



DRAGOON HILL

LAPPEENRANTA

Lappeenranta Dragoon Hill area

The Dragoon Hill (Rakuunamäki) area was originally built on land belonging to the City of Lappeenranta in 1889–1893, for the Finnish Dragoon Regiment (Suomen Rakuunarykmentti), a Finnish conscript cavalry unit established in Lappeenranta in 1889. These quite modern facilities and buildings were built for six squadrons and 800 horses. Colonel Theodor Schauman was the unit's commander until its disbandment in 1901 as a consequence of Russification.

The golden age of Dragoon Hill was in the 1920s and 1930s, when the area was home to the Cavalry Brigade, which was established in 1921 in Lappeenranta and formed by the Uusimaa Dragoon Regiment (Uudenmaan Rakuunarykmentti, URR) and the Häme Cavalry Regiment (Hämeen Ratsurykmentti, HRR). At that time, around 3,000 people worked in the area, and all services, such as a shop, a daycare and a cinema, were located in the garrison area.

Later, the area was home to the Uusimaa Dragoon Battalion (Uudenmaan Rakuunapataljoona), the Karelian Artillery Regiment (Karjalan Tykistörykmentti), the Officers Academy (Päällystöopisto), the National Defence Institute (Maanpuolustusopisto) and the Army Academy (Maasotakoulu). Although horses were abandoned in 1947, the dragoon was kept as a military rank. The Dragoon Squadron detachment was disbanded in 2016, when the operations ended in Lappeenranta. Dragoon Hill is one of the best preserved barracks in Europe that was built specifically for cavalry.

VisitLappeenranta

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Tourist information
Vallikatu 2, Lappeenranta

Learn more about the
history of Lappeenranta:



