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Daria Minashkina and Ari Happonen

FOREIGNER'S POINT OF VIEW ON THE LUUMÄKI INDEPENDENCE ROAD SIGHTSEEING LOCATIONS

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Authors: Daria Minashkina and Ari Happonen

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FOREWORDS

This project report is based on material gathered in the late parts of 2018 field study done into the context of Luumäki itsenäisyyspäivä. The purpose of this report is to show, that when Finnish sightseeing opportunities promotions are wanted to be enhanced and the possibilities are wanted to be presented in a positive light, in the eyes of foreigners, even the most basic things have to be remembered to be considered.

For this particular report, two researchers reserved a full day for a field trip to given 7 different sight seeing locations, in Luumäki itsenäisyyspäivä. The trip was planned to mimic a generic tourist route. The experience material was gathered as one might assume a person who really does not have too much advance information about the options available for him/her, might have done in the similar situation.

We would like to thank, Regional Council of South Karelia, for making this report possible, by funding the DigiBooster project (as part of the funded Alueelliset innovaatiot ja kokeilut (AIKO) projects). Additionally, we would like to give our special thanks for Luumäki city personnel, who have been extremely helpful on providing local specialties details and giving us support to be able to finalize this report. Finally, we would like to specially thank Erno Salmela, the project manager of the DigiBooster project for giving us the possibility to work within this interesting Etelä-Karjala specific topic and report and the opportunity to experience the local areas from non-local point of view.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The current report is done at the Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT to look at the local attraction Itsenäisyudentie (Independence road) from international tourists' / participants' point of view. The report is part of experience, skill and publication chain of the authors, where the authors representatives act as action researchers (Porras et al. 2006; Salmela et al. 2011; Happonen 2014; Salmela et al. 2015; Eskelinen et al. 2017; Porras et al. 2019) and/or field studiers (Häkkinen et al. 2006; Helimä et al. 2007; Kallonen et al. 2007; Hämäläinen et al. 2008; Happonen et al. 2015; Happonen and Minashkina 2018; Happonen and Santti 2018; Minashkina and Happonen 2018; Palacin et al. 2019; Happonen and Santti 2019; Happonen and Minashkina; 2019) and report the experience for further development actions. Namely, this report contains improvement ideas of the marketing image for the Luumäki Independence Road from the foreigner's point of view. The ideas and report are built based on the actual visiting experience, in the summer daytime. Referring to the general description of the Independence Road and its key facts, it can be said this road visiting locations encounter a visitor with both the local and Finnish history in initial stages of the independence establishment of Finland and last wars events (<http://www.luumaki.fi/itsenaisyydentie>). The report starts with the analysis of the web presence of Independence Road places and then goes deeply into improvement ideas in location sites given in the form of the practical marketing advices which will help to attract more visitors and make them enjoy their stay in the Luumäki area.

2. ITSENÄISYYDENTIE INTERNET PRESENCE

This chapter provides insights of web present as what materials available for a reader and propose ideas how to enhance Luumäki materials improving the overall image of the Luumäki road.

2.1. Difference between given materials

It can be a little bit confusing for international people who have some skills to understand Finnish and look around. Also, looking at the general view of the Luumäki web-page, the content there is only in the Finnish language, so it is probably extremely hard for English and/or Russian speaking tourists without the help of Finns to find any Independence Road info which is only given as PDF info booklets in the Finish version of the website. In addition, the Finnish website version and Finnish info PDF file offer visitors a map which makes tourist navigation a lot easier compared to the English and Russian PDF documents. Moreover, this Finnish language PDF version has even the names of the point locations translated to other languages, but this is not revealed in the English or Russian PDF files. Moreover, it seems that the English and Russian language PDF files are the collection of the different Finnish sub webpages under the website element kohteet. So, there should be the similar collection of PDF materials for different language versions.

To conclude, the webpage could be beneficially improved by clarifying the points mentioned earlier, like a short English and Russian texts (e.g. in the right side of the webpage) to explain where to find the map and PDF documents and another simple guidance update to all possible tourists / people interested about these attraction points.

2.2. Present material converted to more lively forms

Now the Luumäki documents just explains the exhibits place descriptions and history making a reader to only understand something about the locations' history. Some guidelines (Manitoba 2009, Veverka 2001, National Park Service 2010, The J. Paul Getty Museum 2011) suggest putting less effort on some of the general description like “dams are usually used in the defence point” and focus more to the subject specific issues:

- What is the locations mission in historic events?
- What is its role nowadays?
- Why is this monument / place to go exactly here?
- To whom it was build? and so on...

Another point to mention, a reader does not get info about how to get to visiting locations. If a map is added there, one could give a suggested route to and sequence of visiting these locations depending on directions of arrival (from the Kouvola or from Lappeenranta direction). Moreover, if route suggestions are given, the best visiting times of year and days and some nearby nice places information should be given too. For example, for families with children, some of the locations might be little bit dangerous when the sun goes down and also tourists would probably prefer to have full access to all places (like the cafeteria and museum daytime open). For families, places for food & souvenir shops and activities for children should be something to think about. So, the general guidance for the best times and months to visit is advised to be mentioned too. Therefore, tourists will appreciate if one can explain why the visit to Luumäki locations is beneficial for them some another way too rather than just seeing locations (for instance, “in here you can enjoy nature and calm open sky walking in historic fortress location” and etc.)

From the document available layout point of view, the PDF should be improved with the different pages' layout and design (e.g. various font sizes for headings and other info parts in text) – to make the reading experience more enjoyable and a tag more interesting too. Adding livelier and lovelier location pictures to this PDF would be helpful. That adds an interest to go to visit the places. Furthermore, grasping a readers' interest to the specific info in the text, e.g. with highlighted (colour) boxes could give some extra to look and feel (for example, using colour boxes for best times of year to visit the locations). As it is shown in the Figure 1.

ПАМЯТНИК БОРЬБЕ ЗА ПРАВА И СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТЬ

Этот монумент воздвигнут в память о борьбе с угнетением со стороны имперских властей, имевшем

Памятник посвящен борьбе всего финского народа за свои права, которая закончилась объявлением независимости Финляндии в 1917

независимости Финляндии в 1917 году.



Изначально планировалось отремонтировать расположенное рядом со станцией старое здание суда Луумяки, откуда в 1914 году окружного судью Свинхувуда отправили в двухлетнюю ссылку. Причиной ссылки были незаконные, по мнению тогдашних властей, судебные решения. Однако отремонтировать здание оказалось невозможно, и тогда было решено за счет народных средств возвести памятник у станции Луумяки.

Летом 1937 года был организован конкурс, в котором победил проект скульптора Вяйно Аалтонена. Памятник из красного гранита имеет 7 метров в высоту. Рельефы и тексты символизируют силу закона и справедливости. Памятник был торжественно открыт 5.12.1937. На церемонии присутствовали высокопоставленные гости во главе с П.Э. Свинхувудом, а также публика в количестве около двух тысяч зрителей.

