

Marttisen's Men

“Marttisen's men” were a group of Finnish Army Officers who, in the period shortly after the 1944 Moscow Armistice between Finland and the Soviet Union, secretly hid stockpiles of weapons across the country. This clandestine operation was meant to prepare a guerrilla resistance in case of a full Soviet occupation. When the plot was exposed in 1945, the Soviet-controlled Allied Commission demanded the arrest of those involved. To escape prosecution, Marttinen and his inner circle fled to Sweden.

Marttisen's men were fifteen in number, apart from Marttinen himself, the majors Antero Havola, Erkki Lahdenperä, Eino Lassila, Paavo A. Kairinen, Aito Keravuori and Teuvo Turtiainen, the captains Olavi Alakulppi, Olavi Pihala, Antorinne and Toivo Saastamoinen, Vesa Järvinen and lieutenant Kalle Keränen as well as ensigns Juho Anttila and Sulo Uitto. Threatened with deportation from Sweden, Marttisen's men managed to obtain an American transit visa to Venezuela along with a temporary residence permit in the USA in November 1946. The original group was expanded in the USA with six more members, Antero Aakkula, Pauli Nysten Erik Patojärvi, Lauri Törni (later Larry Thorne) Arvo Vikström, Onni Sinkka, who had made it to America on their own. They were able to enlist, under the Lodge Act, officially the Lodge–Philbin Act of 1950. The Lodge act was a U.S. federal law passed on June 30, 1950, that allowed non-citizen foreign nationals—primarily Eastern European refugees and anti-communist emigrants to voluntarily enlist as privates in the U.S. Army. The US Army recognized the expertise of Marttisen's men, many were assigned to teach as experts on winter warfare in Alaska, Germany, Japan, and the US. These Soldiers were tasked with rewriting the US Army manuals on Winter Warfare. When they received their US Citizenship, after 3 years of service, they were promoted to one rank below their previous rank held in the Finnish Army.

COL Paavo A. Kairinen, COL Aito Keravuori, LTC Kalle Keränen Special Forces and MAJ Lauri Törni (later Larry Thorne) all served in US Army Special Forces. MAJ Larry Thorne would be killed in Vietnam.