

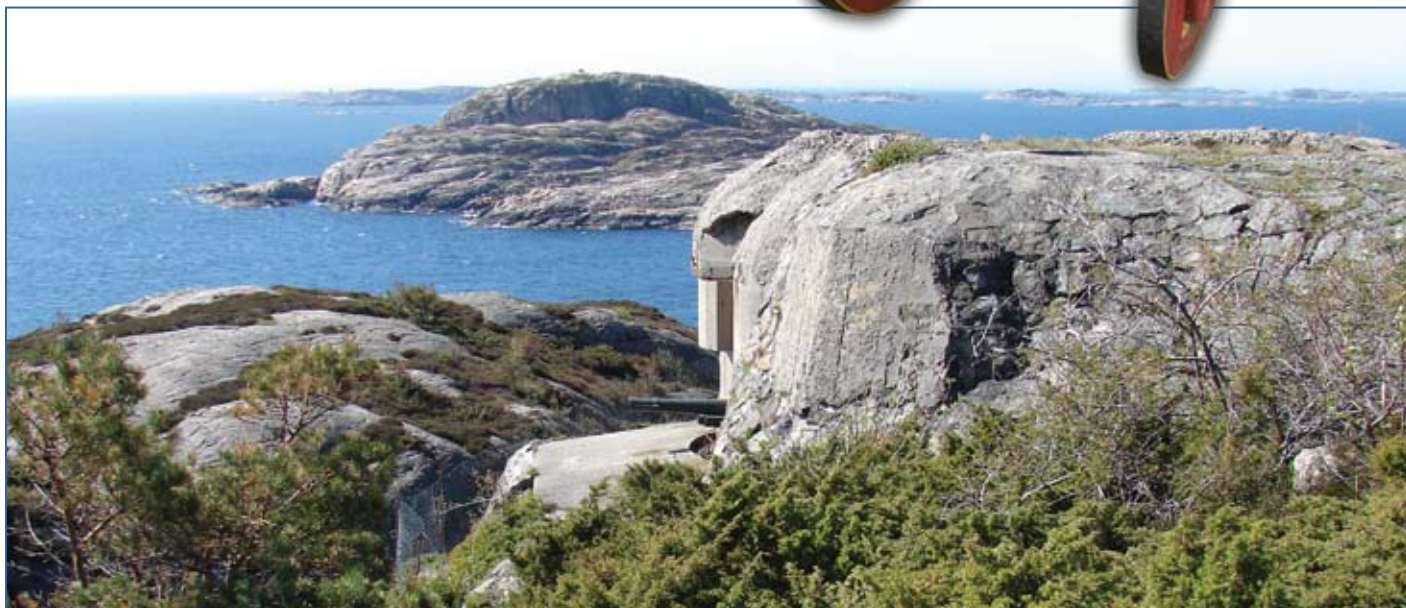


# The War Tourist

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## Travelling to Ny-Hellesund, Norway's Gibraltar



Ny-Hellesund is an immensely beautiful spot on the planet, an unspoiled slice of Paradise. Most of rural Norway is, but on the tiny uninhabited island of Helgoya, nature really veil the landscape in an almost Tolkien-like atmosphere, setting your imagination ablaze and tickling the child within you.

### A Viking ride

The boat ride alone is an experience of sheer beauty, revealing a scenery similar to that the Vikings must have seen when they went out for a little merry fighting and pillaging. As you are dropped off on the landing pad and see the boat vanish, you know, that for the next six hours you are the only human being on the island, and it fills you with a combination of awe and thankfulness for experiencing this.



### The ruins

The first artifacts that meet the eye hidden among the trees not far from the landing pad are remnants of kitchen and mess hall facilities. Built from local materials these ruins almost resemble something from a medieval castle and as nature has reclaimed the territory, the area has a somewhat mystical, fairy-tale appearance about it; you would not be the least surprised to see Gandalf wander around in the shadows or Aragorn brandishing his sword in combat.



Here and there you will notice the signs of an outer perimeter of defense; little pillboxes are built into the cliff and cleverly concealed. The Germans who built this battery understood how to make the most out of natural camouflage.



# Lest we forget...

The past thousand years of war history have left Europe with numerous imprints in the landscape, where men built, fought and died. From Hadrians Wall to the Berlin Wall, battlefields and would-be theatres of war have left their calling card, reminding us of our violent past and the costs of warfare.

If these memorials are old enough - say from the medieval or renaissance - we gaze in awe at the sight of them, and try to convey their inherent significance to our children. However, if the place of remembrance is i.e. from the last great war, many people tend to act as if it did not exist.

It is understandable, of course, that most people make an effort to forget evil times and to wipe out anything that may serve to remind them - especially if a nation has been forced to endure enemy occupation - but there is a problem with this approach; no matter how horrible and devastating the years under foreign rule may have been, *they still form a part of our history*. By denying or neglecting this, we leave a void that inevitably will fill with all kind of lies and misinterpretations and in the end, we thus refuse ourselves and our descendants the chance to learn from that history.

The fortifications along the Atlantic Wall form a fine example here. For many years after the end of WW2, all of the western European countries suffering under Nazi occupation, made an effort to obliterate any trace of the period. Most often, though, the bunkers along the shoreline were too big a mouthful for struggling post-war economies to remove, so they were locked up, buried, forgotten.

Even today, you can frequently hear older Danes argue that the many bunkers along the shores of western Jutland should be torn down (not as easy as it sounds), because they remind them of the “five cursed years!”. Others just find them ugly - and young people are not quite sure, what they actually are.

Well, in this editor’s view that is exactly why they should be left as they are – to decay at nature’s mercy, to slowly be overgrown or reclaimed by the sea - or to be present and visible for the next 500 years where that is the case, reminding us that our world was in peril only some sixty years ago. Historical context is important to understand your own time, and only by acknowledging that there is a darker side to man’s nature can we hope to harness this to the benefit of our common future.

