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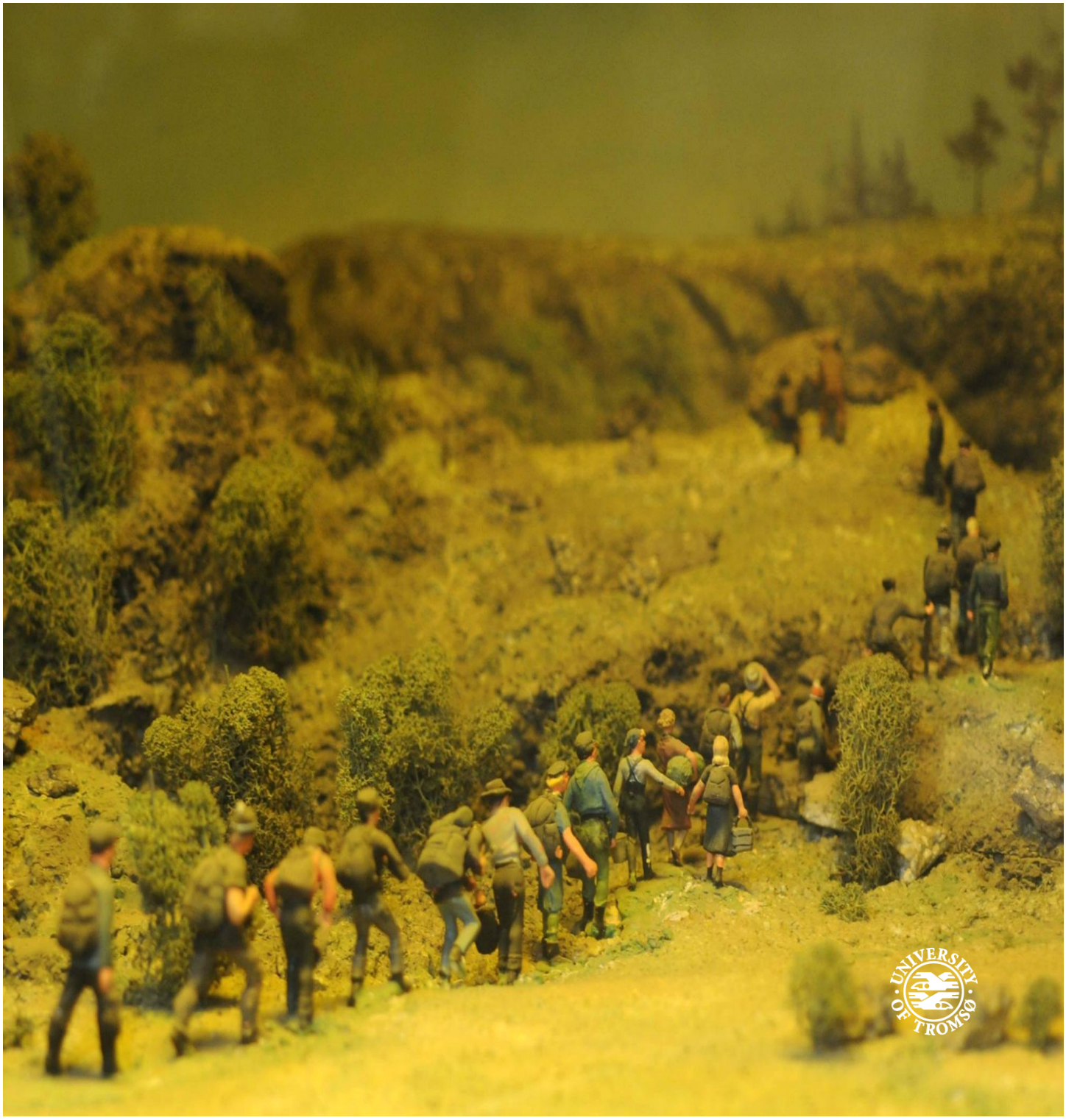
Journey to the Free World

Sámi and Norwegian Border Pilots during World War II in Nordland County

Simon Pavall

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies
May 2016



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Sámi and Norwegian Border Pilots in Nordland County during World War II

A Thesis submitted by:

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Cover Page: Part of the exhibition about the border traffic in Norway during World War II at the Homefront Museum, Akershus Fortress, Oslo. Copyright: Norwegian Homefront Museum.

Acknowledgements

First, I want to thank my grandfather for what he has done as a border pilot in his life. Even though I never knew him, I feel as if I have gotten closer to him through the stories I have heard and read.

I also want to thank everyone I have been in contact with while doing my fieldwork gathering data. They are:

The Library in Fauske

The Library in Mo i Rana

The Norwegian Homefront Museum in Oslo

Oddmund Andersen, Árran, Tysfjord.

Ole Henrik Fagerbakk

I also want to thank the Centre for Sámi Studies for helping with my thesis.

I want to thank my supervisor, Jens-Ivar Nergård. Even though you came into this process a year later, you have given me a lot of good ideas and comments, which have helped a lot.

I want to thank my family for providing me with contacts and giving me tips, ideas and useful information.

Lastly, I want to thank Vanessa. Without you pushing me to reach my goal, this thesis would have never made it in time, nor would I have been as satisfied with it as I am now. You have given me a lot of good insight and help. It have also helped to have someone to talk to while bouncing ideas, even when you never said a word to comment on what I was saying. They say that behind every man is a great woman. In this sense, it is especially true.

Abstract

The Second World War had a great impact on. For Norwegians, the War contributed to create a national identity, based on a shared oppression from a military invasion and resistance. Because of the war, many people fled to Sweden. Most of those refugees needed help from border pilots. In some areas Sámi border pilots was important because they knew the area very well indeed. Some of them were closely related to Sámi families in Sweden

This thesis is a study what both Norwegian and Sámi border pilots did, who they were, where they did it and why they did it. It is also about how the public treated Sámi border pilots after the war. It covers the areas from Saltdal in the south to Tysfjord to the north. The thesis is based on interviews, books, articles and articles from local yearbooks in those four areas. In the end, many border pilots helped refugees because they felt it was the right thing to do. It was organised in such a way that a lot of people helped. People helped with food, clothes and shelter. Sometimes refugees came to them asking for help, but most of the times there were people picking up the refugees and then giving the refugees to the border pilots. Turning the refugees away would reduce their chances of fleeing to Sweden and if they did not receive help, they could be caught by German authorities. After the War, the Sámi border pilots were charged with treason, although the case was later dismissed, but because the way they were treated and accused, they became ashamed of what they had done. It was not until 2005, 70 years after the war ended, when the King apologised for the treatment the Sámi border pilots received after the war. It has taken a long time and a lot of effort to try to tell their stories and to fix the injustice that they received.

Table of Content

Grenselosenes innsats for å redde mennesker ut av livsfarlige situasjoner under krigen er blitt vel kjent etter hver som krigshistoria er blitt fortalt. Og innsatsen var engasjement, strabaser og risiko for eget liv. Hva som drev dem, kan vi gjøre oss mange tanker om. At det betyr noe for mange å gjøre noe for andre, er hevet over tvil. Noe av det største må være å kunne berge liv. Dette ligger forankret både i menneskets natur og i vår kultur. Vi ser også at det ikke er belønning, verken i form av penger eller ære og berømmelse, som er drivkraften. Hadde det dét vært, ville det ikke vært grenseloser. For det var neppe så mange av de som de reddet, som hadde midler å belønne med. Og den ære og berømmelse som ble noen av grenselosene til del, måtte de vente med til langt ut i freden for å få. Selv gjorde de ikke mye for å skape oppmerksomhet om det de drev med. Ikke i fredstid, og slett ikke under krigen[1]

The border pilot's effort for saving people out of life threatening situations during the war became well known as the occupation history has been told. And the contribution was involvement, hardships and risking their lives. What drove them, we can make many thoughts about. That it means something for many to do something for others, there is no doubt of that. The greatest must be to save someone's life. This is anchored in both human nature and in our culture. We see that it is not reward, neither in the shape of money or honour and fame, that is the driving force. If that were the case, there would be no border pilots. For it was hardly so many of those that were saved, that had any means to reward with. And the honour and fame that went to the border pilots, they had to wait long after peace had arrived before they got that. They did not try to gather any attention of what they did. Not in peace time, and especially not during the war.

[1] Granheim 2008:190

1 Introduction

My topic in this thesis is the Sámi and Norwegian border pilots in Nordland County in Norway during World War II. Border pilots were people who voluntarily escorted refugees from Norway to Sweden during the occupation of Norway, thus helping and saving many lives. The border pilots knew the terrain, they knew the German patrols and checkpoints and because of this, they became important figures for refugees struggling to cross borders. As a neutral country with no German soldiers, Sweden was an attractive choice for many refugees. In the first years of the war, German soldiers that deserted and came to Sweden were returned back to Norway by Swedish authorities and many of them would face punishment. Although, in the later stages of the war, German soldiers that deserted and fled to Sweden were not sent back. Reasons for that may have been that the war turned against Germany or that Swedish authorities realised many German soldiers wanted away from war.

The reason for choosing the topic is that my grandfather was a border pilot during the war. Even though I never knew him, I feel that I know some part of him because of the stories I have heard about him. I am proud about the kind of person he was. Because my grandfather was a border pilot, I feel he has a connection to history. Being able to write his story allows me to connect to him and know him, even though I never knew him.

1.1 Invasion and Five Years of Occupation

April 9, 1940, German military forces invaded Norway, thus Norway became part of the Second World War and the King and government had to flee from the capital. The fighting in the southern parts of Norway was over quickly as the Norwegian army withdrew to the north. The German forces attacked Narvik, and Allied military troops from England, France and Poland, managed to push the Germans out of Narvik, inflicting Germany its first defeat of the Second World War. However, because of Germany's success in Western Europe and with the invasion of France, the Allied troops had to withdraw from Narvik and the King and government fled to England, where they continued their resistance.

Two months later, on June 10, the Norwegian military forces capitulated and Norway would stay occupied for the duration of the war, until May 8, 1945, when Germany surrendered to the Allied military forces.

Because the King and the government had fled, Quisling, the leader of the Norwegian Nazi Party, took charge and established himself as Prime Minister through a coup. As a result, many Norwegians did not know where they could look for guidance. They could either look

towards the exiled government and the King in London, or towards the new one. Quisling, leader of "Nasjonal Samling"[2] had, on the day of invasion, declared himself Prime Minister, and had proclaimed his own list of ministers without the Norwegian government and the German occupation forces agreeing to it. After the war, Quisling would be charged with high treason and executed for his crimes against Norway and its people. Still, the exiled government considered itself in charge, while the new government considered itself in charge as well. It was no wonder Norwegians were confused when they were looking for guidance.

> *Against this, the continuity of Norwegian sovereignty was embodied in the King and his Government, from the middle of June 1940 in exile in England and all but cut of from contact with their people. Constitutionally their position was strong, and their formal authority to speak on behalf of the nation was generally recognised. Politically, however, it was a government tainted by defeat, and saddled with blame for failing to keep the country out of the war and for inadequate leadership during the campaign.*[3]

With the capitulation of France, the new government in Norway saw no other outcome than to ask the King to resign allowing itself to become a satellite state under Germany. It must have been a very difficult choice to make. Nonetheless, the King spoke to his people on a broadcast by the BBC and explained himself.

> *...he stated his conviction that he would betray his constitutional duty to his people if he yielded to suggestions which were necessarily the product of threats and intimidations and not the result of free deliberations. His duty to the Norwegian Government at the last free meeting of the Storting, was to uphold the nation's sovereignty until such a time as the country was again free and normal constitutional processes could be resumed.*[4]

The King's response to the question about resigning coupled with the events on April 10, where a German messenger asked the King to accept Quisling as Prime Minister, have become known as "Kongens nei."[5] At that time, it was felt as a turning point for many that resulted in many people believing that the King and the exiled government were still in charge and the new government was not. The message that the King held was spread all across occupied Norway by clandestine means, and it was printed, duplicated, and copied. Even though some people felt that they could side with the King and the exiled government, others felt obliged to follow the new government. There were also people trying to be as neutral as possible, because they were no sure where the lines were drawn. This made it incredibly hard for Norwegians to decide

[2] National Unity, Norwegian Nazi Party
[3] Riste and Nökleby 1994:9
[4] Riste and Nökleby 1994:13
[5] "The Kings No"

whether they should fight against the German authorities. After the war, there were many people who faced punishments because they had sided with the German authorities and the new government.

The Germans wanted Norway to be as calm and quiet as possible so strategic and economic benefits could be extracted as thoroughly as possible. Any kind of disturbance, resistance, or non-cooperation would have greatly affected the strategic and economic benefits Norway had to the German forces, and Norway would have needed a greater presence of German soldiers to be in control of the population in case of some sort of resistance.

When there was an explosion under a bridge between Oslo and the airport, which was a vital route for the arriving forces to Norway, the reaction was severe. First, the German military commander issued warnings that such acts of sabotage would have consequences, such as punishment for the saboteurs and reprisals among the civilian population. Posters appeared on the street that announced executions for the perpetrators. The next day, there were posters by civilians that warned against such destructive acts of sabotage. The sabotage had a couple of unintended consequences and it showed both Norway and Germany that there were people willing to fight.

> *The "Lysaker Bridge" incident was but an episode. In retrospect, however, it is quite meaningful. First of all it shows that there were people in Norway who were prepared to offer all-out resistance to the invaders, resistance beyond the limits of conventional campaign warfare. But it also confirms that such a resistance was completely alien to the thinking of large segments of the Norwegian population. Finally, the German reaction shows the nervousness of the invader at the prospect of fighting a whole nation instead of a small army.*[6]

It is also harder for a traditionally operating military force to fight against an unconventional army. The unconventional army, or in this case the Norwegian resistance, is much harder to identify when compared to a conventional military force. They do not dress up in military clothes, and instead they try to blend in with the general population. But for the most of the population, this was a kind of fighting they were not used to and knew nothing about.

It is easy to understand why soldiers and people affiliated with the Norwegian military would fight for Norway's independence from the occupation. They have an obligation and a sense of duty to fight, while civilians do not. It is an interesting fact that most border pilots had no military training or education, yet they risked their lives and even came into combat with German soldiers to help refugees across the border to Sweden. Some of the border pilots were

[6] Riste and Nökleby 1994:15

part of the Norwegian military, while most were not. Most of the border pilots in Norway were civilians who by some chance became part of the war. They were in physical good shape since they had to escort refugees to Sweden and they knew the land and the terrain they were crossing with the refugees. The Norwegian resistance movement consisted of many components, ranging from illegal printing of news and posters that were anti-German in nature, to saboteur actions, such as the Heavy Water sabotage[7] and the sinking of the German transport ship "Donau".

The German leadership considered Norway very important and they sent many German troops there, especially to the Northern parts of Norway that were considered important.

> *I forhold til folketallet var det ikke noen av de okkuperte landene som hadde så mange tyske soldater som Norge. På det meste var det stasjonert over 400.000 tyske soldater på norsk jord. Den største styrken var, som nevnt, sendt til Nord-Norge i forbindelse med utbyggingen av vei og jernbane, brakkebyer, forsvarsanlegg og flyplasser.*[8]

The German military command considered Norway very important for the outcome of the war. Because of Norway's location in the Atlantic, German airplanes could attack Allied military convoys headed for the Soviet Union. Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, and the Allied powers sent military convoys carrying military equipment and munitions to the Soviet Union. The convoys needed escorts by military vessels because German submarines sunk many ships during the war. They would also ship a lot of resources for the German war effort. Norway became known as part of the "Atlantic Wall"[9], and there were many German soldiers stationed during the war. In fact, as late as May 1945, there were still approximately 350,000 German soldiers in Norway,[10] and the Allied military powers feared that they would not surrender, even when Admiral Dönitz[11] signed the complete and unconditional surrender of all German forces. For the Commander-in-Chief of Norway, that decision was hard and bitter. In his opinion, the German force stationed in Norway, was "undefeated and in the possession of their full strength".[12]

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[7] An act of sabotage at February 27, 1942 at the Norsk Hydro plant in Rjukan in Telemar. Heavy Water is a key component for creating the atomic bomb, and was Germany's only supplier of it. In addition, an act of sabotage in 1944 destroyed the ferry that was carrying machinery and Heavy Water, but also ended up with the loss of fourteen Norwegian civilians. With the sinking of the ferry, the chances of Germany creating the atomic bomb were gone.

[8] Evjen 2004:212. My translation: When compared to the population, no other occupied country had as many German soldiers as Norway. At the most, there were over 400,000 German soldiers on Norwegian soil. The biggest part of the force was as mentioned, sent to Northern Norway in connection with the development of roads and railroads, the building of group a of military huts and defence facilities and airports.

[9] A series of fortification, coastal batteries and defences that stretched from the northern coast of Norway and all the way south as far as the border between France and Spain.

[10] Riste and Nökleby 1994:82

[11] Chief of the German Kriegsmarine (navy) and Hitler's successor

[12] Riste and Nökleby 1994:85

That is why the Norwegian underground resistance became so important. In the event that the German Commander-in-Chief of Norway would not surrender, the 13,000 people in the police force in Sweden and the 40,000 in Milorg[13] would join forces to protect lives and property, and in case the Germans would not comply with Dönitz, support an Allied landing force in Norway.

However, for Norway and its population, the Commander-in-Chief of the German forces in Norway complied with Dönitz, and he surrendered alongside the rest of the German military. Even though the German Commander-in-Chief agreed with the unconditional surrender on May 7, it would not take effect until the next day. The problem the Commander-in-Chief had was accepting that Milorg would come and take control until the government could return and that he would follow directions from what he thought as a "civilian army." Luckily, he accepted that the Milorg would only ensure law and order, and that they meant no danger towards the German troops.

The capitulation happened in a more peaceful fashion than anticipated and the German troops were ordered to withdraw from every fortification and hand in their weapons, although no one could have forced them to do it. There was a proclamation printed by the leadership that said that even though Norway was a free country again, the enemy had weapons, people were told not overdo their celebration or to provoke German troops. Because of this, there were very few incidents between Norwegian and German troops. Only the most convinced Nazis, Germans and Norwegians committed suicide, such as Reichskommisar Terboven, who was the German in charge of Norway. The celebration reached its peak when King Haakon VII returned to Norway on June 7, 1945.

The Norwegian resistance had its losses during the five years of occupation. The exact number is unknown but one can estimate.

> *No one knows for certain the number of Norwegians arrested for political reasons during the war, but it seems to have been between 30,000 and 40,000. According to official sources, the Resistance lost 2,091 men and women during the five years of occupation. 366 were executed; 162 were killed in open fights with the Germans; 130 died in prison in Norway, many of them either as a result of torture or because they committed suicide. In the concentration camps in Germany 1,340 Norwegian political prisoners lost their lives, among them 610 Jews, and the escape route across the North Sea took 93 lives. In addition comes*

[13] Militær organisasjon. My translation: Military organization.

an unknown number whose health had been ruined for life because of torture of maltreatment in prison.[14]

The 2,091 men and women who died during the occupation were not the only casualties during the war. Norwegian soldiers that joined the Allied forces also had their casualties, and the Norwegian merchant navy suffered significant losses. However, Norwegian casualties during the war pale when compared to the losses of the Allied forces, and especially when compared to the Soviet Union, which had the highest number of casualties during the war.

