 1975; Westrheim 1978; Helskog 2004).

Needless to say, Sværholt was not saved. Between the 11th and 15th November 1944 the locals were deported along with soldiers, officers and POWs; the settlement was burnt to the ground; military installations were dismantled or destroyed. The command bunker, gun emplacements, and auxiliary bunkers were all lined with explosives and blasted (Fig. 3). Chunks of steel-reinforced concrete and twisted panels of corrugated iron rained down upon the heights and slopes of Sværholtklubben. After the war, amidst vestiges

of this destruction, most of the locals returned to Sværholt to rebuild their homes. However, the new economic and social infrastructure in Norway worked against isolated places like Sværholt. Without road connections and proper harbour facilities the fishing hamlet was desolated gradually during the 1950s and 60s. Today the hamlet is abandoned. The cape with its abundance of war ruins is now a wildlife sanctuary protecting an ever-decreasing population of nesting kittiwakes.

## THE POW CAMP

The preceding description places Sværholt in the wider historical context of WWII events, and briefly considers the impact of these events on the region, both during and after the war. Moving on to the archaeological material and information gathered, we shall lower the focus onto the POW camp and the details, challenges, and everyday banalities of those imprisoned at this northern outpost.

Located in Eidsbukta, the bay on the west side of the isthmus, the POW camp lays approximately 500 m west of the garrison and the Sværholt hamlet (see Fig. 2). Situated on a flat grass- and heather-covered area at the lower end of a defile in the southern part of the bay, the camp is delimited to the east by the raised beach terrace and to the south by the foot of the mountain. Through the defile runs a creek which intersects the southern section of the camp zone and terminates in an extensive area of successive fossil beaches, stretching between the POW camp and the sea. The pebble beach area is cut-off to the north and the south by mountain crags and steep slopes, and to the west by two extensive transverse lines of barbed wire fencing, of which some portions still stand, blocking off access to (and from) the sea. As an additional protection, a dense minefield was installed between the two barbed wire entanglements. To the east, the edge of the raised beach terrace was heavily armed by a network of trenches, gun emplacements, guard posts, and foundations for spotlights branched out below a bunker set at an apex of the terrace.

Measuring 42 x 42 m and quadratic in outline, the POW camp itself was surrounded by a double perimeter fence of barbed wire (Fig. 4). The fence was set on vertical wooden posts that later have been cut down, most likely in the course of the evacuation. The stubs are still visible and several of the posts lie where they fell. Parts of the inner



fence line were set on metal screw pickets; many still hold fast rusted lengths of heavy-gauged barbed wire. The main gate was situated at the northeastern corner of the enclosure, at the terminus of a road leading up the defile across the headland to the garrison and the battery. Outside and along the southern section of the fence a stone-paved path provided an elevated route across marshy ground next to the creek. The path ends by the foot of the mountain slope south of the camp where stone-built steps lead up to an enclosed rock shelter, accessed through an opening in the low frontal stonewall. The interpretation of the shelter remains uncertain; we initially considered it to have been a possible camp latrine where the stacked stone benches functioned as toilet supports. Phosphate analysis conducted on samples from the shelter, however, yielded no results in support of this interpretation (Grabowski 2012: 10; see Fig. 10). Immediately west of the shelter runs a branch of barbed wire fence from the face of a higher cliff to the southeast corner of the camp enclosure. The purpose is undoubtedly to block any possibility of escape and suggests that the shelter may have been used for some prisoner-related purposes rather than, say, as a guard post.

Inside the camp are the traces of six buildings; four circular and two rectilinear (Fig. 5). The shape of the buildings endure in the outlines of the sod embankments, the remains of turf linings that were set around the base of the walls in order to stabilise them and insulate from the cold. The circular embankments enclosed 'tents', which were shelters constructed of thin prefabricated plywood (*Sperrholzzelte* or so-called *Finnenzelte*)<sup>3</sup>, while the rectangular foundations presumably held more ordinary barracks. In one of the circular embankments, a large iron cauldron remains. Apart from this and some post stones in the rectilinear structures, little indication of the buildings' use or interior design was directly revealed on the surface. Just a few meters east of the camp, at a slightly higher elevation, are the remnants of dwellings used as warming huts and rest quarters by the camp guards. With one circular and one rectilinear foundation, these vestiges are hardly distinguishable from those provided for the inmates. Indeed, the circular embankment held the same kind of plywood tent as those used inside the camp.

Near the gate, at the northeast corner of the camp, is an intact stone oven. Constructed of stacked stone, with interstices of concrete packed

by hand (in some of these, fingerprints are still visible), the oven has two rectangular openings and is crowned with a circular iron lid. Similar open-air, stone ovens (often called 'Russian ovens') are known both archaeologically and ethnographically throughout this northern area from the 13th to the early 20th centuries, and are associated with Russian presence or cultural 'influence'. Traditionally they were used for baking bread, but other uses are also known. In its own peculiar way the oven inside the POW camp at Eidsbukta also speaks to a Russian presence, albeit one very different and involuntary.

## THE INVESTIGATIONS

The initial archaeological surveys conducted in 2001 and 2010 drew our attention to Sværholt's war heritage and prompted us to consider how it might be approached archaeologically. A preliminary investigation of the POW camp started in July 2011 where we set out to accomplish three main tasks: first, to conduct a detailed survey of the camp area and to map all structures visible at the surface; second, to undertake soil chemical sampling of the entire camp area for phosphate and magnetic susceptibility (MS) analysis, in order to identify and delineate activity and residue areas not visible on the surface<sup>4</sup>; and third, to excavate trial trenches in the remains of dwellings and other structures. During the following three seasons, additional surveys and soil chemical sampling were conducted, and most significantly, the areas under excavation were extended with trenches encompassing larger portions of the structures. The excavations now include both dwellings and other features inside the camp area, as well as a refuse dump, a guard dwelling, a gun emplacement, and a guard post situated outside the camp. Excavations were also undertaken in areas where surviving structures and soil analysis suggested some likelihood of success with respect to gathering information about the camp, daily life, routines, surveillance, and relations between POWs and their German guards (Figs. 6a&b).

### *Excavations inside the camp*

14 trenches have been excavated, whereof ten are inside the camp proper targeting all buildings as well as some open-air features (see Fig. 4). The first trenches were excavated in the vestiges of

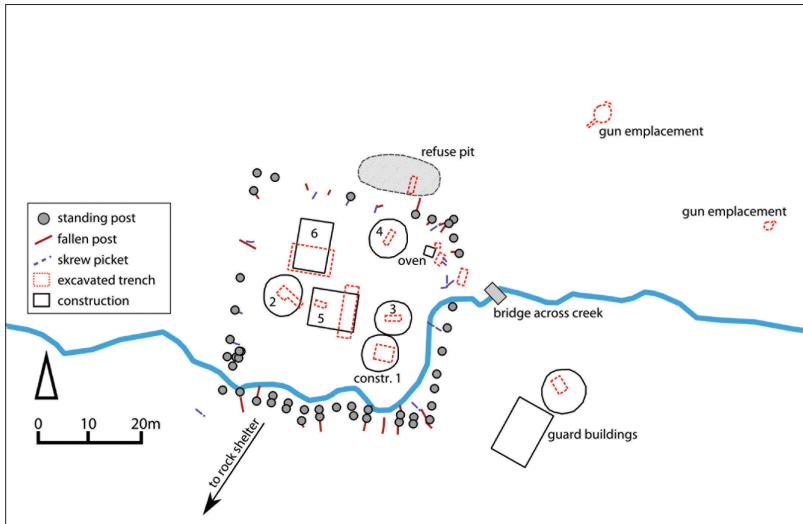


Fig. 4. Map of POW camp in Eidsbukta with excavation trenches inserted. Illustration: R. Grabowski.

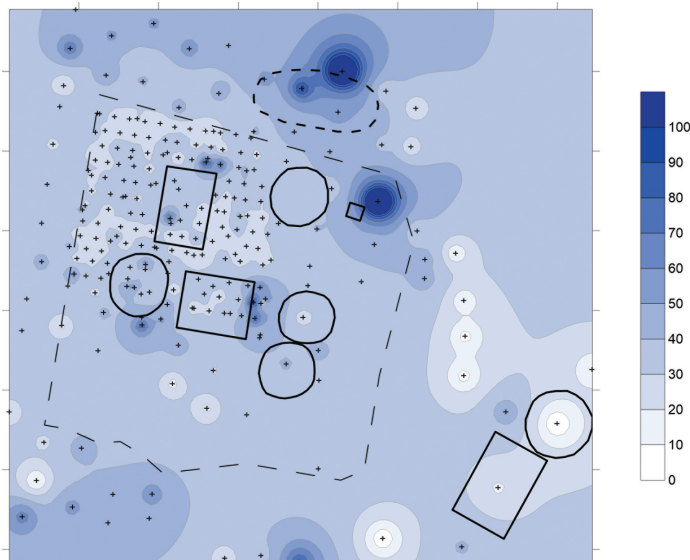
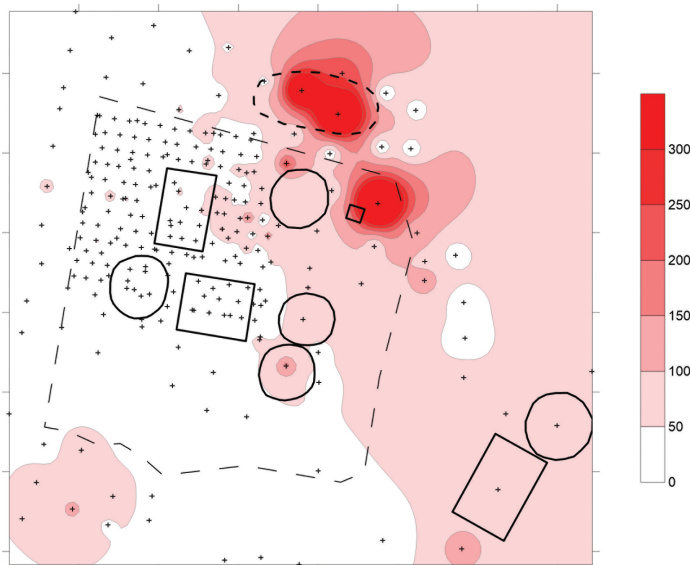
Fig. 5. The POW camp at Eidsbukta. Photo: B. Olsen.

the *plywood tents*. The remains of the circular sod embankments are quite uniform and of equal size; the interior diameter is 5.5 m, rendering a floor area of c 16 square meters.<sup>5</sup> Where detected, the single entrance always faced the eastern side of the camp, in a direct line of sight to the gate and guard area. As indicated by the presence of the large iron cauldron still sitting in one of them, the use of these *Finnenzelte* was varied. This was further confirmed by our excavations, which actually suggest that most of them were not used for dwelling purposes. Two of the tents (Structures 1 and 4) had thin concrete floors, which make

it rather unlikely that they were used as living quarters under these sub-arctic climatic conditions (Figs. 7 & 8). A third one (Structure 3) had a large concrete foundation in the middle, possibly for a large stove, and the very space demanding features inside this tent, which is also the case in Structure 1, do not comply well with a dwelling, nor with the information about how the plywood tents were used for quartering (e.g. Fløtten 2004: 58). The artefacts from these three tents are also quite uniform, and consist mostly of building/construction related items – iron nails, bolts, screws, bars, and rods.

While the finds from Structures 3 and 4 were few and inconclusive in terms of use (the latter structure may have been used as a storage), the situation is quite different for Structure 1, which warrants further discussion (Fig. 7). As mentioned, the remains of this tent still contain a large iron cauldron inside the wall foundation. The excavation indicates that, initially, the tent may have had an earthen floor, thus leaving open the possibility that it originally was used for living purposes. However, at some point, a central circular, stone-lined hearth was constructed to

accommodate the iron cauldron, while the rest of the floor was lined piecemeal with a thin concrete covering. Numerous segments of solid iron bars were found on this concrete floor. These were probably related to some kind of a suspension framework associated with the cauldron. Thus, a possible sequencing is that after an initial use as dwelling for inmates, the tent was refurbished to serve either as mess room or, more likely, as a bath or laundry. Given its proximity to the creek, water was readily available, and while a modest number of fish and animal bones were recovered from the



*Fig. 6a & b. Results of magnetic susceptibility (a, above) and phosphate (b) analyses of the POW camp at Sværholt. The visual presentations of the values have been capped at 300 for MS and 100 P° for phosphates in order to prevent variation inside the camp to be 'drowned out' by the exceptionally high levels in the refuse dump and next to the oven. Illustrations: R. Grabowski.*



trench, the low phosphate levels and elevated MS levels in the soil samples do not speak in favour of food preparation.

Structure 2 is the only plywood tent that seems to have been permanently used as living quarters. The floor here was very different from the other structures and simply consisted of trampled earth formed by removing turf and topsoil from the ground inside of the tent and stacking it around the outside to form the embankment. A wooden doorstep marked the entrance to the building; small deposits of burnt coal and other debris, probably stemming from cleaning the fireplace, were found just outside the door. No hearth or stove was recovered, but the central floor area contained clear traces of firing, probably associated with an iron stove, which was later removed. Set in a circular pattern around these traces was a series of postholes – their arrangement suggests some kind of an elevated structure, perhaps racks for drying cloths. The postholes, and also some intentionally dug pits, contained a number of artefacts. In the case of the postholes, some of the finds, such as a



folded lid of a tin can, may be explained as items for bracing the post. Other objects, on the other hand, appear deliberately veiled, and the pits, thus, seem to have served as potential hideaways. Finds from this plywood tent were quite rich and far more varied than those from the other tents, and they relate mostly to processing and maintenance (of shoes in particular), food consumption, leisure and everyday activities. Also scattered across the floor area were fragments of plywood, sundry bits of other types of wood and loose nails associated with the tent construction.