Luckily, the understanding of this is growing, and in many countries Atlantic Wall museums now pop up, bunkers are refurbished, fortifications are brought back to their original looks by local history buffs, and fiery souls, reenacting the sights and sounds of 1940-45 and conveying tangible insights.

Perfect places to take your kids for a live lesson in contemporary history...



# wartourist

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## The Rating System

Each location visited will be rated using the following gradient, where five red hearts constitute the best possible score and five white hearts - well, not so good ;-). Rating **solely** represent authors private opinion.

- ♥♥♥♥♥ (5) An absolute must-see
- ♥♥♥♥♡ (4) Worth your while
- ♥♥♥♡♡ (3) An OK experience
- ♥♥♡♡♡ (2) A tad stale, perhaps
- ♥♡♡♡♡ (1) Make no detours for this
- ♡♡♡♡♡ (0) Read a book instead

## E&OE - aka Editors humble request

Dear reader. You have in front of you The War Tourist or TWT, a **free** magazine, the second issue of what will hopefully be a long row. I do this, because I gives me great personal satisfaction, and because I want to promote the concept of war tourism and share the joys of Danish and European history with others.

Alas, I am not a historian by education, I am simply a history buff, with a background in technical writing, who have navigated into the dire straits of popular history writing. By the same token, articles in TWT will usually be inspired by - and use data from - the work of others. Where this is the case, it will be duely stated at the end of the article and in the literature list.

Please also note that in spite of all reasonable caution and thorough homework, errors **will** occur. Many of you guys out there are a lot more knowledgable than me on many specific (war) history topics, and you will, no doubt, spot my errors and omissions ;-)

When you do, kindly say with Napoleon that; “-history is the version of past events, that we have decided to agree upon...” and turn the gloating **ha-ha!** into an informative email to me. If the error is grave enough, I will make amendments in the next issue of TWT.

That way we will all learn so much more. Thank you.

The War Tourist Newsletter is totally apolitical and does not intend to glorify war or neglect the suffering or hardship brought upon mankind as the result of war, but strive to bring articles and information of interest and use for the battlefield and fortification tourist of today.



**1 The battery**

As in so many places along the Atlantic Wall, the artillery employed consisted of captured (and close to obsolete) elderly pieces. The 1913 French field gun of Schneider design was an excellent weapon for its time and manufactured in large quantities both in its homeland and on license in several European countries, but it was only moderately suited for coastal defence. The gun is described in detail elsewhere in this issue.

Three of the guns were entombed in concrete (Regelbau 671), most cleverly camouflaged with slabs of natural rock to blend in with the surroundings. Camouflage netting - probably stone-colored - did the rest. Steel hooks for fastening remain visible.



The fourth gun is today in an open position on top of what seems to be a field-type crew shelter, but whether that is the original emplacement is uncertain. For one thing, there is no turntable and thus no easy way of azimuth adjustment and even if there was one, traverse would be very limited due to the long undercarriage tail.

Another thing is that the bulwark does not look very protective, but of course it might have been supplemented by sandbags or logs whilst in active service.



**Fire control**

A large Regelbau 636a served as command, and fire-control station. The bunker is in top-notch shape with parts of the wooden flooring and even some wooden doors intact. All that stuff was pillaged from Danish Atlantic Wall bunkers and burned in private stoves during the cold winters of the late 1940ties.



**Radar guidance**

Like several other German coastal batteries, Ny-Hellesund was equipped with a FuMG 214/Würzburg Riese radar for surveillance and artillery guidance.

In total, there are 25+ Regelbau bunkers and other concrete constructions on the island of Helgöya and many field-type positions for machine guns, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns, for mortars, and for searchlights. The defence system even embraced a smoke system to obscure the battery to enemy fire.



War-time leftovers are visible everywhere. Here remnants of a PAK gun



### The maze

Several of the bunkers on the island are interconnected by an elaborate maze of underground tunnels giving Ny-Hellesund the nickname “Norway’s little Gibraltar”. Caution is recommended when negotiating the tunnel system as it is pitch dark in there and some deep holes **does** exist in the tunnel floor.



Goes without saying, I guess, that ample light - and lots of backup - is necessary.

Most of the system is crudely carved - somewhat as in the diamond-mine operated by the seven dwarfs in “Snowwhite”, but in several places the finish is in an advanced state;

fine masonry, looking more like passageways under a renaissance castle. Most of it is accessible, but you will find closed bar-type doors.



Here and there half-finished - or demolished - constructions are visible, the purpose of which is unknown today.



A network of trenches, the height of a grown man, complements the tunnel system. Presumably these were concealed under camouflage netting during the war years. All in all, the defenders of the battery seem to have been pretty well protected from enemy

observation (and fire).

### Troops

The crew embraced 120 Heer (Army) artillery gunners, 23 radar engineers and 14 Luftwaffe Flak-gunners. Counting in officers and non-commissioned, the total must have been around 150 man.



### Construction

Work on the fort at Ny-Hellesund begun in 1942 and was for a large part carried out by some 200 Russian slave labourers. Initially, these unfortunate souls were transported by boat from prison camps at the mainland every day, but later barracks were constructed on the island. This gave the prisoners the chance of complementing their meagre rations by gardening and raising rabbits.

I have not been able to find any records concerning the death toll, but it must undoubtedly have been an inhuman toil to carve away the hundred of tons of rock - mostly by hand - and to drag huge boulders out of the tunnels.

### Post war

After the war, the battery on Helgoya was dismantled, the bunkers sealed and attempts were made to completely obliterate any evidence of the German occupation. However, in 1987 the local branch of Forsvarshistorisk Forening (The Society of Defence History) started a restoration work that has yielded this magnificent example of a German WW2 coastal battery. An absolute “must-see” for the battlefield tourist.



