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## 2.

## Landscape as cultural habitat

*Two defence lines from the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Norway: the ambiguity of a military landscape*

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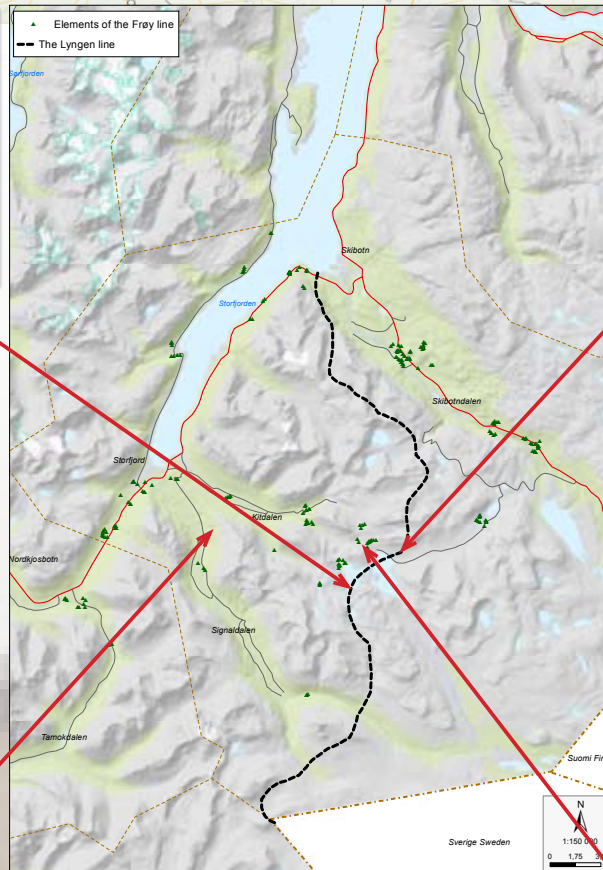
### INTRODUCTION

Northern Norway, especially the Lyngen area, became strategically and militarily important during the second half of the 20th century. The military use of the area has created a landscape of many opposing values. The physical remains from World War II occupation, the Cold War period and traces of fifty years of military exercises by NATO forces, play an important role in the ongoing listing process to safeguard this military landscape as a cultural habitat.

How much landscape is enough? How much needs to be protected in order to maintain its representativeness? A single large area or several small parts, sturdy physical remains and vulnerable traces?



The Lyngen defence line was built in 1944 by the German occupation forces and consists of hundreds of shelters



The Norwegian Lyngen area, located between the end of Storffjord and the Swedish border, was a perfect location to establish a defence line for both the German occupation forces in 1944 and the Norwegian Armed Forces in the 1950s  
Map NDEA 2014



Camouflaged shelters from World War II are blending into the terrain, blurring the boundary between nature and human artifacts

### INTERPRETATION

The conflict landscape of Lyngen can be interpreted in different ways. This leads to a controversial debate between the emotional approach of the local authorities requiring a complete protection including the immaterial traces, and the pragmatically approach of the governmental authorities thinking about safeguarding in terms of financial profits and obligations for future management.

This cultural habitat can be seen as a palimpsest of international political tensions during the Cold War period. The landscape functions as a 'filter' where physical remains are caught and can be read horizontally which archeologists describe as percolating landscapes.



A commando headquarter has a size of 1500 m<sup>2</sup> (right) while a CuSy position uses less than 20 m<sup>2</sup> (left).

### MILITARY LANDSCAPE AS A CONFLICT LANDSCAPE

Conflict landscapes are not limited to battle zones or front lines, but include landscapes that have been changed due to wars located far away. For instance in the 1950s, the Norwegian army built bunkers in the Lyngen area because of the Korean War, a war that was, seen from a Norwegian point of view, fought on the other side of the world. This landscape used for modern warfare training may also be characterized as conflict landscape. Military activities implied restricted access to the local population.

The Lyngen landscape has become part of a larger international political, economical, ideological and military perspective, with an impact that is beyond the previous scope of the local population.

### CONCLUSION

The physical remains of the twentieth century military heritage in Norway are a challenge. The landscape of Lyngen is a conflict landscape shaped by modern warfare, it can be qualified as an archeological site, with layers of different kind of values and significances.

The way we interpret military landscapes will affect the decision making process and have consequences for the future management. It will also change the experience of nature and military history, and how to disseminate this cultural landscape to future generations.

### VALUES

The Lyngen area was originally a natural landscape, with reindeer herding and small scale farming. Between 1944 and 2006 it was a restricted military battlefield.

Military complexes of the Lyngen and Frøy defence lines are scattered and spread out across several municipalities.

This landscape has:

- **visual values** connect to the intrinsic nature of the area
- **historical integrity** as a result of (un-)changed practices over time
- **quality** in terms of variety and type of bunkers, location, defense strategy etc.
- **human values** due to activities like military exercises and the use of farmland by locals

It is important to address all these values simultaneously during the listing process. Any removal of military complexes and/or traces of war can be seen as a partly deletion of history and will imply a significant loss for the cultural habitat of Lyngen.



Part of the existing military complexes of both the Lyngen defense line (blue) with its prisoners of war camps (black) and the Frøy defence line (red)  
Survey 2014. Map Troms County Council



The Frøy defence line, built between 1981 and 1996, consists of 299 military complexes.

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