



MILITARY  
HERITAGE  
TOURISM

# MILITARY HERITAGE TOURISM: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND BALTIC COOPERATION

## Conference Program

[militaryheritagetourism.info](http://militaryheritagetourism.info)

We are excited to welcome you to this international conference dedicated to developing a shared Baltic military heritage tourism product. Through collaboration in military heritage tourism projects, partners from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia have revitalized military heritage sites, improved accessibility, and created innovative ways

to communicate our region's complex history. This event brings together experts and practitioners to share insights, learn from successful practices within and beyond the Baltics, and envision the next steps for inclusive military heritage tourism. Together, we have the opportunity to shape how the Baltic story is understood, experienced, and carried into the future.

Date:

**March 25-26, 2026**

Venue:

**Hotel Jūrmala Spa & Conference Centre,**  
Jomas street 47/49, Jūrmala, Latvia

Participants:

tourism professionals and entrepreneurs,  
historians from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia

**REGISTRATION**  
by filling out the  
application form



March 24, Tuesday

**20:00** GET TOGETHER IN THE HOTEL JŪRMALA SPA FOR WELCOME DRINK AND SNACKS  
(Cocktail bar "Seaside", on the hotel's 11th floor)

**Interreg**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

### Latvia – Lithuania

The project "Extending the Baltic military heritage tourism product in Lithuania and South Latvia" (Military Heritage II, project number LL-00052) is being implemented with the support of the European Union under the Interreg VI-A Latvia-Lithuania Programme 2021- 2027.



Lauku Ceļotājs



LIETUVOS KAIMO  
TURIZMO ASOCIACIJA



**Interreg**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

### Estonia – Latvia

The project "Improved Accessibility of the Latvian-Estonian Military Heritage Tourism Product" (MIL-HER ACCESSIBLE, project number EE-LV00094) is being implemented with the support of the European Union under the Interreg VI-A Estonia-Latvia Programme 2021-2027.



Lauku Ceļotājs



EESTI  
TILI  
MUUSEUM



Saldus

KAROSTA



LATVIJAS  
OKUPĀCIJAS  
MUZEJS

JŪRMALA  
MILITĀRMUSEUM

SALM | SA Haapsalu ja Läänemaa  
Museimid



Estonian  
War Museum  
GENERAAL LAIDONER MUSEUM

This event is organised with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Latvian Country Tourism Association "Lauku ceļotājs" and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



## Day 1, March 25, Wednesday

**09:30 – 10:00** REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE

**10:00 – 10:15** OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

Welcome addresses:

- **Mārtiņš Kaprāns**, University of Latvia, researcher in memory and remembrance

**10:15 – 12:30** SESSION I – PRESENTATIONS: NEW PERSPECTIVES IN MILITARY HERITAGE TOURISM

### **Baltic Military Heritage Tourism: Project Achievements and Future Outlook**

Military Heritage II and MIL-HER ACCESSIBLE project overview and results.

- **Katrina Seržante**, project coordinator at the Latvian Country Tourism Association "Lauku ceļotājs", Latvia (15 min)
- **Agnė Vaitkuvienė**, Lithuanian countryside tourism association's president, Lithuania (15 min)
- **Anneli Kana**, representative from NGO Estonian Rural Tourism, Estonia (15 min)

### **Architectural Perspectives: How to Develop and Restore Military Heritage Sites**

Examples from Lithuania - Lyduvenai Railway Bridge, Cold War exposition, and Kaunas Fortress.

- **Vygantas Kilčiauskas**, Deputy director of directorate of Zemaitija protected areas, Lithuania (20 min)
- **Vladimir Orlov**, researcher of Lithuanian military heritage, guide, museum curator, director of the public institution "War Heritage Center" and Fort VII of Kaunas Fortress, Lithuania (25 min)

### **Responsible Storytelling and Experience Design for Interpreting the Sensitive History – the Soviet Era**

How to interpret controversial sites and symbols responsibly and legally correctly, and how to balance historical accuracy with visitor sensitivity. Approaches used to contextualize Soviet heritage without glorifying it.

