

KANTAMA



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On Holiday or at Home?

*A Visitor — or Part
of Society?*



A Guild —
More Than
an
Association.



A Story of Dreams,
Courage and Crossing
Boundaries.



Preparedness Tips
— Safely Into the
Forest.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S *summer* GREETING

Holidaymaker, visitor or at home?

Summer is the season for holidays. Hundreds of thousands of people travel around the world, discover new places and enjoy a well-earned rest. The holidaymaker has a simple task: to rest, enjoy the moment and gather good memories. People on holiday rarely think about the destination country's taxation, security or future. Nor do they need to.

A visitor is in a slightly different position. A visitor comes to a country to study, work or meet loved ones. Their main responsibility is to respect the host country - its laws, culture and people. A visitor knows that they are only passing through.

But what happens when a country is no longer just a place to visit, but home?

Then the perspective changes. A home is not built simply by living there. It is built by taking part in shaping it. Home means responsibility: responsibility for one's work, paying taxes, following shared rules, caring for those around us and, above all, strengthening our common security. Finland's security is not created by the authorities alone. It is built through the actions of everyone who lives here: by caring about one another, taking part, helping others and being ready to share responsibility for our common society. Comprehensive security belongs to all of us.

That is why I would like to ask every reader one question.



Look in the mirror for a moment and ask yourself: am I here on holiday, am I visiting, or am I at home?

If you are on holiday, enjoy it fully.

If you are a visitor, respect the country that has received you.

But if Finland is your home, help build it. Do your work well. Pay your taxes. Follow the shared rules. Take part in voluntary activities. Look after your surroundings. Be part of strengthening security and society's crisis resilience.



**Home is not only the place
where we live.**

**Home is the place which
future we feel responsible
for.**

Shaho Jaff

EDITORIAL

What is A GUILD?

Ari Pakarinen, Executive Director, MPKL Association

Maahanmuuttajien Varautumis- ja Maanpuolustusyhdistys ry, MVM Association, was accepted as a member of the National Defence Guilds' Association of Finland (MPKL) in December 2025. MVM's activities fit well within the family of other member guilds.

When defining a national defence guild, it is useful to open up the concept and briefly revisit the history of MPKL.

When asked, artificial intelligence can summarise the basics in a few seconds: a national defence guild is a voluntary national defence association that promotes the will to defend the country, shares national defence knowledge and preserves traditions. Guilds bring together reservists and other citizens interested in national defence. Guild activities are diverse and offer a low-threshold way to take part in preserving the traditions of branches, units and services. Unit guilds, in particular, played a central role when the association was founded in 1963. The association was established on the initiative and under the guidance of General Simelius, then Commander of the Finnish Defence Forces, because guild activities were seen as a meaningful way to build community.

Since the association was founded, guild activities have expanded to include broader national defence interests and the development of skills. To serve their members, guilds organise training and recreational activities, such as lectures, trips and visits, and provide information on current issues. Training is supported, among other things, by the course activities of the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK).

Guilds, including MVM, build a sense of community among their members. They serve as places for networking and as peer support for people who share an interest in national defence.

Vapaaehtoisen maanpuolustustyön järjestö



MVM is a genuine guild



It has been encouraging to follow MVM's first steps. The guild has moved forward quickly and with confidence. The focus areas it has chosen, particularly in preparedness and training, have been well selected. Contacts for organising training have developed quickly, including with civil defence actors and MPK.



MVM has also found partners among other guilds, which MPKL encourages all guilds to do.



These partners have recognised the existing skills of citizens with immigrant backgrounds, as well as the wider potential found among MVM's members. The social significance is clear: no one should be left out.



The guild has understood that it needs its own committed trainers, and that these trainers must be given a real opportunity and the skills to train other guild members.



At the same time, the ordinary member must not be forgotten. Not everyone is a trainer. For this reason, it is important that MVM provides all its members with knowledge of preparedness and national defence. In this way, everyone can be included in understanding the different areas of society's comprehensive security.



**MVM IS AN IMPORTANT LINK
IN THE CHAIN OF NATIONAL
DEFENCE GUILDS!**



Guild activities are not only for those who have completed military service or have a long background in national defence. They can also offer people who have moved to Finland a chance to learn new skills, develop their language skills, find friends and feel part of society. Seppo Suhonen explains what guild activities and MPK have meant to him for more than three decades.