After the war, those who supported Nazism, those who were members of "Nasjonal Samling" and/or those who reported Norwegians to the German authorities were faced with different penalties. Quisling and 24 others were executed for the crimes they had committed during the occupation.[15] In total, 90,000 people were investigated, and about half of those were taken to court. The reason for the high number of people that were investigated for treason was that the Government in England had made it illegal during the war to be a member of "Nasjonal Samling." The other occupied countries had not done that, but on the other hand, Norwegians did not take the law into their own hands and punished Nazi sympathisers, as they did in other countries, because Norwegians experienced a "milder" form of occupation than many of the other occupied countries. The term "milder" is used very lightly, as the occupation in Norway was not in any sense mild, because of the scorched earth policy that was used in Finnmark in 1944-1945. This policy resulted in the forced evacuation of a large amount of the population there. When comparing the occupation of Norway and the occupation of the Soviet Union, one can see that it was much harsher for the Soviet Union than it was for Norway.

The largest group of the 45,000 people that were taken to court, included those who had been members of "Nasjonal Samling." The penalties could range from fines, penal servitude, and/or prison, and the punishment could depend on the combination of other actions they undertook during the occupation. The fines were seen as a collective punishment for what "Nasjonal Samling" had done during the occupation, and in addition, everyone lost their rights as citizens for 10 years because of their anti-national attitude. Others received harsher penalties such as higher fines, and the worst cases (excluding execution) could face to lose his/her right to vote for the rest of their lives.

[14] Riste and Nökleby 1994:89
[15] Evjen 2004:248

1.2 Crossing the Border

During the fighting in 1940, there were approximately 10,000 people who fled across the border or crossed the border to get to the fighting further north. Sweden was a neutral country during the war, at least when it came to the fighting, but there were Nazi sympathisers there too, and Sweden transported resources to Narvik by train, which were then transported to Germany. Those resources were then used for the war. It is important to note that there were no German soldiers in Sweden, and because of that, people could travel across the border or flee to Sweden.

After the fighting stopped, most returned to Norway, but between 1,000 and 2,000 stayed. Most were young men who wanted to get to either Canada or England to join the Norwegian forces there, but because of the restrictions Swedish authorities made, it became very difficult to leave Sweden and join the fighting.[16] Even though they somehow managed to find a way to other Allied nations, getting there would prove very difficult. One option was to take a boat from the coast of Norway and travel across the sea, but this was dangerous because of the chance that they be discovered by German patrols before and during the crossing. Or they could simply perish in the sea. Another options people had was to travel one of several longer routes to join Allied forces (see picture below).

[16] Rørvik and Støre 2012:11

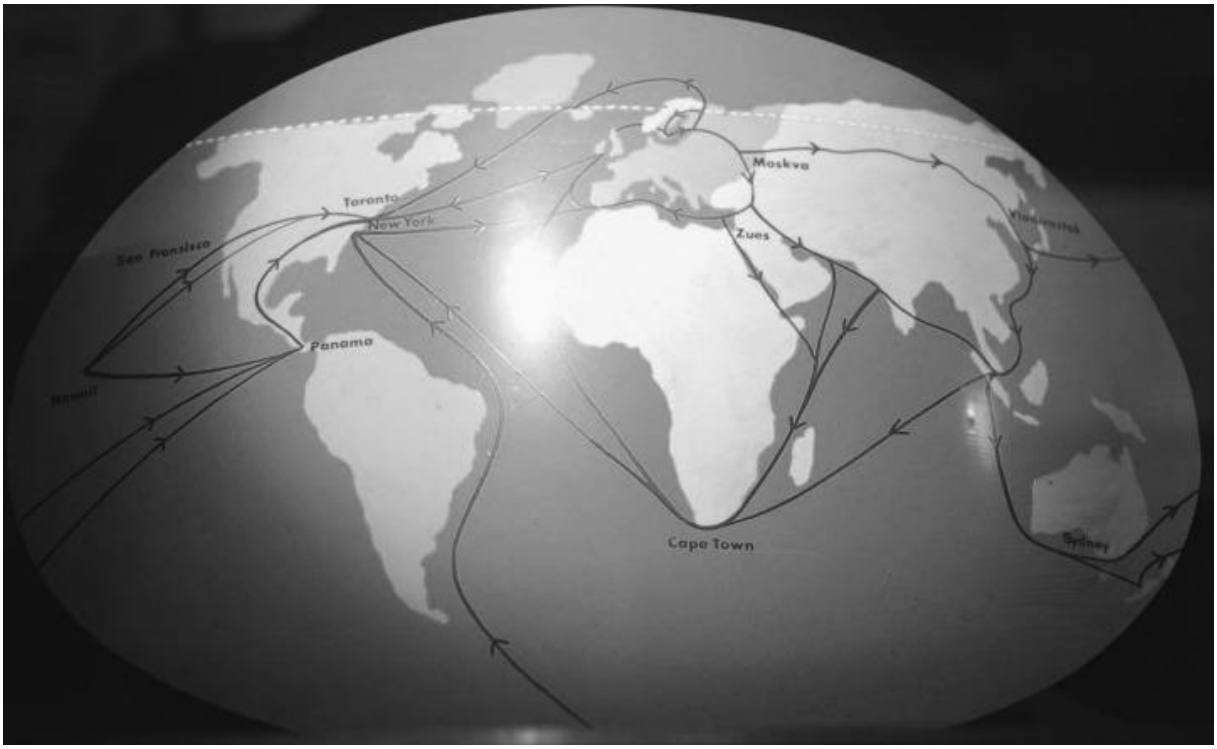

Figure 1 *- This picture shows the different routes people could take if they wanted to leave Norway to join either Norwegian military forces and/or Allied military forces. (Courtesy of the Norwegian Homefront Museum, Oslo)*

With many refugees wanting to cross the border to Sweden, it was inevitable that border pilots became important. Exactly when and where border pilots started to escort refugees is uncertain however, it is known that these escorts were already underway in 1940. Many border pilots lived on mountain farms, which were farms that were located close to the mountain in tough terrain, but not in the mountains themselves. They did not just live off the farm. They also hunted and fished in the mountains, and because of those activities they became very familiar with the terrain across which they would later end up escorting refugees. In addition, Sámi border pilots would use Sámi when talking amongst themselves, which meant German soldiers listening to the conversations, could not understand them. They also created codes, which meant that even though the German soldiers understood the language, they could not understand what they meant. In addition, they had many contacts around them who could help them if they came under suspicion. When they had to carry messages, they only knew whom they would receive them from and whom they would pass the messages on to. They did not know who sent the message to begin with and who would receive it on the other end. They were people who knew the terrain very well: they were used to being in the mountains, they were in good physical shape because they were hunting, fishing and gathering food, and they knew the routines of the German soldiers. In other words, they were in an advantageous position to help refugees.

Losen var viktigere enn brød -- de var veltrente -- utrustet for lange turer og lokalkjente i fjellet. De holdt grenseområdene under oppsikt og kjente tyskernes vaktskifter. -- Mange loser og deres familier og medhjelpere gav alt til flyktningene -- til siste brødsmule. De kunne aldri tenke seg å motta noen som helst form for betaling. Hjelp til flyktende fanger var en del av kampen mot nazismen, og det var lønn og nok -- i tillegg til et håndtrykk og en klem ved avskjed[17]

Not only were they important because of their physical shape and their good knowledge of the terrain, but their work was also a symbolic resistance against the Nazis, for which the border pilots did not even expect to be paid. And even though some received payment, this was not the reason why most of border pilots escorted refugees. Border pilots also had different contacts--people they could trust to help them with refugees. The border pilots could entrust the safety and secrecy of refugees to other people and they had to do it. If some border pilots were discovered, they could receive a message telling them they had to flee to escape imprisonment or worse. As such, they had a large network of people that could help them and ensure the survival of border pilots, their families and the refugees.

Many people felt that they needed to flee to Sweden. In total, there were 45,088[18] registered refugees who crossed the border to Sweden to request asylum from the beginning of the occupation to the end of the war. Of course, some people did not want to register with the Swedish authorities, such as people who crossed the border and had criminal backgrounds, or people who were in isolated areas or those who resided with friends and relatives and therefore did not need the refugee aid that the Swedish authorities offered.

Seven different groups tried to leave Norway. The first one and the one with the largest population was what one would call "velferdsflyktninger".[19] These were people who were not wanted by the German authorities, but left to find a better life in Sweden: the number in this group increased as the occupation continued. "Deres motiv var å søke seg bort både fra den ubehagelige sosiale atmosfæren som okkupantene skapte og fra mangelen på velferdsgoder som krigen førte med seg".[20] The second group consisted of groups of young people who wanted to fight and they tried to get to Allied nations and join either Norwegian or Allied forces there.

[17] Cveja Jovanovic 1985. Cited in "Fauskeboka 1995" by Einset 1995:28. My translation: The border pilot was more important than bread -- they were in good physical shape -- they were equipped for long walks and they knew the mountains. They kept an eye on the border areas and knew changing of the guard by the Germans. -- Many border pilots and their families and their helpers gave everything to the refugees – to the last bread crumb. They would never think of receiving any kind of payment. Giving help to fleeing prisoners was a part of the fight against Nazism, and that was enough payment – in addition to a handshake and a hug while saying goodbye.

[18] Soleim et.al. 2015:15

[19] Rørvik and Støre 2012:11. My translation: Welfare refugees

[20] Rørvik and Støre 2012:12. My translation: Their motive was to find a way out of the uncomfortable social atmosphere that the occupiers created and from the lack of social welfare that the war brought.

Later, the Swedish authorities allowed the creation of a police force that refugees could join. The third group consisted of people that fled to avoid being forced into service for the occupation forces. "Nasjonal Samling" tried to recruit Norwegians to join German forces and they made a decree of enforced labour in the service of occupation forces.[21] Some also fled because they did not want to work for the Germans. It did not matter how much they were paid by the German authorities, they were the enemy. In addition, some probably had to flee because they were registered somewhere, and they could face jail time if they refused to work. Fleeing became their only option. The fourth group consisted of Jews that tried to escape the occupation forces. As with every other occupied country, the German military forces tried to round up as many Jews they could to send them to concentration camps. The fifth group consisted of resistance members that were discovered whose situation became so severe that fleeing to Sweden was the only option. The sixth group consisted of prisoners that managed to escape from prisons and had to flee because German forces were trying to locate them. The last group was German soldiers that deserted and tried to leave. As the war progressed, German soldiers saw that the war was not going as it was supposed to, so many of them deserted and tried to get to Sweden. There were German soldiers who tried to desert and go to Sweden as early as 1940 but the Swedish authorities would not grant them asylum and they were sent back to Norway where they faced punishment.

In 1941, the occupation forces gave themselves permission to make Norwegian youth work for them. In 1943, a law was enacted that allowed the occupation forces to register and mobilize people to work for them and in 1944 three groups of three different ages were called out to work. This caused a reaction from the exiled government in London, which told people not show up. Those that waited to be called out to work had to flee. For the small local communities in Tysfjord and in other areas in Norway, it was not so easy. After a bad year of fishing, unemployment, and an economic crisis, many saw the work as a way to earn a living even though they did not sympathise with their employer's ideology.[22] In addition, many in Tysfjord for example, had the notion that working for civilian production was acceptable, even though they were working for the occupiers. Working for military production, however, was not acceptable. Still, it was not easy to distinguish between differing job opportunities. People needed the money, and the work at the German construction sites paid very well. They did not have any problem recruiting people to work in Northern Norway. Many people in Tysfjord thought that the work they did was not supposed to bring them into a lot of contact with the

[21] Røvik and Støre 2012:12
[22] Evjen 1998:273

German authorities. One example of this occurred when three people volunteered for service as drivers for the Germans. When the drivers used the uniforms provided to them, other workers believed that the drivers had crossed a line and thought it was dangerous to be around them.[23]

Those who came to Sweden as refugees had to explain their reasons for fleeing, and most told their real reason for fleeing. Yet it is likely there were some that did not. For example, some might have lied because of security reasons or because they wanted to join the forces in Great Britain. The reasons given during interrogations were: "resistance/wanted, officers, Jews, students, wanting to join the allied military forces, avoiding forced labour, avoiding German work, lack of food, following their family and there was a significant number that did not give any reasons for fleeing".[24]

The traffic of refugees happened in waves and had a peak with the most number of refugees crossing the border. For example, in Tysfjord the escorting of refugees started as early as in 1940 but it was not until 1942 that it was steadily going. In 1943 and 1944 it reached its peak. There are some reasons for this. During the retreat through Finmark by the German army, many people were evacuated because the soldiers burned everything down. This meant more refuges for the border pilots.

Even though Sweden was supplying Germany with resources through the trains to Narvik carrying iron ore, there were no German soldiers there, and many refugees felt that it was better to go to Sweden than to stay in Norway. Because of refugee aid that the Swedish authorities gave, and combined with the uncomfortable social atmosphere and the lack of welfare benefits, Sweden was a very attractive country to go to. Additionally, it was easier for refugees to go to Sweden than it was to go across the sea to England.

The number of refugees who lost their lives during the occupation was not particularly high. In total, 31 refugees died trying to escape to Sweden,[25] most of them because they tried to escape without a border pilot to show them the way. And most of these individuals died in Northern Norway. While the southern part of Norway is mostly dominated by forest all the way to the border, the north is a mountainous area and a much tougher climate. Those that died did so because of snowstorms, because of the cold, the tough terrain, and the climate in the mountains.

Although most of the border pilots simply escorted refugees, they sometimes got into firefights with German soldiers -- most ended without any injuries, and most of the time the

[23] Evjen 1998:274
[24] Soleim et al 2015:17
[25] Evjen 2005:235

border pilots managed to escape. There were some instances where the border pilots shot and killed German soldiers. After the war, many of the border pilots did not speak much of their experiences, and many of them struggled throughout their lives, or humbly felt that they had not done anything special.[26]

1.3 Refugee Routes

As stated earlier, there were 45,088 registered refugees in Sweden, and approximately 1/3 of them came from Northern Norway. In addition, there were ten major refugee routes in Northern Norway[27], and seven of them in Nordland County. I will focus on four of those major routes, which spread over six different areas.

The first went from Junkerdalen, using different valleys in that area across the border:

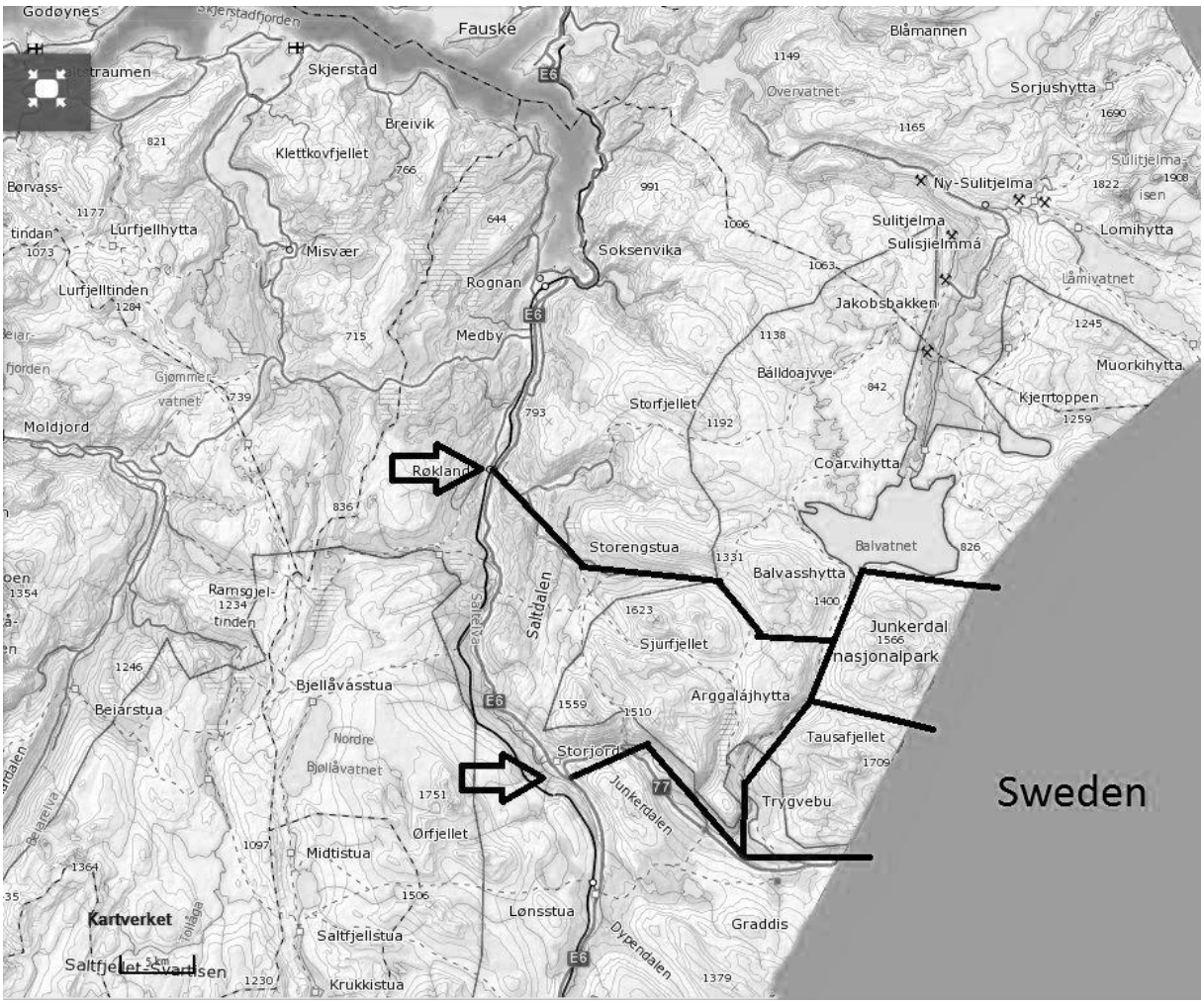

***Figure 2** - The first route started in two different valleys, Junkerdalen (south) and Evenesdalen (north). From those two starting points, the routes went up the different valleys and used many smaller valleys to cross the border. The northernmost route took the took the refugees east of Balvatnet, and across the border there was a Sámi village with which the border pilots in Junkerdalen and in Jakobsbakken had a lot of contact, before and during the war.*

[26] Ole Henrik Fagerbakk 18/8 2015
[27] Ulstein 1977:164

The second route sometimes crossed with the third route that went from Fauske, Sørfold and Sulitjelma.