ПАМЯТНИК ПОСЛЕДНЕМУ СРАЖЕНИЮ ГРАЖДАНСКОЙ ВОЙНЫ

Гражданская, или освободительная, война, начавшаяся сразу после провозглашения независимости Финляндии, велась с 27 января по 15 мая 1918 года. Нестабильная ситуация стала причиной политического и военного кризиса, который привел к войне между красными и белыми. Бои и столкновения гражданской войны происходили и в Луумяки.

Одно из последних сражений гражданской войны произошло в районе поселка Киурула. В конце апреля – начале мая уже рассеянные части красных начали отступать в сторону Кюменлааксо. Белые подходили к Луумяки с нескольких направлений. На какое-то время бои задержались в районе Киурулы. Красным пришлось отступить после того, когда белым стало известно расположение их артиллерии, размещенной на церковном холме. Эти сведения, пройдя через лес, доставила одна молодая местная жительница. Батарею удалось уничтожить, после чего красные бежали в сторону



Figure 1. An example how a reader's attention can be attracted to PDF info.

2.3. Advertisement through sponsors

It might be that someone would like to visit the Luumäki Independence Road because it was recommended by sponsors (e.g. in some event or someone knows) of this location or might be the issues is also in trust to this sponsor. Currently, the sponsoring companies' logos are in the end of the PDF file and are not noticeable so much. If the companies are sponsoring in a way that they directly somehow relate to locations, one might want to move the locations of logos to near the explanation of interest points and explain little something about the sponsors too. Logos location examples are in the Figure 2.

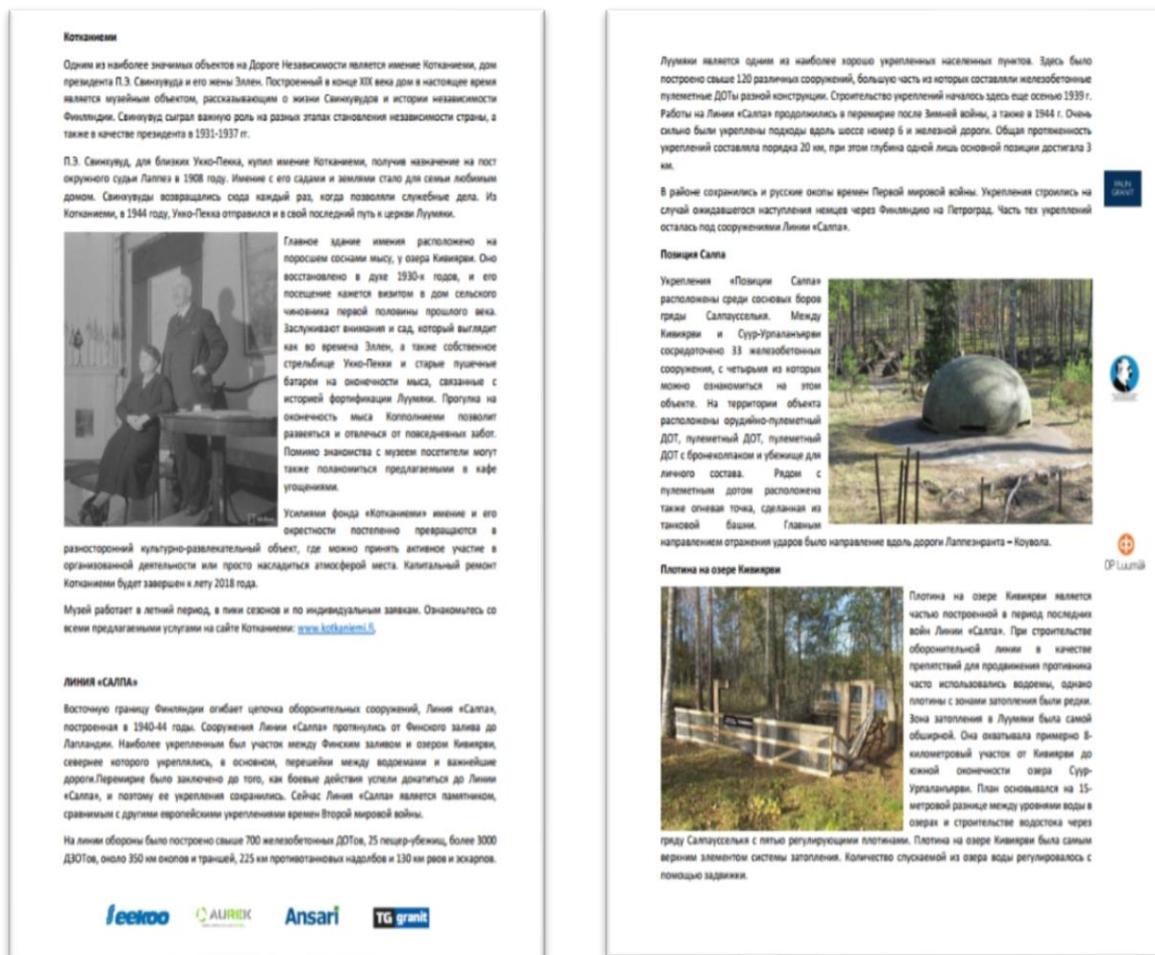


Figure 2. PDF info examples of companies' logos in the bottom of the page (left) and in the side of the page (right).

2.4. Adding the street address number into the visiting points details

Arriving to the exact point of interest in these special Luumäki locations might actually be a bit challenging for non locals and especially for a potential foreign visitor. First of all, if the foreigner would be using one of the typical navigators, which (by default) want to guide into the proper road, given by the application user. For example, when visitor types the road name, and either does not bother or does not know the exact street number, a tourist can get into a hard to drive location. This was the actual case, in our field test. Our path towards the forest of Taavetti did lead to end of road, within an area inside some private people's home yard.

So in practice, from non local point of view, it would be quite useful to inform/communicate the exact address of each location for the visitors. First of all, it makes the commute easy for the outsiders with the navigator and additionally it is needed for visitors to be able to use tools like Google Maps etc. to check the actual physical distances between different sightseeing points. For simplicity, these exact street addresses should be written on the website of Luumäki and printed on all big info boards used in different points of Itsenäisyydentie (As presented in Figure 3).



Figure 3: Information board for Itsenäisyydentie sightseeing locations

3. PROMOTIONS AT INTEREST POINT

SATUN MAKIAT

The cafeteria Satun makiat, nearside the road 6, can actually be a really good motivator for people to visit the Independence Road sights by directing their attention towards sights physical locations if a relevant approach of communicating information for potential visitors is applied for this purpose. The information communication could be improved both, inside and outside the bakery premises (in the parking area).