Why I became interested in guild activities and MPK training

My name is Seppo Suhonen and I am from Oulu. I completed my military service in 1968-1969 in Korea, at KYMPIONP, and on Reserve Officer School course 129 Polar in Hamina. My training is therefore a combat engineer. In civilian life, I am a construction engineer.

In general, reservists with training in the construction sector serve in the engineering branch. My first contact with guild activities came at the Reserve Officer School, when the Pioneer Officer Association came to present guild activities. I became more closely acquainted with actual guild work in 1988, when I joined Pohjan Pioneerikilta ry in Oulu. I had got to know members of the guild between 1986 and 1988, including during refresher training organised by the Defence Forces, and I considered it worthwhile to join the guild. In the 1980s, guild activities were different kinds of tradition-related work, as many of the founders and members of the guilds were respected veterans of our wars.

The National Defence Training Association of Finland, originally MPK ry and later a public-law association, was founded on 14 December 1993. The association focused on training reservists on a voluntary basis. I first took part in MPK training in 1994, when I served as an instructor on a fortification course in Oulu. I have been involved in MPK activities ever since, and I still am. My training with Defence Forces reservists ended when I turned 60, but it is possible to continue taking part in MPK activities after that.

In the early 2000s, the global security situation was calm, public finances were tight, and refresher exercises were hardly organised for cost-saving reasons. Nor did the security situation create threat scenarios that would have required the development of defence readiness. At that time, MPK provided reservists with training to update and practice their knowledge and skills. It played an important role in keeping reservists up to date. Guilds and other national defence organisations carried out voluntary training for reservists through MPK courses.



Seppo Suhonen
Guild member from Oulu, Editor-in-Chief of Hakku magazine, Military Chamberlain





Expert Perspective

Preparedness training was later added to MPK's programmes alongside training in military capabilities. Preparedness training focuses on society's ability to function in emergency conditions. Such conditions may result from natural events, storms, other natural disasters, or from war. Preparedness means safeguarding society's operating capacity and caring for the civilian population. Preparedness training includes practicing the evacuation of the population, securing energy and food supply, maintaining health care and medical services, and other essential functions. Russia's attack on Ukraine has shown how necessary such measures and capabilities really are.



Pohjan Pioneerikilta ry received MPK's training activities with great enthusiasm. As MPK courses, we organised different modules related to the engineering branch, such as obstacle construction, clearance, fortification and shelter construction, specialised protection courses and bridge construction. The guild has carried out 35 bridge courses under the MPK banner in North Ostrobothnia, Kainuu and Lapland. We have built nine bridges for the Border Guard in the border zone, as well as bridges for municipalities and a few for village associations. I have personally taken part in 33 bridge courses as course leader or instructor. In total, I have worked on nearly 200 MPK courses over the past 32 years. I have found guild activities and MPK training useful for maintaining my own knowledge and reservist skills. I have also been able to build a broad personal network both nationally and internationally. That has enriched my life considerably.



NETWORKS

At guild events and in training, you meet patriotic, defence-minded and like-minded friends. You feel that your hobby and your work have a purpose.



EQUALITY

In guild activities, we are all equal, regardless of civilian background or military rank. This is one of the important special features of guild work.



INTEGRATION

Organisational activities can support settling into a new country, improve language skills, and build friendships between people of different nationalities. Through them, you can feel that you are part of the society of your new home country.



WELCOME

I recommend guild activities and MPK activities to those of you who have moved to Finland. Preparedness training, in particular, is open to everyone.

Welcome to join us!

EVENTS

AT THE NORDIC GUILD DAYS FOR THE FIRST TIME



MVM Association built international cooperation in Eksjö, Sweden.

MVM Association took part for the first time in the Nordic Guild Days, a Nordic military guild meeting, on 9-13 June. The event, held in Eksjö, Sweden, was the 40th of its kind. MVM Association was represented by Executive Director Shaho Jaff and the guild's active volunteer Tatjana Jaff.

The roots of Nordic guild cooperation reach back to the 1940s, and the first meeting was held in Oslo in 1948. Finland joined the cooperation in Fredrikstad in 1965, and the first meeting hosted in Finland was held in Hämeenlinna in 1973. The event is organised every two years in turns by Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

For our young guild, participation was an important opportunity to get to know long-established organisations, exchange experiences, and build international relationships. At the same time, we presented MVM Association's multilingual activities and our way of inviting people who have moved to Finland to take part in voluntary preparedness and national defence work.

