

ALTERNATIVE USES OF FORMER COASTAL ARTILLERY MILITARY BASES IN KOSZALIN COASTLAND IN VIEW OF THE GROWING POPULARITY OF MILITARY TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Motives: In recent years, the popularity of military tourism has increased considerably in Central and Eastern European countries, especially among tourists who have an interest in military history and technology.

Due to the general scarcity of methods and studies examining alternative uses of former military bases, including coastal artillery bases, a reliable method for assessing the value of such sites for military tourism should be developed. The study presents the history of the analysed military bases, and it examines the extent to which the existing facilities could be converted into tourist attractions. An innovative method for evaluating the tourism potential of defunct military bases was proposed and verified, and the required changes for improving the accessibility and applicability of military facilities for educational and tourism purposes were described. Two former military sites in Koszalin coastal region were selected for the study.

Aim: The main aim of the study was to propose an original method for assessing alternative uses of former coastal military bases, and to evaluate the educational and tourism potential of former military bases on the Koszalin Coast (a subregion of the South Baltic Coast) on the example of two former military facilities: Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division No. 68 in Łeba and Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division No. 66 in Naćmierz.

Results: The results of the study indicate that the evaluated military sites have considerable tourism potential, in particular for tourists who have an interest in military history. An analysis of exogenous as well as endogenous (architectural and historical features) factors revealed that both sites could attract tourists, including visitors who are not strictly interested in military facilities. The assessment conducted using the proposed method demonstrated that the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division No. 68 in Łeba is characterised by high tourist attractiveness, whereas the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division No. 66 in Naćmierz is characterised by moderate tourist attractiveness.

Keywords: military tourism, military sites on the Koszalin Coast

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, military tourism has been gaining in popularity among tourists, especially those who are interested in military history and technology, and the scope of the term “military tourism” is becoming wider and wider (Venter, 2017). According to many authors, it also encompasses terms like “military cultural tourism”, “war tourism”, “battlefield tourism”, as well as “military installations tourism” (Kowalczyk, 2008; Jędrzyśiak & Mikos von Rohrscheidt, 2011; Stach, 2013; Stach et al., 2014; Sadowski, 2016; Zienkiewicz & Podciborski, 2019), “military heritage tourism” (Huh, 2002; Chhabra et al., 2003). It is also closely connected with related themes, such as “dark tourism” and “blood tourism” (Raine, 2013; Biran & Hyde, 2013). However, the main reason for practicing military tourism is always the cognitive motivation. This particular form of tourism broadens the mind, increases one’s knowledge and general culture (Kwilecki, 2011).

At present, military sites and facilities are becoming new, important destinations for cognitive tourism. Poczta (2008) drew attention to the increased interest in this type of tourism, claiming that one of the unconventional forms of active tourism is military tourism (Poczta, 2008). The development of military tourism was also discussed by: Chylińska (2006), Cynarski (2012), Stach (2013), Stach et al. (2014) and Zgłobicki (2016). Kowalczyk (2008) referred to the issue in a similar way, claiming that military tourism is one of the relatively new forms of tourism, which by Jędrzyśiak and Mikos von Rohrscheidt (2011) was also called military cultural tourism, war tourism, battlefield tourism or military equipment tourism. It can perform the following functions: historical-educational, martyrological, political-ideological, cultural-entertainment, recreation-sport and adventure (Kowalczyk, 2009).

A different situation took place in the countries of Western Europe. The research conducted by Logan and Reeves (2009) confirmed that interest in the heritage of dark events, both nationally and internationally,

has grown and continues to grow among scientists and tourists alike. The main destinations of tourists were: extermination camps, places of massacre and genocide, former maximum security prisons, defense quarters and former dictatorships (Logan & Reeves, 2009).

Huh (2002), Chhabra, Healy and Sills (2003) also drew attention to the particularly dynamic development of military heritage tourism in their works.

The authors of this article have approached the issue of former military bases, which are currently not used for military purposes, located in the geographical region of the South Baltic Coastlands sub-provinces. There are many coastal artillery bases on the Polish coast that could be made available for the development of military tourism. These are facilities such as: bunkers, hangars, shelters, observation towers, radar stations and others. In the light of the literature, research of this type is innovative, because the method presented below takes into account the environmental values of the areas where military facilities are located. In many cases, the facilities situated in the Polish coastal area may be a substantial attraction for military tourist. The majority of the facilities in question are the remains of the Polish, German, and Soviet coastal artillery built in the 20th century in the coastal area between Gdansk and Świnoujście (Jarosz, 2018).