### The Hard Facts

**Place:** Ny-Hellesund Kystfort (Ny-Hellesund Coastal Fortress) Location: Island of Helgöya, Norway

**Phone:** +47 38 05 55 55 (Sogne Tourist Office)

**E-mail:** floke@sogneguiden.no

**Web:** <http://www2.sogneguiden.no/norsk.asp?txt=hellesundny>

**Opening hours:** Boat sails four times a day. Itinerary [here](#)

**Phone** (Boat route): +47 990 06 995 - 473 16 360

**Admission:** Open Air Museum is free. Boat fare equals 10-15 €

**Bus from Kristiansand:** Route No. 40 towards Høllen. Itinerary: [www.177-agder.no](http://www.177-agder.no)

**Required gear:** Flashlight, head lamp, sturdy shoes or boots. Use caution!

**RATING:** ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥



## 4/512. M.M.A. at Hals

Reinforcing the Atlantic Wall was an effort for the German occupation forces throughout the war years and right up to the end in May 1945. However, as resources grew scarce, the Regelbau building concept did not always prevail, and lighter constructions had to be employed.

### A stubborn commander

All in all, the area around Hals was pretty heavily fortified and embraced a garrison of some 600 troops at the end of the war. As it turned out, Hals was actually the last German stronghold to surrender in Denmark, as the local commandant refused



The thin-walled fire control bunker at the 12.7 cm battery at Hals in Northern Denmark. Time has taken its toll...

One example of this is the battery at Hals in Northern Jutland (4/521 M.M.A). Not much is left today of these thin-walled bunkers, but the fire control post and a couple of ammunition bunkers still stand along with a single, open emplacement. The battery was installed in the spring of 1944.

The guns employed here were four German naval guns (12.7 cm S.K. C/34), and the main task of the battery was to protect the eastern entrance to the Limfjord and to command the northern part of the bay of Aalborg. The guns were fairly



modern with a range of some 17 kilometers for a 28 kg projectile leaving the muzzle with 830 m/sec and with a rate of seven rounds per minute. Due to the open emplacements with a low bulwark of soil the battery could maintain a 360° arc of fire. The fire control bunker was equipped with a 3-metre stereoscopic rangefinder.

Some 5-600 meters south of the battery was a Luftwaffe AA battery, comprising three 20 mm guns on Regelbau L409 and L410 bunkers. Two of these bunkers are in service today with the local Marine Home Guard whereas the last one is accessible. Today a small grove is concealing the bunkers, but these were originally camouflaged by a group of artificial trees. Pine logs were rammed into the ground and decorated with artificial leaves.

to capitulate to local resistance forces. He even threatened to turn his guns around and shell the town of Hals, if the Danish authorities did not prevent the pillaging of German installations and the harassment of Danish girls that had been a little too friendly to German soldiers. Not until May 17<sup>th</sup> 1945, where an English detachment arrived in Hals, was the situation remedied and an orderly surrender could take place.

### The town of Hals

Hals is a popular tourist resort, especially for yachters who enjoy the modern marina and the various bars and restaurants. The coastal battery is in a derelict condition today, as the lightly constructed bunkers have not taken the years well, and only one concrete emplacement remains visible (photo to the left), and it is unclear whether the other have been removed or covered or if they were field-type emplacements.

However, it is still worth a visit if you are in the vicinity, and you may want to include a visit to Hals Skanse, the

1600 century fortification illustrating the significance of controlling the entrance to the Limfjord through centuries.



If the walking tire you out and you need to refresh yourself, I can recommend **Torvekroen** where my favorite innkeeper Tom has just the cure for your condition.



## Touring Coastal Batteries in Denmark; Stützpunktgruppe Süd aka Bangsbo Fort



One of three (originally four) 150 mm guns, commandeered from the Danish coastal defense ship "Niels Juel". German design (Krupp) and Swedish manufacture (Bofors).

### Stützpunktgruppe Süd

Frederikshavn is a medium size coastal city in Northern Jutland with some 23.000+ inhabitants. People have lived here for thousands of years, taking advantage of the fruits of the sea and the fertile land. Archeological evidence dating back to the Stone Age has been unearthed here, and Viking burial sites are common in the landscape. Also the early years of the second

millennium found Frederikshavn a busy community, i.e. there are five medieval churches here, the oldest dating back to 1150. The coastline forms a natural harbor with a group of small islands protecting the inlet and for hundreds of years shipbuilding and fishing have been pivotal for the economy. Today the harbor is dominated by the ferry-traffic to Norway and Sweden, and tourism is an important trade.

South of the city a plateau is rising some 70 meters over sea level. This hill, locally known as "Pikkerbakken" is a moraine - a result of glacial terra forming - as the ice was pushing soil and gravel in front of it during the last ice-age.

Pikkerbakken had been a popular resort for decades before the German occupation of Denmark in April 1940. On its sides blueberries and strawberries grew in abundance and from its top one had – and still has - a stunning view over the town of Frederikshavn and the Bay of Aalbaek. On a clear day it is possible to see Skagen, the northernmost point of Denmark, and the island of Laesoe to the East, both some 25-30 km away.

These properties as a lookout were not wasted on the German Pioneer staff as it was searching for a suitable place for an Anti Aircraft battery to protect the harbor of Frederikshavn; a vital point for the supply routes to Norway.

### The first guns

Frederikshavn has been of strategic importance since the Viking age and has had actual coastal fortifications from at





least the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), before it even had a harbor. The task for these fortifications was to support Danish naval forces in their protection of the sailing routes to Norway. Redoubts were constructed north and south of the city and modified throughout the years. Still today the original tower for storing gun powder, built in 1686, is a prominent landmark for the town.

Construction of actual harbor facilities started in the 1830ties and was completed in 1895.

### The German occupation

One of the main reasons that Denmark was invaded on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1940 was the need for the German High Command to protect supply lines to Norway by gaining control of internal Danish waters. In that respect, Frederikshavn had a key strategic position.