A VARIED FIVE-DAY PROGRAMME

The programme included ceremonies, expert presentations, visits, and practical demonstrations. On the opening day, participants marched through Eksjö's historic wooden town and took part in a wreath-laying ceremony. Participants also learned about the work of SWEDEC, the Swedish EOD and Demining Centre.

At the Skillingaryd training area, participants watched a flight demonstration by a JAS 39 Gripen fighter aircraft and learned about clearance operations and the Home Guard. At Ränneslätt, engineer activities were presented, including reconnaissance, raft assembly and bridge equipment. The programme also included a Nordic shooting competition and a formal dinner.

One of the traditions of the meeting is the Nordic Sword, which is always handed over to the next host country. A special medal was also produced in honour of this 40th anniversary meeting.

"The trip strengthened our view that even a young guild has its own place in Nordic cooperation. This was our first participation - but certainly not our last."



“ This was our first participation - but certainly not our last. ”



Watch the atmosphere of the trip by scanning the QR code or visiting our website at mvmry.fi





Women Involved

Learning confidence and community

Even someone who has lived in Finland for a long time may notice that there is still much to learn about society, preparedness and security. Homa Valizadeh became interested in MVM Association because she wanted to understand better how to act in disruptions and crisis situations, and how to take care of her own family. Alongside training, she found a community where people can learn, ask questions, and help one another. Homa is now taking the next step and starting a work trial at MVM Association.

Homa's story: From fear to action and confidence

When I heard about MVM Association, I was immediately interested. I realised that through the association I could find training that is genuinely useful in everyday life. As a mother, I want to know how to act during a long power cut or another disruption. For example, I did not know that many apartment buildings have a civil defence shelter. Thanks to the training, I now know more and feel more confident. It is important to me that MVM works in several languages. When things are explained clearly in your own language or in a language you know well, learning is easier and the threshold for asking questions is lower. The courses also give skills for ordinary everyday life, increase confidence, and help people stay calm in difficult situations. At the same time, multilingual activities support learning Finnish, because important concepts and field-specific vocabulary gradually become familiar in Finnish as well.



..... Homa Valizadeh

One of the most important things, however, has been the community. I have made new friends and felt that I belong. I want to develop myself and be useful. When a parent feels safe, a child feels safe too.

Join our activities!

Would you also like to learn new skills, gain confidence, and find a community where no one is left alone? You can join MVM Association's activities from your own starting point and regardless of your background.

BECOME A MEMBER OF MVM ASSOCIATION - YOU MATTER!

You can find instructions for joining on the back page of the magazine.



“

I have lived in Finland for almost ten years. Still, I was surprised by how much new information I learned through MVM Association. One of the most important things for me has been the community. It feels good to do something meaningful together.

”

PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Into the Forest Safely

Into the forest safely: small preparations help prevent dangerous situations.

In summer, many people head into nature to pick berries, gather mushrooms and hike. Even in a familiar forest, it is possible to get lost, and hot weather can reduce your strength and concentration.

EXPERIENCE DOES NOT PREVENT GETTING LOST

According to the police, berry pickers who get lost are often experienced people who are used to moving in nature. Long experience can, however, create too much confidence in one's ability to navigate and cope physically.

- Always tell someone close where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Check the weather forecast and plan your route in advance.

DRESS SO THAT YOU CAN BE SEEN

- Choose at least one brightly coloured item of clothing, such as a jacket, vest or cap. Dark clothing blends into the terrain, while a bright colour can help rescuers find you more quickly in an emergency.
- Wear sturdy footwear and protect your skin with long sleeves and trousers. Take rainproof or windproof clothing with you as well.

PACK AT LEAST THESE ITEMS

- A charged phone and a power bank
- Water and a small snack
- Any essential personal medicines
- A paper map (or offline map) and a compass
- A flashlight and a small first aid kit
- Clothing suitable for the weather

Remember: do not rely only on your phone. Network coverage does not reach everywhere, and the battery may run out.

IF YOU GET LOST, DO THIS

Stop and stay calm. Do not continue in a random direction.

- Stop and calm down. Do not keep wandering.
- Check your location on a map or on your phone.
- Only return the way you came if you are completely sure of the route.
- Stay in a visible and safe place to save your energy and phone battery.
- Call 112 if you cannot get out safely or need help.

REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES

Go through these instructions also with young people or older relatives before they set out into nature.

A small reminder before leaving can prevent a dangerous situation.

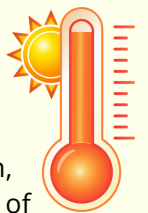
A SHORT REMINDER ABOUT HEAT

Heatwaves cause heat stress every year, especially among older people.

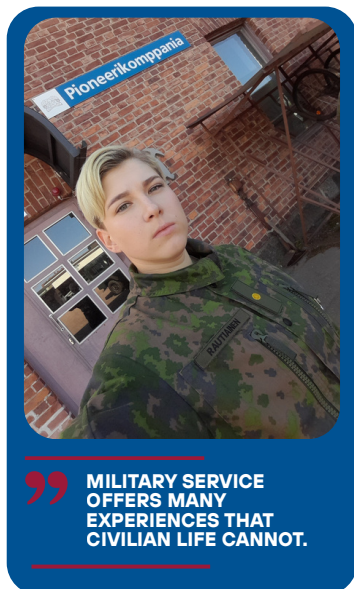
Drink water regularly, protect your head from the sun, and avoid strenuous activity during the hottest hours of the day.

Dizziness, headache, nausea, severe tiredness, and confusion can be signs of heat stress. Move to a cool place, rest, and drink water.

If a person is confused or their level of consciousness weakens, call 112.



Head into nature with confidence – but never unprepared.



MILITARY SERVICE OFFERS MANY EXPERIENCES THAT CIVILIAN LIFE CANNOT.

A story of a dream, courage and crossing boundaries

YOUTH'S VOICE

When we heard about Alisa's experiences, we quickly understood that this was not an ordinary service story.

Alisa moved to Finland at the age of ten. A dream carried since childhood, the decision to defend Finland, uncertainty about her own background and the path from the North Karelia Border Guard District to the Reserve Officer School form an exceptionally inspiring story.

In this issue, we publish the first part of her story. Next month, we will continue the theme with a broader video interview on MVM Association's social media channels.

What motivated you to apply for voluntary military service?

Military service had been my dream since I was little. Already in preschool, I tried on my older brother's service uniform and imagined that I was a conscript. When I moved to Finland and completed my education, I decided that this is the country whose independence I want to defend. I feel safe here, and I want to make my own contribution to our common security. After vocational school, I applied for women's voluntary military service.

Before the call-up, I took part in MPK's Basic Soldier Skills for Women course. There I saw in practice what service requires, and it strengthened my decision even more. Although some relatives reacted negatively, I received an important blessing from my mother and grandfather. I began my service at the North Karelia Border Guard District in summer 2025.

What was military service like?

At first, I was very nervous. I wondered whether I would fit in, whether I would be seen as a traitor to my country of birth, and how others would react to my background. At first, I did not tell my service mates about my background because I was afraid of being left outside. I stayed awake at night and questioned my decision.

But when I remembered why I had come there, I calmed down. I focused on doing the work. During basic training, the physical strain was hard and at first, I was physically behind many others, but I decided to think about my goals instead of the pain and tiredness.

At the Border Guard, discipline was strict and attention to detail gave the work a strong sense of order. I became so enthusiastic about it that I even shaved my head for the oath ceremony! My best memory was the border march of more than 20 kilometres in Ilomantsi. After the march, when we were allowed to attach the golden bear to the beret, the feeling was unbelievably good.

What did military service give you?

I learned to understand my emotions, grew mentally and developed physically. I stepped outside my comfort zone and pushed my own limits. Today I feel much better, and small setbacks no longer bring me down. I grew up. And best of all, I gained countless friends and wonderful memories.

How did you experience the sense of community during service?

In the army, everyone is on the same line. When a person with an immigrant background chooses to defend Finland, it is viewed very positively. If difficult situations arise, the regular personnel help and support you quickly.

What would you like to do in the future?

I would like to work for the Finnish Defence Forces in the future - perhaps in a civilian position.

What advice would you give to young people with immigrant backgrounds who are considering service?

Sufficient Finnish language skills are important, and English is a good addition. Do not be afraid - your own attitude matters! Military service gives unique experiences and helps you understand Finnish society and its way of thinking.



Alisa Rautiainen

CURRENT TOPICS

A fake police officer may now also appear in a video call



Scams are changing quickly. In the past, fake police officers usually contacted people by phone, but now criminals are also using video call services such as Google Meet. The police have received reports of several cases in which the caller has pretended to be a Finnish police officer. These contacts have particularly targeted immigrants living in Finland.

Video can make the situation appear credible. The caller may present themselves in an official manner, speak Finnish or English and claim to be investigating a serious matter. In reality, the aim is to make the recipient act quickly, under pressure and in fear.

The scammer may claim that the recipient's bank account will be closed, or that they are at risk of arrest or deportation. At the same time, the scammer may ask the person to show a payment card, passport, identity card, or another document to the camera. The purpose is to collect information that can be used to steal money or misuse someone's identity.

The scammer may also pretend to be another authority

A criminal may also pretend to represent a bank, the Finnish Immigration Service, the Tax Administration or another trusted organisation. The contact may come as a video call, ordinary phone call, text message, email or through a messaging app. A scam message may appear to come, for example, from Suomi.fi, OmaVero or OmaKanta. However, the link in the message may lead to a fake website created by criminals. Always log in to an official service yourself through its website or app, not through a link in a message.



A genuine authority representative gives you the chance to check the matter.

A scammer tries to stop you from pausing and thinking.

If you receive a suspicious contact

Remember that the police, a bank or any other authority will not ask you in a video call or message to:

- give your online banking credentials
- show your payment card or identity document to the camera
- tell them PINs or verification codes
- transfer money to a so-called safe account
- act quickly because of threats

End the contact. Do not give any information or open a link in the message. Check the matter yourself by using the official contact details of the authority or bank.

If you have already given information

- Contact your bank immediately. The bank may be able to block payments and close compromised cards or credentials.
- After that, file a police report.
- Also tell your loved ones about the warning, especially people who may not yet be familiar with how Finnish authorities operate.

The article is based on a police bulletin published on 25 June 2026 and on other scam warnings issued by the police and the Finnish Immigration Service.

SECURITY
VOCABULARY

Learn the key words

Varautuminen
Preparedness

Preparing in advance for possible disruptions and crises.

ESIM. Kotivara on osa arjen **varautumista**.Häiriötilanne
Disruption

A situation in which ordinary everyday life or a service does not function normally.

ESIM. Pitkä sähkökatko on **häiriötilanne**.Poikkeusolot
Emergency conditions

A very serious situation in a society that requires special measures.

ESIM. Sota voi aiheuttaa **poikkeusolot**.Kotivara
Home emergency supply

Food, water, and supplies kept at home for exceptional situations.

ESIM. **Kotivaraa** pitäisi olla vähintään 72 tunniksi.Väestönsuoja
Civil defence shelter

A space that protects people from hazardous substances or the effects of weapons.

ESIM. **Väestönsuoja** voi sijaita talon kellarissa.Viranomainen
Authority

A body that performs public duty, such as the police or rescue services.

ESIM. Häiriötilanteessa seuraa **viranomaisten** ohjeita.Hätänumero
Emergency number

The number 112, which is called in an urgent emergency.

ESIM. Soita **hätänumeroon**, jos joku on vaarassa.Toimintakyky
Functional capacity

A person's ability to act, make decisions, and take care of themselves.

ESIM. Riittävä lepo auttaa säilyttämään **toimintakyvyn**.Palovaroitin
Smoke alarm

A mandatory device that gives an audible warning in case of fire.

ESIM. **Palovaroittimen** toiminta pitää tarkistaa.Sammutuspeite
Fire blanket

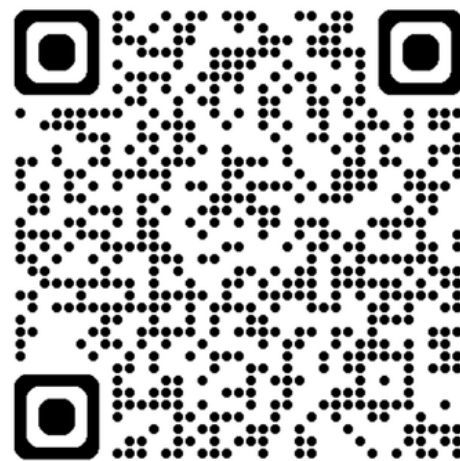
A non-combustible blanket used to smother small fires.

ESIM. **Sammutuspeite** sopii kattilapalon sammuttamiseen.Security Belongs
to Everyone –
Join Us!

As a member, you are not merely following our activities – you can learn, participate and help build a safer Finland together with others.

Complete the membership application by scanning the QR code.

Further information:
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www.mvmry.fi



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Maanpuolustuksen
kannatussäätiö