The purpose of the article is to present the educational potential and the possibilities of using former military bases located on Koszalin Coastland and comprising a total of six *mezzo*-regions, covering ca. 6500 km² (Kondracki, 2002). A specific objective of the research is to analyse the attractiveness of individual military facilities, using the point bonitation method – a technique that may prove useful in evaluating other military facilities as well, which are currently not performing their military functions. Another goal is to indicate in what other ways the facilities could be used (outside the terms of ownership and the like) and adjusted to the needs of tourism.

The subject of the article are two facilities selected for study: the anti-aircraft missile artillery in Łeba (68. Missile Air Defence Battalion) and the anti-aircraft missile artillery in Naćmierz (66. Missile Air Defence Battalion). The authors put forward the following research hypothesis in this article: military facilities located in an area with high landscape and environmental values are better rated as military tourism attractions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area. The location and characteristics of selected military facilities in Koszalin Coastland

Compared to the Gdańsk Coastland, situated to the west, Koszalin Coastland (Fig. 1) features a smaller number of facilities that used to be artillery and missile bases in the past. The region covers the area from Trzebiatowskie Coast and Gryfice Plain in Szczecin Coastland to Kępa Swarzevska and Kępa Pucka in Gdańsk Coastland. In contrast to other coastlands, its coastline is not varied – it shows only one slight bend between the Pomeranian Wall and

Łeba elevation. The coastline was smoothed by the abrasive and cumulative activity of the Baltic Sea, which produced accumulative sandbars with dunes.

This resulted in the formation of lakes and peatlands, cut off from the sea. This coastland area is furrowed by the rivers flowing out from the lake district: Parsęta with Radwia, Grabowa, Wieprza, Słupia, Łupawa and Łeba. This macro-region covers the area of about 6500 km² and is divided into: Słowińskie Coast, Białogard Plain, Sławno Plain, Damnicka Upland, Żarnowiec Upland, as well as the Reda-Łeba ice-marginal valley (Kondracki, 2002).

The first facility in this part of Polish Coastlands is the anti-aircraft missile artillery in Łeba – the 68. Missile Air Defence Battalion (68. DR WOPK) (military unit No 3886; Fig. 2).

The complex is located in the eastern part of the city of Łeba, on the sandbar between the Baltic coast and Lake Sarbsko. It includes many deserted yet easily accessible facilities, such as the command bunker with a radar station, or shelters for military vehicles. When it was first built (1974), it was armed with missile anti-aircraft systems (S-125-M “Neva”) and remained operational until 1999 (Jarosz, 2018).



Fig. 1. The location of the Gdańskie and Koszalin Coastland
Source: own elaboration.



Fig. 2. Łeba – a) Anti-aircraft missile artillery in Łeba, b) 68. Missile Air Defence Battalion
Source: authors' collection.

Currently, a part of the facility functions as the “Power Park Łeba”, where people looking for entertainment have access to three go-cart tracks, six different passes in a rope course, a pendulum jump installation, a climbing wall, as well as a paintball

field, an off-road and a quad track. One can also find a playground for children, a shooting range and a gastronomic outlet (Power Park Łeba, 2022).

A similar site in Poland is the anti-aircraft missile artillery in Naćmierz (66. DR WOPK; Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Naćmierz – Anti-aircraft missile artillery (66. DR WOPK)
Source: authors' collection.

It was also established in 1974, on the premises of a former military unit situated on Obła Mountain (25 m above sea level) in the Postomino commune. Closed down in 1990, it included missile systems similar to those in Łeba. The facilities which are worth visiting here are the command bunker with a radar station and shelters for military vehicles.

The method of evaluating coastal artillery facilities

Due to the relatively limited access to data, the issues of military tourism presented in this article required using specific research methods and techniques. In this study, the authors used methods based mainly on primary data (observation and collecting photo materials). Due to the specificity of the topic, as well as the niche character of military tourism, as well as the lack of appropriate statistical data, the particularly useful methods and techniques were those used in desk study conditions (a historical method).

The article also presents some statistical methods, which were particularly useful while developing and applying a new method of evaluating artillery facilities on the Polish coast.