3.1. Outside advertisement

Coming to the informational point at the Satun makiat, it can be said that it is hard for a potential visitor to spot the current informational board place. It is easy to find only in the case, that the visitor already knows exactly what to look for. The problem happens, because the info board currently does blend “too well” with the background. Also seeing the board is quite a challenge as the yard was a half full of big trucks. The situation is shown in the following Figure 4 below, which was taken from the road leading to the yard area.



Figure 4. The blocked view of the information board with trucks.

The Satun makiat seems to be the popular place for truck drivers to stop by, and the current location of the information board is selected so, that it cannot be seen from the arrival road at all.

The purple colour in the board might work as a giveaway signal to support the overall purple theme in the Luumäki website. This might work even better, if it would be promoted already in the road 6 big signs too, as advised earlier. The same sort of visibility thing is related to the information board at the Satun makiat yard, as currently it does not feel like it would “pop up” to visitor eyes.



Figure 5. The information board attraction signs.

To help tourists / interested people to find the information

board, eye guiding arrows could be put in the road ramp that people are driving into the parking area, when they arrive to the yard area. As “hey I’m here” pointers, arrows could be added around the board itself to “catch the visitors’ eye” in close by areas. Also, a heading in the top part of the board would be useful as if it would be using big enough letters. If the board can be extended little bit higher, this text should be available from the behind of the info board too, as that side faces in the road people who come from Lappeenranta direction, will be using. Both visibility ideas / variants are shown in the Figure 5.

To solve this issue, at least following could be considered: 1) moving the information board to another location, maybe after the gasoline stations, as that area is “non-

parking” area, 2) of course, one could suggest for relocating trucks, but considering their turn circles and driving lines, that is probably not an option 3) considering different options to attract people to the current location and offer hints (about this we will talk in the next subchapter)

Returning to the Satun makiat informational board and taking a closer look, there is the map on it, but this map does not have the street addresses of the different attraction points 1 to 7 printed into the map (Figure 6). This is a huge disadvantage as it makes it impossible for a potential visitor to put this places route into a navigator to find to the actual points (especially, as many of these pints are not clearly visible on the road), plus, for foreign person, the distance in km from the current info board might be useful information too. Moreover, it is hard to get to know how does each Luumäki visiting location look like because there are no photos of this place in the informational board too.

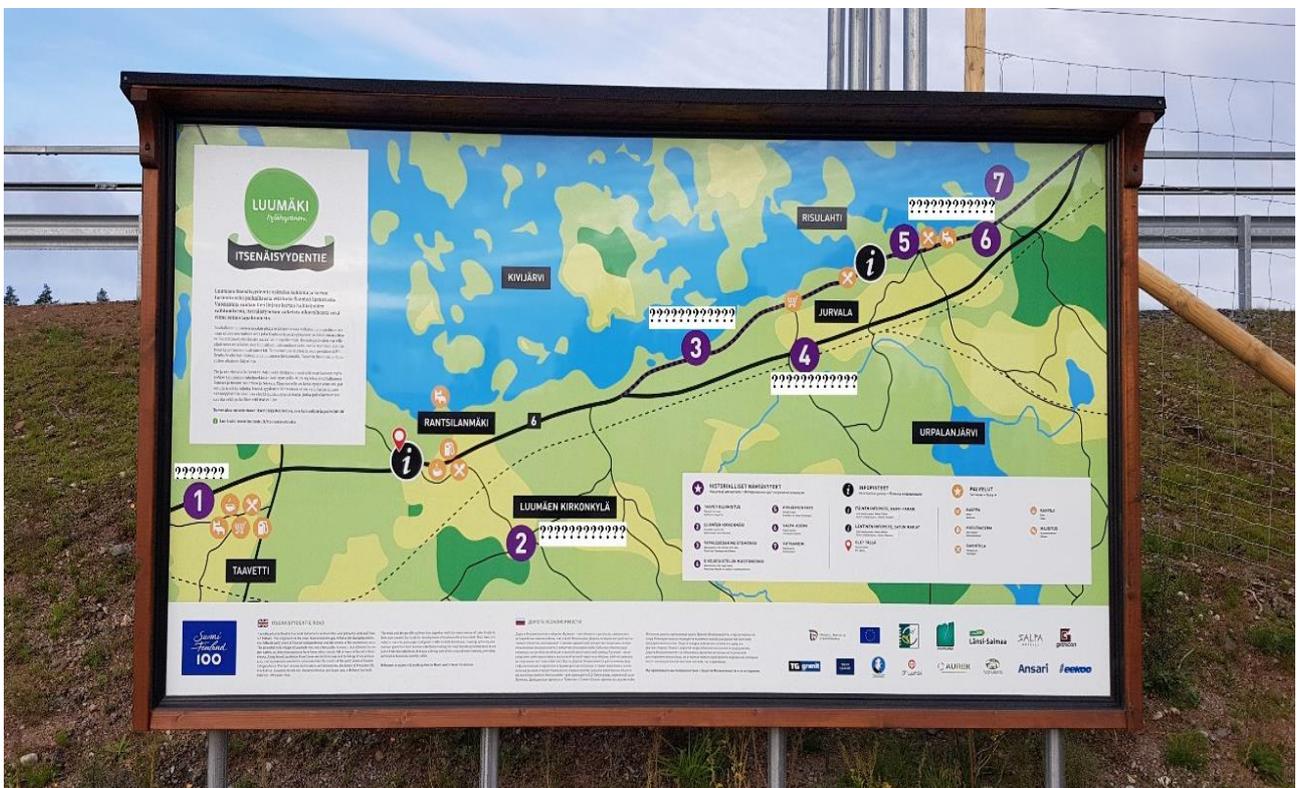


Figure 6. The information board Luumäki map with missing addresses.

3.2. Indoor advertisement

Now potential visitors in the bakery can get to know about the Independence Road sights only by spotting the advertisement wall posters that inside the bakery. Firstly, a definite plus, that there are a lot of photos of the actual locations. However, it is hard to get to know how each location looks like because of the absence of any numbering or names under pictures.

Also, the location of the wall advertisements was not the best one as during the bakery lunch time it is used as a place for dirty dishes trolleys and those were blocking the view of the wall documents (Figure 7). With a quick glance, it seemed that these guidance boards could be moved somewhat more into the left side, but not that much more as other walls were in use for other things.