It remains unclear whether the occupation forces had pre-arranged plans for the plateau of Pikkerbakken, and what artillery emplacements may have been initially attempted in the first hectic days of the occupation, but very soon after April 9<sup>th</sup>, the first confirmed battery arrived to Frederikshavn and was placed here, designated as 3. M.A.A./509, and on May 1<sup>st</sup> this battery was test-fired and ready for action. The battery comprised four 88 mm S.K.C./30 with a range of some 12 kilometers horizontally and approx. 8 kilometers in the anti-aircraft role. A 20 mm cannon for low altitude engagement completed the picture.

In March 1941 it apparently was decided to rearm the battery and the 88 mm guns were shipped to Germany late March, rendering the battery more or less defenseless for a good fortnight as the new 105 mm armament did not arrive before April 15<sup>th</sup>. The new S.K.C./32 guns had a service ceiling of

View from Fire Control Bunker; Dead ahead a 628 Crew bunker and the modified AA bunker. To the right the Vf174 Radar bunker. The city of Frederikshavn in the background



German Flak (AA) gun, S.K.C. 32, 105 mm with copula. Guns were installed in Regelbau Fl 243 bunkers with compartment for a crew of 15. Awaiting restoration at museum in Aalborg.

some 10 kilometers and a direct fire horizontal range of 15 kilometers. They were modern, rapid firing semiautomatic weapons capable of both air and sea borne target engagement, firing up to 15 rounds a minute. At this stage, guns were still mounted on open platform pivots and crew was quartered in tents or wooden barracks. Later the guns were entombed in bunkers with compartment for the crew.

In the following months some improvements were undertaken as fire control and gun positions were reinforced with logs and trenches between the positions were constructed. At the same time the battery was camouflaged, but entombment in actual concrete bunkers was yet to come.

### The first bunkers

In September 1942, however, following the increased demands to coastal fortifications along the Westwall stated in Hitler's directive No. 40 of March same year, excavation for the four Fl243 gun emplacements and for a fire control bunker was initiated. During the course of the winter these installations





were completed and in February 1943, the battery was once again declared ready for action. Each gun crew now lived in a 15 man underground bunker and the guns themselves were shrouded in steel cupolas.

An FI244 Fire Control bunker was added in February, serving as a command post for the entire AA battery and – sporting shower and toilet facilities - catering for 27 enlisted men, 6 non-commissioned officers and two officers.

All these interesting bunkers are unfortunately inaccessible today as the area is still under the auspices of the Danish Naval Authorities.

Following the first five bunkers, a massive construction work took place. In rapid succession large ammunition bunkers (FI246), a generator bunker (FI245), several crew bunkers type 622 and a water supply bunker in a converted 621 were completed, all in the summer of 1943. In the fall and early winter a large hospital bunker (638) was added. Within the same time frame a number of Bauform constructions for close combat defense were placed in and around the battery.

**The coastal battery**

The idea of an actual coastal battery did not surface in the mind of the planners before an incidence took place, demonstrating that the mine field and the batteries in Hanstholm was far from sealing off the Skagerak as intended.



V174 bunker for Würzburg Riese (Giant Würzburg) radar. This bunker is not yet accessible.

In April 1940 some French torpedo boats managed to slip by these sentries and into Danish waters. A short skirmish with German naval forces followed, but no ships were sunk and the intruders soon retreated. However, subsequently the Naval Group East raised the demand for a battery to be placed for protection of Frederikshavn, and in May the Battery “Hipper”, consisting of four WW1 battleship 150 mm guns, was relinquished from its position at the Elbe River estuary and sent to Denmark. The guns were placed in open positions with a bulwark of timber and soil.

The lifespan of Battery Hipper on Pikkerbakken was to be short. A few months later – in August – it was dismantled and sent to Germany. As a replacement, four 120 mm guns - obsolete model 1912 with a limited range of only 10 km, commandeered from a Danish coastal fort at Copenhagen - were installed. At the same time, the name “Sperrbatterie Frederikshavn” was introduced for the battery, and the unit was organized as 1. M.A.A./509.

Also this part of Pikkerbakken was soon to be saturated with heavy concrete bunkers, starting with ammunition and crew bunkers, the large 162a fire control bunker and another water



Equipment waiting for the conservator; a Danish 12 cm Lomholt naval gun and a searchlight with generator

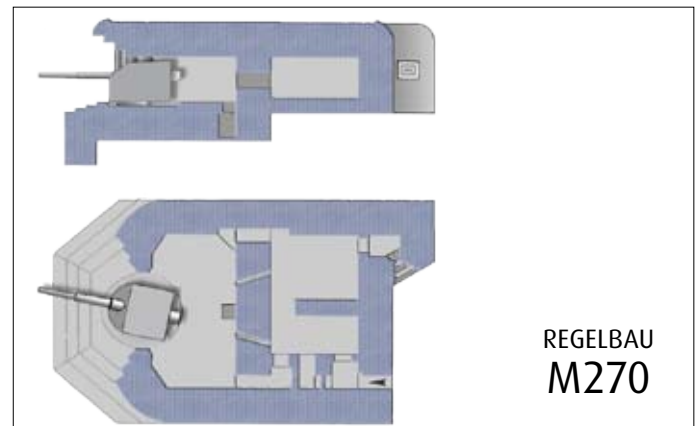
supply bunker. Photo to the right shows fire control

The next and final rearmament took place in 1944 and by the same token, the characteristic casemates that today overlook the harbor was constructed.



**The gun bunkers**

The M270 is a relatively large gun embrasure with ammunition storage rooms and a basement chamber for collection of used shells.



REGELBAU M270





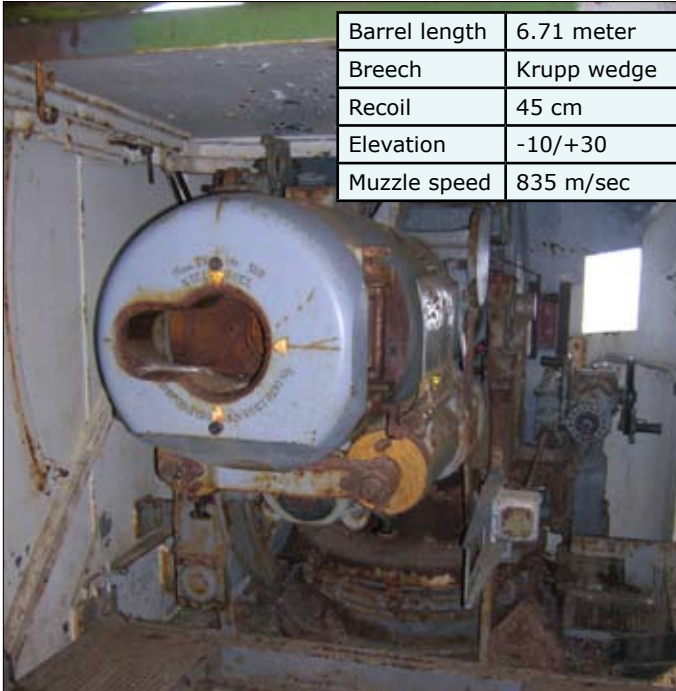
**The armament**

The guns were four out of originally 9 guns from the Danish armored ship “Niels Juel”, launched in 1922. They were fairly modern weapons, capable of sending a 46 kg. shell 18.000 meters. A well-trained crew could fire seven rounds a minute.

Due to the size and weight of the guns (some 6 tons), construction started by casting octagon concrete slabs on which the guns were mounted. The bunkers were subsequently

**Capitulation**

Although information is sparse, it seems that Stützpunktgruppe Süd may have been under German command in some time after the general capitulation of German forces in Denmark (May 5th) - perhaps for as long as to May 17th where the British Commander Bruford arrived to Frederikshavn with a detachment of 25 men. Records show that the last of the German troops marched out of the area in the evening of May 21st although some may have left earlier.



Barrel length	6.71 meter
Breech	Krupp wedge
Recoil	45 cm
Elevation	-10/+30
Muzzle speed	835 m/sec



Original wooden chute for spent shells leading to a basement chamber

constructed around the guns. For some reason, only three out of four guns were entombed in concrete whilst the fourth remained in its open position as the war ended. Perhaps it was found useful that one gun retained a 360 arc of fire or perhaps the job was simply not finished as peace broke out. Although construction work continued in many places along the AW into April 1945, some slack was noticeable as the outcome of the war became obvious to even the most headstrong Nazi commandant.



Chute from ammo storage room to gun.



The open position. Also gives you an impression of the height of Pikkerbakken over sea level (some 70 meters)



15 cm gun from Niels Juel without the shield.



### Operational record

Like so many other coastal batteries along the AW, the guns were never fired in anger. Frederikshavn was never attacked from the sea, and the only guns who saw action was the AA battery, frequently firing at passing bomber formations on their way to Germany or on mine-laying aircrafts off the coast.

### Cold War

In September 1945, the Danish Navy took over the installations and after much debate, the fort was recommissioned in 1952 as Bangsbo Fort. This was in the early years of the Cold War, and once again were the ancient guns from Niels Juel expected to protect the harbor of Frederikshavn. In the same period the forts of Stevns (Southern Seeland) and Langeland (on the isle of same name) were built, also based on outdated German WW2 naval artillery.

At Bangsbo, radar and communication equipment was updated and new AA guns installed (40 mm twin Bofors), but everything else was left pretty much as the Germans had built it. Bangsbo Fort was in service until 1961, where it was decommissioned as obsolete.

A part of the fort is still in use by the Danish Navy as a center for controlling the waters off Frederikshavn and as an early warning station.

More about this some other time...

**Editors note:** If you read Danish and want the full story of Pikkerbakken, **Kenneth Kristensen** has written an excellent book to which I owe many of the details here. See the literature list for details and how to purchase.

## Have a story to tell?

## Tell it **HERE!**

If you have visited a place that you believe other war tourists could benefit from hearing about, this platform is open to your story and photos.

Full credit will be given to author - name, photo and contact details if you like - but I cannot offer you any fee as this is a non-commercial magazine from which I make no profit myself.

You are encouraged to come forward with your story and tell it here in TWT. Only condition is that it will deal with the (war) history of Europe through the past 1000 years - from Hastings to the Cold War so to speak, and that it is held in a civil tone with no prejudice to race, sex, creed or color.

If English is not your first language (not mine either) necessary assistance with the text will be provided.

Write to [kingpin@wartourist.eu](mailto:kingpin@wartourist.eu)

### The future for Stützpunktgruppe Süd/Bangsbo Fort

A very active support group is working tirelessly to conserve and restore this unique facility. Lately, a generator was discovered, bought and installed in the original bunker - and it works!

Negotiations are allegedly ongoing with Danish military authorities to gain possession of a 40 mm Bofors AA battery and on the lawn behind the museum, equipment is waiting to come under the loving care of the work group.

Consequently, both the open air museum as well as the large museum bunker (M152) is well kept and definitely worth a visit. Bangsbo is a place where you can come back year after year and new things will have happened.

A pleasant rest area allows you to bring a food hamper and end the tour with a delightful outdoor lunch. In case of foul weather, there is also a sheltered facility.



### The Hard Facts

**Place:** Stützpunktgruppe Süd/Bangsbo, Frederikshavn, Denmark

**Phone:** +45 9842 3111 (Bangsbo Fort Museum)

**E-mail:** n/a

**Web:** <http://www.bangsbo.com/default.aspx?m=2&i=64>

**Opening hours:** Open Air Museum 24/365. Museum Bunker hours **here**

**Admission:** Open Air Museum is free. Museum fee equals 4 € for adults

**Train from Aalborg:** Any train going North. In Frederikshavn, Bus No. 3 goes to Pikkerbakken

**Required gear:** Sturdy shoes or boots will do. And perhaps an umbrella (it is Denmark, after all ;-)

**RATING:** ♥♥♥♥♥



# Visiting: Varde Artillery Museum

Varde is a town in south-west Jutland, dating back to the medieval period. It is in close proximity to major WW2 fortifications along the west coast and can also boast of a nice little museum with artillery pieces, ranging from bombardiers and old, smooth-bore, horse-drawn cannons to cold war missiles.

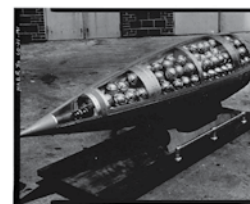
By no means comparable the IWM, but absolutely worth your while if you are in the area (e.g. to see the Tirpitz gun bunkers, the Defense Area of Esbjerg or the strongpoints at Blaavand).

Admission is modest and you can easily spend an hour here.

**Left:** Cut-through 150 mm barrel with conventional APHE shell in chamber. Breech removed.



**Below:** Renown “Honest John” tactical missile. First nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missile in the US arsenal.



Deployed in 1953, this free flight, solid fuel booster could carry a 20 kiloton warhead up to 25 kilometers. Conventional high-explosive warheads and a variety of cluster-heads (incl. Sarin nerve gas -

see photo) was also an option. The missile stayed in service with the National Guard until

1982

**Below:** 105 mm light haubitzer delivered in 1949-50 as weapons-aid from USA to new NATO countries. This short-barreled field-gun had a range of some 11 kilometers. Due to its minute size, the crews of heavier batteries often mused that the 105-mm crew should remember to “fix bayonet”.





# The Citadel, Copenhagen



Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark and a city covering almost 90 km<sup>2</sup> with 1.2 million residents and an 800 year history behind it. From a humble beginning as a mere fishing village during the Viking Age - the royal castle was at that time situated in Jelling in Jutland - Copenhagen (literally meaning; merchants harbor) raised into power after being annexed by Bishop Absalon and fortified by him in 1167 – the year traditionally counted as the city’s birth date.

The Citadel, which is located at the waterfront in the heart of Copenhagen, is an extremely well preserved fortress, in fact one of the finest of its kind in Northern Europe. Founded by King Christian IV who financed this stronghold partly on taxes (on salt and silk) and built on it from 1627 to his death in



1648, this pentagon construction is integrated into the city and today a popular resort for the people of Copenhagen.

Meant to serve as a command post for the King and a refuge for his family, the Citadel was built to be self-sufficient for a period, with own well, windmill for grinding corn and bakery, whereas a church took care of the necessary spiritual nourishment.

Christian IV died before completion of his fortress and it was up to his successor Frederick III to continue the construction. For several years this work was neglected, moats were run dry and bulwarks allowed to deteriorate. Following the siege by the Swedes (1658-60) where the Citadel actually proved quite successful in artillery duels and in fending off enemy





A WW2 Memorial flanks the entrance

infantry, but also clearly displayed its shortcomings and lack of maintenance, the Dutch architect and engineer Henrik Ruse was called in to finish the project and secure that the Citadel would be up to standards should another conflict arise.

#### A Dutch engineer takes over

Ruse was a renowned pioneer officer and military architect, born in 1924, who started his career at the age of fifteen. He had served with several royal houses in Europe and was able to set high demands to his new employer Frederick III before he took on the job. In example, he demanded a position as a colonel of an infantry regiment, to be appointed General Inspector of all fortress construction in Denmark and to be General Quartermaster. These positions earned him a yearly total of 3000 Rd. (Rigsdaler) which should be compared to the grand total for constructing the Citadel, namely 70.000 Rd.

The work started in 1661 and carried on for some three years, not without trouble and conflicts between the Absolutist Monarch and the people of Copenhagen who tended to see the Citadel as a sign of distrust of their loyalty to the King.

#### Battle of Copenhagen

Late 1800 Denmark had entered a pact with Russia, Sweden and Prussia where a part of the agenda was that unwillingness of the member states to submit to search of their ships in



Entrance with the traditional guardhouse

convoy by England. The de facto ruler of the waves did not take this decision well and responded immediately by impounding the vessels of the four nations, currently in British harbours, but they did not stick to that. In April 1801 a superior fleet of British vessels bombarded the Danish fleet anchored off the Citadel. Due to their position, the guns at the fortress never came into action of fear that “friendly fire” should hit own ships.

During the second English onslaught on Denmark in 1807, aiming to seize the Danish fleet of fear that it would fall into French hands, the Citadel did well in its defense, but eventually had to give in after several days of terror bombardment of Copenhagen, resulting in a fire storm with many casualties. To prevent the fire brigade from doing their job, salvos were fired intermitting aimed against the largest fires. Eventually, the Commandant of the fortress had to give in, following pleas from the population of Copenhagen who could stand no more. It is thus notable, that the fortress itself was not overrun, but that the defenders succumbed to the threat of further acts of terror against the civilian population.



A few guns remain in place

#### The Citadel as a prison

Several high-ranking prisoners have spent time in the dungeons of the Citadel, some of them awaiting execution - amongst others the notorious Struensee, advisor (and usurper to the throne) for the insane King Christian 7th – or a Royal Pardon. It must have been a consolation to the prisoners that their cells had windows facing into the church, allowing them to be part of the worshipping performed here.

Most notably in recent history the German administrator of Denmark during WW2, Dr. Werner Best, spent some time here after wars end. He was incarcerated on June 21st 1945 and tried in a war criminal process where he was sentenced to death on September 20th 1948 for his partaking in deportation of Danish Jews to Concentration Camps. However, the verdict was later altered to a prison term and in August 1951, he was extradited to Germany.