The purpose of the modified method described below (Zienkiewicz, 2021) was to develop the best possible technique of evaluating former military facilities located on the Polish coast, with respect to education and tourism development. Interest in former military facilities, e.g. bunkers, cannon posts, etc., is becoming increasingly common, even despite the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Places of this kind may be visited individually, because they are usually open to the public and unguarded.

In order to define the conditions for tourism development at former coastal artillery facilities, a number of variables were adopted, referring to the natural environment assets, accessibility by transport, as well as regarding the architectonic and historical value of a given facility. They can be divided into exogenic and endogenic factors.

In the opinion of Kowalczyk (2003), historical-military facilities as well as the sites of true military events, can be considered by tourism geographers on several planes. From the perspective of the study presented in this article, a tourist may be interested in mainly two aspects.

Firstly, the general location of the facilities (within the country or region) and their precise location (in relation to the land relief, presence of surface waters, buildings). According to Kowalczyk, “what is particularly important in this approach is the fact that a given facility is treated as an element of landscape. As a result, an interest in tourism geography may develop together with an interest in landscape architecture” (Kowalczyk, 2003).

Secondly, the tourist may become interested in matters strictly regarding the tourist development of a given facility or site and its nearest vicinity. Typical tourist infrastructure includes. For instance, carparks, gastronomic establishments, souvenir shops, sanitary amenities, hotels and many other (Kowalczyk, 2003).

For the purposes of this article, the factors identified in the conception outlined above were classified by authors as follows:

- a. the exogenic factors of the tourist attractiveness of a military facility, which include indicators describing the surroundings of and access to the facility or a group of facilities, as well as all kinds of amenities, i.e. tourist infrastructure and services (Table 1);
- b. the endogenic factors of the tourist attractiveness of a military facility, which include the features of the facility or a group of facilities, directly resulting from its/their physiognomy, architecture and historical value (Table 2).

The scores presented in the tables below were determined after expert research conducted as part of the preliminary research in the city of Łeba and in the commune of Postomino in July and August 2021.

The indicators presented in the tables were measured or observed during field studies or on “Geoportal” and “Google Maps” Internet portals, because they were mostly unobtainable as secondary data.

Table 1. Exogenic factors of the tourist attractiveness of a military facility

No.	Indicator	Score/Points
Exogenic factors of the tourist attractiveness of a military facility		
1	access to an access road (the distance from the road to the nearest military facility, measured in metres, land signage)	– up to 100.0 m – 5 pts – 100.1–150.0 m – 4 pts – 150.1–200.0 m – 3 pts – 200.1–250.0 m – 2 pts – over 250 m – 1 pt 5
2	presence of tourist infrastructure, i.e. gastronomic outlets, carparks, accommodation (number of hotels) closer than 100 m from the main facility	For each facility – one point extra $x \geq 0$
3	the mean distance from a recreational plot of land to the nearest water reservoir (in metres)	– up to 100.0 m – 5 pts – 100.1–150.0 m – 4 pts – 150.1–200.0 m – 3 pts – 200.1–250.0 m – 2 pts – over 250 m – 1 pt 5
4	the percentage of forests and forest land in the overall area of the <i>gmina</i> (%), i.e. the forestation rate (%)	– 0–20.0% – 1 pt – 20.1–40.0% – 2 pts – 40.1–60.0% – 3 pts – 60.1–80.0% – 4 pts – over 80.0% – 5 pts 5
5	the number of buildings registered as historical monuments in the <i>gmina</i> , calculated per area	– under 2 – 1 pt – 3–4 – 2 pts – 5–6 – 3 pts – 7–8 – 4 pts – over 9 – 5 pts 5
6	population density per 1 km ²	– under 300 persons/km ² – 1 pts – 300.0–600.0 persons/km ² – 2 pts – 600.1–900.0 persons/km ² – 3 pts – 900.1–1200.0 persons/km ² – 4 pts – over 1200.0 persons/km ² – 5 pts 5
7	the mean distance between the facility and a higher order unit (e.g. the <i>gmina</i> office), in km	– up to 1000.0 m – 5 pts – 1000.1–3000.0 m – 4 pts – 3000.1–5000.0 m – 3 pts – 5000.1–7000.0 m – 2pts – over 7000 m – 1 pts 5
8	the number of tourist accommodation facilities in the <i>gmina</i>	– up 40 – 1 pts – 40–80 – 2 pts – 81–120 – 3 pts – 121–160 – 4 pts – over 160 – 5 pts 5
9	the number of beds in accommodation facilities in the <i>powiat</i> per 1000 people	– under 100 – 1 pts – 101–200 – 2 pts – 201–300 – 3 pts – 301–400 – 4 pts – over 400 – 5 pts 5
Exogenic factors TOTAL (without extra points)		40