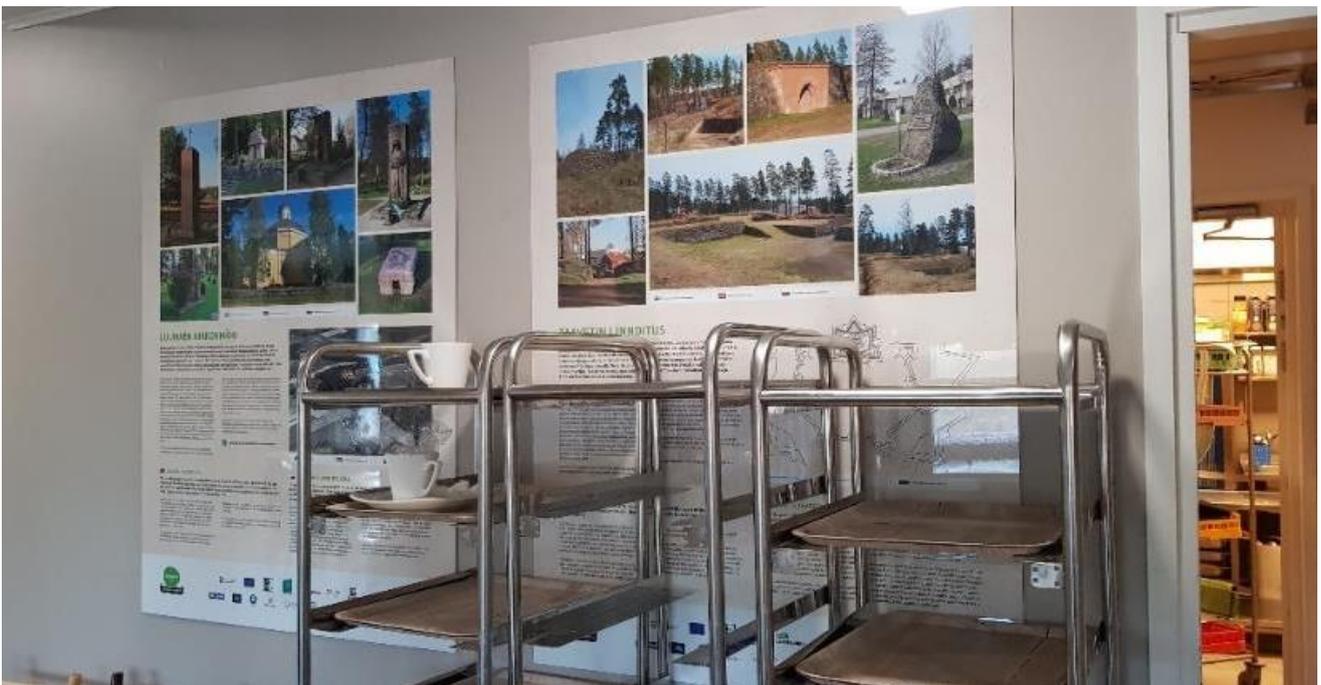


Figure 7. The Luumäki info stands are blocked with dirty dishes in the bakery.

Furthermore, in order to get more potential visitors from the inside area of the bakery, there can be, for example, minimalist table stand advertisements about Itsenäisyysentie or some small table triangles to make people to take a note about those. This way it

will be seen by those people who have been too hungry to notice anything or visitors with children who have taken all the available time to “look around” and find this in table. So, for starters, currently there was promotion about “leipäviikko” in the bakery tables (Figure 8). That sort of an approach might also attract the adults to consider some local places to check out before heading far away.



Figure 8. Luumäki advertisement can be put on tables as well as Leipäviikko advertisement.

In this way, some of the Independence Road advertisement material could be also printed to the table top marketing materials to the Satuan makiat to remind people what sort of tourist attractions are available nearby.

As a question from a tourist’s point of view, does the bakery bake some sort of special Independence Road related products, maybe, a bun named like this or a dish to offer with coffee or as a take a way solution?

In practice, Luumäki visiting places can be advertised in the door leading into bakery (Figure 9) it can be said that the information board can be found from the behind of the person reading the hints. If a person has opened the outside door or if it is kept constantly open for summertime, the inside door could have some small hints that there is additional information about Itsenäisyudentie in the cafeteria area of the bakery. The

red wall at the outside could easily work as a place to put some hints about the yard information board to pop up into visitors' eyes.



Figure 9. The bakery entrance door (left) as a possible place where to put Luumäki visiting information like where Iltalehti is now (right).

4. PUTTING ROAD SIGNS TOWARDS LUUMÄKKI SIGHTSEEING POINTS

Unfortunately, the sign is in Finnish “muu nähtävyys” is not familiar for international tourists because it does not reveal anything for foreigners (Figure 10). If the road sign just would read in English “tourist attraction information point” or additional guidance text such as “follow these brown signs to tourists’ attraction” that would help somewhat. For the future development, it might be useful to get the text in 3 different languages (Finnish, English and Russian).

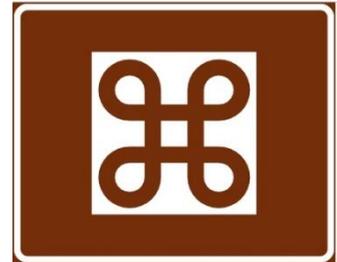


Figure 10. The "Other tourist attraction" sign used on Finnish roads.

Moreover, the road 6 is quite straight road leading towards Kouvola, if one is not thinking to stop for gasoline station or bakery Satun makiat this visitor will definitely just drive past the information there is about something called “/Independence Road” (Figure 11). On this figure the road sign does not tell anyone anything else there is an information point for “something”. Thus, this sign is not enough to get people to stop to check what it is (there is a lot of these signs in different places in the road 6, so why would people would check all to just to see are they interested or not?).

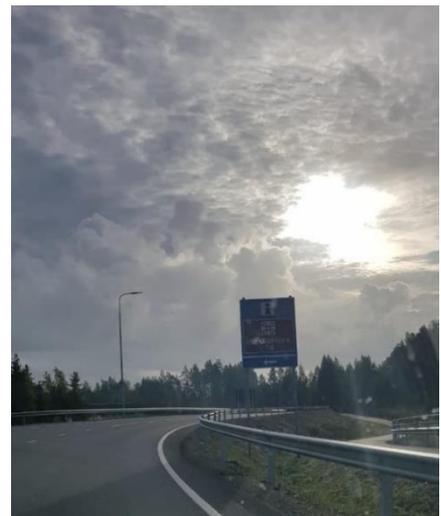


Figure 11. The Independence Road info road sign.

Because of the road 6 renovations, it is straighter and faster, so people are driving by the signs more easily than before. In roads like the renovated road 6, the focus is already in the next stop that might be 1h away. Because of that, they are not looking any additional reasons to stop.

So, to make people to be more interested to stop, for example, the whole map of the Independence Road (Figure 12) should be put in a big road side marketing bill board for everyone to see. The map that is available in the Internet might be a good starting point. And adding text “look for brown signs for more details” will be a definite plus.



Figure 12. The Luumäki visiting sites map.