The two rectangular *barrack* foundations are the most extensively investigated structures inside the POW camp. Structure 5, measuring 8.5 x 7.5 m, was initially explored in 2011 by a small test trench next to the west wall (Fig. 9). This provided evidence of an elevated floor resting on stacked stone, as was also indicated by the rather loose soil in the floor area. The finds from the trial trench were few but, interestingly, consisted mainly of ‘personal’ items, of which some, such as a set of pipe cleaners, may have been deliberately hidden beneath floor planks. In 2013 a new and larger trench measuring 10 x 2.5 m was excavated across the eastern section of the barrack. Here slabs and stone-built steps marked two entrances situated opposite each other at the end of the southern and northern long walls, respectively. This, together with the partly exposed row of detectable sill stones along the building’s centre axis, suggests that the barrack was divided lengthwise into two compartments. Similar to the earlier trial trench, the finds were not very abundant, particularly in the floor area, perhaps suggesting that the building was cleaned out before it was dismantled in the course of evacuation.

Lending further support to this possibility was the higher density of finds just outside of the entrance areas, especially at the southernmost entrance where also a pit was discovered at the edge of the trench. The fill of the pit consisted predominantly of refuse in the form of bone debris,

*Fig. 7. Pole photo of Structure 1 and the iron cauldron during the 2011 excavation (this initial test trench measures 2 x 1.5 m; in 2012 the trench was extended with 6 m<sup>2</sup>).*

*Fig. 8. Pole photo of Structure 4 during excavation.*

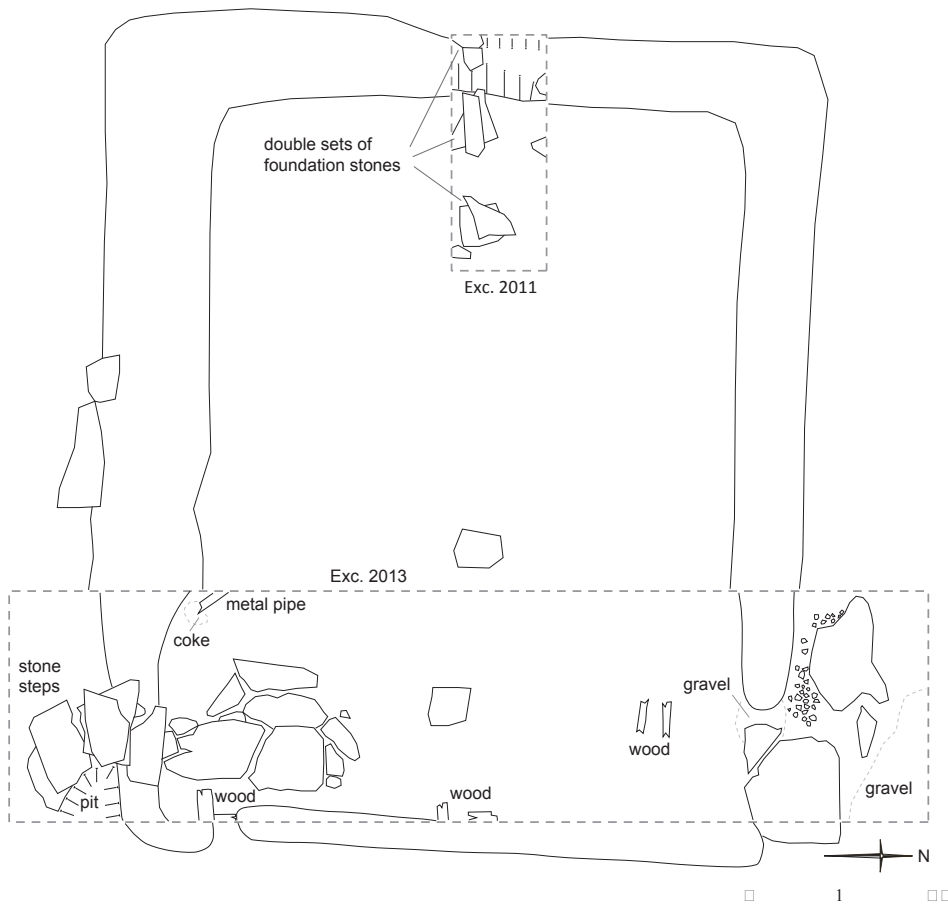


Fig. 9. Plan of Structure 5 with excavation trench from 2013 and test trench from 2011. Drawing: Þ. Pétursdóttir.

bottle glass, iron fragments from tins and cans, cuts of leather and rubber, broom bristles, etc. Samples taken from the pit displayed some of the highest phosphate levels on the site (Fig. 10), with mean values comparable to those of a larger waste disposal area situated outside the camp (described below). Furthermore, nearby samples associated with the areal phosphate mapping showed elevated levels all along the outside of the eastern wall (see Fig. 6b). These results may indicate that the space just east of this barrack was dedicated to the waste management regime on the site, perhaps for temporary storage of waste and rubbish prior to being transported to the main midden outside the camp fence. The finds from Structure 5 contained a high proportion of ‘personal’ items (including buttons, sherds of alcohol and medicine bottles, iron toe and heal plates, and fragments from the copper chain of a necklace). This is probably indicative

of the barrack’s use for quartering. The vertical distribution of materials from within the confines of the floor area places many finds in distinctive proximity to the surface, indicating that they either had fallen between, or were intentionally hidden away beneath, the floor planks.

The remains of most buildings inside the camp indicate that the abandonment was relatively controlled, as the structures were dismantled and taken away. Left behind were only those things broken, hidden or lost, or objects considered too heavy, too impractical or useless to be removed. While one of the tents (Structure 4) seems to have been burnt down, the scarcity of finds suggests that it had been emptied prior to this event. The situation, however, proved to be very different for the second barrack within the camp (Structure 6) (Figs. 11 & 12). Here, there is much that points at a very abrupt abandonment where the building

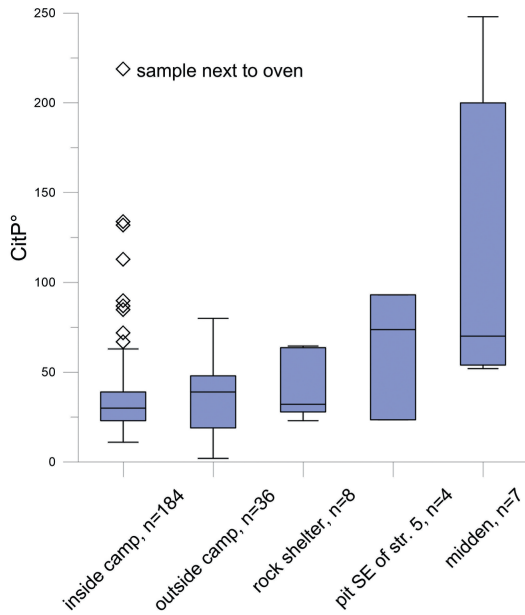


Fig. 10. Box-plot showing the phosphate levels in different parts of the investigated area. Distinctly elevated values were recorded in the refuse dump as well as in a smaller refuse pit next to Structure 5. Note that the mean values inside the camp, outside the camp and in the rock shelter were similar, probably reflecting the underlying natural phosphate levels of the soil, but also that the category of samples taken inside the camp shows several elevated outliers. These probably represent anthropogenic activities inside the camp. Illustration: R. Grabowski.

was set on fire without removing much of the stuff it housed. One trivial but telling indication of this relates to the differences in the remains of the ‘roof anchors’ which were used to secure the roof of the barracks (and thus the barracks themselves) under extreme weather conditions<sup>6</sup>. Whereas the wires for structure 5 were systematically cut right above the ground, entire stretches of wire were found collapsed in the trench of Structure 6 and still secured to large boulders aligned immediately outside the turf embankments (see Fig. 11).

