

# Estonian War Museum – the best estonian war museum in the world

- Established in 1919, when the War of Independence was still ongoing:
  - Chief of operative staff: Jaan Soots (19.01.1919): „*A great necessity orders to commemorate this war greatly and for this it would be best to establish a Museum of the Estonian War of Liberation*“.
  - Resolution of the Commander-in-Chief of the Estonian Armed Forces Johan Laidoner (19.01.1919): „*A good idea and must be carried out*“.
- After Estonia was occupied in 1940 by the Soviet Union, the Museum of the War of Independence was liquidated.
- The museum was re-established on 26.02.2001 by the decree of the Minister of Defence as Estonian War Museum – General Laidoner Museum and is located since then in the Viimsi manor, the once residence of Johan Laidoner.

# What we do?

- We are a classical museum:
  - Finding out artefacts and materials related to Estonian military heritage
  - Collecting and preserving
  - Researching
  - Exhibiting
  - Developing cooperation
- We are a unique muuseum:
  - The only professional military heritage focused museum in Estonia
  - The Estonian Military Orchestrais is also in our structure

# Estonian War Museum in numbers

- 19 staff - excluding the Military Orchestra, but including project-based experts
- More than 100 000 items in our collections
- Approximately 60 000 items digitised and made available in the Museums Public portal ([www.muis.ee](http://www.muis.ee))
- Number of visitors annually around 20 000
- Participation in 2-3 transnational projects

# Estonian War Museum during COVID – how work was organised?

- An unexpected situation in which the museum had never been
- Rapidly changing decisions and orders with a need to react
- Changing the internal procedures in all main areas of activity

# Estonian War Museum during COVID – what happened?

- Initial decrease of visitors: limitations to visit the museum (including international moving restrictions), dispersing regulations, fear of the visitors
- But we knew that this could not last forever:
  - Creating and developing e-exhibitions and virtual tours, paying more attention to digital solutions
  - Information and awareness raising campaigns
  - Manifold updating and renewing of the exhibition
  - Newsletters, social media
  - Analysis of „what and how to do next“
- After the „corona spring“ the number of visitors in the summer increased, despite the still prevalent restrictions –from the other Baltic states („the Baltic bubble“) and internally, the Russian-speaking Estonian population

# Digital solutions in the Estonian War Museum

- Digitizing the collections using the principles worked out during the CD-ETA project
- Virtual tours and e-exhibitions  
(<https://esm.ee/ekspositsioon/virtuaaltuurid>)
- Implementing virtual and augmented reality solutions in the exhibition
- What next: „Baltic Museum Resilience: Resilient museums and memory institutions for resilient societies in the Baltic Sea Region“ (projekti co-financed by INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme)