

0. NORWAY at the END of WWII - Story Preface

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8. NORWAY at the END of WWII



Despite the trauma Norwegians endured during the country's five-year occupation by Hitler's forces, one thing remained unchanged during those difficult days: the incredible beauty of Norway. In this photo, taken by Ximonic (Simo Räsänen) in June of 2013, we see a view of Geirangerfjord from Ørnesvingen, Stranda, Møre og Romsdal. Click on the image for a better view. License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

After being interrogated in Sweden, Erling flies to the United Kingdom. In London, he meets with other Norwegians who are working for their country in an office called Kingston House.

By this time a high-school graduate, Erling is old-enough to join the Royal Norwegian Air Force. He becomes an "Aircraft man and Aircraft Helper, lowest rank," and is assigned to Transport Command.

Unlike other Norwegians at Kingston House, however, Erling has unique information. He has been inside the German High Command at Lillehammer, known as "Fortress Norway."

How would a Norwegian teenager, acting as a spy, get inside such a secure place?

Before his escape to Sweden, Erling had pretended to be a harmless person with mental challenges who just wanted to trade potatoes, from his mother's garden, for the small wooden carvings which prisoners, inside the fortress, had fashioned. His real mission, however, was to memorize what he saw, then make a map.

Debriefed about the map, and his other Milorg activities, Erling receives a dangerous new assignment. The mission will send him back home to Norway:

...another officer came - he had parachute wings on his uniform - and said that they urgently needed to drop an Intelligence operator in Norway. "Was I willing?" I replied that I could neither operate a radio nor handle a weapon, and that he, as a trained spy, must be more suitable for such a job than an overgrown schoolboy from Lillehammer.

I'll never forget the answer he gave: "Yes, technically I am a better spy than you. But, number one, I have lived here in a free society for so long that I would be unmasked by elementary mistakes. Number two, you have proved that you can manage very well in an enemy environment, and finally you have just come from there so you will manage much longer than I could." I asked if I could take a trial jump but there wasn't time for that...Finally I had to say "OK." (See [Erling's story](#) using his own words.)

Erling is spared that dangerous jump when the war is suddenly over.

Returning home, he is reunited with his family and friends. Thereafter, Erling has a career in the travel industry, including many years with SAS.

Norway, itself, experiences tense times after the war is over (just as it experienced great hardships during the war).

Nazi collaborators are hunted-down, tried and, in some cases, executed.

Norwegian women, who were part of the Lebensborn program, are harassed (as are their children). One of the most-famous *Lebensborn* children is Anni-Frid Lyngstad, of the pop group *Abba*, whose family would move to Sweden to avoid the pain of a shunned life in Norway.

The country, proud of its own civil and moral defense against Nazifying Norway, also has this sign of gratitude at the exit of the Resistance Museum in Oslo:

*In the skies above London
In the African Desert
In the Ruins of Stalingrad
And on the Normandy Beaches
Norway was Given Back to Us.*

And what of Erling? Where is he today?

He marries Aase-Brit. Both are still alive, and in their 90s, living in the southeastern village of Østerås (in Akershus, Norway). Marge Preus has fictionalized his story in *Shadow on the Mountain*.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/NORWAY-at-the-END-of-WWII-Shadow-on-the-Mountain>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/NORWAY-at-the-END-of-WWII-Shadow-on-the-Mountain>

Media Stream

Food Lines in Norway during 1942

During Germany's occupation of Norway, during World War II, the Norwegians suffered great hardships. Beyond the disastrous occupation itself, many people had insufficient food supplies for themselves and their families.

As in other countries, food was rationed in Norway.

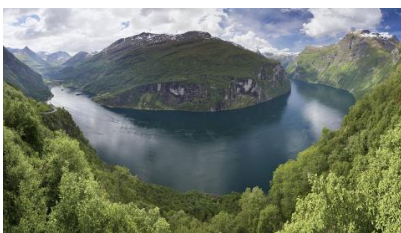
This image depicts food lines, in Oslo, during 1942. The photo, provided during the war by the Royal Norwegian Information Service (in Washington, D.C), is maintained at the Library of Congress where it has this description:

Oslo, Norway, during WW2. The food queues in Oslo are constantly growing. It is a usual sight to see people queuing outside the shops as early as 5 o'clock in the morning. In spite of the adverse weather conditions people are standing hour after hour hoping to get a small share of unrationed goods, which are often sold out almost as soon as the shops open.

Image, described above, maintained at the Library of Congress. Digital ID fsa-8e09258

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