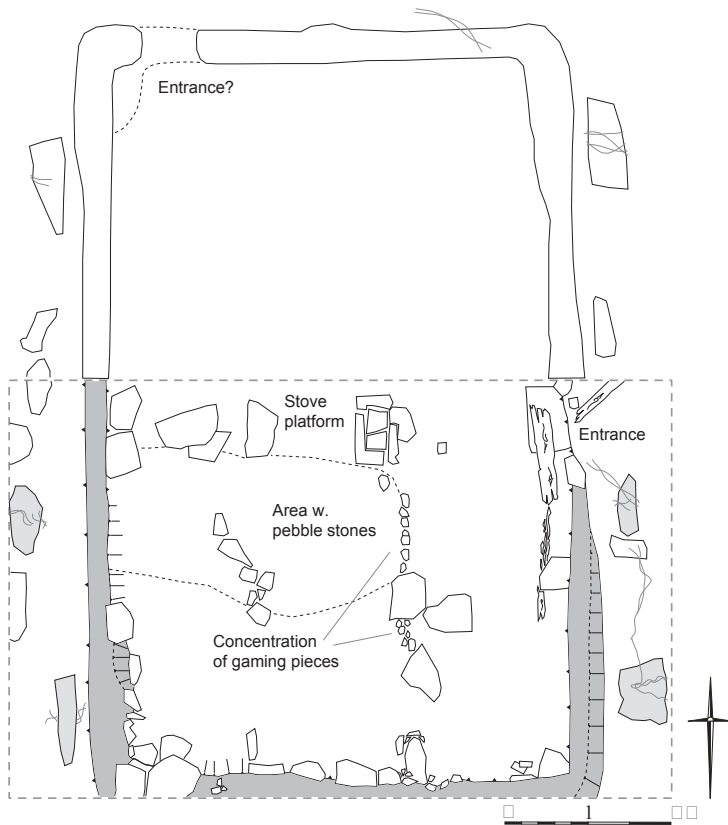
However, the most conspicuous evidence of an abrupt departure was the variety, condition, and vast number of finds from the trench excavated across the southern portion of this barrack. Measuring 5 x 8 m the trench covered more than half of the 9 x 6.5 m large building, as well as areas

immediately outside the walls. The structure was constructed of light, prefabricated materials set upon a pier and beam foundation surrounded by a turf embankment. A doorway was located in the centre of the western wall and construction materials including nails, window glass, burnt timbers, hinges and hardware for the locking mechanism were dispersed across the subfloor surface nearby. Concentrations of glass, partly deformed by fire, were also found dispersed along the outer walls (or turf embankment) of the structure indicating the location of windows. In the centre of the building was a rectangular concrete stove platform; the stove itself, smashed into pieces, was found scattered across the site.

The structure was extremely rich in finds, and especially everyday and personal items, most of them heavily transformed by fire, were present in large quantities (Fig. 12). Among the things found were fragments of wine and other alcohol bottles, glass and ceramic cups, uniform buttons, iron boot heels and toe plates, chess pieces from at least two sets, mostly melted, and a large number of gaming pieces (see Figs. 17 & 18). The latter items were found in clusters along a line in the centre of the floor area and just east of the stove platform. This concentration of finds also corresponded with a line of sill stones, thus denoting an interior wall, possibly with shelves or other storage facilities. Few items were unaffected by fire, and evidence of burning was pervasive, both inside and outside of the building. Some well-preserved items were, however, found along the eastern wall, including an intact cologne bottle and a detergent bottle (see Fig. 15). The first, corked and still containing some liquid, was found relatively deep – as if tucked under the turf embankment – together with a piece of hemp rope, textile remains, and a large sheet of copper alloy; thus indicating a possible intentional deposit.

The last three trenches excavated inside the camp area were related to structures other than the tents and barracks. One was excavated next to the ‘Russian oven’ in order to better expose what seems to be a concrete channel leading to the oven (Fig. 21). The opening of the channel was stone-lined and contained the front portion of an iron stove. This, combined with the fact that no discernable traces of firing/cooking were observed inside the oven, suggests that it was used as a smoker rather than for baking. Smoke from the iron stove was led to the oven (and chilled) through the stone/





*Fig. 11. Plan of Structure 6 with the excavation trench from 2013. Note the alignment of roof anchor stones outside the barrack walls. Drawing: Þ. Pétursdóttir.*

concrete channel. The high phosphate and MS levels immediately to the east of this structure indicate both food processing/waste disposal and heavy firing (see Figs. 6a&b). The latter probably relate to the firing of the stove; however, a second trench dug in this area proved inconclusive in terms of traces of organic disposal, which may relate to both waste removal and poor preservation conditions. The final trench was placed at the gate to the camp and encompassed the remnants of the two gateposts. Tightly packed stones around the post foundations firmed the uprights, which would have held the gate. The southern post had a slight rise on the exterior stone, perhaps to secure the gate at the base.

### *Investigated features outside the fences*

Of great significance was the detection of the refuse dump a few meters outside the northern perimeter of the camp. This waste disposal area displayed both the highest phosphate and MS-levels within the investigated area (see Figs. 6a&b,

10). The results of these investigations, combined with excavation and test pitting indicate that the dump covers an area of at least 60 square metres. A 4 x 1 m trench was excavated in the southern part of the dump, indicating that the trash had been deposited in deep pits. Huge amounts of garbage, sundry in composition, were found here, including a substantial quantity of faunal material. Among the artefacts were numerous alcohol and medicine bottles, tin cans, bits of plastic, string, slag, coke and coal, wood, pieces of rubber, bullet cartridges, fishing equipment, textile fragments, buttons, etc. Some of this material – such as discarded wine and champagne bottles – may suggest that the guards shared the dump with the prisoners, though alcohol bottles were also found inside the camp.

Another trench was dug in the floor area of the foundation for the plywood tent used by the guards on duty. The structure itself is hardly distinguishable from the tents inside the camp and contained a gravel floor scattered with pieces of plywood (Fig. 13). Compared to those from the prisoner dwellings the finds were sparse,



*Fig. 12. Pole photo of the southwest section of Structure 6 during excavation with dense concentrations of glass and other material exposed.*



*Fig. 13. Guard dwelling during excavation. The black tire fragment is barely visible next to the right section (behind stone); in the front part of the trench the fire rake can be spotted. Photo: B. Olsen.*

with, as expected, few traces of privacy and food consumption. There were, however, some very interesting specimens among them. An intact inkbottle, still with the cork stopper, may be seen as an iconic expression of routine activities performed here. An iron toe-plate for a boot may indicate maintenance but also contraband activities, as similar items were found inside several of the inmates' dwellings. Of great interest, in this respect, is also a large fragment of tire rubber with extensive cut marks. Traces of similar black rubber, apparently used for footwear production, augmentation and maintenance, were found inside

the camp, especially in Structure 2. Otherwise the excavation revealed little to suggest more affluent living conditions. Still, one significant feature, when compared to the prisoners' dwellings, was the larger amount of unused coal discards – an indication of less restricted access to this fuel source. The presence of an intact iron hoe/fire rake may be seen as another manifestation of this difference, as are, perhaps, fragments of asphalt/tar shingles, which may have helped to keep the roof waterproof or seal the windows. No such items were present in the trenches excavated inside the camp.

The last two trenches outside the camp were dug in a gun emplacement and a guard position, respectively. The gun emplacement consists of a circular concrete floor, 3 m in diameter, surrounded by a low wall of dry-stacked stone with two entrances. The northern entrance, comprised of turf steps firmed by tar-felt and wooden stakes, provided access to a shallow trench leading upslope. The southern opening connects to a staircase of turf and wood, which leads down to a hollow surrounded by turf. Compared to the artillery's western line of defensive positions set along the ridge of the raised beach terrace, the location of this gun emplacement – within the middle of the terrace slope below – is a bit odd. Given its field of vision, it seems to have had an additional mission involving camp surveillance and control. Apart from items associated with its construction features, there were hardly any finds from this structure. A single spring attached to an iron disk may be the remains of a but-cap for a flashlight.

South of the gun emplacement, the guard position is nestled at a higher point near the rim of the ridge above the drainage defile. Excavation exposed a narrow circular burrow lined with stacked stones and turf, one metre wide and one metre deep, accessed by well-built steps on the upper west side. To improve cover for the soldier on duty, the burrow wall may have been extended with an embankment of stacked sandbags around the rim. To provide some insulation during the cold seasons, the floor was covered with asphalt singles and tar-felt fragments. Lodged in one of the tar-felt fragments was an expended cartridge.

Among the few finds were fragments of a cap to an iron (field?) bottle.

### CARTRIDGES, COKE AND CHAMPAGNE

Given the POW context of hardship, shortage, and dispossession, one may easily assume that the outcome of archaeological explorations of their erstwhile campsites would prove rather poor, drab, or dismal. However, as indicated by a number of recent studies of POW camps (e.g. Waters 2006; Myers 2011; 2013; Seitsonen & Herva 2011; Utvik 2012; Mytum & Carr 2013; Rothenhausler & Adler 2013), and also by survivors' testimonies (e.g. Levi 1986; Myers 2011), questions regarding material possessions and access to resources is more nuanced and multifaceted than commonly assumed. And the material recovered from Teil-lager 6, Sværholt, clearly enriches our understandings of the POW conditions and experiences during WWII.

At first glance the excavated material may seem trivial and monotonous. A great portion consists of nails, bolts, bars, barbed wire, and unidentified iron debris, mixed with pieces of wood, window glass, rubber strips, and various amounts of coke. These masses of broken, discarded things, however, constitute an important portion of the camp assemblages and also reveal a great deal about facilities, construction, and maintenance, and about the necessities of POW life: such as keeping the cold at bay during long hours of winter dark; replacing a worn-out hood on a well-worn clog; or how to heat water in a large caldron in a small



*Fig. 14. Beer, wine, champagne and 'schnapps' bottles from the midden. Photo: S. Farstadvoll.*





Fig. 15. Bottles containing cologne (a) and Spectrol Wasser (b) from Structure 6. Photo: S. Farstadvoll.

plywood shelter. And their significance is not lessened by the fact that our excavations also yielded a large amount of not so expected artefacts. In fact, it is precisely the interplay between the bedrock of things everyday and anticipated, and the range of odd or unexpected things seemingly out of place, that provokes reflection and allows for thicker description of the conditions and experiences in this POW camp.

Alcohol and items related to smoking clearly belong within a category of matter out of place. While alcohol and drugs (such as Pervitin) were used with some frequency by German forces to stave off the miseries that came with combat and harsh living conditions (Steinkamp 2008), they were stimulants prohibited to the POWs. And yet, a large number of alcohol bottles, both fragmented and whole, were found inside the camp and, in particular, in the dump (Fig. 14). Whole specimens come mainly from the dump and the largest category was wine bottles of different varieties. These included red wine bottles in the shape of Bordeaux and Bourgogne types, more slender white wine bottles (Alsace / Mosel / Rhine), and even several champagne bottles, one of them from the burnt barrack inside the camp (Structure 6). Beer bottles are also common and the affluence of beer at the coastal artillery is further indicated by the large assemblage of smashed beer bottles still resting nearby the artillery positions at the cape summit (probably destroyed during the evacuation). In addition, there are examples of bottles for schnapps or other hard liqueurs (see Olsen &

Witmore 2014: 185–6).

Since most of the bottles were found in the dump outside the camp fence it cannot be ruled out that the deposits here also contain rubbish generated by guards on duty. In the case of alcohol, their presence may reflect the need to get rid of any evidence of on duty consumption. However, numerous fragments and even complete alcohol bottles were also found in the inmates' dwellings and their presence triggers the question whether the POWs had access to alcohol? While subsequent reuse for the purposes of holding drinking water cannot be ignored, such access is in fact also confirmed by local testimonies (pers.comm. Gunnlaug Sagen). A few finds indicate that even tobacco found its way across the fences. A set of pipe cleaners was found in an initial trial trench excavated in one of the barracks (Structure 5). The context suggests that they may have been hidden underneath the floor planks. While pipe cleaners may have a variety of uses, a tiny fragment of a pipe shaft was also recovered from a trench in one of the plywood tents (Structure 2). Along with alcohol, tobacco is not on the common list of rations for POWs. The finds thus clearly indicate that camp life at Teillager 6 may at times have deviated considerably from prescribed behaviour.

Similarly intriguing are also the numerous finds related to toiletry and personal care, including cologne. Bottles, jars and tubes holding these products were found both in the dump and the camp dwellings. For example, a clear glass, 40cc toiletry bottle embossed on the base with the brand name



Fig. 16. Tube containing cucumber ointment.  
Photo: S. Farstadvoll.

'Kaloderma' (Greek for 'good skin') was found in the dump. Produced by the German toiletry company *F. Wolff & Sohn*, it probably contained cologne or perfume. Another cologne bottle with the lid still on, and part of its liquid contents intact, was found at a lower level next to the wall in Structure 6, the burnt barrack (Fig. 15a). On top of it, and partly folded underneath, was a sheet of copper alloy, which also covered a few other items (pieces of garment, string, leather, and possibly paper). The content and context of this assemblage may indicate a cache or hideaway; the fact that it was unaffected by the fire may further support this. Another interesting find related to this category of personal items is a fragment of a heavily corroded container of copper alloy, also recovered from the burnt barrack. The surface contains rows of fluted lines as well as faint lettering reading 'Potocka – Compact', indicating that it might have been a 'compact', a small container for cosmetics, usually make-up for women.