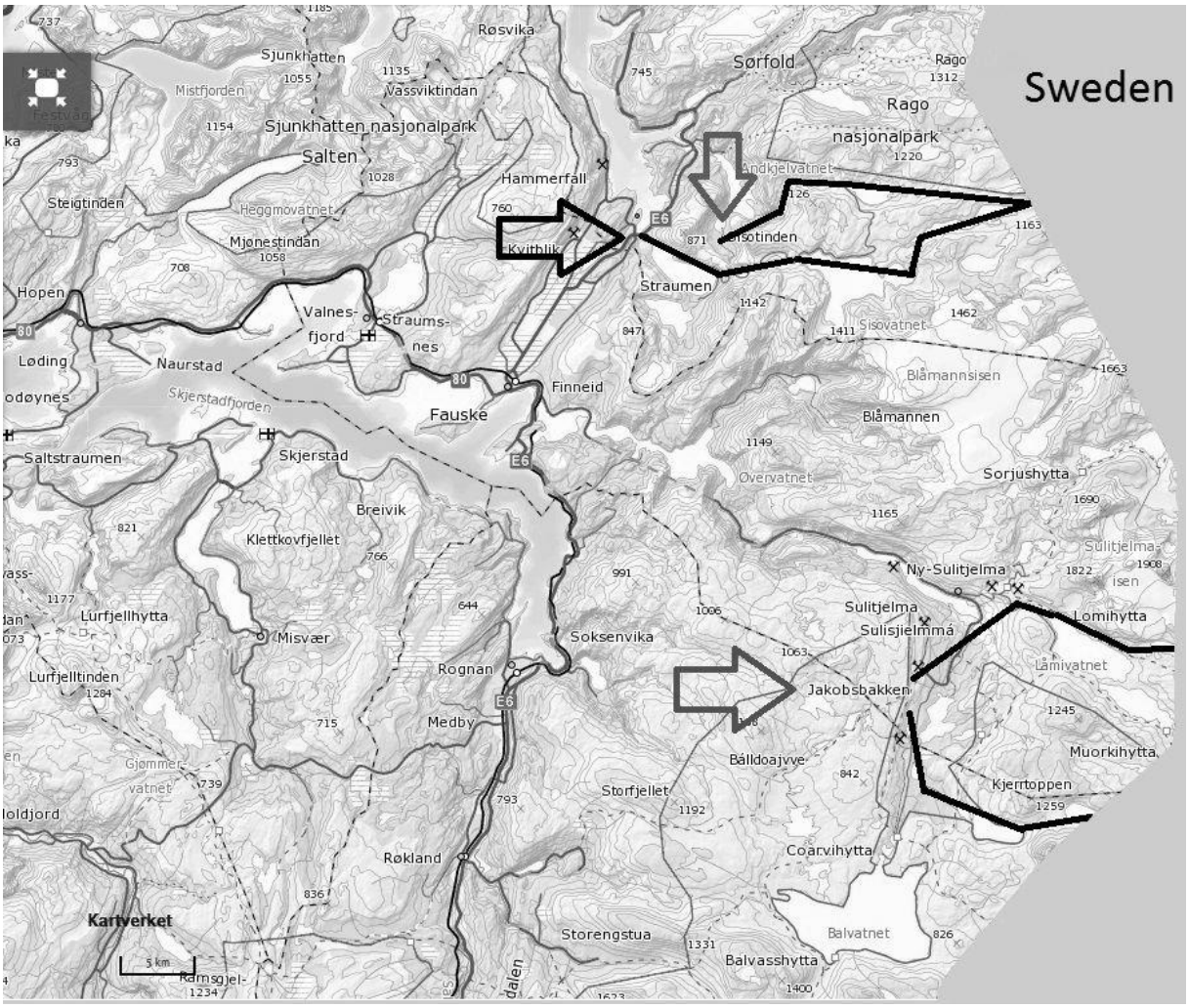

Figure 3 *- The second and third routes consisted of the areas around Fauske, Sulitjelma, and Sørfold. Although Fauske did not have any routes directly to Sweden, border pilots would escort refugees to Sulitjelma or Sørfold and then towards Sweden. In Sulitjelma, the people of Jakobsbakken (the two lower lines) would escort them using two routes to Sweden. In Sørfold (second line from the top) my grandfather would escort refugees into the Siso area and then towards Sweden. Oskar Henriksen in Fagerbakk would start from his farm (upper line), but would then go the same route as my grandfather into Siso and then towards Sweden. There was one event when my grandfather started in Fagerbakk (upper line) and followed the northern route, which is a bit longer and tougher. The reasons for this are unknown, most likely he would have this because there was a German patrol in Siso, and my grandfather had to use the northernmost route to get by without notice.*

The third route also sometimes crossed with the fourth route that went from Tysfjord.[28]

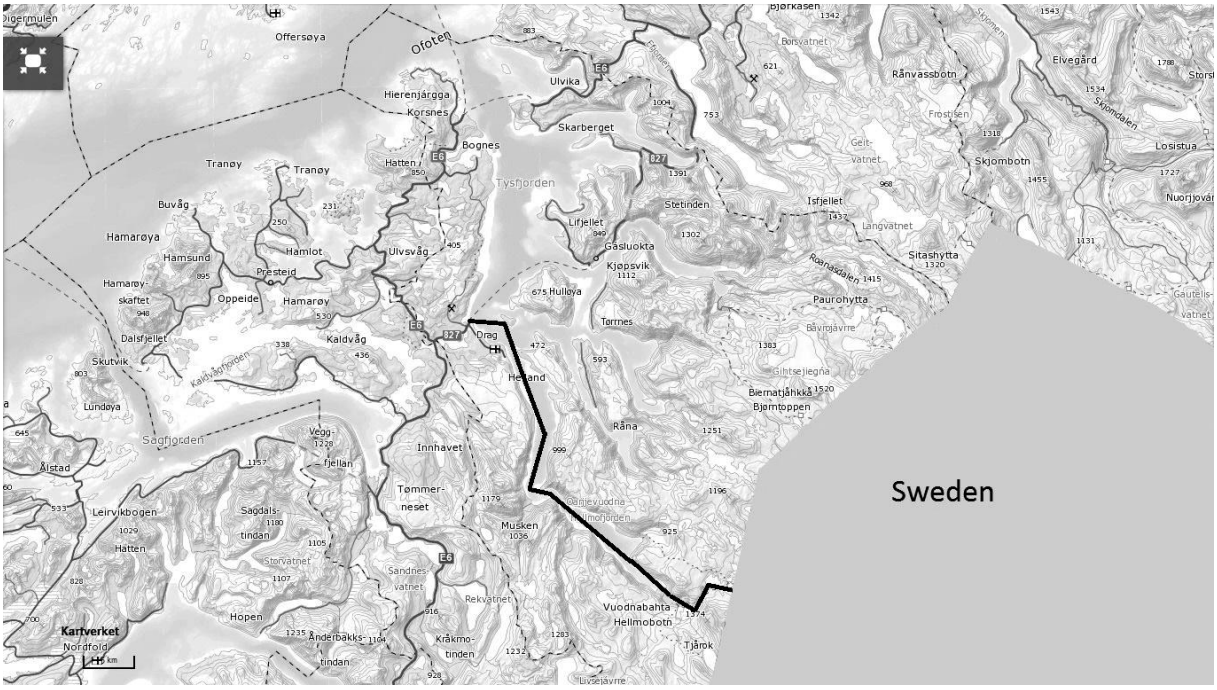

Figure 4 *- The fourth route was in Tysfjord. Most people that took this route had to go by boat to Hellemobotn. Some refugees looked at the map and thought it would be easiest to go with this route since it has the shortest walk to the border. The problem was that when they crossed the border there were no houses or people, and they would have to walk for a day or more to reach anyone. Many people had to go by boat to get to Hellemobotn and the short walk they had to take was in an area that was very tough.*

These areas are the four major routes I will talk about, but there were many different variations within those major routes. The border pilots had to have many different smaller routes to choose from in case there was a German patrol keeping watch over one route. I will go more in-depth in those areas and I will separate some routes from each other, such as the routes in Sørfold and Sulitjelma.

1.4 Important Aspects of the Border Pilots

As the invasion ended and wartime occupation became the norm of the day, two things happened: some tried to hide and survive the German forces, while others tried to escape the area altogether. Those who were discovered had to flee in order to survive, and it was because of this that the border pilots became so important for refugees.

Many aspects increased the success of the border pilots and minimized the chances of discovery by the German forces. Indeed, some abilities and skills became very important for the border pilots.

[28] Ulstein 1977:164

One of them was that border pilots were in very good physical shape. They had to be, especially those that escorted many refugees and crossed the border many times, because they travelled in the mountains.

As the number of refugees and the number of border pilots increased, the need for secrecy became paramount to survival. If someone was discovered by German forces who had done illegal work, then punishment could be very severe. As said earlier, many people were executed, killed in open fights, or died in prison because of torture or suicide. The only way to survive was to be as secretive as possible. If a border pilot was caught while escorting refugees, he could be shot on sight or executed later for this offense. As such, the border pilots lived in fear of discovery.

There were events where the border pilots could be discovered, no matter how vigilant they were in maintaining their secrecy, because someone ratted them out. One example of that was a man in Tysfjord who knew about the border pilots. He wrote a letter to the German High Command telling them about the border pilots, the weapons they had, and the radios they used. If the German troops would have known that they were border pilots, that they had weapons and radios, the punishment would have been very severe, as it was illegal to cross the border and to have weapons. Weapons were confiscated by German soldiers, as were radios. The problem with the man's letter was that it was in Norwegian and the German High Command needed it translated. There was a Norwegian woman working there who got the task to translate, and when she read it, she knew it was serious. Luckily, she managed to take the letter home so that she and her husband could contact the Homefront forces, who decided to make a forgery. Because of this, the German High Command was none the wiser, and nothing happened. The man who sent the letter was visited by the County Sheriff and was put on house arrest, since the County Sheriff was helping the border pilots.[29]

Another thing that helped border pilots maintain their secrecy was language. The Sámi border pilots in Tysfjord would speak Sámi among themselves, and the German soldiers could not understand them. For them, this was a way to communicate even when the German soldiers were standing right beside them, listening to what they were saying. If they understood Sámi, then they could be discovered. That is why they used codes.

One example of being secretive was that border pilots and their helpers created codes and phrases that meant a lot to them, but the German troops listening to the conversation or reading the text would not know what was going on. The Sámi's could speak Sámi amongst

[29] Soleim et.al 2015:36

themselves and no one could understand them, and in addition, they created codes for different words, meaning that even if a German soldier knew Sámi, he would not understand the meaning since they spoke in code. For example, the word for the German soldiers was "ruonaga," meaning the "green clothed".[30] Therefore, the Sámi's could discuss the Germans without getting caught. In another example of talking in code, someone would make a phone call to a border pilot who was told that the seven socks he ordered were now ready to be picked up. This would mean that there were seven refugees in need of a border pilot.

1.5 Research Questions

My main questions are: "What was the role of Sámi and Norwegian border pilots in Nordland County, Norway during World War II? What did they do, how and why?" In addition, I will investigate three more research questions:

1. In what way were Sámi and Norwegian border pilots important during WWII?
2. Did the border pilots get any recognition for their effort and how does that recognition differ from area to area?
3. What are the reasons for Sámi border pilots being unknown?

[30] Soleim et.al 2015:36

2 Methodology, Interviews, Literature Review and Theory

In these four areas, I have focused more on some people than others. The reasons for this are many and varied, although some can be easily explained. Some specific people became focus of my attention because of the interviews I did, others because of how many refugees they helped, and still others because of their affiliation with me. The methods used for this are varied, and they will be explained in this chapter.

During my fieldwork and the writing of my thesis, I have used many different ways of gathering information. I have been to the archive at "Norges Hjemmefrontmuseum"[31] and to the library in my hometown, Fauske, where I have gathered many different articles from yearbooks.[32] In addition, I have received literature from other libraries and talked to the authors of *Grenselos i Grenseland*, a book that have been important to my research.[33] I have also conducted several interviews.

Another important book to me have been *Svensketrafikken*[34] and it is most likely one of the most comprehensive set of books about the refugee traffic in Norway. It divides into three parts, with one part being about Northern Norway. Unfortunately, it was written in 1977, and as such it is not as up to date as *Grenselos i Grenseland* is. *Grenselos i Grenseland* is the most current book about border pilots: however, while it is comprehensive and recently written, many of those that were interviewed are old and may not remember every detail. Some had to refuse to be interviewed because of issues with their health. Others that could have been good to interview are dead, because it has been 70 years since the war ended, and most of them are in their nineties and upwards. The book also only covers a narrow area, from the southern parts of Troms County to the northern parts of Nordland County. However, at the same time I am using a lot of written material that is based on interviews with border pilots or their families, which gives the text both strengths and weaknesses.

One of the strengths is that a lot of the information I have gathered is about people's experiences, which gives my text a unique perspective by telling their life. The texts also provide a unique insight into what people felt about the war and what daily life was like in those areas. They do not talk about the war in a larger picture, and indeed many of those texts should not do that, because they are about individual experience. As such, their stories are not necessarily representative of what everyone went through. However, if one managed to collect

[31] My translation: Norwegian Homefrontmuseum
[32] A yearbook is a local history book that publishes every year in a small community or area.
[33] Grenselos i Grenseland. My translation: Border pilots in border areas.
[34] My translation: The Swedish traffic.

the experiences of many people and their experiences and felt that those stories felt coincided with each other, one might extrapolate to say that these stories represented a larger scale of the general population's experience during wartime. On the other hand, it is a weakness because the border pilots themselves do not discuss threesome random questions that I would have liked to ask, such as to the reasons why they did it. Some books and texts do talk about that, but not every border pilot states the reasons for why they did it. Furthermore, the interviews I have done with people and families of border pilots and the information given to me has already been processed and thought about, so these stories can be different in small details from what books and articles say about the same matter or vice versa.

2.1 Interviews

Some of the information I have gathered comes from articles and books where border pilots talk about their experiences and/or events during the war, but some of these sources are useful only in the right context. When I wanted to do interviews, there was one thing that became apparent: since I am writing about border pilots that lived during World War II, most of them have passed away. Most of the people that are alive have health issues that prohibit their ability to talk or they are from a different area than I am writing about. It is a challenge for me as a researcher to write about people's lives without being able to access the primary sources, to be able to talk to those who were border pilots or at least be able to talk to the closest family members of border pilots. Despite these difficulties, I did one interview with a family member of a border pilot that gave me a lot of useful information. For my interviews, I prepared a set of questions that I wished to ask and topics I wished to touch upon, and luckily, my interviewees started to talk immediately about their lives and their experiences, and/or about the life of someone that they knew. So, I did not need to ask too many questions: instead, I had to steer the interview in a certain way. Any follow up questions I had were made during the interviews, and they were questions that I did not prepare before the interviews. Rather, they had to be asked when the interviews took place. These semi-structured interviews allowed for more flexibility when it came to follow-up questions, but at the same time, that method gave the interviewer control of what was being said. If a statement was left inadvertently unquestioned without a discussion of the statement's validity, misinformation could have been spread. Luckily, no such event or statement happened during the interviews.

Oral history is just valid as written history. It is a way to connect the story and the storyteller with the past and the future, one generation to another, the land with the people and

the people with the story.[35] It is a way to pass on values and beliefs from one culture to the next, in the hope that future generations will treasure them and pass the story further. That is why doing interviews is important, for it is a way for one generation to share values, beliefs, experiences, and the stories of another time.

2.2 Written Material

I have gathered a lot of written material from a lot of literature, which can be divided into two parts. The first part is books and articles that have some sort of narrative, which form a larger picture. They can also contain a group of narratives which together creates an idea or impression of what things are like, often showing what a certain group believed about a certain topic. The second part contains articles from yearbooks. Though they are many and they give a lot of vital information, they are very narrow in terms of their narratives. A lot of those articles and stories are only about one certain event in someone's life during a certain period. Those articles and stories do not concern themselves with trying to put that story or narrative into a larger picture and they should not. The reason for that is that one story from one person during a certain period, while interesting and informative, cannot be used to show that the actions of one individual changed the course of the war. With a far-reaching war like World War II, it is incredibly difficult to say how significant an impact one individual had, especially when one talks about civilians trying to lead a normal life.

I have gathered information from specialist literature about the topic of the war in Norway. The most important books from that type of literature are concerned with border pilots in Norway during the Second World War, but unfortunately those are few. The rest of existing literature about the Second World War is about the war more in a general sense or about some specialized topics. Those that are about a specialized topic are typically about a special battle, or they follow the war through a group or through the eyes of one soldier. Secondly, I have gathered many articles from yearbooks in different areas. I have gathered material from yearbooks in the areas of Saltdal, Fauske, and Sørfold. The problem with these articles is that they are narrative, and that they are only concerned with specific events in people's lives, and/or their life during a specific period. On the other hand, they provide a unique insight to individual's lives, and they give them a chance to tell their story. However, even though they are very narrative-driven and do not necessarily fit into the larger picture, one can use a lot of

[35] Smith 2010

them. By using a lot of them, one can show how many people, even though they came and were in different areas, felt the same and had similar experiences.

2.3 Stigma

The theories that are used in this thesis are theories concerning stigma and stigmatization. The stigmatization of the Sámi's has been going on for a very long time and in a way, still going on. The Norwegianization policy had its influence from 1850 to 1959 and in that time speaking Sámi in school was forbidden.[36] This subsequently led to Sámi culture and way of life to become something that one should not be proud of, and in some cases even ashamed of. It is important to note that the Norwegianization policy was Norway's way to make Sámi's Norwegian. Stigmatization came out of the policy, but even though the official Norwegianization policy ended in 1959, stigmatization did not. It is important to note that other stigmatized Sámi's and that Sámi's stigmatized themselves. That part of Norwegian history is among the darkest chapters Norway has. It was not until 1997, when the King gave a speech in the Sámi Parliament apologizing for the treatment that the Sámi received under Norwegian policy, the relations improved. Furthermore, the Sámi's were stigmatized before, during, and after the war, and it was not until very recently that Sámi border pilots received the recognition they so justly deserved. During the opening of the 5th newly elected Sámi Parliament in 2005,[37] the King said that the Sámi border pilots in Tysfjord who risked their life and health to help people to a free life in Sweden, they nor any family members and relatives had received any recognition. For that, the King apologized. Both speeches were a turning point for their cases.

To understand the treatment that the Sámi's have undergone during the Norwegianization policy, one first needs to understand the concept of stigma. When a stranger comes into our presence, first appearances are what we make of that person: thus, we form our own opinion of that individual and anticipate his personality and attributes. We have anticipations of that individual, and those anticipations transforms from normative expectations into demands, which we typically are not aware of until a question arises whether or not they will be fulfilled. When we make these demands of the stranger, evidence can arise that sets him apart from others in the same group, which can make him less desirable or in the most extreme case, bad, dangerous, or weak. In our minds, he has been reduced from a whole person to a tainted and

[36] Nergård 2013
[37] Soleim et al. 2015:201

discounted one, because in our minds he is less desirable. That attribute is stigma, especially when its effect is extensive.[38]

An individual who is stigmatized for one reason or another can experience an identity ambivalence when he sees others within his own group portrayed in a stereotypical way or acting out the negative attributes that are given to or forced upon them. This sight may repel him, since he may conform to the norms of the wider society. This repulsion can lead to shame, leading the shamed individual to not wish to be a part of specific group any longer. The norwegianization policy and the emergence of boarding schools, wherein students were far away from home and not allowed to speak their own language, made many of them think that being Sámi and speaking Sámi was not something to be proud of, but rather be ashamed by. What also needs to be considered is the idea not only that people are ashamed of their own Sámi background, but also that there are people who are ashamed of trying to hide their own Sámi background from others and are unable to take it back.[39]

The actions taken against people with a stigma can be explained: those who are "normal" (i.e. those with no stigma) believe that those who have a stigma are not quite human. On that assumption, people who are "normal" discriminate against people with stigma and shorten their life spans. "We construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on other differences, such as those of social class".[40] Thus, the Norwegianization policy was used as a way to explain why the Sámi needed to become more like the majority of the society, and it also became a way for the border schools to instil ashamedness of one's own identity and culture. "Mange identifiserte seg med koloniherrens forakt for dem. De så seg selv slik myndighetene så dem: Uopplyste, kulturløse og gudløse. De måtte derfor løse seg selv ut av den tradisjonen de vokste opp i".[41] Not only that, but many of those who were sent to boarding schools had teachers or supervisors that believed that being Sámi was not something people should be. In addition, many of the children faced violence.