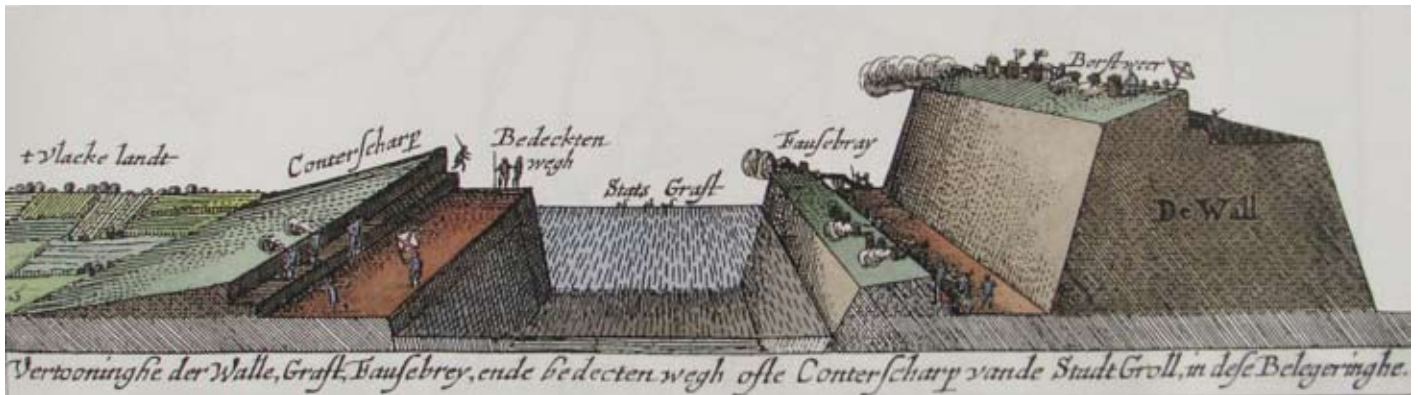
**Editors note:** Details of the history of The Citadel are picked from the impressive book, written by Herluf Krabbe in 1964. See the literature list for details and how to purchase.



1600 century fortress construction put great emphasis on hindrances to infantry attacks, as this was the predominant treat in a time where artillery was still relatively ineffective and armored vehicles as well as airplanes still just feverish ideas in the mind of Leonardo da Vinci and his peers. Thus bulwarks and gun positions were mainly constructed from soil

and timber, while enemy soldiers were attempted kept at bay by water hindrances, high walls and small arms fire from own troops in protected positions.

The cut-through example below (from Belgian Fort Groll) gives an excellent view of how the Citadel was constructed.



The view from The Kings Bastion



Remains of forward bastion

Three photos from the Citadel today (November 2007) where the area - although still a military installation and home for the Chief of Staff and military intelligence - is a much appreciated resort for Copenhagengers for a Sunday stroll. If in Copenhagen, you should take your time to visit this 340 year old and very well preserved fortification.



Faussebray (outer defense position)

Know about a fabulous event taking place in your area?

Tell it **HERE!**

There are history-buffs and fiery souls all over the planet, organizing historical reenacting or arranging open-house events for like-minded people as well as for the general public.

The War Tourist would like to help make these events known and offer you space to announce them in the upcoming events calendar (from first 2009 issue in February).

Thus - if you have knowledge of a noteworthy (war) historical event, send details to me for inclusion in the calendar. It's free, of course ;-)

Write to [kingpin@wartourist.eu](mailto:kingpin@wartourist.eu)



# Atlantic Wall artillery

The batteries along the Atlantic Wall - stretching from northern Norway to the Pyrenees mountains at the Spanish border - displayed a multitude of different guns, as to age, manufacturer and caliber.

A part of this artillery was of German origin, some of it pillaged from the border fortifications at the Ost- and West Walls (as well as from the Maginot line) along the German border to Poland and to France, some of it was naval artillery from decommissioned battleships, but a large proportion was taken from defeated enemies, in Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Greece, and in Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France. And some was taken from the BEF, of course, who had to leave their heavy equipment at the beaches of Dunkerque.

Accurately described as a logistics nightmare for any artillery officer, this heap of different guns none the less came in handy when Hitler recognized the need for a fence along the coast of Fortress Europe - to deter the enemy and to stiffen the home moral

Two types of field guns were captured in especially large quantities, namely the Russian Pushka A19, 122 mm and the French Schneider, 105 mm and both were put extensively to use in the Atlantic Wall.

Although an old timer at the outbreak of WW2, the French model 1913 Schneider was in use in many countries throughout Europe. After the Great War had ended in 1918, France sold or gave away large quantities of this gun, and it had been manufactured on license in several European countries.

All these guns fell into Germany's

lap after the conquest of Europe had completed by 1940 and initially probably stashed away somewhere as the logistics in field application would have been difficult to administer. Later though, this gun should play a vital role in the fortifications on the western seaboard of Europe.

Following the rapid victories and encircling of whole Russian Army Groups during the first stages of Operation Barbarossa, a lot of armor and artillery was captured. Among this was a large number of the fairly modern and very effective Pushka A19. Easily recognizable on its long barrel and vertical equilibrators, this awesome gun had an impressive range and was installed in several coastal batteries.



Schneider Le Creuset, Model 1913

### Technical Data

Weight:	2300 kg
Barrel length:	2,9 m
Caliber:	105 mm (4.134")
Breech:	Skrew
Elevation:	-5° to 37°
Traverse:	6°
Ammunition:	Shell
Projectile weight:	14,9 kg (HE)
Muzzle velocity:	550 m/sec
Range:	up to 12 km



Pushka A19, Model 1931

### Technical Data

Weight:	7250 kg
Barrel length:	5,4 m
Caliber:	121,92 mm
Breech:	Screw
Elevation:	-2° to 65°
Traverse:	5,8°
Ammunition:	Shell
Projectile weight:	Up to 25 kg
Muzzle velocity:	560 – 788 m/sec
Range:	Up to 20 km



## Featured Website

### The Featured Website

A website of choice will be presented in each issue of TWT. Readers are encouraged to suggest candidates. To nominate a website to be a War Tourist Featured, send URL to [kingpin@wartourist.eu](mailto:kingpin@wartourist.eu) along with reasons for nomination. Basic admittance criteria are:

- Apolitical
- Non-racial, non-sexist
- Serious and informative (or amusing)
- Related to (war) tourism
- Preferably non-commercial



Museumscenter Hanstholm is Denmark's largest of its kind and a **must-see** if you are anyway near the town of Hanstholm. The area was home to a mighty 38 cm battery that was to seal off the entrance to internal Danish waters - in conjunction with a battery at Kristiansand in Norway.