- **Valdis Kuzmins**, researcher, National Defence Academy of Latvia (30 min)

**Q&A and reflections** (20 minutes)

**12:30 – 13:30** LUNCH IN THE HOTEL

**14:00 – ~17:00** EXCURSION AROUND JŪRMALA, INCLUDING A COFFEE BREAK

In the afternoon, participants are invited to enjoy a guided excursion by bus through Jūrmala, exploring some of the city's most remarkable architectural and cultural landmarks. The tour will give a glimpse into Jūrmala's elegant resort heritage, interwar artistic life, and the traces left by Soviet-era sanatorium culture. Highlights include the former Russian Ambassador's Summer House, the legendary Sanatorium "Belorussiya", and the beautifully restored Morberg House, one of the finest examples of 19th-century wooden villa architecture. We will also stop at the iconic Dzintari Concert Hall, a symbol of Latvia's cultural life for nearly a century, and pass by the historic Benjamins' House, once belonging to Latvia's legendary publisher.

Throughout the tour, participants will gain insights into Jūrmala as a resort city shaped by romantic 19th–20th-century architecture, interwar cultural life, and the extensive sanatorium system of the Soviet period — a vivid backdrop to discussions on heritage interpretation and adaptive reuse.

**19:00** EXCURSION AND JOINT DINNER AT "VALGUMA PASAULE"

During the Soviet era, the present-day "Valguma Pasaule" area was a restricted government residence with security, fencing, and direct communications with Moscow. The building was constructed in 1968 based on a design by architect Ivars Strautmanis.

The site was under the USSR Council of Ministers and popularly known as Kosygin's residence (he visited only once; Augusts Voss attended only the opening). The territory was guarded by the Tukums KGB, and anti-missile systems of the Baltic Military District were located in the surrounding forests.

Although intended for high-ranking officials, guests were rare — silence was what was mostly protected. Local accounts mention visits by Galina Brezhneva and ballet dancer Māris Liepa.



## Day 2, March 26, Thursday

**9:00 – 11:00**

### SESSION II – SUCCESS STORIES IN MILITARY HERITAGE TOURISM

#### **Military Heritage Tourism Trends. Visitor Demand and Future Opportunities**

– **Andris Klepers, Professor,**

Leading Researcher, Director of the Scientific Institute at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (35 min)

#### **Poland as an Example: Involving and Showcasing Military Heritage in Tourism**

"Poland at War Tours" offers immersive WWII-history tours across Poland - from major wartime sites to lesser-known heritage locations - emphasizing the occupation of Poland, the Holocaust, Polish resistance, remembrance, and respectful commemoration. Damien Stewart, trained in psychology and with a long-standing passion for WWII history, draws on his background to design thoughtful, visitor-oriented tours that combine historical depth with empathetic storytelling.

– **Damien Stewart,**

Director and Tour Operator, "Poland at War Tours" (35 min)

#### **How to Present History in an Engaging Way: The Heavy Water Cellar at Vemork, Norway**

The Heavy Water Cellar in Vemork shows how historical facts can become a powerful visitor experience. Using the authentic sabotage site, immersive storytelling, and multimedia, the exhibition brings the 1943 operation to life. It demonstrates how dramatic, sensitive wartime history can be communicated responsibly and attractively for a broad audience.

[www.nia.no/en/vemork/experiences/the-heavy-water-cellar/](http://www.nia.no/en/vemork/experiences/the-heavy-water-cellar/) (35 min)

– **Gunhild Lurås,** Project manager and curator. The Norwegian industrial workers Museum (NIA)

– **Rita Engedalen,** Press manager. The Norwegian industrial workers Museum (NIA)

#### **Q&A and reflections** (15 minutes)

**11:00 – 11:30**

### COFFEE BREAK

**11:30 – 13:30**

### SESSION III – ACCESSIBILITY IN MILITARY HERITAGE TOURISM: GOOD PRACTICES IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA

Presentations of sites that have developed accessible infrastructure for visitors with mobility restrictions, visual impairments, or adapted experiences for those with claustrophobia, as well as developed special solutions for school-aged youth.

– **MIL-HER-ACCESSIBLE** project partners with developed solutions in Estonia and Latvia

#### **Partners**

■ Saldus regional municipality

■ Estonian War Museum – General Laidoner Museum

■ Occupation Museum  
Association of Latvia

■ Foundation of Haapsalu and Läänemaa Museums

**13:30 – 14:00**

### Q&A AND WRAP-UP

led by **Valdis Kuzmins,** Researcher, National Defence Academy of Latvia

Summary of the key insights, with brief recommendations for strengthening accessible and inclusive military heritage tourism across the Baltic region.

**14:00 – 15:00**

### LUNCH AND NETWORKING

End of the conference

[www.militaryheritagetourism.info](http://www.militaryheritagetourism.info)