> *Tiden på internatet var hard. Det var en heit buljong å bli kokt i. En ting var volden som lå I at structurer ble så tvingende at det var vanskelig å holde på egen verdighet. En annen ting var resultatet dette føret til. Inngjerdede og avmektige gutter. Volden gikk ikke utover, den imploderte. De store guttene banket de små. Jeg ble brent med vaffeljernet for å undersøke*

[38] Goffman 1963
[39] Nergård 2013:450
[40] Goffman 1963:15
[41] Nergård 2013:448. My translation: Many identified themselves with the colonial power's contempt of them. They saw themselves as the authorities saw them: unenlightened, cultureless, and godless. Therefore, they had to release themselves from the tradition they had grown up in.

om jeg tålte smerte. Samtidig var det en type vold mot foreldrene våre som ble fratatt omsorgen for sine barn, og det var vold mot personalet at de måtte ta seg av slike avmektige frustrerte mennesker. Internatet var en smertemaskin for alle[42]

Even today, many people remember their parents or grandparents speaking Sámi amongst themselves, but not to the children. People who had/have parents that spoke Sámi do not necessarily see themselves as Sámi, but rather parts of Finmark and the reindeer herders in Kautokeino, those that have a close connection with the Sámi culture, as real Sámi. Many tried to explain their connection with Sámi away. In this way, the Norwegianization policy was very successful.

It is also important to note that there are three different kinds of stigma. Firstly, we have those who can be stigmatized because of a physical deformity. Secondly, stigmatization can occur because of character traits such as dishonesty, weak will, radical political behaviour, passions that can be considered unnatural, which can originate from alcoholism, imprisonment, mental disorder and more. Thirdly, there are those who can be stigmatized because of race, nationality and religion. However, I would add another example in the third category that includes, ethnicity, minorities, and indigenous peoples to better cover different groups of people that can be stigmatized in that category. Being stigmatized means that one can still be a part of the wider society, which would make him "normal" but because he has a stigma, he does not completely belong to that group. He has a "defect," and it is foolish to try to deny this difference. His so-called "defect" has been chosen by the wider society, because the difference needs to be conceptualized by the wider society before it has an effect. It is also important to note that "normals" in many situations will extend a courtesy of invitations so that the stigmatized can be allowed to act as if he is "normal" and that he has no "defect." Thus, he is allowed to be taken in and to be more accepted than he really is, which can lead to him being in a situation and acting in a way that "normals" feel is not his proper place.[43]

Although the awakening of the Sámi and the Sámi movement have changed the balance between the Sámi and the rest of Norway, there is still a stigma against Sámi. "The traditional rejection of Lappish identity by Norwegians has deposited a stigma of inferiority in the Lappish

[42] Nergård 2013:448. My translation: The time in the boarding schools was tough. It was like being boiled in a hot broth. One thing was that structures became so forceful that it was hard to maintain one's own dignity. Another thing was what this led to isolated and powerless boys. The violence did not go outwards, it imploded. The bigger kids beat up the smaller kids. I was burned by the waffle iron to see if I could feel any pain. At the same time, it was a type of violence against our parents that had the care for their children taken away, and it was a violence against the personnel, for they had to take care of powerless and frustrated people. The boarding schools were a painful event for everyone.

[43] Goffman 1963:145

population".[44] The movement that strengthened a Sámi identity emerged in the post-war period, and nations saw what could happen if things went too far, especially with regards to treating other groups of people as inferior. Even though nations saw what could happen if they treated groups of people as inferior, the change of attitude towards the Sámi did not happen fast. Changes happened gradually and it is still happening. Unfortunately, some Sámi border pilots during and/or after the Second World War suffered discrimination and stigma of different kind which would follow them to the end of their lives.

One example of Sámi border pilots being stigmatized, comes in the form one report among many that were written and sent in May 1945 to the Norwegian Delegation in Stockholm. Because of it and others like it, the Sámi's in Tysfjord became part of a legal matter concerning treason. There was also a report written about the inhabitants in Tysfjord:

> *Befolkningen i Tysfjorddistriktet består for en stor del av mere eller mindre oppblandete fastboende samer. De driver et meget utpreget inngifte, og da spesielt i fjordens indre deler. Følgene av dette inngifte har ikke vært slike at eksemplet egner seg til etterfølgelse i andre deler av landet. En har et visst inntrykk av at befolkningen har fått både samenes og de såkalte riksnorskes dårligste egenskaper i en utpreget grad. Derimot er ikke noen av de to folketypenes gode egenskaper bevart, uten i enkelte spesielle tilfeller. Hele befolkningens stilling under krigen i Norge ser ut til å ha vært passiv. Det eneste de folkene jeg har snakket med har hatt å fortelle om i retning av aktiv tjeneste, har vært et par stykker som er blitt kommandert til å tjenestegjøre som kjentmann for norske styrker, eller som speidere i oppklaringspatruljer.*[45]

That excerpt was part of a report that was written in January 1945, and at that time, the refugee traffic had been going on for four years already. The priest Kolbjørn Varmann said that the two that wrote the report saying that the inhabitants were passive during the war had no knowledge of Tysfjord, and it was not right to say that Tysfjord was worse than other municipalities in the rest of the country. Varmann's opinion was: "folkets holdning var så bra, og de utrygge var så få, at en kunne diskutere nyheter, og uten større risiko omtale de viktigste ting i gudstjenester

[44] Eidheim 1971:7 The term Lapp and Lappish is not used by the Sámi themselves. This stigmatization is entrenched in people's minds.

[45] Ulstein 1977:176. My translation: The inhabitants in Tysfjord consist of more or less mixed permanently residing Sámi. They practice a distinct intermarriage especially in the inner parts of the fjord. The consequences of this have been such that the example is not to be followed in other parts of the country. One has a certain impression that the population has gained from both Sámi and the so-called national Norwegians the worst attributes in a distinct way. On the other hand, none of the good characteristics from both groups is preserved, except in a few special cases. The position of the entire population seems to have been passive. The only people I have talked to when talking about active service have been a couple that have been commanded to serve as a local guide for Norwegian forces, or as scouts in reconnaissance patrols.

og foredrag".[46] When the authorities arrested Varmann, no Sámi border pilot were arrested at that time or later. He also pointed out how important the Sámi were for the refugee traffic in Tysfjord:

> Han betraktet flyktninghjelpen som en Tysfjord-sak og ikke bare en same-sak. Han påpekte at samene var enerådende i fjellet fordi de var de eneste som var dyktige nok til å håndtere de vanskelige forholdene som kunne oppstå i fjellområdene. Alle visste at uten samene kunne de *ikke* foreta seg noe[47]

The case was later handled by the Narvik police district, of which Tysfjord was a part. In the fall of 1945, the treason department of Narvik's police department asked that the border pilot case was to be thoroughly investigated. The department investigated cases such as food depots laid out by Swedish authorities being plundered by border pilots and border pilots avoiding those food depots while escorting refugees, then taking the food for themselves on the way back. It also investigated claims such as border pilots leaving refugees on the border and then pointing the way to nearest settlements, which would sometimes results in deaths. With the case of leaving people at the border, many border pilots felt that they could not risk being away for too long. Being away too long meant German authorities could get suspicious and search their homes trying to find out what was really going on. Border pilots risked their lives to help refugees, and some may have felt that they could not risk any more by escorting them to settlements in Sweden. This was a central problem of using Tysfjord as a way to get to safety in Sweden. The closest settlement after crossing the border from Tysfjord was between 30 and 70 kilometres from the border.[48] For many border pilots, that meant they had to go on a walk of at least 60 kilometres, which could take a couple of days. The chance of being discovered would be very high. It is understandable that those refugees who were left after getting directions felt as though they were left in an unknown mountain area and had to do as best they could, or that they felt they were abandoned. On the other hand, border pilots were not forced to help refugees: they did so of their own choosing. Because they did so of their own choosing and no one forced them to escort refugees all the way, they had to decide for themselves how far they would go to help others.

[46] Soleim et.al 2015:184. My translation: The people's attitude was so good, and those at risk so few, that one could discuss news and the most important stuff without any large risk during sermons and lectures.
[47] Soleim et.al 2015:184. My translation: He considered the refugee traffic as a Tysfjord case and not just a Sámi case. He pointed out that the Sámi were supreme in the mountains because they were the only ones that were good enough for the tough conditions of the mountain areas. Everyone knew that without the Sámi, they could not do anything.
[48] Ulstein 1977:184

The case against the border pilots was dismissed in March 1948 because of a lack of evidence. Unfortunately for the border pilots, the damage had been done. The investigation had been going on for almost three years, and during that time the border pilots had allegations thrown at them. Because of those allegations and the investigation of treason, many became ashamed of their own actions. For many of them, it resulted in deep emotional scars that some would never speak about again. They never mentioned it, and it was not discussed as long as they were alive.

It would take many years before the topic of the Sámi border pilots in Tysfjord came up again. When Ulstein wrote his book about the refugee traffic in Norway and published it in 1977, the topic of the Sámi border pilot's treason came up again. Even though his work showed a lot about the refugee traffic, it was another book that would create a stir. In 1979, Björn Fontander wrote it, and a film was made that took up the same topic and opinions that the book portrayed. In the book and film, there were many accusations against the border pilots -- they left them at the border, they took their valuables, food, and clothes -- and these accusations came without the border pilot's response or means of defending themselves against the accusations. Former field police officer Mauritz Erikson and his assistant Mikkel Utsi came up with accusations against the Sámi border pilots. An advertisement for the program said the border pilots were people without a conscience, and furthermore liars. In other words, even before the program was shown, people could make up their mind about the border pilots. Those two examples resulted in giving the border pilots an even worse reputation and making them feel even more ashamed of themselves.[49]

NRK[50] produced a response interviewing Sámi border pilots. In this response, both border pilots and those affiliated with the refugee traffic told their stories and shared their experiences. It received good reviews after it aired, and some saw this as a kind of reparation of what had happened to them. However, some felt that this was not enough. It took another 20 years to bring up this matter again.[51]

The next time this matter was brought up, was in 1992, when the King and Queen were on a coronation tour all over Norway giving out medals to different peoples. Even though two border pilots in Tysfjord had a ceremony where the King gave them each a medal, it was felt more could and should have been done, especially since the medals were specially made for the

[49] Soleim et.al 2015:197
[50] A Norwegian radio and television broadcasting channel.
[51] Soleim et.al 2015:197

coronation tour and ended up as common property later which one could buy. The two border pilots received the medals in a ceremony in the church in Tysfjord.

The matter was brought up again in 1995 in connection with the 50-year anniversary of the end of the Second World War and how different municipalities were planning to mark the occasion. In Tysfjord for example the suggestion was that a memorial tablet be put up, but the location of that tablet created some discussion. It ended up that it was not installed where they discussed: instead, it was put up at the churches in Tysfjord. At the same time, the discussion in Tysfjord focused on a huge rock that they make a monument out of, since its placement was in the middle of the routes that border pilots from Hamarøy used. As such, it had some meaning to it. A helicopter moved it to Musken, and it was moved close to what was previously the school in Musken. They wanted a tablet with writing on the stone which was approved by the royal family, and those in charge of the monument wanted to invite the King in 1998 for a unveiling, but because of local resistance it did not happen. It was not until 2014 that a tablet was put on the monument.[52]

The matter was not brought up again until 2004, when Anders Urheim, a representative for the Sámi Parliament, wrote to the Prime Minister at the time about the matter. The Prime Minister replied in 2005 saying he knew about the border pilots and wanted more information about the work the Sámi Parliament did in this regard, and he wanted Urheim to help in this matter. The Sámi Parliament replied to this matter by saying the State should give an official apology to the border pilots, and that apology was to come on the opening of the Sámi Parliament in that same year. They also requested that scientific research and documentation should commence. That same year of 2005 marked the 60-year anniversary, and there was an increased criticism of how they were treated. The Sámi Parliament received all what they wanted, the King opened up the Sámi Parliament that year by giving an official apology and a research project started, culminating in the book *Grenselos i Grenseland.*[53]

All of this shows how difficult it has been to give the border pilots the credit they deserve and how controversial the topic has been for the border pilots and their families. It also shows that it has taken a very long time for them to get any recognition. On the other hand, one has to be careful. Since it has been a very long time, there might be tendencies to glorify them and put them on a pedestal of which they might feel they cannot fulfil. It is also a possibility that there are some historical inconsistences between what has been said and written and what really happened. Because of the stigma that Sámi's received during the Norwegianization policy (and

[52] Soleim et.al 2015:199
[53] Soleim et.al 2015:201

also before, during, and after the war) it has taken a long time for the Sámi border pilots to receive the recognition they so rightly deserve. Unfortunately, because it has taken a long time for them to get this recognition, most have already passed away, and many that are still alive, have mental and/or physical health problems. Although, the families of border pilots feel and have felt that the recognition the family members have received should not have taken such long time, since many of the border pilots themselves were not alive when the recognition came. As such, many passed away without getting the recognition that they deserved, all because of a stigmatization that eventually all Sámi border pilots in Tysfjord became subject to, when in reality that stigmatization was wrong and unjustly given.

3 Areas of Study

In my fieldwork, I have gathered data from six different areas in Nordland County. They are Saltdal, Fauske, Sulitjelma, Sørfold, and Tysfjord (in geographical order from south to north).

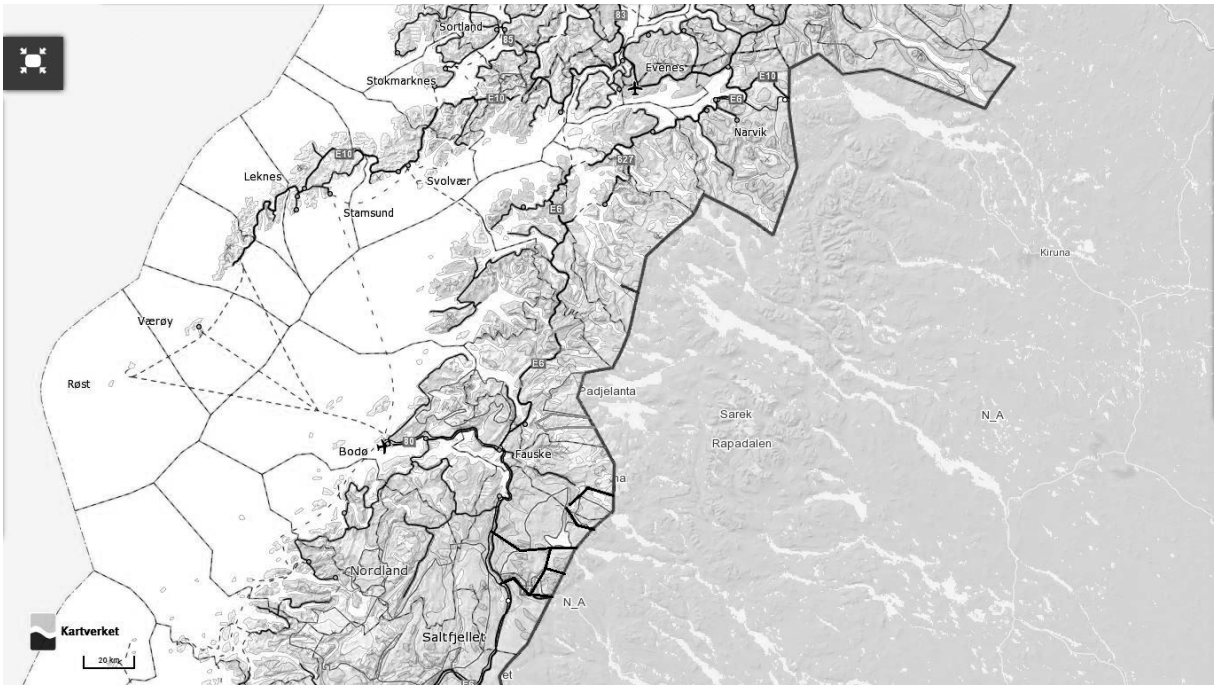

Figure 5 *- This shows an overview of the routes in the areas this thesis is concerned with. The lower line shows the route in Junkerdalen and the valleys around it. The second from the bottom line shows the route in Sulitjelma. The second from the top line shows the route in Sørfold (difficult to see on the map). The short upper line to the north shows the route in Hellemobotn in Tysfjord.*

These six areas were very different during the war in regards to refugee traffic, and they all had different numbers of Sámi and Norwegian border guides. In some areas, almost all guides were Sámi, in others, they were Norwegian and in others there were either both Sámi's and Norwegians or there were almost no one at all.

Some of these areas became very important for refugees fleeing from Norway and from Nazi authorities and some of these areas did not. Some of these areas became transit areas for refugees to travel through before they sought the help they required from the border pilots in order to find their way through the terrain and past German checkpoints and patrols. In all of the five areas though, there was at least one border pilot who escorted a significant amount of refugees and that person crossed the border many times, risking his/her life in the process.

In some of these areas, border pilots became very important, but they were not the only ones risking their lives to save refugees. The family of the border pilot and the people who knew about the circumstances in those areas also became important. They would help with food, clothes and a place to stay or hide while they were trying to find a border pilot that could

escort the refugees across the border into Sweden. However, in some areas and in some families, they did not even know about the existence of border pilots (as the border pilots would not tell anyone what they had been doing during the war). It is likely that because of this, there might have been border pilots we do not know anything about.

3.1 Saltdal

Saltdal did not become a major area for refugees to cross the border into Sweden, but despite this, there were some border pilots there. Exactly how many there were is unknown, but one can find the names of some people and the names of people that helped refugees and prisoners to get in touch with border pilots. There were 13 people[54] who either helped themselves as border pilots or who knew border pilots that refugees and prisoners could contact if they needed help. Most likely, there are many more people that helped refugees and prisoners,

[54] Ulstein 1977168-171

or they are not mentioned anywhere or they did not tell anyone about what they did.