- 1 Bridge of sighs.** The bridge connecting the city centre and the former Dragoon Hill military area was built when the railway was built to run through the city. The bridge had to be raised to allow ships built as war reparations to pass under it. On the bridge, soldiers bid farewell to their loved ones before returning to the barracks.
- 2 The walls of Nicholas I and the memorial plaque of the old observation tower.** During the Swedish rule, the area had a rudimentary defence system. In the 1780s, a better equipped fortress (Nikolain linnake, "the fortress of Nicholas I") was built as part of St Petersburg's defence system under the leadership of General Alexander Suvorov. When the fortifications lost their importance for military use in the early 1800s, the area became a popular evening walking area with observation towers.
- 3 Lappeenranta Church.** The construction of the Orthodox military church was left unfinished as the First World War began. The building was consecrated as a Lutheran church in 1924 after renovations, when the Finnish state donated the church to the Lappeenranta parish.
- 4 Monument to the Finnish Cavalry.** The relief by Väinö Aaltonen shows the Finnish cavalry, who gained notoriety in the Thirty Years' War as hakkapeliitta, charging into battle. All 23 wars and 267 battles in which the Finnish cavalry participated in different centuries are engraved on the stone slabs of the monument.
- 5 Garrison main gate.** The main gate and guard post of the former Dragoon Hill garrison at the intersection of Mannerheiminkatu and Liisankatu.
- 6 Memorial plaque to Väinö Valve.** This house was the birthplace of General Väinö Valve, the last of the jaegers, who trained as a jaeger general in Germany and served as Commander of the Navy and Minister of Defence of Finland. These buildings now house student apartments.
- 7 Monument to the Häme Cavalry Regiment.** The cavalry of independent Finland was formed in 1921 by the establishment of a cavalry brigade, which consisted of the Uusimaa Dragoon Regiment (URR) and the Häme Cavalry Regiment (HRR).
- 8 The old main guard building.** The building used to house a guardhouse and the garrison detention facility.
- 9 Hotel Rakuuna.** Former military barracks. On the wall of the building is a plaque commemorating the musician Pave Maijanen, a native of Dragoon Hill.
- 10 The old Linden trees on Mannerheiminkatu.** There are more than 10,000 Linden trees growing in Lappeenranta. Many of them were brought to the city from Viipuri as early as the interwar period. Rare plants such as the Turkish wartycabbage, hoary alyssum and dragonhead, spread to the area with the Russian cavalry.
- 11 Adolf Ehrnrooth Square.** Dragoon Hill is centred around the former central or training field, on the edge of which were the cavalry stables. The pyramid-shaped monument was erected in 1946 by Adolf Ehrnrooth, commander of the Uusimaa Dragoon Regiment (URR), in memory of the cavalry war heroes who died in the Winter War and Continuation War. The monument is surrounded by a fence made of horseshoes and tank trap stones. It was here that Adolf Ehrnrooth dismounted the cavalry in 1947, after which the soldiers' mode of transport changed from horses to bicycles.
- 12 Dragoon Hill Banquet Hall.** The barracks' former recreation building was originally built in the 1800s as a garrison canteen. The recreation centre for military personnel, which was the oldest in the country, closed its doors in 2017. The building has been renovated into a banquet hall, which houses a lunch restaurant and the Sotkunen Kellari restaurant.
- 13 Old stables.** The low red brick buildings on the edge of the square used to serve as stables for horses. Today, they house commercial premises for companies, such as floatation therapy studio Floatti and the brewing company Tuju & Taproom.
- 14 The old barracks building.** The wall of the former Army Academy building is decorated with the coats of arms of the Uusimaa Dragoon Battalion squadrons.
- 15 Playground.** The park has a horse-shaped play structure with slides and climbing walls, swings and a sandpit for children.
- 16 Monument to the Artillery School.** The first field artillery officers of independent Finland were trained in Lappeenranta in 1918–1920.
- 17 Artillery Regiment memorial.** The roots of Finnish artillery units are in Lappeenranta, where the first artillery regiments were equipped and assembled.
- 18 Vilho Petter Nenonen park and community garden Plantis.** The park is named after General Nenonen, known for his significant contributions to the development of the Finnish artillery. The park's meadow area is home to the city residents' allotment garden.
- 19 The JP 6 memorial.** In 1943, the 6th Jaeger Battalion was established on Dragoon Hill. The young jaegers did their duty without compromise in the fierce battles in the Karelian Isthmus.
- 20 Laila Hirvisaari memorial.** The author Hirvisaari's first novel, *Lehmusten kaupunki* ("the city of Linden trees"), published in 1972, started a series of novels about Lappeenranta that reintroduced to people the image of dragoons' skeleton jacket and red trousers and the sound of horses' hooves on cobblestones.
- 21 The house of the military band.** This currently privately owned house was previously used by the military band of the garrison. The dragoon band was founded in 1921. The dragoon band and the traditional riders and their horses that can be spotted around the city in summer all wear the legendary uniform of skeleton jackets and red trousers.
- 22 Old tanks On Dragoon Hill.** You can see old tanks, such as the Soviet-made T-54 from 1951 and the German Sturmgeschütz III.
- 23 Garrison low gate.** The low gate of the former Dragoon Hill garrison at the junction of Kasarmikatu and Upseeritie.
- 24 Lappeenranta Officers' Club** was completed in 1891. Upstairs were apartments for young officers.
- 25 The regimental commander's residence.** This house, now privately owned, was the most valuable residential building in the garrison. It was home to Theodor Schauman, commander of the Finnish Dragoon Regiment, before the periods of oppression and the abolition of the military during the Russification era.
- 26 Rantaraitti lakeside route.** The beautiful Rantaraitti lakeside route traces the shores of Lake Saimaa and is within easy reach from Lappeenranta city centre. Welcome to the mobile guide Stories from the Lakeside Route (in Finnish): www.tarinasoitin.fi/rantaraitti
- 27 Dragoon Hill Pumppuhuone.** Completed in 1892, the purpose was to provide water for the personnel and horses by drawing clean water from the shore of Lake Saimaa up the hill. Pumppuhuone ("the pump room"), now renovated, serves as a venue for various events and meetings.
- 28 Old Orthodox cemetery.** The cemetery, established in the 1700s, houses the graves of several influential merchant families that lived in Lappeenranta. The last deceased were buried in the cemetery in 2015, when the deceased found in Huhtiniemi in 2006 were laid to rest. The deceased found in Huhtiniemi had died in a temporary military hospital in Lappeenranta during the Crimean War of 1855–1857.