Considering the road 6, we do not see any other options to get people to take their time and to stop e.g. to the Satun makiat bakery to study little bit more what this attraction is, than by adding those big road side advertisements with pictures of attractions (the Figure 13) and clear message like “would you like to see the Kotkaniemi, home of Finnish 3rd president Pehr Evind Svinhufvud”. The figure below (from the yard area of bakery Satun makiat), should reveal the reality of the size factor. Even when the big roadside marketing sign are really big, they do not seem to be that from few hundred meters away. Now because of the absence of any billboards and the existence of the brown background small attraction standard road mark sign, it should not be a surprise, why people do not notice those. As a side note, we were looking for those together and even when that was our main focus, every now and then one of us missed some of the signs



Figure 13. An example of possible places for Luumäki place info billboards.

The current road signs' sizes showing the direction of each visiting point are too easy to miss (at least some of them) by a tourist following them. In general, we would have expected them to be a little bit bigger. In practice, we did find out that if there are signs, those are not too much in easily visible locations, some of them are, actually, obstructed with close by buildings, trees or other things. Also, the distance from the sign to the parking lot should be more clearly stated to help a visitor to navigate easily. Might be, an assigned place to park a car near the location sights would be beneficial for this visiting point.

Then, moving into the visiting locations. For instance, in the Road 6 there should be a big sign with few pictures about the fortress Taavetti, which was given as the № 1 visiting point. This sign could at least have text in English e.g. "historic Fortress 1km in that direction". Especially, the current sign into the Fortress of Taavetti № 1 can be easily skipped by a tourist looking for it, as it is blocked mostly by the pedestrian road crossing safety sign (Figure 14).



Figure 14. The hardly seen sign to the 1st location.

Also, a couple of signs, leading to the church location № 2, from the Satun makiat bakery could be put on the side of the road to guide people when driving away from the bakery yard area, first of all, directly guiding to turn left and telling how long in km to follow the road into the church. One or two signs in the way, should keep people calm and tell them they are going in the right direction. Arrows examples of signs showing directions are in the Figure 15 below.



Figure 15. Arrows showing the direction to the church location №2.

After people get close to the location №2, they currently face the info board black backside from the driving road, the info board is only seen if a visitor knowing this fact arrives to the parking (Figure 16).



Figure 16. The actual info board is only seen from the parking, it is totally black from the road side.

Info boards should be always designed so, that they are obviously info boards, so some additional purple sign “info here” could be added to backside, to give a little bit of hint for a tourist that they have just arrived at the right location.

Then the monument of the last battle № 3, as an interest point was almost missed by our test group. Even the roadside sign, which was around 500m to 1km before the visiting point, was not enough to make the visitor be prepared to stop to turn into “nowhere” as the last turns to this location are not obvious. Following picture presents the “challenge” from the city of Lappeenranta direction. The picture has been taken from the point where the driver should turn to right, but the monument is still nowhere to be seen (it is in the picture (Figure 17), behind the trees etc.). Navigating with road and street number might solve this problem, but those were not available.

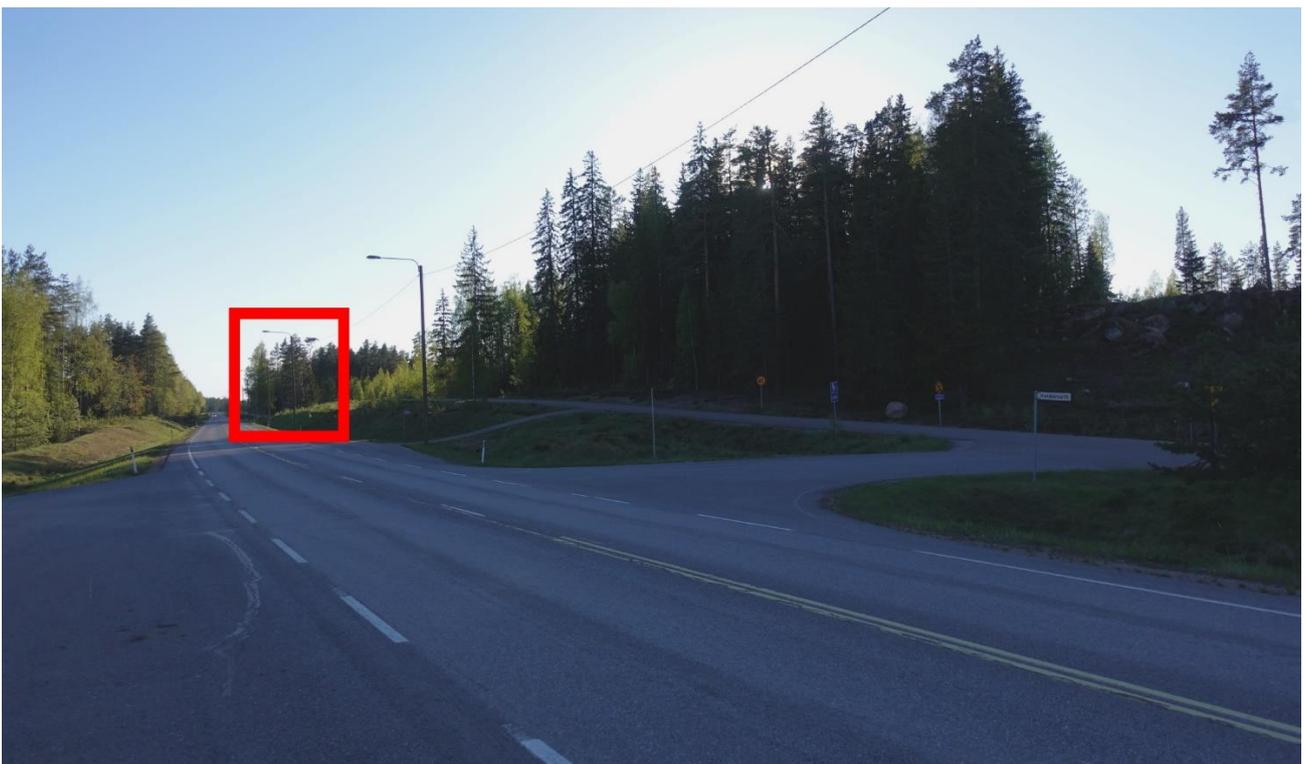


Figure 17: A challenge to be ready to turn in "side road"

Furthermore, similar situation plagued our team on other locations too. For example, it was extremely hard to find the Monument of the last Finnish civil war № 4, because of the lack of the signs that a visitor goes to the right direction (Figure 18).



Figure 18. The absence of signs toward the location № 4.

When a visitor arrives at “parking lot area” of the train yard area, ere the monument can be seen far left, just only after arriving the correct parking lot. If people just look the correct way to put the car on parking lot, the monument, actually, is then hidden

behind the buildings. For example, just a simple white sign “Independence Road monument 50m to left” would have been enough/ would have helped a LOT (Figure 19).



Figure 19. An example of an arrow that could direct visitor to location №4 from the parking.

