



Even though 75 years have passed since the German occupation of Norway (1940-1945), there is probably no other period in Norwegian history that is met with such general interest and involvement, but also concealment and shame. Major topics are the actual acts of war, nationally and internationally, local incidents, everyday life of the war, the illegal actions of the resistance, people's attitudes concerning the presence of the occupying forces and the very physical traces of war – in the form of objects and installations from the occupation years. In Agder, a region in the South of Norway, were 20.000 German Soldiers were located. Several kinds of short-term or long-term interactions with the local societies have taken place, and the narratives have often changed character over the years.

IDENTITY

The history of World War II contributes also to the shaping of people's perception of themselves, their family history, and family identity. In some families, it is still, even two or three generations later, challenging or impossible to talk about what has happened and how it happened. Interactions with the Germans have been discreet, hushed up, and kept quiet too long, primarily when related to family members who were on the "wrong" side in the war, who served the occupation power or interfered with the soldiers in a way, which during or after the war was defined as inappropriate or even betrayal. But also memories about some German soldiers cruelty could have been too hard to share.

IMPORTANT NARRATIVES

Stories, which often have had a huge impact on one's own life, good or bad, were not told. Children and grandchildren had, and still have, to relate to incidents which led to great suffering for a beloved parent or grandparent, knowing nothing about what happened. Also, some offspring of German soldiers can still not connect with possible siblings in Germany, as their mothers often have experienced insulting traumatizing treatment in Norway after WW2 and won't talk with their children about their fathers.

IN FULL CONFIDENTIALITY

In "*Keep it quiet! Family Secrets in the aftermath of WW2*," the Vest Agder Museum aims to collect some of these untold stories. We invite the local society to share personal narratives about interactions and incidents, and the long-term consequences of their occasional concealing. In addition, we are interested in items, photographs, and objects related to the soldiers' presence. Both narratives and objects might be used in a new travel exhibition about the topic. All stories will be wholly anonymous if wished so, and all contributions will be handled with respect and presented in accordance with the contributors' wishes.

We hope that the project may contribute to openness to this part of the history of the war and introduce new shades to the black and white narratives in the family history, as well as in society.

For further questions, please contact the project manager Kathrin Pabst at

k.pabst@vestagdermuseet.no or +47 932 46 157.

*This project is a part of an international large-scale cooperation project "**Identity on the Line**." Here, six cultural history museums and two universities from seven European countries are working together to explore the long-term consequences of different migration processes, forced or voluntary, which took place in Europe over the last 100 years. More information about "**Identity on the Line**" can be found here: www.i-on.museum.*

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