The demand for such 'surplus' products in a male POW camp is indeed intriguing, though it should be noted that eau de cologne, and other male perfumes, is known to have been used for drinking as a surrogate to alcohol. Another bottle embossed with the name 'Spectrol' found in the burnt barrack, contained *Spectrol Wasser. Flecken-Reinigungsmittel für Wolle, Seide, Leder*,<sup>7</sup> which may be another trace of such alternative

means of intoxication, though more likely used as an inhalant (Fig. 15b). Still, toiletry articles found in the camp and the dump also included jars and tubes holding cream. Here such secondary uses are less likely. For example, a rolled-up aluminium tube with the name 'Gurkensaft' legible on both sides, contained cucumber ointment for skin care of which a white chalky substance still remains (Fig. 16). With respect to skin care, another interesting find from the burnt barrack was what seems to be a small iron razor blade.

Findings related to entertainment and leisure activities – board games in particular – were surprisingly abundant in the camp. Most frequent among these were small circular game pieces made of glass and decorated on both sides with concentric circles in the centre and lines radiating outwards from them (Fig. 17). A few of these pieces, which probably were used for board games such as Draughts, Mill or the like, were found in the plywood tents (in particular Structure 2) and in the dump. By far the most game pieces, however, were found in the burnt barrack (Structure 6) where 182 specimens of various colours were uncovered; their clustered distribution near the centre of the building indicates complete stored/shelved gaming sets caught by the fire. Among the exceptionally rich finds from this structure were 40 glass chess pieces and a six-sided die. The chess pieces (Fig. 18), which must have belonged to at least two sets, are white and black, and comprised of pawns, rooks, knights, bishops, queens and one warped and melted piece that might be a king. Fairly simple and small in design, the pieces were probably mass-produced as indicated by their uncomplicated character and the visible mold lines. Their form might be influenced by the ideological chess piece design named 'Deutsche Bundesform' that emerged in the late 1930s in Nazi Germany (Lindörfer 1991: 50).

Far removed from the realm of entertainment are a number of used cartridges, which were found throughout the site. They stem at the base of the cartridges show that they stem primarily from two producers, *Metallwarenfabrik Scharfenberg & Teubert GmbH* in Thüringen and the Norwegian company *Raufoss Ammunisjonsfabrikk*, which was taken over by the German occupying forces. The cartridges are for rifles as well as hand weapons, including the legendary 11.25 mm automatic Colt pistol manufactured by another Norwegian arms factory taken over by the Germans, *Kongs-*

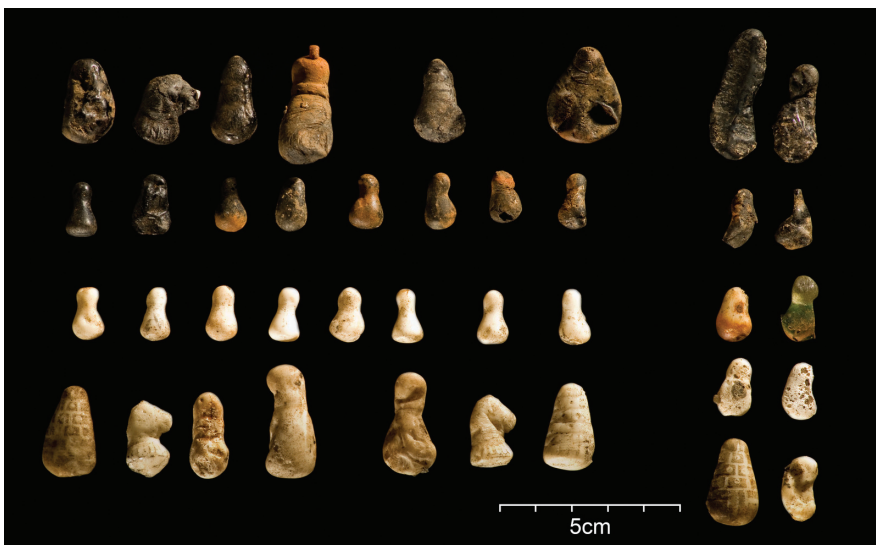
*berg Våpenfabrikk*. It was here that the Germans produced more than 8000 pistols of this type to be used as everyday hand weapons for officers (Hanevik 2003). It is hard to determine whether the cartridges found inside the camp dwellings reflect reuse for harmless purposes or violent incidents. At least one of the cartridges was cut in half, thus indicating some secondary reuse. Speaking in favour of such harmless bricolage is also the fact that few severe acts of violence are known from this camp. According to local testimonies and military records, though, one Russian prisoner was killed at Sværholt; a 23-year-old, who was accused of committing sabotage and executed in November 1943<sup>8</sup>.

A number of finds relate to prisoners' dress and footwear. Actual cloth is rare, though bits of fabric (wool, cotton, and linen) were found both in the dump and in some of the buildings inside the camp. Buttons, mostly made of metal, but also glass and plastic/bakelite, were found quite frequently in the camp dwellings. Of the identified buttons, several are German uniform buttons, including the somewhat iconic pebble-grain cap buttons. There were also small buttons for shirts as well as a large button most likely dislodged from an overcoat. One dish button, with fragments of a twisted cotton string still attached, carried the inscription 'Equipement Militaires'. This belonged to an Italian WWII camouflage *Zeltbahn*, a sheet



*Fig. 17. Gaming pieces from Structure 6. Photo: S. Farstadvoll.*

*Fig. 18. Melted chess pieces from Structure 6. Photo: S. Farstadvoll.*





of canvas (or other material) which could be used as a tent or a rain poncho (cf. Sáiz 2008: 128–9). Another dish button stem was from a German *Zeltbahn* or some other gear (satchel or backpack) issued by the Wehrmacht. More enigmatic is a silver fireman-uniform button, decorated with a laurel along the edge, two axes on the top and a fire in the middle. Several snap-cap buttons were also found in the burned barrack, including one with rubberised textiles attached, perhaps belonging to some kind of raingear. Since the snap-cap buttons are more permanently fixed to the cloth, they probably represent (uniform) garments kept in the building. The find of four iron-wire cloth hangers may be taken as further support for such a garment store. Other dress items include a couple of belt buckles; one of them, a large ‘roller’ buckle found in the other barrack (Structure 5), is of a distinctive type used by the Red Army.

The far most frequent archaeological components of prisoner dress are items related to footwear. Fragments of footwear and debris from shoe making and maintenance, mostly cuts of rubber but also pieces of leather (including soles), were found both inside the camp and in the dump. Most of the leather seems to originate from worn-out German army boots, while a good portion of the (black) rubber was derived from vehicle tires (Fig. 19a). The find of a large portion of cut-tire rubber in the investigated guard hut suggests a likely source of access. A rubber boot heel, produced by the German company *Westland Gummiwerke GmbH* found in Structure 2 (Fig. 19b), may well have entered the camp through the same supply connections. The rubber also comes from sources other than tires, including a yellow/white variety with striated surface of unknown origin. Among the notable remains of footwear, from both inside the camp and the dump, were also numerous German iron boot heels and toe plates; these represent another reminder of the flow of material across the fenced divide.