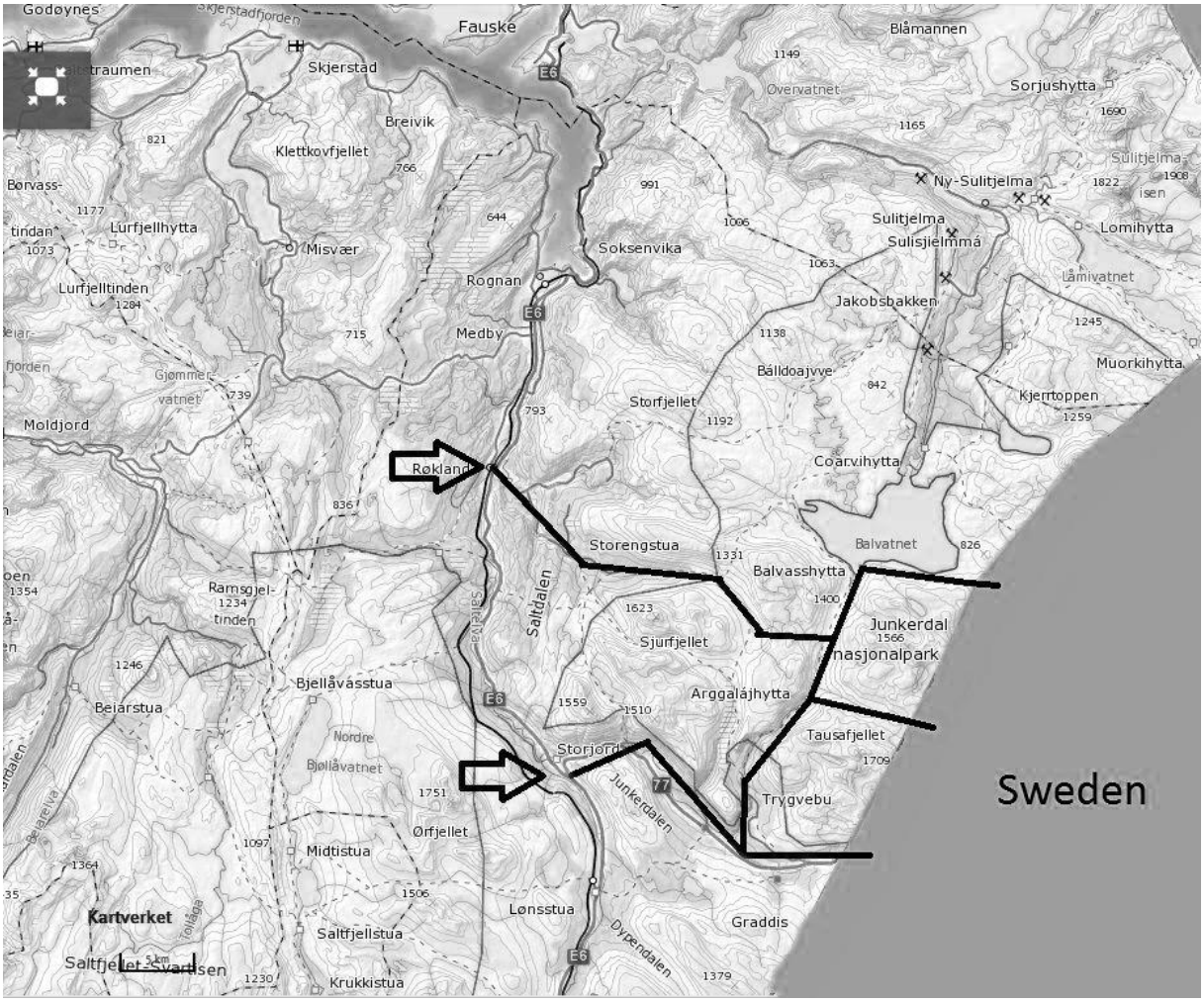

Figure 6 *– These are some of the routes that the border pilots in Saltdal could take. At "Balvatnet", they crossed the border and they came to Mavas, which was a Sámi place where they could get help.*

The best-known border pilot in Saltdal was Peder Båtskar.[55] He had no job but managed to survive by hunting and fishing and lived in a turf hut. During the war, the Germans took the rifle he hunted with but he still managed to survive. He had only one eye and did not care how he looked or in what state his clothes were, so people did not take him seriously and thought that he was strange. Early on in the occupation, there were rumours that Båtskar helped refugees over to Sweden. After some time, Båtskar became known as a man, people could send refugees to. Later, when there were many Yugoslavian prisoners in Saltdal, they would learn that if they managed to flee from the prison, they could contact Båtskar.

[55] Ulstein 1977:168

Jugoslavane oppfatta ikkje namnet riktig, dei trudde det var Postkass. Seinare blant frie jugoslavar i Sverige og seinare ennå, i Jugoslavia, gjekk det ei legende om den einøygde mannen frå gammen ovafor Rognan med namnet Postkass, Peder Postkass.[56]

This showed that outward appearances could be very deceiving and the German authorities could dismiss him as a person of little note. As such, he managed to exploit it.

In Junkerdal in Saltdal, three men were pioneers: Vilhelm Aronsen, Reidar Bredesen and Adolf Hansen. They undertook their first trips as early as the summer of 1940.[57] Vilhelm Aronsen went through the occupation without any problematic events. Reidar Bredesen made many trips as a border pilot. The exact amount of refugees he escorted is unknown. At the end of 1942, the Germans spotted and arrested him. Adolf Hansen lived in Skaiti-dalen, which is a side valley in Junkerdalen that is very close to the border. Adolf served as a border pilot, courier and saboteur. He and three others were supposed to blow up the road between Setså and Kvænflåget but that did not happen. In February 1945, he got an anonymous telephone call telling him that his life was in danger and that he had to flee immediately. He did and when he got up to the mountains, he saw that German soldiers had surrounded his house and they interrogated his wife Maria, who did not know where he was. He remained in Sweden until the end of the war.[58]

Another man who escorted refugees but was arrested, was Sjønning Albrigsten who helped refugees from the southern parts of Saltdal to find people who could escort them. He drove a postal route and would take with him refugees and prisoners and drop them off at people's houses he knew who could help. As with Reidar Bredesen, it is unknown how many refugees he helped during the occupation but as early as November 1942, the Germans learned of his actions. He was in a café when a man who was part of "Nasjonal Samling" came to him and said that he should take his wife and go to Sweden that very evening. Unfortunately, Albrigsten did not believe him, and that evening German authorities arrested and sent him to Germany to a prison camp from which he never returned.

There were many different people and many different ways of helping. One of them was chief physician Anton Gisle Johnson in Bodø, who sent people to Saltdal so they could find help. Another one was the District Sheriff in Fauske, Per Selnes, who sent refugees and prisoners to Saltdal to get help. A third one was Tore Sundby, a county forest ranger together

[56] My translation: The Yugoslavians did not get the name right; they thought it was Postkass (mailbox). Later, among the free Yugoslavs in Sweden and still in Yugoslavia, there was a legend of the one-eyed man from the turf hut above Rognan with the name Postkass, Peder Postkass.
[57] Ulstein 1977:169
[58] Hultmann 2001:55-56

with Arthur Baardsvik, a district forest ranger, would make business trips to the north and south without any problems to help people.

Another important person the border pilots could contact was the merchant in Saltdal, Knut Furebotten. He was an important figure both in the refugee traffic and in the resistance movement. People often spent the night at his place for cover, and then he would find a border pilot for them that could come and escort them toward Balvatnet and on to the border, refugees could then go to a place called Mavas in Sweden and to find help.

3.1.1 The Sámi's at Mavas

Mavas is a Sámi village that is 3,5 kilometres from the border, east of Balvatnet. Border pilots in Saltdal, Jakobsbakken, and Sulitjelma would escort refugees to Mavas. For a very long time, Mavas has been an old Sámi place of residence, and Mavas is at the lake Mavasjavre. The Sámi's there and those working as refugee aides collaborated closely with "Fjelltjenesten".[59]

"Fjelltjenesten" provided airplanes when refugees came to Mavas in terrible shape who had to be taken to the hospital in Arjeplog because of injuries and frostbite. Other refugees in good shape could simply cross the lake and get to Arjeplog or other population centres in the area.

The most known Sámi in Mavas was Inga Steggo. She, along with her son Lars and his wife Petrine from Saltdal, worked together to help the refugees. After the war, Inga would receive a medal for her services in helping refugees. Other Sámi's in Mavas worth mentioning were Anders Ruong and his wife Sara. The Sámi's in Mavas also had close contact with the people of Jakobsbakken in Sulitjelma, but I will come back to this later. Due to all the contact the Sámi's in Mavas had with people across the border, they became very important for refugees and even got recognition for this after the war.

3.2 Fauske

Fauske was an area where allied soldiers stayed in which was attacked by German forces. After the King and government fled from the capital because of the invasion and the retreat of military forces, the focus shifted to the north during and after the battle of Narvik. There was an English platoon staying in Fauske, but the number of soldiers is unknown since they spread out across a larger area. On May 22 1940, three German airplanes flew towards Fauske, using their machine guns and bombs against houses there. The reason for the bombing was most likely

[59] My translation: Mountain rescue service

an attempt to kill English soldiers and their helpers.[60] Due to the bombing and the approach of the advancing German army, the English soldiers retreated. A Norwegian company led by captain Rambech was sent towards Sulitjelma. It was this company that later would go to Sørfold and meet with Oskar Henriksen at Fagerbakken, but I will come back to this narrative later.

When German soldiers actually came to Fauske on May 29, they did not come with tanks and other vehicles. The first forces that came to Fauske were infantry soldiers who used bicycles while the rest walked. It was a big contrast to German forces in other parts of Europe.

As mentioned earlier, Norway was considered important because of the iron ore production from Sweden and out Narvik. Fauske itself became important because there was a mining industry in Sulitjelma, and Fauske also had a harbour. Due to the mines in Sulitjelma and the harbour area in Fauske, the region drew a large number of German soldiers. Some sources state that there were about 7000 German soldiers at the most, and that the population of Fauske municipality was 7000 at the time.[61] That says something about how important the Germans considered Fauske. It is also worthwhile to consider the resources Germans transported from the occupied areas were resources that the Allied forces could not use.

Fauske had border pilots, but since the area is not adjacent to the border between Norway and Sweden, the border pilots primarily escorted refugees to other border pilots in areas that are adjacent to the border. Some border pilots could live in the area around Fauske, but they could escort refugees into other areas and then across the border. There were border pilots that lived in the area around Fauske but operated in other areas, such as Sørfold.

Fauske is also close to Bodø, which was bombed in the early days of the war and was a strategic location because the German forces used the airport.

3.2.1 Johan Gustaf Pavall - My Grandfather

My grandfather was one of the border pilots living in the area around Fauske, though he operated in Sørfold. Being a reindeer herder, he was someone who hunted and fished a lot and gathered berries in the mountains, so he knew the terrain and the location of different turf huts, huts, and stones. Due to his ability to seek shelter and his good physical shape, he was in a good position to escort refugees across the border. When the war broke out and Fauske was bombed, my grandfather felt that he had to help people. Since he knew the terrain very well and could

[60] Evjen 2004:206
[61] Evjen 2004:213

help refugees to get to Sweden[62], he could accompany them instead of letting them go alone and risk getting lost or freezing to death if they went during winter.

My grandfather, together with a man named Hans Strømmen, escorted 14 or 15 refugees across the border until my grandfather had to flee to Sweden.[63] There is one event that showed how secretive people had to be and how desperate people were to flee and get to Sweden. Hans Strømmen was summoned to the office of Sverre Mornes, who was a police officer. There, he was asked if Hans could show Sverre the way to Sweden. Hans became very suspicious and he could not answer right away. Maybe Sverre was on the "wrong side" and was trying to surreptitiously discover those who border pilots were. Hans talked to people that knew Sverre, and it turned out that Sverre actually needed to flee and get to Sweden. This would work, since this was during the spring and Hans's cover story would be that he and my grandfather were with the reindeers in the mountains in Valnesfjord, west of my grandfather's home.

Hans Strømmen met Sverre and his wife in Fauske and they all took a taxi to Rødås before they started on their journey to Sweden. The route they took was a very long one, as shown on the map:

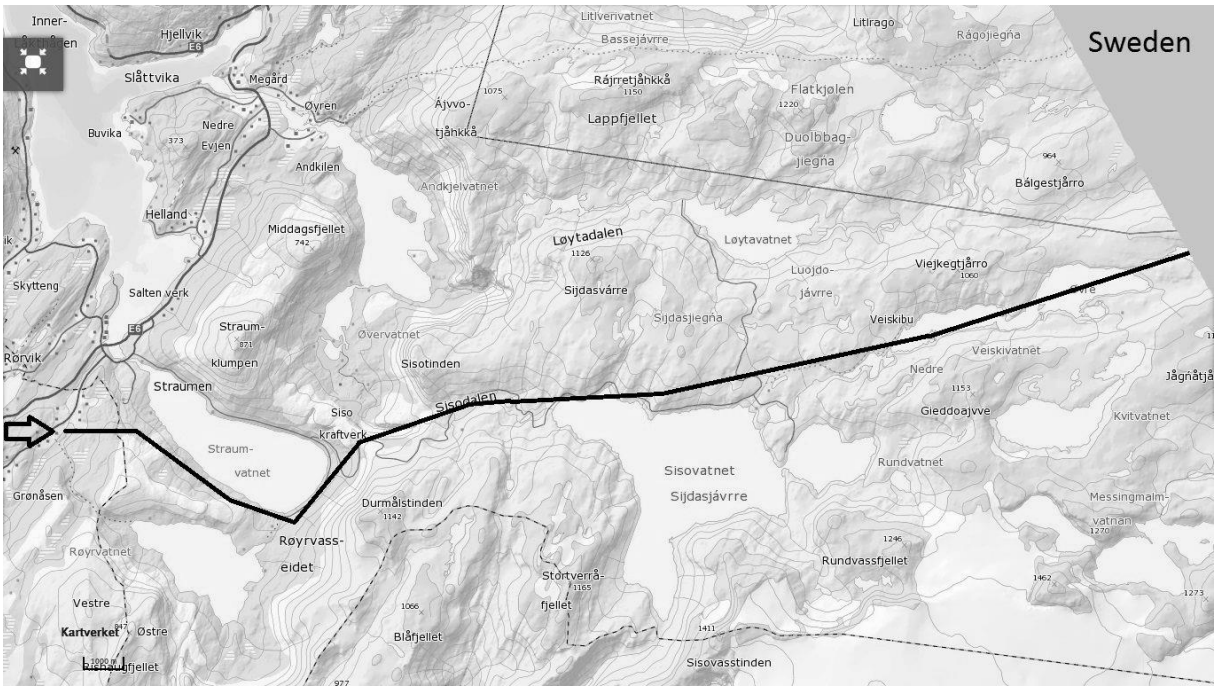

Figure 7 *- The route that Hans, Johan, Sverre and his wife took. They started in Rødås, went over Hareli mountain, over to Siso, Veiski and then Sirkasloukta at Værrå water.*

They were planning to sleep in a turf hut, but when they came there, three bodies were inside and some parts had been cut off. Outside was a bucket filled with bones in which the

[62]Interview with Halbera Pavall
[63] Lind 1999:56

body parts had been boiled.[64] They did not want to sleep, there so they found another place to sleep (but they got very little sleep that night). The next day they had to make a boat out of old fence wood and row across the river they needed to cross. Sverre and his wife slept in a tourist turf hut, while Hans and Johan found a tent to sleep in. The next day Sverre and his wife continued on while Johan and Hans returned home, but because of fog, they could not go the route they planned and had to take another. They also had little food, which consisted of a grouse and a piece of bread. Hans borrowed some fishing line from Johan and tried to see if he had any luck. He caught many fish, and when he returned to Johan, Johan threw the grouse to the dog. According to Hans, Hans ate the most wondrous char meal he had ever eaten.[65] This is an example of what border pilots went through to help refugees. It was a complicated journey to get them to safety, and they did so because they made the moral choice to help refugees.

There are two stories that supports the fact that my grandfather used a cover[66] name when he was as a border pilot. These stories also show how strenuous and dangerous the mountains could be without a guide, especially during the winter. Even though they are different, there are some points that support those facts. According to Soleim et.al (2015:136), four Norwegians came to a farm in 1941 or 1942 in Nordfjord (north of Sørfold) and asked for a border pilot. They did not receive any help because the owners of the farm thought they might be Nazis or at least Nazi sympathisers. They left the farm and tried to get to Sweden on their own, but unfortunately, they chose a course that took them south towards Sulitjelma, not east to the border. They would find their way back to the farm after two weeks, but one of the girls died. One of the men had apparently become deranged and perished. Johan Holtan found the girl.

The second story, written by Lind (1999:55), says that in 1943, three men came to Hans Strømmen and asked for help. After they received aid, Hans escorted them to Siso but because of his work, he could not be away for long, and had to tell them the rest of the way. Hans hoped that the rest of the route would be easy to follow. They had skis and they borrowed a sledge for their gear. My grandfather found this sledge abandoned in the mountains because he was going to get a girl that had frozen to death in the mountains. The boyfriend had had become deranged and walked out in the winter night. My grandfather found the girl and took her back to Norway, but the boyfriend was not found until spring.

[64] Lind 1999:56
[65] Lind 1999:56-57
[66] My grandfather was either known as Johan Holtan or Johan in Holtan.

The two stories share similarities because of who and how they died. In both stories, a girl had frozen to death and one of the men became deranged and walked out in the night and froze to death. In the second story, it says Johan Pavall found the sledge when he was going to get the frozen girl. In the first story, it says Johan Holtan found the girl, and my grandfather used the name Johan Holtan when he was escorting people because he was afraid that if someone got his real name he would be caught. It strengthens the notion that my grandfather used the name Johan Holtan, since the person my grandfather was working with used my grandfather's name when he told this story. It might not have been the best cover name however, since he used his own first name and the place he lived as a surname. If someone said to a refugee that they should contact Johan in Holtan for help, those who overheard that could add what they knew and then know whom in reality they were talking about. In fact, it may have been the reason why my grandfather had to flee to avoid arrest by German authorities.

In the summer of 1944, he was escorting three men from Poland when he met Hans Strømmen. Together they agreed that it would be safer for them if there were more people involved to help escort refugees to Sweden, which would allow them to help the refugees on different stretches of their journeys. A man called Johan Jentoft agreed to escort the three Poles one part of the way, and then Hans Strømmen and Johan Pavall were to take them to Sweden.

Later, Hans and my grandfather went to a place to wait for an entire week. They fished and waited for Jentoft to come with the three men from Poland, but they never showed up. They went down from the mountains to find out what had happened. They learned that Jentoft and the three Poles had been arrested, and that the Germans were now looking for my grandfather. My grandfather was not concerned, but Hans managed to convince him that he needed to flee, so he went in the mountains. After a few days, he came down again and heard that SS soldiers were looking for him. He decided that he should flee, so Sverre, his brother, brought him some supplies before he left. He made it to Sweden and registered as a refugee there on September 29, 1944.[67]

People had to be secretive. They could not know where and when the German authorities were spying to find people who were working against the occupying force. In one story, Johan and Hans Strømmen had helped some refugees to Fagerbakk, but instead of going straight to Siso and then on to Sweden, they went along the Ankjell-valley and up the Løyta-valley - a trip that is much longer. The only explanation for doing this would be that they knew that German soldiers were in Siso, and that the soldiers knew someone was escorting refugees through Siso.