Then the dam (the location № 5) was, probably, one of the most problematic for a visitor traveling with private car. The location is visualised in the following picture (Figure 20). Basically, for non-local, it really looks like that anyone, who does not have the needed familiarity with these areas and maybe the area history or does not know what to look for, will probably not find this location. It was not easily seen from the car road and even when we walked to the end of asphalt and did see the dam it was clear that for foreigner the nearby private persons house and the fact of missing real access road by car, probably would give visitor feeling of an easiness of being in this location.



Figure 20: Interest point 5 (the dam), will be missed from moving car

Considering the problems of finding the locations, the missing details of street numbers for the locations and locations with no car access, one might hope some guidance for parking near by. For instance, in the Kahvila-Pakari (Figure 21), visitors could be more details about the nearby Salpa-asema and dam locations. Specially a sign with distance information and rough walking time how long it would e.g. take to just to walk to the dam location would be helpful. This would make it easy to understand, that the interest point is not far away at all and the people could then leave their cars to the parking lot of the Kahvila-Pakari. Actually, in a nice summer day, walking might be even preferred. Additionally, a picture or two should be left on the info board, so people know exactly, for what they are looking for, when they go towards the dam and when they would be getting near the dam. As short wrap up for location information, it would significantly help visitors, if the sights № 4 and №5 for the sightseeing location with good information boards would have been inserted to clearly visible points near the road too.



Figure 21: Big information board at the parking lot of Kahvila-Pakari

A funny thing with the Salpa-asema, the № 6 location was, is that it is really easy to get the big parking area, but where to go next was not so clear. In the parking area, if one drives to far end, you will not probably see any guidance to defence positions.

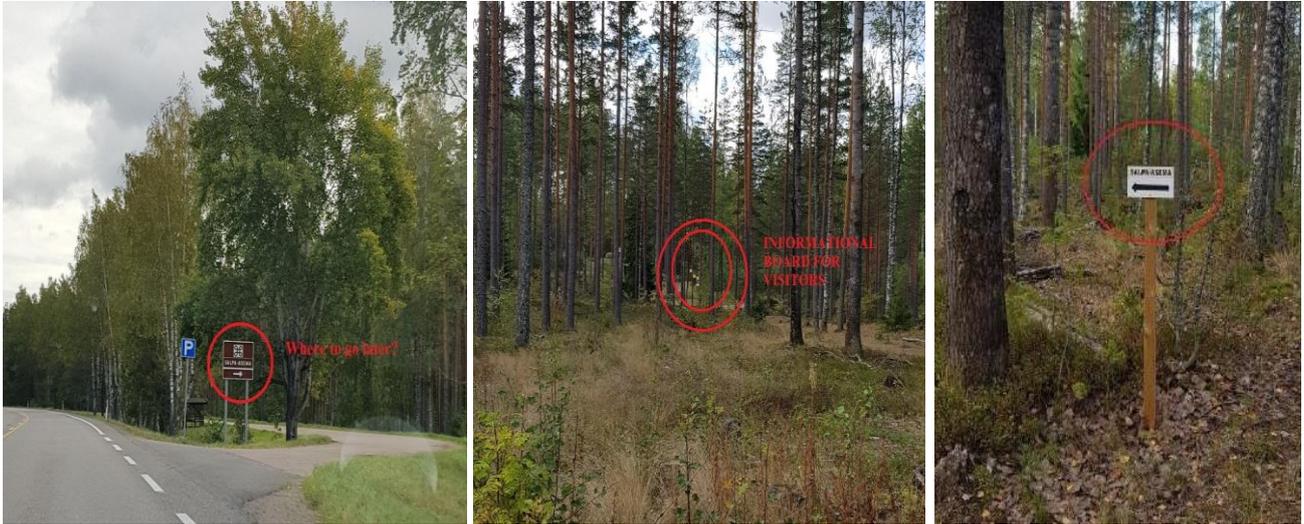


Figure 22. The Salpa-asema parking direction sign (left), hardly visible 5th location information board in the forest (middle) and small sign directing to the sight direction. (right).

You need to wonder around the parking lot to be able to see a really small sign, really far away already in sand-based walking road (Figure 22 (middle)). To fix this situation, 2 arrow signs in the side of the parking area, guiding directly to the correct location, should be added. Following picture shows what a clueless tourist would see in this parking slot (Figure 22 (left)). Basically, the location № 6 is invisible in the forest. Only those people who would arrive to the parking lot and park in the nearest location in arrival curve, shall see the sign easily. Basically, those nice people who do make life easier to everyone and drives to the end of parking area to leave it free for others, can only see some trees around themselves and no signs at all to follow. Only walking a lot in the parking area, one might see the sign in far end, but many tourists might, actually, get their shoes wet first, when they wonder into the forest firstly. In the end, they do perhaps see the little small sign, which is similar to the info board in the really far away location in the woods (Figure 22 (right)).

The most cared-for look and perfect exhibit location place is the Kotkaniemi museum and cafeteria № 7 because of the most welcoming parking lot where the information

board looks a step up from other locations directly in the eye line from the arriving car (Figure 23) and woods and walking paths look like to be in the tiptop condition (Figure 24).



Figure 23. The №7 location information board easy to find place.



Figure 24. The most cared location №7.

5. MORE NOTICEABLE INFORMATION BOARDS WITH NUMBERING

To easy navigation points for tourists, in the information boards design could be updated to the general design theme which is in Luumäki's website. E.g. the purple circle with numbers of each visiting point could be added clearly in a visible location in the top corner of the information board in the similar manner of the overall design of the Luumäki Independence Road that would help a lot and the purple colour can nicely guide visitors' eyes to spot the info boards from nearby roads. For better visualisation, locations numbers from the 1st to the 7th are shown in the following Figure 25.



Figure 25. Examples of Luumäki information boards numbering.

After that, a small map and point where the visitor is when they read the information board would also add value to lessen the navigation challenges between locations. Given the hard-seasonal weather conditions in the Finland, it might be best to manufacture the purple sign numbers from plastic or similar material, high clos / reflective white number in the circle would help to spot it within darker times of the year.

So, when a visitor arrives to the location, info boards would be more noticeable to someone looking for the exhibition stop, especially, if this person would now already know to look for the purple colour with anything to do about giving information in Luumäki sight seen locations.

Also, it is advisable to add a basic map of all locations to, for example, in the bottom left hand side corner of every info board to help tourists to locate themselves in relation to the actual map. This would also guide people, who have stopped here, to other interest points as it always reveals every 7 points there currently to see in nearby areas.

6. ADDING MORE SIGHTS INFORMATION

Providing more information in the Independence Road location sights can encourage visitors to spend more time and not to pass them through as soon as possible. For example, for the location №1 some small info extras about the fortress would be nice. E.g. details how spaces inside the fortress were used for area defence. Also, numbering schemas are hard to understand as different information boards mix the numbering structures in the fortress (Figure 26). For example, the white boards have numbers 4 and 5 (which seem to be referenced by the small maps in white boards). The problem is, that in the Itsenäisyydentie board (left side of the Figure 26) numbers can be confusing. In the fortress entrance path, info boards use numbers to indicate locations inside the fortress. To separate from Itsenäisyydentie locations, Alphabets could be used here.