Footwear was of course crucial for survival under the conditions prevailing at Sværholt and its generous share in the archaeological material is a telling reminder of these harsh circumstances. The poor quality and simplicity of the footwear generated constant demand for repair and replacement. Among the most common footwear for the prisoners were clogs or ‘slippers’ (cf. Helskog 2004: 40), and some of the half cuts found are clearly hoods for such wooden footwear. The amount of

shoe material from Structure 2, where numerous cuts representing different stages of processing were found, further suggests a certain ‘division of labour’ and an allowance for the practice of professional or learned skills. Other items, possibly related to this activity, include fragments of small wooden brushes (found in the dump), awls, and grindstones (Structure 2).

Finds related to food consumption are also frequent. These include tin cans of various shapes and sizes uncovered in both the dump and the camp dwellings. Sardine cans, heavily corroded and without labels, represent a common and distinct category, including one unopened can with only a crack in the lid. Discarded lids and corroded can fragments are especially common; some of the lids have profiled concentric circles similar to the tin-ration cans issued by the Wehrmacht (cf. Sáiz 2008). More exceptional is the fragmented remains of what seems to be the packaging for a field ration, found in the dump. Despite the frequency of their recovery, the tinned food remains are perhaps less plentiful than one might expect and the recovered faunal material strongly suggests that local resources, especially fish, constituted an important addition to the diet.

Most of the faunal material comes from the dump. Osteological analysis shows that the most prevalent bones, by far, are vertebra and cranial fragments of cod (including a minor portion of haddock) (Vretemark 2013). The presence of fin bones suggests that whole fresh cod, probably acquired from the fishing hamlet, was processed in the camp. Another interesting feature is the large number of crushed bones from large cod, which also suggests that dried fish was an important part of the diet. The size of the cod varies greatly (lengths from 20 to 120 cm), and one cannot rule out the possibility that some of the small specimens, especially given the presence of plaice bones in the material, may represent shallow-water fishing by the inmates themselves in the area of the hamlet harbour where they commonly worked in various garrison workshops<sup>9</sup>. Finds of numerous fishhooks in the dump, a needle for mending fishnets (Structure 2), and even fragments of a cotton fishnet recovered from the dump’s lower layers may speak in favour of this situation. A small number of cattle, sheep, and pig bones were also found. Bone size and cut marks show that this rather rare food had been finely sliced before cooking. Moreover, some remains of wild animals



Fig. 19. Hood for clog made of tire rubber (a) and rubber boot-heel (b) from Structure 2. Photos: R. Skjørten Hansen and S. Farstadvoll.

included a few fox bones. One hipbone had clear traces of butchering (Fig. 20), suggesting that even fox may have been occasionally consumed<sup>10</sup>.

Few eating utensils are among the recovered finds: only some fragmented ceramic dinner plates, cups, and mugs were found. One fragment of a porcelain pitcher has the base stamped with the logo and name of *Porsgrunds Porselænsfabrik*, a well-known Norwegian company which also produced porcelain ware for the Wehrmacht. Fragments of frosted glassware are probably from a decorated drinking glass or bowl. No cutlery was found, though a blade for a sheath knife may have been used for food processing. Given the large amounts of fragments of high quality glazed earthenware and porcelain Wehrmacht services observed in one of the yet unexcavated garrison features in the hamlet, it seems obvious that there where restrictions with regards to which items – legally or illegally – could enter the camp.

### A SENSE OF SYMPATHY?

The finds from our investigation of the POW camp at Sværholt are rich and some of them clearly

challenge common assumptions related to the conditions and experiences among those incarcerated. Importantly, what these things expose does not wipe away the many well-documented accounts of hardship and trauma in POW camps in the north or elsewhere (for Norway, see Steffenak 2008; Stokke 2008; Soleim 2009; Lundemo 2010). Rather, these accounts and experiences are in many ways attested, detailed, and concretised through the archaeological material. Still, the things recovered also speak to the less often articulated everydayness of camp life, from the trivial details to the more astonishing, even enigmatic events; all totalled, such information thus thickens those accounts otherwise available. In their variety and richness, the things found clearly reveal that rules were negotiated, or, in the least, that there was some acceptance of deviant behaviour.

As our investigations have revealed non-commissioned goods travelled across the double-perimeter fence. Indeed, the numerous exotic and/or prohibited items found inside both the camp and the dump suggest networks for the movement of contraband and for bartering. This, of course, does not account for all ‘exotic’ goods recovered. Board games and chess sets may have entered the camp through official channels, as an acknowledgement of the prisoners’ need for some measure of pastime and to keep them mentally fit, not the least during the long, dark winter hours. Alcohol and tobacco items, of course, were clearly not part of any regular exchange; neither were cologne and skin care products, nor German iron boot heals and uniform buttons. Thus there is much that speaks in favour of a hidden, even overlooked, ‘economy’ where food, everyday items as well as more desired goods were circulated. The existence of such ‘economies’ is well documented, from major concentration camps such as Auschwitz (cf. Levi 1986; Myers 2011), and the finds from Sværholt suggest similar networks of exchange also existed at small and more easily monitored camps. Entangled in this exchange was also a native community of people, animals, and things that supplied the camp with fish and other products. Clearly, most of the fish and animal bones found in the dump are the remains of local products supplied through this exchange. In all likelihood, the Germans acquired fish and meat from the locals, both for their own consumption and in order to feed the prisoners. Still, local testimonies describe how food was left, whether secretly or overtly,

near the trails frequented by the inmates. Perhaps to express their gratitude, accounts also note how POWs gave handmade dolls and ornaments to the hamlet children (Sagen 1999).

If such transactions between the POWs and the locals clearly reflected a care for the other, if they indicate some concern for prisoner well-being, a similar empathy cannot be assumed for those non-prescribed transactions, which occurred across the divide. The guard on duty may have paid his boot repair with a decent cut of tire rubber or a worn-out sole; such exchange of goods and services between guards and prisoners may be explained as opportunistic or rational behaviour. Nonetheless, even if grounded by use value or necessity's whim, could such exchange and interaction also have been fostered by a developing sympathy between the guards and the guarded? A wide range of variability characterised relationships between the prisoners and the guards in POW camps. German soldiers were known at times to have turned a blind eye when POWs received food from locals or violated the prescribed rules in other ways (cf. Steffenak 2008; Lundemo 2010). It is also generally assumed that the conditions in small camps were normally more tolerant than in larger ones (Lundemo 2010: 61), and maybe Sværholt, more than many other places, afforded such tolerance – at times, perhaps, even a delicate measure of bonding?