[67] Flyktningkontoret i Stockholm 1940-1945, Dokumenter (RA/S-2080/V/L0022), 1940-1945, oppb: Riksarkivet [online] http://arkivverket.no/URN:db_read/db/43434/686/?size=medium&mode=0

Because of that, Johan and Hans Strømmen took a much longer route so they would not be spotted and discovered.[68]

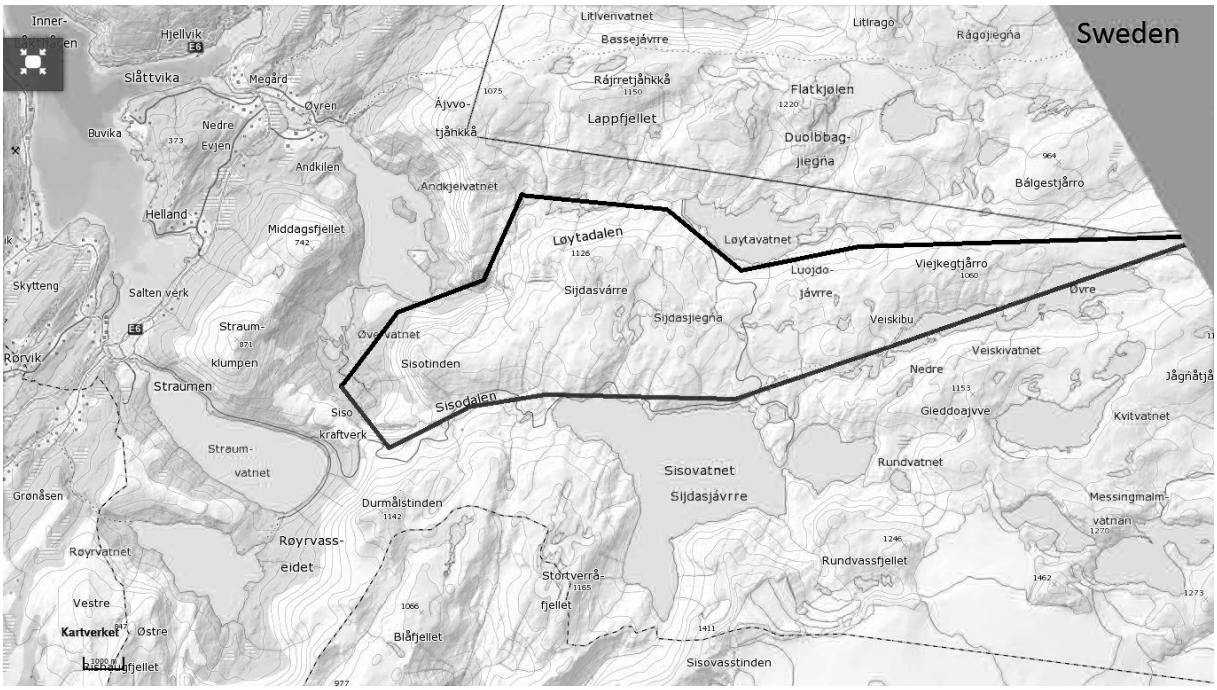

Figure 8 *- The lower line shows the route my grandfather and Hans Strømmen usually took but opted against. One doing this may have been that there was a German patrol there at Siso lake. The upper line shows the route they actually took, which is a bit longer and navigates through a tougher mountain area..*

What he did was so secretive that he did not tell my grandmother anything about it. Being a reindeer herder, he usually just told her that he was going to the mountains to watch the reindeer when in reality he was escorting refugees.

My grandmother did not know that my grandfather was a border pilot. She was shocked when German soldiers came to their home looking for him. She could not really say anything because she did not know anything. She did not hear anything from him for the rest of the war, and she did not even know if he was alive. After the war, my grandmother was working on the farm when her father told her that there was someone waiting for her in the kitchen and that she had to go and see that person. She did not know who it could be, and when she came to the kitchen, my grandfather sat at the dinner table. The only thing my grandmother said about that moment later was that "it was a nice evening".[69]

My grandfather did not tell many stories of what he had been doing during the war. It was most likely a period of his life that he had put behind him, or it was a period of his life that he felt he did not need to talk so much about. And when he did tell stories of what he did during the war, he probably did not tell everything.

[68] Interview with Ole Herik Fagerbakk 18/8 2015
[69] Interview with Halbera Pavall, 2008

3.3 Sulitjelma

"Jakobsbakken i Sulitjelma var eit av dei største eksportsentra i Nordland".[70] Sulitjelma is an area with a strong mining industry, and early during the occupation the Germans were so interested in it for the export of resources to Germany that they established a permanent military area to guard shipments. Sulitjelma also became an important area for refugees crossing the border to Sweden and there are many reasons for that. In other places, it was uncommon for entire communities to get together and help the refugees, but Sulitjelma became such a community. This was especially so in Jakobsbakken.

3.3.1 Why Sulitjelma became important

There are many reasons why Sulitjelma became important. The people in Sulitjelma spent a lot of time in the mountains and had got to know the terrain through hunting, fishing, and gathering berries. People also practiced many sports in Jakobsbakken. Many people who were active in sports would later become border pilots because they knew the terrain and had spent a lot of time in the mountains: therefore they were hugely beneficial to refugees looking for help. Some refugees posed as workers in the mine and they worked for a while until they managed to get the necessary contacts, alternatively, the people in the community would hide them in old and closed-down mines until someone could escort them across the border.

The terrain was easy to traverse, the distances were feasible for refugees, and there was close contact across the border toward Mavas. A Sámi family lived there, and because of trading back and forth between those two communities, there was close contact between the two. Mavas became important for refugees crossing the border because they could get help there.[71]

Sulitjelma is an area that is close to the border and from Jakobsbakken, the easiest routes are approximately 30 kilometres long. However, if one wanted to go to the closest inhabited area, excluding Mavas, one would have to add 10 or 20 kilometres to the trip.[72]

If one wanted to travel to Sulitjelma to get across the border, one could use the mining company's transport routes, which were by train and by boat, though these routes were easily controlled by the German soldiers and they could easily look through the train when it stopped at the stations to search for passengers. This happened when Hubert Høfling, who worked in

[70] Ulstein 1977:171. My translation: Jakobsbakken in Sulitjelma was one of the biggest export centres in Nordland County.
[71] Rørvik and Støre 2012:59
[72] Rørvik and Støre 2012:58-61

Organization Todt,[73] defected from the work he did and wanted to escape. It has been characterised as foolhardy and his escape was badly planned, so his chances of escape were slim, though he was very fortunate and would eventually make it to Sweden thanks to the help of border pilots.[74] His defection and escape towards Sweden were not without problems, and would test his patience. One such instance occurred when he had to wait for one week alone in a farm before people could find him someone to could escort him to Sulitjelma.

Because of the mining company, people lived close to each other and worked eight hours a day, meaning that they had a lot of spare time to socialize. As such, they created close informal bonds between each other. Since everyone lived close to each other, it was very hard to try to hide the fact that someone was helping refugees from the rest of the community. Because of this, everyone was drawn into helping refugees. For the border pilots in Jakobsbakken, it was not a question of not helping anyone. If there was someone in need for help, every border pilot in Jakobsbakken "felt that they had to help them".[75] There was no clear organization or leadership in Jakobsbakken when it came to escorting refugees. At least not when compared to other resistance groups that were organized by the Allied militaries, such as Milorg[76] and XU.[77]

The board of directors in the mining company was also very helpful for the border pilots. The Germans controlled the workers and the management had to give reports to the German leadership. In the beginning, reporting took place once a month, then every two weeks, and from the summer of 1944, every week.[78] If a border pilot who also worked in the mines was away from work, the management would not report him to the German authorities. The doctor working for the company would write out a sick note for the border pilots when they were escorting refugees.[79] This way, all the work the German authorities tried to do to control the mining in Sulitjelma was undermined.

The border pilots had to be careful in case the German authorities would discover them, and many had their backpacks close by in case this happened. Because there was no organization within the community, and hence no leadership or formal ideas of running a resistance movement, German authorities would eventually discover them, and they stopped

[73] A paramilitary organization named after Fritz Todt where the workers were forced out to do practical work related to German military activities. Normal members wore civilian clothes, but those in leader positions wore uniforms.
[74] Rørvik and Støre 2012: 17-18
[75] Interview with Rørvik, Norum and Norum 18.08.2015
[76] Milorg: Militær organisasjon. Military organization. A military resistance organization that was tasked to prepare for an eventual liberation of Norway and support an eventual Allied landing.
[77] An intelligence organization that worked in Norway on behalf of the Allied forces.
[78] Rørvik and Støre 2012:62-63
[79] Rørvik and Støre 2012:63

escorting refugees. One of the reasons for their discovery, was that when a refugee came to them asking for help, they would follow their intuition. This way of determining if a refugee actually was a refugee and not someone in league with the German authorities, and it was not a good way of determining their intentions. In fact, it would later come back to haunt them.

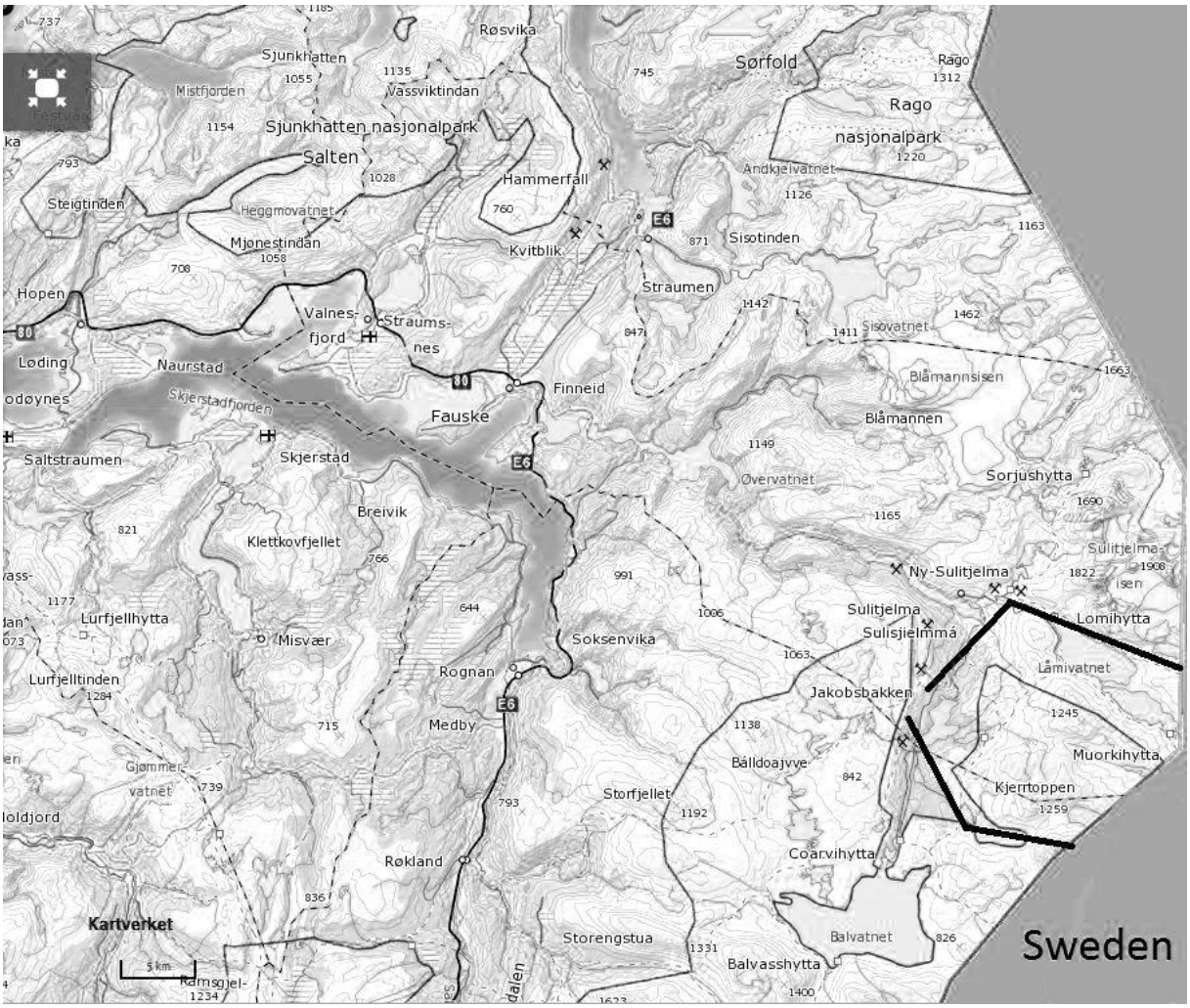

Figure 9 *- These are the routes that the border pilots used to get refugees to Sweden. They are also close to Mavas, which was a Sámi village. The only problem many refugees had was that they had to take the train from Fauske to Sulitjelma, and there were German soldiers patrolling the stations asking for identification.*

3.3.2 A "Deserter" asks for Help

At the end of 1944, a refugee came and asked for help. He went to the café in Sulitjelma and he pretended to be a deserter. The way he acted and the way he was dressed did not give any warning signs to the people that saw him or those who interacted with him. Eventually, he got into contact with Petra Strømhaug, who worked there, and she took it upon herself to take care of him and find a border pilot. She found someone named Trygve Edin who could escort him to Sweden, and she also found a house where the "deserter" could stay for the night which belonged to a couple named Johanna and Leonard Larsen. She also found a couple named Bibi

and Bjarne Kojan who could help him to Jakobsbakken and point out the house where he would spend the night. Because Petra had put in a good word for him, the couple and Trygve trusted him. They told him that there had been some escorting of refugees recently and that Trygve, who had escorted refugees before, would be one of the border pilots. Trygve would not escort the "deserter" that evening because there was a pre-Christmas party on the agenda that night and most of the adults were going to participate.

They left for the party, and when Trygve was about to leave, the "deserter" asked for the doors to remain unlocked, which Trygve found a bit suspicious. Nevertheless, he did not lock the doors. At the party Trygve talked to Leonard, who agreed that it sounded suspicious, so Leonard went to the house to check on him but the "deserter" was gone and had left a note saying he left to find a friend that also tried to get to Sweden. In reality though, the "deserter" left the house to contact German military authorities, who picked him up. After he gave his report, the authorities ordered a full mobilization of the military force into the area.

What happened next was that the German soldiers along with the "deserter" came to Jakobsbakken and met a man named Marcelius Hellarvik, who went home for a while before he would re-join the party. They asked where Trygve lived and Marcelius pointed out the house for them. Then they let him go and he returned to the party and told Trygve that the German soldiers were looking for him. Everyone now knew that German soldiers where there and that Trygve was the first one the Germans were looking for. When the German soldiers came to the house where the party was, they started to search the house, but Trygve managed to climb out a window and escape. He would eventually get to Sweden, return to Jakobsbakken after the New Year when he told his family he was okay, and then return to Sweden. After the war, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis, maybe because of all the contact he had with refugees and prisoners, or because of how strenuous his escape was. He would later die in 1948, at the age of 37.[80]

At Jakobsbakken, the party was stopped. Everyone was ordered out, and the Germans would later arrest 16 people. Out of the 16, 12 were released shortly after their arrest because the Germans could not connect them to any illegal activity. The other four, Petra Strømhaug, Johanna Larsen, Leonard Larsen and Solveig Edin, were not so lucky, and were sent to prison until the end of the war. Petra was arrested because she was the one who knew whom to contact so that the "deserter" could get to Sweden. Johanna and Leonard Larsen were arrested because they were the ones who would take the "deserter" in for the night. Leonard was tortured during

[80] Rørvik and Støre 2012:90-91

his stay in prison. Solveig Edin was arrested because she was married to Trygve and they thought she might knew something.[81]

3.3.3 Aftermath

Before the raid people were afraid of the German soldiers and what could happen if they found out what they were doing. After the raid they became terrified and they stopped helping refugees. The reasons for their undoing were that the people of Jakobsbakken were too naïve, too comfortable in their situation, and they thought it could not happen to them. This naïve thinking was what led to their undoing.

Before the raid, the people in Jakobsbakken tolerated the Germans, but after the raid they hated them, and this hate lasted for many years after the war.

3.4 Sørfold

As with Fauske, Sørfold became part of the war from the very beginning. When the first German military forces came to the area, Norwegians met them, but they were quickly defeated and the German forces established themselves in the area. They established a large presence in Sørfold, and there were a couple of prison camps in the area. Because of the heavy presence of German forces and the prison camps, many people felt that they had to leave Sørfold and make it to Sweden.

The exact number of border pilots in Sørfold is unknown. One source says it was ten border pilots[82], and another source says it was as many as 17 border pilots in Sørfold during the war.[83] When I interviewed a man named Ole Henrik Fagerbakken, he would discuss only 15 border pilots. The reasons Ole Henrik only talked about 15 border pilots were, first, that the family of one of them did not want Ole Henrik to talk about him. The other reason was that Ole Henrik could not manage to contact the family of the other border pilot and so he just left him out. In addition, it has been claimed that one border pilot was not really a border pilot even though he said so. However, I will not use the number that Ole Henrik Fagerbakk uses in his presentations. I will use the source telling of 17 border pilots in Sørfold during the war.

As in all other areas, there were one or more border pilots that took many trips and escorted many refugees across the border into Sweden. In Sørfold, that border pilot was Karl Skar. I will come back to him later.

[81] Cf. Rørvik and Støre 2012 70-86
[82] Soleim et.al. 2015:128
[83] Interview with Ole Henrik Fagerbakk 18/8:2015

There was complete silence about this topic during and after the war. They had to be silent about what they did or there was a chance that the German authorities would catch them. "What some were talking about, everyone knew".[84] Those who were caught or were sought for questioning were caught because people talked about them, and somehow German forces heard that. There is also a possibility that a refugee sent them a letter thanking for the help, but because of censoring, the letter was read by German authorities. Many also felt that what they did was not extraordinary. They just took a trip over to Sweden and had some people with them. It just happened that the people they were escorting were refugee, and those people needed help. This is something I will come back to in a later chapter.

3.4.1 Karl Skar

Karl Skar did not start to escort refugees at the beginning of the war. He started escorting refugees on August 20, 1941, and he continued until March 10, 1945[85]. He completed 14 trips with 36 people, and most of the trips were in 1943 and 1944[86]. He became border pilot by chance and did not exactly plan to become one to begin with.

One of the reasons contributing to him becoming a border pilot was that he spent a lot of time in the mountains and he was in a very good physical shape because of that. He also had close connection with "Bodø Turistforening"[87] and he had put up markers on a tourist route from Sørfjorden in Sørfold, meaning he knew the area very well. As such, he stood in a very good position to offer help to refugees. However, the first group of refugees came unexpectedly to Karl. He and the rest of his family at first were not equipped to handle this type of situation. The notion that the names of the refugees were known and how Karl and his family became part of the refugee traffic shows that it was "unprofessional" and not organized in a good manner. Although it had been characterised as "unprofessional", the fact that he went through it, shows that he and his family wanted to help people. Later, Karl and his family became better at both meeting up with refugees and escorting refugees without knowing names or telling any names. This shows that even though it started "unprofessionally", it grew to become more professional. Not knowing any names or telling any names would also help them in case German authorities discovered them.

What is strange is that many of the refugees who came to Karl did not know him personally, yet they knew of him before they came. This is evidenced by the fact that the

[84] Interview with Ole Henrik Fagerbakk 18/8 2015
[85] Balstad 2010: 35-40
[86] Soleim et.al. 2015:132
[87] My translation. Bodø Tourist Organization

refugees knew which room he was sleeping in and they knocked on his window and managed to wake him up without waking the rest of the family. However, the rest of his family (his parents and his two brothers) helped and contributed with what they could anyway. Therefore, someone was supplying the refugees with information on where they could find help.

One time Karl was traveling with the local boat when some people were talking about him. Somehow, people knew what he was doing and he was afraid of the repercussions. Even though people tried to be as secretive as possible, there still was a chance German authorities would discover them.

Karl's contact was a police officer named Kristian Brekken in Bodø. After the war, Karl contacted the police in Bodø but they had never heard of Kristian Brekken before, and there were no records of him either. It is possible that both the name and his job title were just a cover to protect himself. Later, Karl became sick and he was admitted into the hospital in Bodø. There, the chief physician, Anton Gisle Johnson, paid him a visit and told him that Anton was the supervisor in charge of the local home front division and his boss during the war.[88] They spent many hours talking about their experiences.