The modern and well equipped museum is merged with one of the 3000 square meter emplacements for a 38 cm gun - fully refurbished, while other bunkers in the area remain in their derelict state - some of them a spooky experience to visit (remember flashlight). Layout of museum and bunker [here](#).

The surrounding area is typical for the region - apart from the more than 500 bunkers scattered around. The original munitions train is functioning and available for a tour that will also take you through two-storey ammo bunkers.

The website is a **well of information** not only with regards to the museum and the area, but also features a library of German and Allied documents. It is well-organised, frequently updated and in Danish, English and German.

## News Cuttings from around the World

### Huge amount of WW2 explosives found

San Diego Union Tribune, July 9th, 2008

When a mushroom picker stumbled across a machine gun belt on a public beach in northern Poland, he had no idea of what lay beneath his feet - and good for him.

Investigations by local authorities revealed a stockpile of some 155.000 pounds of explosives and 20.000 pieces of ammunition and detonators, each powerful enough to rip off an arm or a leg.

Unexploded ammunition from WW2 are a relatively common find in Poland here 60+ years after the war's end.

### Honeckers Nuclear Bunker still open?

Object 17/5000 - Honeckerbunker

Although previously scheduled for seal-up by the end of October, the Object 17/5000 website announces tours in November as well.

In other words, it seems not to be too late if you want to see the three-storey, 60 by 50 meter command center, built during 1978-85 from 85.000 tonnes of reinforced concrete. And one can only speculate whether this money-maker (100 € for a "tough-guy tour") really will be closed, come end of November. Doubtful at worst.

Book or read more [here](#).

### Valkyrie in theaters on Dec. 26th (in USA)

United Artists

After much postponing United Artists finally has decided to launch the debated historical motion picture "Valkyrie", starring Tom Cruise as the German resistance hero Graf von Stauffenberg who tried to kill Hitler in Rastenburg on July 20th 1944.

It will be very interesting to see if Hollywood (and Cruise) are up to the job or it's a total flop. There is really no middle ground here.

See trailer [here](#). Worldwide release schedule [here](#).

See more **News Cuttings** on Wartourist Website

Are you a battlefield tourist  
or a fortification aficionado?

Join **WAR TOURIST!**

The War Tourist Group on **Plaxo Pulse** is a rendezvous point for the devotees of battlefield tourism and the ones who enjoy touring great fortifications throughout history.

It is a place for war history buffs to meet and to share photos (e.g. the photos used here in the TWT), tips, knowledge and links to places and issues of interest.

If you feel you belong in an apolitical group, motivated by a joint devotion to the topics described, you should check it out:

<http://bunker.plaxogroups.com>



The following books and articles have been used as inspiration and background material for the articles in this issue of The War Tourist. Several of the books are obtainable from the shop at **Museumscenter Hanstholm**, or from **Bangsbo Museum**.

Original Language Title	Title in English	Language	Author, Publisher, Year	ISBN or medium
Atlantic Wall Typology		English, German, French	Rudi Rolf, Fortress Books, 1998	90-763-96-05-1
Besættelsestiden I Nordjylland	German occupation of North Jutland	Danish	O. Neimann, Aalborg Universitetsforlag 1992	87-7307-450-0
Besat og Befriet (Hals)	Occupied and liberated	Danish	Henrik Gjøde Nielsen, Hals Muesum 1995	87-985457-0-1
Die Regelbauten des Heeres im Atlantikwall	Army Regelbau in the Atlantic Wall	German	Harry Lippman	3-931032-10-8
Fortress Europe		English	J.E.Kaufmann, Greenhill Books, 1999	1-85367-341-1
Frederikshavn som tysk fæstning (1)	Frederikshavn as a German fortress (1)	Danish	Kenneth Kristensen	87-7833-032-7
German Bunkers in Denmark		English	Jens Andersen, Rudi Rolf, PRAK Publishing, 2006	
German Sea Coast Defenses in Denmark		English	British Intelligence	<b>Report</b>
Hverdagen i Nordjylland under besættelsen	Everyday life in North Jutland under German occupation	Danish	Multiple authors, Bangsbo Museum, 1985	87-88552-50-4½
Kastellet gennem 300 år	The Citadel through 300 years	Danish	Herluf Krabbe, Martins Forlag, 1964	
Kommissionsrapporten af 1946	Commission Report 1946	Danish	Danish Military Authorities	<b>Report</b>
Kystartilleri i Danmark	Coastal Artillery in Denmark	Danish	Svend E. Albrethsen, Jens Andersen, Ole L. Frantzen, 2003	87-989621-1-6
The Atlantic Wall (1)		English	Steven J Zaloga, Osprey Publications, 2007	978-1-84603-129-8
Tysk invasionsforsvar i Danmark 1940-45	German Coastal Defense in Denmark 1940-45	Danish	Jens Andersen, 2007	978-87-89022-50-5
Tyske Kystfort I Norge	German Coastal Forts in Norway	Norwegian	Jan Eigil Fjørtoft, 1982	8299087813

Abbreviation	German	English
AW	Atlantikwall	Atlantic Wall
FlaK	Flieger Abwehr Kanone	Anti-Aircraft gun
FuMG	Funk Mess Geräte	Radar
H.K.A.R	Heeres Küsten Artillerie Regiment	Army Coastal Artillery Regiment
HKB	Heeres Küsten Batterie	Army Coastal Battery
M.A.A.	Marine Artillerie Abteilung	Naval Artillery Section
OKH	Oberkommando des Heeres	Army Supreme Command
OKM	Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine	Supreme Naval Command
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht	Supreme Command Armed Forces
PaK	Panzer Abwehr Kanone	Anti-tank gun
S.K.	Schiffskanone	Naval gun
Stp./StGrp.	Stützpunkt/Stützpunktsgruppe	Strongpoint/Strongpoint group