Figure 26. The information of fortress history and schema signs available in the Finnish language.

Considering the church location №2, something could be said about the wooden church architecture (Figure 27), for example, some additional general information about Finland and wooden churches (some might even know that the world's biggest wooden church just happens to be in Finland).

The church and cemetery are a sort of locations, one could also tell some interesting stories to children. It is quite typical internationally to tell about the history of cemeteries, the war heroes and so on.



Figure 27. The wooden church look.

For the location №5 a dam related material and visual photo instructions from the Salpa-asema to the dam location would make this point more interesting and easier to find. A visitor, who has never seen the difference of non-flooded and flooded area, will be interested to see some photos to visualize the previous dam view (Figure 28).



Figure 28. The dam view from the river side.

Additionally, if there are some more photos available, how everything looked in the past times, in the Salpa-asema location №6, these should be added into the information board too. Any sort of historical details might be exciting for a tourist to see. And some of these photos should be available in the Internet sites too. Yet, few historic videos would be even better. For example, are these locations featured in some Finnish war movies (maybe those could be mentioned too and linked to imdb (International Movie DataBase) or similar databases that reveal more movies related details and guide people to make themselves more familiar what has happened in these areas.

Related to the actual visit in the Sapla-asema, it was a little bit disappointing that some interesting places were locked out. These actions might be done for many reasons, but at least some pictures about the insides and story from the inside living conditions should be available to intrigue visitors. These could be placed into the corridors leading to closed inside areas to keep them safe from rainy and wintertime weather conditions.



To make it easy for visitors to check the additional online content because not all information can be put in boards, a 2D bar code could be added to all locations that have more information in the Internet (e.g. more photos, short videos, walking routes) shown with the Figure 29.

Figure 29. The 2D bar code example.

7. LANGUAGE

For attracting internationals, sites information should be provided with the translation into other languages because after finding the location, a non-Finnish speaking tourist finds out that he/she will have a struggle to understand surroundings. For instance, in the №1 location, the information board is only in Finnish, what makes it hard for foreigners to even know there has been something available for them there. Then because there are no explanations of the fortress related map areas in any other language than in Finnish.

In the Salpa-asema №6 for the safety related matters, one might want to ask, why the signs to be careful and do not step here or there and so on (e.g. from the top of the concrete fortified emplacement) are only in Finnish (Figure 30). People speaking English & Russian will not understand these safety issues. Specially, if more tourists will be there, this sort of place will be really interesting for some families with children. Mom and dad shout see the warning signs already before they come near the bunkers, as some children tend to have a habit to run directly wherever they see something interesting to look at.

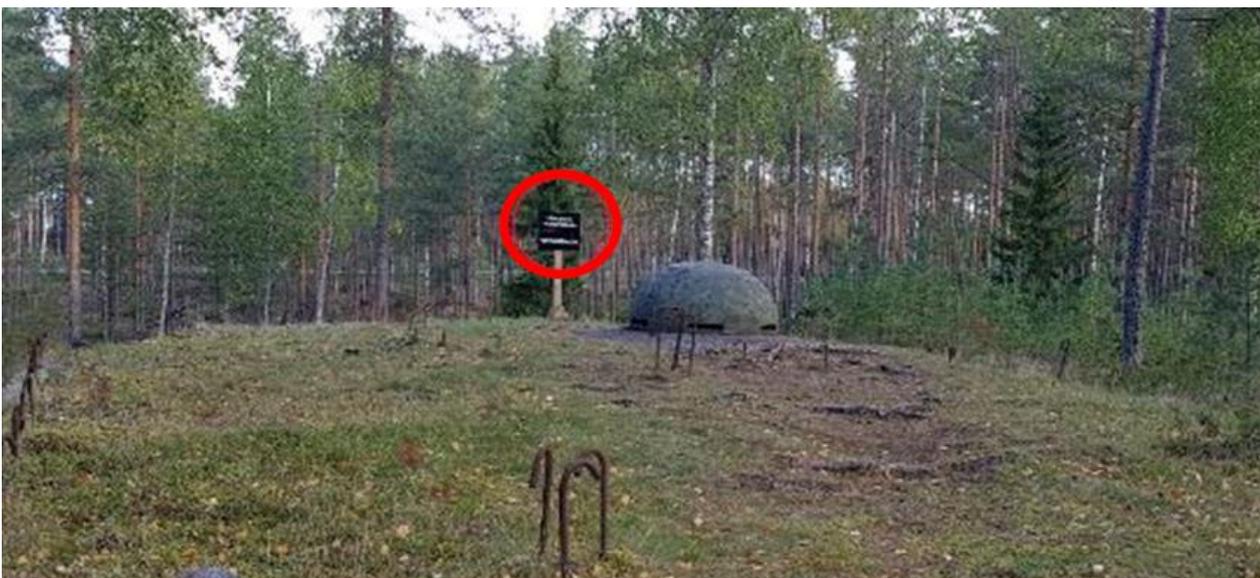


Figure 30. The danger sign only in Finnish.

8. POTENTIAL VISITORS

For the successful Independence Road marketing, it is necessary to decide who / what sort of visitors might be the prime groups to get interested about the different Independence Road attractions / locations to visit. Bellow there are suggestions about potential visitors:

- pupils & students studying this war history period in their schools & universities
- some excursions for old people (from rest homes)
 - a Sunday with a start at fortress, the rest period with the church visit, a stop at the bakery, little bit of outside activity at the Salpa-asema and then some history reminders from the times of our 3rd president
- family / sports activity days
 - golf and games (sports day)
 - “war games” in the form of paint ball or softball competitions (maybe, as a part of some Finnish / European champion ship rounds?)
 - a sports activity day for local schools (hike the Salpa-asema, run up the hill in the fortress, go around the church and so on.
- also e.g. for Russian tourists, returning from Helsinki to Lappeenranta direction, these places could be something to stop with family, but the material needs to be translated firstly and Luumäki should consider marketing this opportunities already in the roads just after the Finnish customs to be able to add these stops into travellers’ minds for them to plan their time table to give time to stop there.



Figure 31. The most cared-for look territory near Kotkaniemi museum.

Finally, to attract more people in these groups, special excursions might be wanted to be considered. These excursions should be connected to other places in the Luumäki region too, to give more fulfilling experience. Maybe, a day in Luumäki, ending to some sort of evening party / event (maybe in extremely lovely views in Kotkaniemi (Figure 31) and then people are transported back to cities, if they are not having a night place at Luumäki or maybe Kiurunselkä or Kivijärvi Vehmainselkä cruise or daytime kayaking. More leisure activities are discussed in the next chapter with the corresponding name.