When Karl would talk about events and stories he participated in, he would try to keep the names, addresses, and other details to as few and as little as possible. During the war, secrecy was of utmost importance, and for him it still was after the war. The best practice for all parties was that the refugees and border pilots knew as little as possible of each other. That way, if the German soldiers caught anyone, they could not reveal anything because they did not know anything. After the war, Karl had an experience with a German soldier in a German military camp in Elvekroken:

> *For etter at tyskerne kapitulerte, var Karl i den tyske militærleiren i Elvekroken, "der de høgste var". Dette var en leir de kjente godt, siden de gikk gjennom den når de skulle på havet. I leiren skal Karl ha møtt en av de tyske soldatene. Han skal da ha sagt til han på norsk: «E det du som kjem, vi veit godt ka du heldt på med, men fordi det var stilt, det va ikkje nokka oppstyr i bygda, så lat vi alt passere»*[89]

Somehow, the German forces stationed in the area knew what Karl did and they knew that he was a border pilot, but because there were no troubles and it was quiet, they let it pass. It seems that they did not take their job seriously and that they did not want to create more ruckus than

[88] Soleim et.al 2015:132

[89] Soleim et.al. 2015:135. My translation: After the German forces capitulated, Karl was in the German military camp in Elvekroken, "where the leaders were". This was a camp that they knew well, because they travelled through it when they were going out on the sea. In the camp, Karl met one of the German soldiers. He told to him in Norwegian: Is it you that comes, we knew very well what you were doing, but because it was quiet, that there was no fuss, we let everything pass."

was necessary. Some have also speculated and said that many of the German soldiers stationed in the Sørfold area, were people who were conscripted, and in reality did not want to be a part of the war. As such, many of the soldiers sympathized with the inhabitants in Sørfold, and they were lenient and showed mercy.

Later, Karl would try to remember what he had done during the war, but he struggled with it because he had previously tried to forget it. Yet, when he talked about the refugees he escorted during the war, he knew the specific routes, times, and the number of refugees.[90]

> *Karl fikk den gang en kopi av det som fremlegges i dag, og som han ikke hadde anmerkninger til. Til tross for at jeg senere, ved forskjellige anledninger forsøkte å innhentet tilleggsopplysninger, kom han aldri med nye «vesentlige» opplysninger eller anmerkninger som rokket ved det foreliggende utkastet. Derfor må man anta at de beskrevne forhold ligger tett opp til det han opplevde på denne tiden*[91]

Because Karl read the draft for the article and because he did not give any feedback or comments on what was written, one must assume it is as close to the truth as possible but of course, there is a chance Karl did not remember everything exactly right.

3.4.2 Håkon Skar

Håkon Skar was the neighbour of Karl Skar but they were not related and he was 15 years old in 1940. He remembers that there were refugees in Sørfold and he became a part of the refugee traffic early. He were asked by Karl if he wanted to become a part of it, which he did, because he thought it was exciting; however he never went alone on any trips with refugees. In total, he did three trips with Karl. Nonetheless, he thought it was exciting and it was his thirst for adventure that made him a part of the refugee traffic. He still knew it was dangerous, just not how dangerous. Later, he confessed that escorting refugees was dangerous because the border pilots and the refugees could meet German patrols up in the mountains or close to the border.[92] They could also be stopped and questioned by soldiers and be discovered. If they were caught and it was discovered they were border pilots, most likely they would be either sent to prison and suffer a lot there, sent to camps, or executed for their crimes.

[90] Balstad 2010:35

[91] Balstad 2010:35. My translation: Karl did at the time, receive a copy of what is being presented today, and he did not have any comments on that. Even though I tried on later occasions to get additional information from him, he did not give any new "essential" information or comments that changed the existing draft. Therefore, one must assume, that the described events are close to what he experienced during that time.

[92] Soleim et.at 2015

3.4.3 Oskar Henriksen at Fagerbakk

The story of Oskar Henriksen is a special one. There is a chance that some of the things he did is still considered classified,[93] so there is a chance that people will never know what he did but some things we know. The reason why some of the things he did may be classified is that he received a diploma after the war where it said "Norway thanks you for your effort in the struggle for freedom". In addition, it also says that Oskar Henriksen was a part of "Etteretningstjenesten"[94] in "Sjømilitære Etteretningsorganisasjon R.M.O."[95]. Whatever he did, we most likely will not know for a long time, or maybe not at all.


OSKAR HENRIKSEN

har arbeidet i Etterretningstjenesten

i

SJØMILITÆRE ETTERRETNINGSORGANISASJON R.M.O.

fra VÅREN 1941 til MAI 1945

Norge takker Deg

for Din innsats i Frihetskampen

Forsvarssjef

Figure 10 *– This picture shows the diploma that Oskar Henriksen in Fagerbakk received for his services to Norway.*

[93] Interview with Ole Henrik Fagerbakk 18/8 2015
[94] Intelligence service
[95] Navy intelligence organization

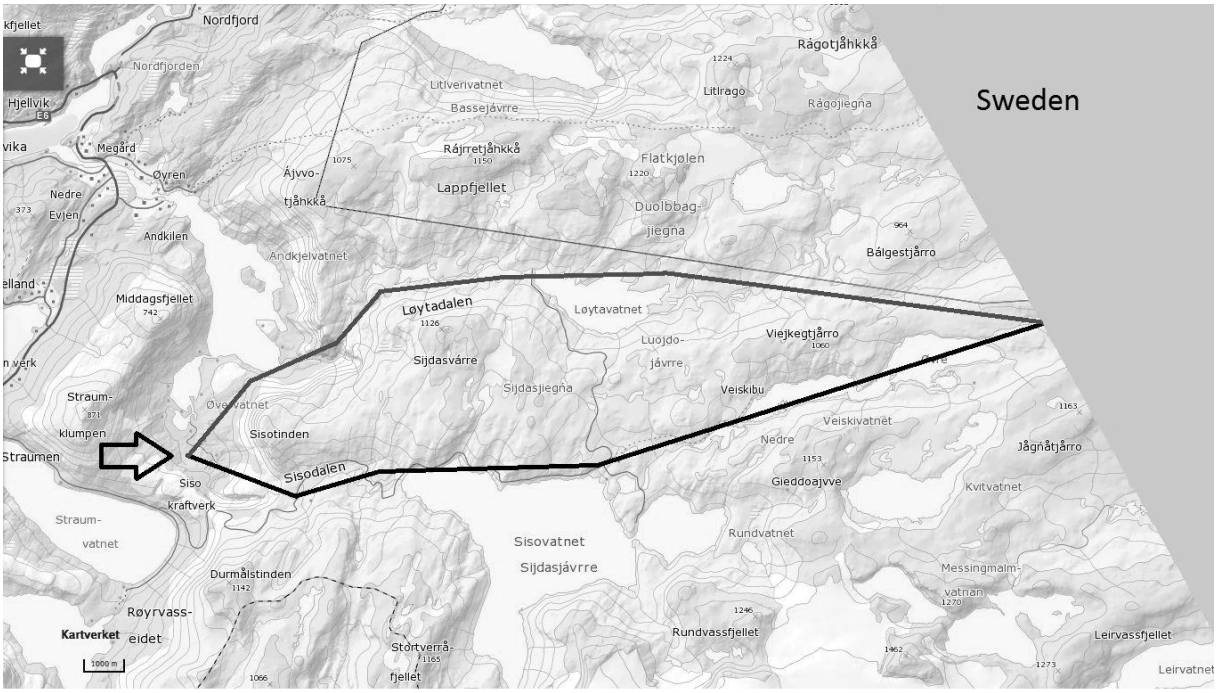

Figure 11 *- The start of the route Oskar used was from his farm in Fagerbakken. From there, he would escort refugees north of the glacier "Blåmannsisen" and over to Sweden. Both lines show the route he could take. The lower route was the shortest.*

Oskar grew up on a farm in Fagerbakken and a military company came there from Sulitjelma, led by a captain named Rambech. The military forces in Norway had surrendered at this time and the military company dissolved in Fagerbakk. This company have been mentioned earlier (chapter 3.2) and it was this company that went from Fauske to Sulitjelma. Rambech told Oskar and his brother that they were to take the weapons and hide them so that the German soldiers could not find them. They did that, and Oskar got a written note about this, which he put it in his wallet. In addition, Oskar started escorting refugees in the spring of 1942.[96]

Oskar had escorted, among others, an intelligence operative that had been sent to Norway to get an overview of German forces in Northern Norway. The operative came to Fagerbakken and asked for help.[97] The operative had 70.000kr that they were supposed to pay to someone. Oskar sent the operative to a man called Magnus Olsen whom they gave the money to. Somehow, Magnus came under suspicion and the Germans were searching for him. Luckily, a German soldier said to Magnus that they were coming to get him and that he had to flee. Magnus fled, and he managed to get over to Sweden where an airplane picked him up.[98]

[96] Ulstein 1977:173

[97]Interestingly, according to Ulstein: 1977, the operative went to the coast and continued north. One month later the operative came to Fagerbakken and asked for help. Ulstein mentions nothing about the money. One reason for this could be that Fagerbakk never mentioned this during the interviews. This is something that I mentioned earlier about books and articles saying one thing while interviews are different in small details or vice versa.

[98] Interview with Ole Henrik Fagerbakk 18/8 2015

Later, the intelligence operative returned to Fagerbakk, said that he needed to get to Sweden and wondered if he could be escorted to the border. Oskar was already standing ready with some refugees that needed help and the operative came along on the trip. It is unknown exactly who the people that Oskar was standing with were. Oskar escorted everybody and he went with the operative almost all the way to Jokkmokk in Sweden. The trip is almost 200km long and Oskar was arrested a few days after he came back to Fagerbakk. It was not a coincidence that he was arrested only days after he came back.

There are two stories that discuss why Oskar was arrested. The first story is about a refugee who was escorted from Sulitjelma to Sweden. The person wrote a letter back thanking for the help, and he sent his greetings to Fagerbakk. Because of German censorship, they opened the letter and read its contents. "The problem with that is that we do not know what happened to the border pilot. Was he arrested?"[99] The second story is about someone that wrote a letter directly to Oskar thanking him for his help. In addition, that letter was opened by German censorship and they now knew Oskar's name. Ulstein (1977) says there were some refugees who had written some letters, thanking the recipients for the help, and asking the recipient to send their greetings to Oskar. It is most likely that this last story is correct.

Oskar was not a border pilot for a long time because German soldiers arrested Oskar on November 22, 1942. He had a pistol, and the night they arrested him he had checked and put it under his pillow. He awoke during the night with three German soldiers looking at him with a flashlight. They searched him and through his belongings. They found the pistol, they found the letter from Rambech saying they had to hide the weapons, and they had his name because of the opening of the letter. "Why he was not shot I do not understand".[100] His brother heard the commotion that was happening in the house and he got scared and jumped out of the window. He ended up jumping right into the arms of a German soldier. Because of that he also was arrested.

If Oskar had to flee to Sweden, his family would have been taken prisoners because of what he had done and because of a directive that came during the war that said the family could be taken hostage if someone fled to Sweden. He was afraid of that, because his parents were almost 80 years old, and he had a sick sister. His other sister Emma would then be alone to work on the farm, tend to the animals and take care of the family. Luckily, the soldiers saw the situation the family was in, and the fact that they did not do anything to the rest of the family, showed that some soldiers had sympathy and showed compassion towards them.

[99] Interview with Ole Henrik Fagerbakk 18/8 2015
[100] Interview with Ole Henrik Fagerbakk 18/8 2015

When the German soldiers arrested Oskar, they sent him to a prison in Bodø. He was then later transferred to Falstad[101] and Grini,[102] and in the end, he was transferred to Sachsenhausen, which was a concentration camp. He survived the ordeal, but at the worst, he weighed 42kg. Ole Henrik took a trip to Sachsenhausen memorial museum to see what his father went through, and when he got out, he said to himself that only the strongest could survive something like that.

3.4.4 Emma in Fagerbakk

Emma was the sister of Oskar and apparently, she had helped a Polish man over to Sweden. This is a story that Ole Henrik never knew about, and one his father never spoke about it. When the war was nearing its end, one of the Polish prisoners in the camp in Sørfold thought that since the Germans had lost, they would shoot all the prisoners. Therefore, he decided to escape. He managed to escape and got in contact with a man named Helbert Hansen in Evjen. Helbert equipped the Polish man with clothes, food and skis. Helbert told him he could go to Fagerbakken and he explained whom he needed to contact, explained how he could get there and he even wrote his name on a paper so that the Polish man could show it as a sign of trust when he made contact with people in Fagerbakken.

When the polish man came to Fagerbakken and made contact with Emma she became terrified. At first, she did not know if this was an agitator[103] and she was terrified because she had a sick sister and her parents were old. When the Polish man showed the paper with Helbert Hansen's signature on the note, she realised that he was trustworthy. He was allowed to stay at the farm for one day, and then she most likely escorted him to the area around Siso, before she pointed out where he needed to go in order to get to Sweden. The reason for this is that Emma had her family and the farm to think of and she could not be away for too long. Later Helbert Hansen received a letter from the Polish man where he thanked him for the help and told him that he was in a hospital. Unfortunately, he had gotten frostbite, but otherwise he was okay.

When Emma's story was in the local yearbook for Sørfold, Ole Henrik called the author to ask if it was true. The author said it was true, because her father had received a letter from the Polish man.[104] This shows how important secrecy became, and that many did not tell anyone of what they did during the war, not even their own families.

[101] Prison camp in Nord-Trøndelag
[102] Biggest prison camp in Norway outside of Oslo
[103] German authorities used agitators, which could be German soldiers or Norwegians that were on the Germans side. They would go to areas and communities and infiltrate them in order to find who was resisting the occupation.
[104] Interview with Ole Henrik Fagerbakken 18/8 2015

3.5 Tysfjord

Tysfjord became one of the most important, if not *the* most important area in Northern Norway for refugees to cross the border, and a place where Sámi border guides became very important for refugees. It is also the area with the most controversy. After the war, many were accused of treason, but the cases were eventually dismissed. This is something that have been discussed earlier (chapter 2.3).

Tysfjord is very close to Narvik, where German forces suffered their first defeat against Allied military forces. Because of that, the people in Tysfjord witnessed different military forces at the outbreak of the Second World War. There was some fighting between German and English forces around the area of Tysfjord, and during some of the fights, civilians were caught in the crossfire - a testament to the uncertainty of war. One example of civilians caught in crossfire was when a damaged cargo plane made an emergency landing at a place called Tepkilen in Tysfjord. The inhabitants in the area made contact with the English Navy patrolling the fjords, and two English trawlers were sent to investigate, gather documents, and look for survivors.

They came under fire from the Germans, suffering casualties. Some were captured while the rest retreated. The next day, the Germans came down from the mountains to Skrovkjosen and they went into a house. The owner of the house had fled into the mountains and hid among huge boulders, which was a good thing because an English boat returned and chased the Germans while firing upon them. Eventually, the English soldiers got the upper hand and captured the Germans.

Some days later, an English trawler came into the area in Skrovkjosen again to see if there were any Germans left. The trawler was German-built and it resembled the German trawlers that had sailed in the area in peacetime. This would turn out to be fateful, because the people in that area mistook it for a German boat. Twelve people had gathered in Skrovkjosen in a boat and wanted to flee to the other side of the fjord, and they thought that a German boat came toward them, when in reality, they were English. The English thought that the boat carried Germans trying to flee, and the English opened fire. Three of the adults were killed.[105] These events showed that civilians were caught in crossfire, and they also showed that it could be safer to flee to Sweden than to stay in occupied Norway. Still, there were many who stayed in Tysfjord and escorted people to Sweden.

[105] Evjen 1998:263-266

After Norway had capitulated and "Nasjonal Samling" came into power, it was decided that the mayor and the deputy mayor had to be chosen by "Nasjonal Samling" and not by the people in the municipality. One had to go through something called "political assessment"[106], meaning "Nasjonal Samling" had to find out if they were sympathizers of the party, or at least not actively against them. It was no longer a democracy, especially since the mayor made decisions based on his own reputation. At least, this was how it was on paper and how it was supposed to work in theory. The reality was something different. The party never managed to make members of the party mayors in all of the municipalities, and they certainly could not fill up all the positions in the municipalities with members of the party or sympathizers. In the eastern counties of Norway, almost every mayor was a member of "Nasjonal Samling", but in the western counties and in Northern Norway, less than half of the mayors were members.[107] This helped the border pilots in Tysfjord, since almost everyone knew about the refugee traffic, or they were helping with it.

Tysfjord, as with many other areas in Northern Norway, became important for the German military campaign. They created sites for their guns, which could shoot at ships and defend their areas from aerial attacks. For example, Batterie Dietl was a coastal gun, which was located west of Tysfjord and it protected the ships leaving Narvik with resources going to Germany.[108] Tysfjord also became important for its resources and materials that were sent to Germany, and it became important because of its northern location and its accessibility to the Soviet Union. They wanted to transport material and soldiers easily and quickly toward the border to the Soviet Union in the northeast. They built out the main road all the way toward Narvik, and they wanted to build a railroad. This, however, proved to be too ambitious a project, and as late as January 1945, there were reports of them still building.[109]

For all of the building of the road and the railroad, the Germans needed people to work. However, at times there were problems finding enough people to work in the mines and the factories, while road and railway also demanded their fair share of workers. The workers consisted of Norwegians willingly working, Germans, and prisoners of war. The last group made up the bulk of the work force. In Tysfjord, the Germans built many camps for prisoners, and many of the refugees that the border pilots escorted were prisoners who managed to escape. As such, people in Tysfjord had a lot of contact with the German soldiers.

[106] Evjen 1998:267
[107] Evjen 1998:268
[108] Nordlandsmuseet [online] URL: http://nordlandsmuseet.no/batterie_dietl/
[109] Evjen 1998:272

3.5.1 How Tysfjord became important

During the war, approximately 3500 people lived in Tysfjord and out of those 3500, 900 people were Sámi.[110] Before the war, the Sámis in Norway, and Tysfjord especially, were not highly regarded. In fact, one mayor had said in a meeting that Tysfjord was a "weak branch on the proud Nordland-tree".[111] Because of the Norwegianization policy, the Sámi were considered "inferior" by the State and others, and as such one would not think that Tysfjord would later become a place where so many refugees crossed the border with the help of the Sámi.

One of the leading men of the refugee traffic in Tysfjord, the priest Kolbjørn Varmann, could not understand how Tysfjord became such an important route used to flee to Sweden. One important reason why so many refugees went to Tysfjord to cross the border was that people saw on the map that the fjords in Tysfjord almost cut Norway in half. Because of that, the route provided a short way to walk to get to Sweden. People did not consider that the mountains were very high or that the wilderness and distances from the border in Sweden were so vast. One incident made Varmann think and realise that refugees needed help from people who knew the land. In the fall of 1940, Varmann was in contact with a group of young people. The group had been training in the mountains to prepare to cross the border during the winter. They did not want to be sent back by Swedish authorities with other soldiers that had deserted. The group had to leave the mountains because of bad weather and barely managed to save themselves.

Because of that incident, Varmann started to realize that people would need help from those who knew the area. People looked at the map, and because the fjords in Tysfjord went so close to the border, and because there was only a short walk to the border. Unfortunately, after one crossed the border the land was uninhabited and it was between 30 to 70[112] kilometres before they got to the nearest stations where they could get help. The Sámi's were made for the mountains and regional the terrain. There were others that could do a good job but the Sámis were considered to be the best help available.