Conditions at 71 degrees north are indeed challenging. For all foreigners to this land, prisoners and guards, the rites of daily life, the circadian rhythms of light and dark, the weekly round, everything was impacted by the changes of seasons. From September to May, the cold was one's constant companion. Snow was pervasive for most of this nine-month period. Sværholt made

its impact. What the summer offered in extended light, the winter took away in the long dark. In a POW camp, darkness might provide opportunities to escape to, but in reality there was nowhere to escape, nowhere to survive in refuge. Neither for the soldiers was escape an option. If the common ratio of one guard to fifteen inmates was implemented (Soleim 2009), there would have been no more than three to four guards on duty at any time. It is likely that other soldiers would man the positions along the terrace, but these positions required few attendants. Taking into account how closely – and how similarly – the guards on duty and the inmates lived, it is hard not to contemplate their *common* fate. Whether POW or soldier, all were stranded individuals from faraway southern places. Imagine the experience of spending months at one's post or in a plywood tent, watching each other through the fence; or climbing the winding road to the ice- and snow-covered summit of the cape during winter darkness with the foaming sea deep below, not knowing, neither POW nor soldier, when – or if – you could leave.

The shared situation of waiting, idleness, and probably also boredom, added to these life conditions, when during winter work was restricted by freezing wind, snow, and darkness. Game and chess pieces, alcohol bottles, items of personal care, remains from repair and maintenance of footwear and clothes provide silent testimony to this idle, 'leisure' time. Maybe the 'prohibited' items jointly gathered in the dump hint at sharing even prior to their deposition? For the whole fort, waiting was a constant; *Heeres-Küsten-Batterie* 1/971 was not involved in any significant combat during its two and a half years of operation. Apart from compulsory tests and preparatory drills, hardly a shot was fired from the artillery canons. The only immediate disturbance and danger came from occasional allied planes. While there was only one air attack, unsuccessful though it was, such raids constituted a constant threat, not only to the battery and its personnel, but also to all communities at Sværholt. Thus, when the air raid sirens sounded they somehow came to signify the involuntary bonds that developed between the German occupants, the POWs, and the local residents. 'If airplanes approached and they flew high we



Fig. 20. Fox hipbone with cut marks. Photo: S. Farstadvoll.



Fig. 21. The Russian oven. Photo: B. Olsen.

knew it was the enemies of the Germans, who also became our enemies since we were so vulnerable', recalled one of the Norwegian residents from her childhood at Sværholt (Sagen 1999: 8). She also gives a clue to the strange everydayness of occupation and war, and the way it, at least as seen from a child's perspective, came to be normalised and lived with, 'None of the Germans at Sværholt did us any harm: they became like neighbours' (Sagen 1999: 8). The situation was clearly very different for those incarnated on the other side of the isthmus. However, there is also much to suggest that there were nuances to this and the things that have survived allow us to glimpse such differences, and what might have been an emerging, if nonetheless restricted, sense of commonality.

The only intact construction surviving in the camp today is the above-mentioned 'Russian oven'; one of the few things that the POWs built for themselves (Fig. 21). With its very distinct design and hybrid blend of stacked stone and hand-packed concrete it is strikingly different from any of the German constructions at Sværholt (cf. Olsen & Witmore 2014: 168–9). Even today it radiates a peculiar otherness and it is very likely that the prisoners and guards alike conceived of the oven as something explicitly 'Russian'. Conspicuously present near the main gate, it constituted a welcoming feature upon return to camp after a strenuous day; one which probably evoked memories of home and hopes of return. The curious fact that the fragile oven was left to stand during those frantic days of evacuation, when everything was destroyed or dismantled, calls for reflection. Its survival, of course, may be due to a presumed insignificance as a waste relic of the *Untermenschen*. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled

out that it was spared as an act of sympathy for the other; in the very least, it may reflect some modest measure of tolerance and acceptance; a sympathy and tolerance thus still remembered by the oven's persistent presence in the heather-covered camp.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Although most of these coastal fortifications were built between 1942 and 1945, earlier coastal forts were also included in the defensive line.

<sup>2</sup> Under the name *Einsatzgruppe Wiking* when established in Norway and Denmark in 1942.

<sup>3</sup> These plywood shelters were also used by soldiers during warfare and came as prefabricated kits, complete with readymade wall and roof sections, poles, and a box of bolts and other mounting devices (see *Taschenbuch für den Winterkrieg*, 1942, translated by the Military Intelligence Division, American War Department, and entitled *German Winter Warfare*, 1943: 75–9).

<sup>4</sup> Both methods have previously been applied in Finland and Scandinavia for functional analysis of pre-modern settlement spaces (Grabowski & Linderholm 2013). Phosphate analysis was performed using the citric acid method which, under the conditions prevailing at Sværholt, is presumed to provide a reasonable representation of anthropogenic enrichment of soil phosphates due to depositions of food residues and/or human excrement (see method section in Grabowski & Linderholm 2013 and therein listed references). MS-analysis using a laboratory based magnetometer was used to identify areas of modified susceptibility due to heating and/or deposition of iron rich material (Grabowski & Linderholm 2013).

<sup>5</sup> This complies very well with the description given in the American translation of the German *Taschenbuch für den Winterkrieg*, where reference is made to another German document stating that the inside diameter is approximately 18 feet. According to this document the height of walls are five feet, while the centre height is seven feet (*German Winter Warfare* 1943: 79). A detailed description of the tents and how to assemble them can be found in the manual *Miehistöelä* published by the Finnish producer Wilh. Schauman A.B., Jyväskylä.

<sup>6</sup> 'Roof anchor' is a term used locally to designate the way roofs are held firm by wires attached to solid ground stones, and observing how they were used in the camp, including the arrangement for how to



twist the wires in order to tighten them as needed, suggests that this knowledge was locally derived.

<sup>7</sup> 'Spectrol water. Stain-remover/detergent for wool, silk, leather'

<sup>8</sup> After being captured during the siege of Leningrad (St. Petersburg) in October 1941, Nicolaj Stepanovich Sujkov of Mordovia spent eight months in the German POW camp Stalag II-D in Stargrad near Szczecin in present day Poland. In 1942 he was transferred to Norway as slave labourer and served at several POW camps in the north before arriving at Sværholt in July 1943. Four months later he was accused of committing sabotage by allegedly cutting an electric wire to the radio link and summarily executed. Local witnesses claim he just grabbed a piece of wire to tie his coat. Buried at Sværholt he was exhumed in 1951 as part of the so-called 'Operation Asphalt', a state initiated enterprise implemented to gather all Soviet POWs buried in northern Norway at a common Soviet war cemetery established at Tjøtta, Nordland County (Fjermeros 2013). The main rationale was to prevent Soviet intelligence using visits to the scattered burials and memorials in the north as cover for espionage.

<sup>9</sup> Apart from being less suitable for such fishing, the extensive mine field and fences will have prohibited all access to the shore on the Eidsbukta side of the isthmus.

<sup>10</sup> *En passant* it may be mentioned that serious discussion occurred over whether to feed the Soviet POWs in Norway with fox meat from breeding farms. The plan was never implemented, however, probably because the number of foxes was too small to make any significant difference to the prisoners' rations (Lundemo 2010: 46).

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