9. LEISURE ACTIVITIES

As for improvements in general, in these 7 different visiting points, Luumäki could improve informational campaigns and add some activities. It is essential to state from the beginning to attract different visitors to the Independence Road sights that all activities and associated guidance should have instructions translated in all 3 most typical visitors' languages (Finnish, English and Russian language).

For a tourist, it could even be a little bit longer pause in each location if there would be guided tours available. For example, a guided tour in the fortress following a tour in the church. A pause in the Satun Makiat for a lunch / coffee break, then a tour to the Salpalinja, following by the end of tour to the Kotkaniemi (with an opportunity to have a coffee break). This sort of (a day) tours could be offered international tourists as bus / minibus trips from Lappeenranta / Kouvola tourist information locations. Other walking routes with different themes might be war hikes to the Salpa-Asema, hide & seek points to fortress and late-night Halloween cemetery trip for some Luumäki specialty. There could be quest games in visiting points, for example, for entertaining and educating people, students, visitors e.g. with an idea of finding a war treasure, completing a soldier's area plan map, composing missing parts of lost soldier's letter to have an overall message he wrote to his family and etc. where visitors should do some activities / solve tasks / win competitions and etc.

Some of the visiting points has a really good potential to end up being "famous selfie" – locations. This should be really considered and given people hints about it in the visiting points. Also, Luumäki could run "Best 5 Independence Road selfies" campaigns every now and then to promote people to pinpoint these locations into world map by using social media apps. There is an idea to introduce a hashtag assigned to this place e.g. #luumakihiking2019.

Discussing leisure activities, as a side note a gold course “runway” (Figure 32). That might be something to give side not to tourists as anyone who has golf as a hobby might appreciate because these small little extra details in these interest points in the path of the Independence Road can add additional leisure activities value.



Figure 32. The Luumäki golf park.

Considering different activities, one thing that did come into our mind at this point was, could there be e.g. a local fitness training days, in the location №1. This sort of thing might give it more populated feel in summer times, when tourists move around in here. Also some people would probably use the location for training for the competition too. Additionally, a tourist might like to have a historic tour inside of the wooden church in the 2nd location, but at least in our field case, we missed this opportunity as all doors were locked up. Also, the church bell tower (Figure 33) would have been interesting place to have access into too.



Figure 33. The church bell tower.

Furthermore, the building near the parking lot has quite clear “old place look on it” - feel in it. At least for our team, this seemed something foreigners might want to get more details about. Is it something that is clearly tight up to history of the church (as a building) or why is it in here, so close to the church itself. Anyhow, all that kind of the history and local area related building infrastructure (as presented in the Figure 34) might still be something to see for the certain type of tourists and they will add some nostalgia feeling to visit into this sightseeing point.



Figure 34: Old historically looking building near by the church

Then next, Salpa asema № 6 was probably the most interesting place in the subject of available activities and points to visit. The area has paths going up and down, surface seems to be flat and suddenly one sees a big drop to war time hiding / shooting places and so on. In this sort of environments, some families with children, can have some fun time to run around and see war time structures. Additionally, it was interesting to go around in the forest to follow the arrows, just to see what a visitor would find next.

Actually, this is sort of “hide and seek” with historic locations, and it really seemed to work well at least with the action researchers. For activities in this location, if there would be e.g. “luumäki summer days”, here one could organize e.g. “throw a grenade” track with painted rocks of a size of a grenade to bright green a competition tool is ready, with marking the starting points and achieving distance marks and a person will have goals set for next people to try out to see, how easy / hard it is, actually, to achieve some needed distances, to defend locations like these. In this subject, there could be more routes organized/set like “nice summer day hike” and “soldiers’ punishment, 3.5km simulation route for safety and back to shooting bunker” and so on. For more action style activities, softball and/or paint ball campaigns (Figure 35 (left)) competitions in these surroundings (Figure 35 (middle and right)) would probably be something to would draw attention to this area.



Figure 35. Visualization of paintball setting in the woods (left), defense shooting point (middle), wooden defense point (right).

Additionally, in the Salpa asema, a visitor can see some actual war time structures buildings / earth places (Figure 36), some machine gun mounting places (Figure 37) and so on. So, these things can be promoted with the ability of visitors to touch the history here.



Figure 36. The defense shooting point view.



Figure 37. The old war equipment.

Furthermore, the old Luumäki railway station building in the location № 4 of the Monument of the last Finnish civil war might be interest to some of the visitors. Specially, for people who are interested about trains and infrastructure related to traveling by train. Actually, it could be a thing to take into consideration, could there be some organized activities within the station in the summertime? For example, retro train travels from Imatra to Kouvola, stopping in all the small stations in between or having a coffee and ice cream in the train cafeteria would be fun to try for at least once. Specially, if the train would drive mostly on special days with actions and specialities available near the stations (like giving a station carnival party in Kouvola etc. or Resiina rally at the Luumäki station. As from a tourist's / visitor's point of view, the natural beauty offered by the location № 7 of the Kotkaniemi museum and cafeteria was really something to see in the (Figure 38).



Figure 38. The most cared-for look of the museum in the location №7.

This location most definitely might work for some families for the adults to have some relaxing time and for some families with children who can have fun time to run around and get to know war times. Also, young couples might find this location attractive to visit and have some peaceful time with each other just by sitting in the terrace with a nice drink and company of the better half of their lives (Figure 39). There might be enough weekend days to keep the museum (maybe the cafeteria too) open for tourists for just several hours, in case bus/minibus visits from Imatra, Lappeenranta and Kouvola would be organised for tourists in same days and times in weekend days in September.



Figure 39. Nce for walking small park nearby the location №7.

10. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, it was a pleasure to visit the Luumäki Independence Road sights seeing locations as a non-local and then to get know more about the past and come to these historic places as someone who tries to see them from foreigners point of view. Owing to care handling, these places are still here with us nowadays, and not lost in the wind of the time. The visit stops in the Independence Road are truly interesting with potential to attract more visitors. Specially if corresponding improvement activities and some clever marketing will be done to efficiently market these points of interest locations for potential foreigner visitors (and why not for locals too). To help to kick start these actions, this report has pointed out e.g. following actions to be considered to improve the visibility and to attract more visitors:

- increasing Luumäki independency road web presence, the design of given information, plus use digitalization (Kortelainen and Happonen, 2017) to offer more web information in the locations too
- translating information into additional languages
- considering Luumäki advertisement on sightseeing sites to make tourists to stop on other nearby locations too
- putting up more road side signs and using one similar style for all of them to make them more noticeable for potential visitors
- working out some current day activities with the sightseeing locations
- build up strategical actions and action plans for summer 2019 and 2020 with potential new visitors in mind to attract new customers to Luumäki

As final closing words, we think there is really good historical value in these visiting points, some of them are just sort of diamonds in rough, needing little bit of perfect cutting and proper value marketing for potential visitors.

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