[110] Ulstein 1977:175
[111] Ulstein 1977: 175
[112] Ulstein 1977:184

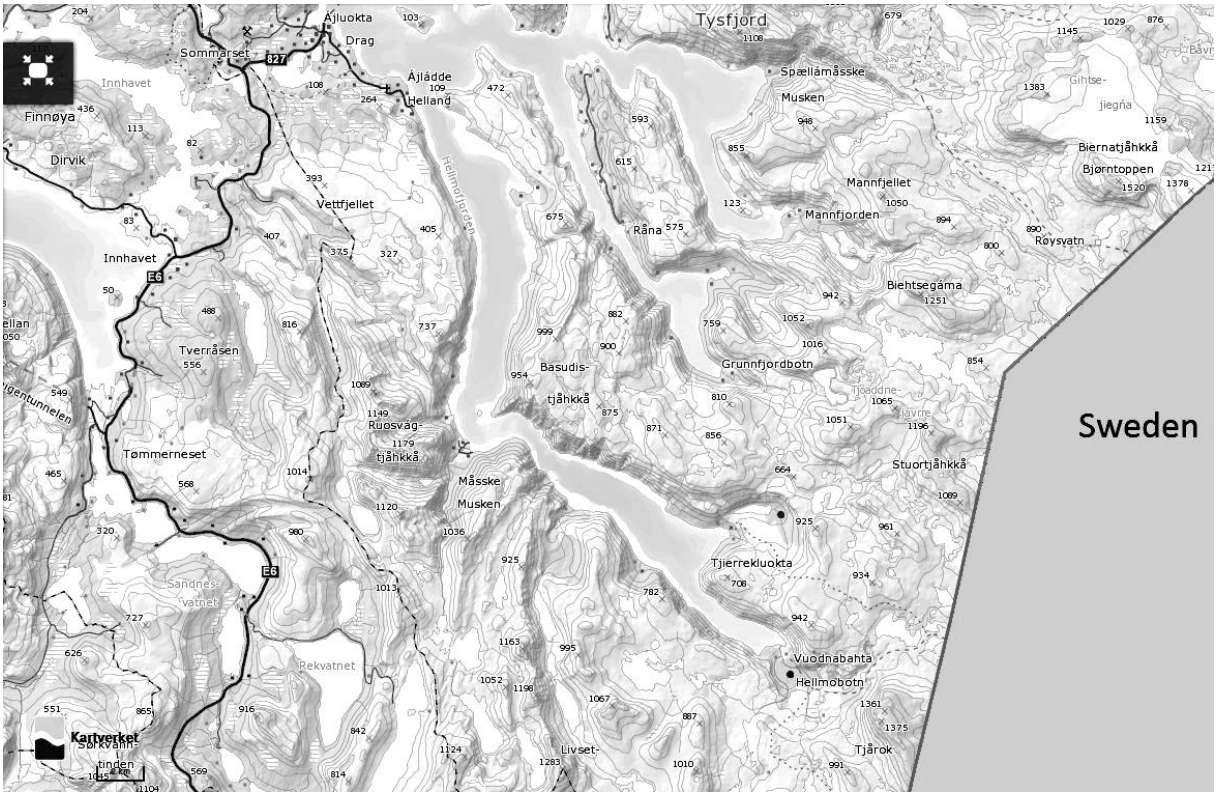

Figure 12 *- In the areas of Hellemobotn (lower dot) and Nordbukt (upper dot), lived mostly Sámis. In the area of Grunnfjordbotn, mostly Norwegian lived. These three areas were very close to the border, but Hellemobotn was the closest one, and the one that received a lot of traffic.*

What is very interesting about the refugee traffic in Tysfjord is how all of the people in Tysfjord came together to help refugees, both the young and the old.

> *Etter alt å dømme visste dei fleste av dei 3500 menneska i kommunen om trafikken. Men så var dette kanskje største flyktningruta i Nord-Norge. Enda nesten alt folket visste om det, og hundretals var med i arbeidet – somme med å skaffe forsyningar, andre med å ta imot overnattingsgjester, kanskje for ei veke eller to, atter andre med å føre flyktningane innover i fjordane frå sentret i trafikken, Kjøpsvik, og endelig folk som førte flyktningane over grensa – så gjekk denne ruta med aukande frekvens til 25. januar 1945, da sjefen for ruta, presten i Tysfjord, Kolbjørn Varmann vart arrestert*[113]

The refugee routes in Tysfjord were in frequent use until January 25, 1945, when Varmann was arrested. He was discovered because a refugee in Sweden sent a letter to a friend at the coast of Norway telling the friend that he should seek help from Varmann in case someone wanted to flee. The letter was intercepted and opened by the Gestapo.

[113] Ulstein 1977:176-177. My translation: As one can see, almost all of the 3500 people in the municipality knew about the refugee traffic. This was perhaps the most used refugee route in Northern Norway. Almost everyone knew about it and hundreds took part in helping. Some would get supplies, others would take in refugees for a week or two, and others would help with escorting the refugees through the fjords from the centre of the traffic, Kjøpsvik, and finally people who escorted refugees over the border. This route was frequently used until January 25, 1945 when the leader of the route, the priest Kolbjørn Varmann, was arrested.

The German army had stationed a large force in Tysfjord and the areas around it in an effort to stop the refugee traffic. There were patrols going across the fjords and following the fjords towards the border in an effort to stop as many refugees as possible. There were few other places in Norway during the occupation that were as good at keeping everything secret as the population in Tysfjord. When Varmann was arrested and many border pilots had to flee to Sweden, they were interrogated by the authorities. When they were interrogated, they managed to fool the authorities with the answers they gave and the authorities wrote as they did in the report. They also gave vague answers that had no value in case something was leaked back to Norway. "Det var eldgammal erfaring på Nordkalotten at samar ofte var flinke under forhør. Den rolla hadde dei lært som undertrykte. Blant "riksnordmenn" og "rikssvenskar" heitte det at ingen kunne som samar svare utan å svare".[114]

One of the most important aspects of the refugee traffic in Tysfjord was how close it was to the border. The shortest route border pilots could take over land, was only a couple kilometres long from the ocean to the border. At least, that was how it looked on the map. In reality, those few kilometres were in rough terrain before they reached the border. In addition, problems arose when people crossed the border into Sweden. Then there was a long way until the refugees even actually met any settlements. The distances they had to travel could be as long as 20 kilometres. Swedish authorities laid out food stations and had different stations set up where refugees could make contact with people. They also had airplanes flying from time to time to see if they found any people. Many border pilots felt that they could not escort refugees further than the border, or maybe past the border a bit. The reason for that was that they could not be away from the family and their homes too long in case German soldiers came around asking for them. If the German soldiers found out they were missing and they could not give a satisfying enough reason for their absence, they could face punishment.

3.5.2 Peder Knutsen

In Tysfjord, Peder Knutsen became the border pilot with the most trips across the border. The reason for this was that he was the government overseer for reindeer husbandry in the area, and he had the documents to prove it. In his passport, which was issued by the German authorities and signed by both Terboven and Quisling, both civilian and military authorities had to ensure that Peder could do his job, which was to make sure both Norway and Sweden

[114] Ulstein 1977:177. My translation: It is from ancient experience on the Northern Hemisphere that the Sámi were good during interrogation. They had learned that role as oppressed. Among both Norwegians and Swedes, it was said that no one but the Sámi could answer without answering.

complied with the reindeer grazing law and upheld it. Norwegian reindeer Sámi could have their reindeers in Swedish territories for six winter months, while the Swedish reindeer Sámi could have their reindeers at the coast for 2,5 summer months. Essentially, this allowed Peder to cross the border as much as he wanted. If the authorities stopped him, then he could just show them the passport. It was no wonder that Peder became so important for the refugee traffic in Tysfjord. He started escorting refugees in the late summer of 1942. The amount of trips he took, the number of refugees he helped, and exactly when he stopped escorting refugees are all unknown. He started escorting smaller groups of refugees but as the traffic grew and the amount of refugees increased, he escorted larger groups. The biggest group he escorted was 48 people in one trip.[115] Once, he was stopped at the border by a guard post when he returned from Sweden and the guard did not believe that he had been in Sweden on a legal errand. He was then taken to the main guard house where he showed his passport again. After that, they finally believed him and they served him coffee and cigars and then they released him. In his opinion, the challenge lied with escorting the refugees to and across the border. The return trip was easy because of the passport. Other border pilots did not have passports like that, and they had to be careful from the time when they escorted refugees until they returned to the safety of their own homes.

Peder Knutsen did not do all of this all by himself. A man named Paul Amundsen was his partner when escorting the refugees. He had the help of relatives, friends and families. They helped with everything, from giving supplies, to having a place for the refugees to hide. "Dei visste det var farlig, men dei leit full tog fast på kvarandre, at ingen ville bere dette ut, dei var eidsvore, som Kaia Amundsen sa etterpå".[116]

3.6 Concluding remarks

The border pilots and their helpers were very important for refugees and prisoners. In most cases, they did not ask for anything in return but refugees were grateful for the help they got and wanted to pay with what they had. There were a couple of instances where the border pilots accepted what they got and left it at that but in most cases, they did not accept anything.

The border pilots and their helpers did not survive the war unscathed. As with military casualties, the border pilots and their helpers had their losses.

[115] Soleim et.al. 2015:68

[116] Ulstein 1977:185. My translation: They knew it was dangerous, but they trusted each other completely and no one wanted out, they were sworn in as Kaia Amundsen said later. Kaia was the sister of Paul Amundsen.

> *I hele Norge mistet 84 livet: De falt i tjeneste, de ble arrester og henrettet, de døde i fangeleire. Medhjelpere ble likvidert, og mange ble drept ved arrestasjoner eller omkom i tyske dødsleire*[117]

Unfortunately, the number of those that died might be wrong. There could have been people who were killed or they perished and there are no records of them, or they are recorded incorrectly. As such, the number can be wrong but without materials that say the number is different, one have to assume that it is correct.

[117] Einset 1995:28. My translation: Throughout Norway, 84 lost their lives: They fell during service, they were arrested and executed, and they died in prison camps. Their helpers were liquidated, and many were killed when they were arrested or they perished in German prison camps.

4 Conclusion

During times of war and armed conflict, the line between friend and foe can become blurred. Some people do not want anything to do with war and try to flee from it while others engage in war for political, social, economic or ideological reasons. War has mainly been the domain of soldiers[118] but there have been many instances where civilians have taken up arms to fight, and World War II has many examples and instances of that. In Norway, it was the Norwegian Resistance, which was led and organized by the military, but there were many civilians who played their part in the war in Norway.

The liberation and the victory of the Allied military forces, combined with the resistance movement in Norway, Norwegians were given a common and shared national identity against a common enemy. It united people above and across any political parties and other divisions for the defence of common national and democratic values.[119] That is the reason why World War II or as Norwegians refer it, the War, has become such a uniting force to create a shared national identity. In that pursuit of a shared national identity, the history of World War II in Norway has become important and every year there are many books published about that particular topic. Many historians have raced against time to capture the stories from people who, in some way, were a part of it. Unfortunately, not everyone has become a part of building up the national identity that World War II created. Although the attempt to write about those forgotten into the history of World War II in Norway is valuable, the process has been slow and time consuming.

During the war people tried to flee towards England by crossing the sea, and this traffic reached its peak in the fall of 1941, but due to high losses it was more or less discontinued in 1942.[120] Because of this, the refugees focused on fleeing to the east toward Sweden. In some respects, it was better to flee across land to Sweden than across the sea to England. The forests and mountains gave cover, unlike the sea, which gave none. In addition, there are instances of sailors abandoning their ships at the coast of Norway and swimming to the shore wanting to get to Sweden instead. There are five drownings recorded[121] because of sailors trying to swim. The occupation forces had a hard time trying to keep watch over the border between Norway and Sweden and from the beginning and until as late as the fall of 1942, the watch was not thorough

[118] Although in recent history, one sees that many civilians have started to take up arms to fight against an established military force. One saw it with the Taliban in Afghanistan, where a group of insurgents were fighting against an established army.
[119] Riste and Nökleby 1994:90
[120] Ulstein 1977:406
[121] Ulstein 1977:407

enough. There were approximately 100 organized refugee routes across the 1600 kilometre long border, from the southernmost route to the northernmost route.

Among the border pilots and couriers, the notion was that the Swedish watch was more organized than the German. Swedish forces concentrated toward the border, while German forces concentrated their forces toward the North Sea: they felt secure in the back so to speak. The reason why the occupation forces did not concentrate their forces on the border was that they knew only a handful would even manage to get to England and join the forces there. They saw it as a dead end, as did many refugees, until 1943 when the police troops started to form. It was also easier to keep watch over the refugee routes in the north, because border pilots and refugees had to use the open terrain of the mountains and valleys to get to Sweden. This meant that German patrols could keep watch over choke points, where the risk of discovery was higher. The routes were also longer in the north than in the south. This meant that many times, the border pilots and refugees had to start in the evening and walk through the night, reaching the border in the morning. They knew that the patrols would rest and relax during the night, but when the morning came, they became active. Therefore, people had to hide. If the border pilots and refugees were surprised by bad weather, the trip would go from one day to several days. This increased the chances of being discovered, since the border pilots were away from home for a long time, there was a high chance they would be discovered if someone came and asked for them.

Even though the watch on the border was weak, getting caught while trying to flee was a very dangerous matter. In addition, for any helper it was even more dangerous. After a German directive, one could be executed or sent to a death camp if one was discovered as a refugee or helper and especially if one had weapons. This happened to Oskar Henriksen in Fagerbakk, since he was discovered with weapons and with orders from the military. Even though he was sent to a death camp, he survived the ordeal but not without some scars. His son was not allowed to whistle when he was younger, because soldiers in the camp would whistle and his whistling was served as a reminder of the trauma he endured.

Even though the occupation forces built up the watch with patrols, border pilots and those who knew the land, could slip by the patrols. The patrols consisted of 8-10 soldiers, and they would cover a large sector. This would prove difficult because one cannot cover one sector effectively with so few soldiers. Those that knew the terrain also knew when the soldiers were not out on patrols. Some of them knew the soldiers personally and they knew who was eager to go on patrols and who was not. Information like this was gathered, analyzed and spread to those

that needed it, and then the routes could be planned accordingly.[122] The northern parts of Norway had a higher number of soldiers than the rest of Norway. In Alta, for example, the ratio of soldiers to civilians was 6:1[123]. This pressure increased in 1944, with the German army retreated and burnt down Finnmark and parts of Troms County. The retreat had its consequences as far south as Trøndelag County. More refugees came to the areas and needed shelter while some wanted to get to Sweden. This gave the border pilots more refugees to help.

There are three reasons why there are no more Sámi border pilots known. The first and most likely the most obvious answer: there were no more Sámi border pilots. The amount of border pilots in general was not that high, and when one starts to talk about Sámi border pilots, that number drops significantly. The second reason is about the stigmatization of the Sámi. With the stigmatization of the Sámi both before and after the war (especially with the Sámi in Tysfjord), one can say that it may have had some kind of ripple effect on the rest of border pilots and/or Sámi border pilots. Since both Sámi and Norwegian border pilots saw what happened to the Sámi border pilots in Tysfjord, they may have felt that they also could be charged with treason and looked at with suspicious eyes, instead of receiving the recognition they really deserved. They may have felt that they should be ashamed of what they did and therefore did not speak of it at all. The third reason is that maybe many felt that what they had done was not something people should know about, or they simply felt it was not that important to talk about. What they had done just became another part of their life and they wanted to go back to living a normal life instead of talking about what they had done. In addition, it is very hard to know who was Sámi and who was Norwegian because of the Norwegianization policy. Because one cannot say for sure who is Sámi and who is not, one can also not say that someone is Sámi. One cannot give someone an identity/background of being Sámi and one cannot force it upon anyone.

Since I was too young to remember my grandfather, I have heard stories of him and of what he did, but that happened on very rare occasions. According to some, my grandfather did not really want to talk about those events. What actually drove him to talk about those events is unknown. What is known however is that he knew what the risks were when he started escorting refugees to Sweden.

The reasons why people risked their lives for others are many and varied from border pilot to border pilot, and it is not possible to know the reason for every single one, as some did not survive the war or they died before they could tell their story. The requirements for helping

[122] Ulstein 1977:408
[123] Ulstein 1977:414

refugees, both in the north and south, were more than just knowledge and physical ability. It required clothes, food, equipment, and time. In addition, because of those reasons, some border pilots required compensation for helping refugees. In the south, and especially in Oslo, each leader of a route paid the border pilots. They were paid for each refugee they escorted, and the sum varied. This money was financed by the resistance, which was financed from Stockholm and England. There are many examples where border pilots got compensation for what they did. There were those who exploited the situation the refugees were in and were paid well, but there were also those who refused payment and gave the refugees everything they had without any ulterior motives. However, the one theme that is common for most: that they felt that they should help others. There were of course border pilots that helped refugees for personal gain and not as a selfless act. Helping refugees was not cheap, and many of the refugees did not have that much to reward the border pilots. Many refugees had to be clothed by the border pilots and the helpers: they had to be given food for the whole trip and those who hid the refugees until they could be escorted were in constant danger. The exact motives they had for helping others were diverse but that is not what matters. What matters is that every border pilot helped refugees and prisoners because they felt that they had to help. This brings us to the quote from the very beginning of this thesis.

> *Grenselosenes innsats for å redde mennesker ut av livsfarlige situasjoner under krigen er blitt vel kjent etter hver som krigshistoria er blitt fortalt. Og innsatsen var engasjement, strabaser og risiko for eget liv. Hva som drev dem, kan vi gjøre oss mange tanker om. At det betyr noe for mange å gjøre noe for andre, er hevet over tvil. Noe av det største må være å kunne berge liv. Dette ligger forankret både i menneskets natur og i vår kultur. Vi ser også at det ikke er belønning, verken i form av penger eller ære og berømmelse, som er drivkraften. Hadde det dét vært, ville det ikke vært grenseloser. For det var neppe så mange av de som de reddet, som hadde midler å belønne med. Og den ære og berømmelse som ble noen av grenselosene til del, måtte de vente med til langt ut i freden for å få. Selv gjorde de ikke mye for å skape oppmerksomhet om det de drev med. Ikke i fredstid, og slett ikke under krigen*[124]

[124] Granheim 2008:190. My translation: The border pilots' efforts for saving people out of life threatening situations during the war became well known, as the occupation history has been told. And the contribution was involvement, hardships and risking their lives. What drove them, we can only imagine. That it means something for many to do something for others, there is no doubt of that. The greatest must be to save someone's life. This is anchored in both human nature and in our culture. We see that it is not reward, neither in the shape of money or honour and fame, that is the driving force. If that were the case, there would be no border pilots. For there were hardly so many of those that were saved that had any means to give a reward with. And the honour and fame that went to the border pilots, they had to wait long after peace had arrived before they got that. They did not try to gather any attention from what they did. Not in peace time, and especially not during the war.

The quote sums up what I have read and heard from stories, books, articles, interviews, and more. It gives a sense of idea of what the border pilots were like. They risked their own lives to save others, and they expected nothing in return. Most of them were civilians. Everyone became a part of trying to help refugees to get to Sweden. They were different ages, from the very young to the very old, and they all had a different income and livelihood. One thing is certain though: if the border pilots had not done what they did, many refugees would have had a very different life.

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Appendix: List of figures