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Table 2. Endogenic factors of the tourist attractiveness of a military facility

No.	Indicator	Score/Points
Endogenic factors of the tourist attractiveness of a military facility		
1	visual attractiveness of the facility as a fortification (a subjective indicator) – evaluation comprises first of all elements of construction: the state of the foundations, walls above the ground, the flat roof, flooring, stairs, elevations, interior plasters, possibly woodwork and wiring	– very attractive (9–10 pts) – attractive (7–8 pts) – fairly attractive (5–6 pts) – not very attractive (3–4 pts) – insignificantly attractive (1–2 pts)
2	historical assets – understood as the year of building the facility, as well as its major functions and the historical periods it survived	– before 1920 (9–10 pts) – 1920–1940 (7–8 pts) – 1941–1960 (5–6 pts) – 1961–1980 (3–4 pts) – after 1980 (1–2 pts)
3	the number of facilities forming the artillery base – the whole complex or its elements (ruins)	– under 2 – 1 pts – 3–4 – 2 pts – 5–6 – 3 pts – 7–8 – 4 pts – over 9 – 5 pts
4	presence of historical objects, artefacts	For each accessible collection of artefacts (display) – 1 point extra $x \geq 0$
5	the degree of dilapidation (%)	The degree of dilapidation (subjective assessment): – 0–20.0% – 5 pts – 20.1–40.0% – 4 pts – 40.1–60.0% – 3 pts – 60.1–80.0% – 2 pts – over 80.0% – 1 pts
6	physical accessibility of the facility – easiness/difficulty in visiting the facility (passages between buildings, etc., marking the buildings, tour direction)	– very good accessibility of the facility and individual buildings and installations (9–10 pts) – good accessibility (7–8 pts) – medium accessibility (5–6 pts) – poor accessibility (3–4 pts) – very poor accessibility (1–2 pts)
Endogenic factors TOTAL (without extra points)		40

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The researchers analysed the military facilities in question, using the point bonitation method.

The stages in the research proceedings were as follows:

1. Stage I – defining a number of variables that potentially affect the attractiveness of former military facilities, as well as dividing them into individual themes: natural environmental assets, accessibility by transport, selected services and tourist and quasi-tourist installations, historical, architectural assets, as well as the general popularity of a given facility;
2. Stage II – a thorough analysis of all features and the links between them considered from the factual and logical point of view. All in all, the study comprised 15 out of 18 factors. Due to the difficulty in data acquisition, the following elements were excluded from the study: the number of tourists in the *gmina* where a given facility was found, the area occupied by the facility and its popularity on the Internet;
3. Stage III – sorting out and preparing primary data for analysis;

4. Stage IV – preparing a matrix of point bonitation data with reference to the attractiveness of military facilities;
5. Stage V – summing up the points gained in the process of evaluating military facilities as well as assigning the results to the final score:
 - a. 71 and more points – very attractive artillery facilities, touristically;
 - b. 41–70 points – attractive facilities, touristically;
 - c. 21–40 – facilities of average tourist attractiveness;
 - d. 20 points and under – facilities of poor tourist attractiveness.

Table 3. Tourist attractiveness of selected military facilities located in the area of Koszalin Coastland

No.	Indicator	Anti-aircraft missile artillery – 68. DR WOPK (Łeba)	Anti-aircraft missile artillery – 66. DR WOPK (Naćmierz)
Exogenic factors of the tourist attractiveness of a military facility		Score/Points	
1	access to an access road (the distance from the road to the nearest military facility, measured in metres, land signage)	5	1
2	presence of tourist infrastructure, i.e. gastronomic outlets, carparks, accommodation (number of hotels) closer than 100 m from the main facility	2	0
3	the mean distance from a recreational plot of land to the nearest water reservoir (in metres)	3	1
4	the percentage of forests and forest land in the overall area of the <i>gmina</i> (%), i.e. the forestation rate (%)	3	2
5	the number of buildings registered as historical monuments in the <i>gmina</i> , calculated per area,	5	4
6	population density per 1 km ²	1	1
7	the mean distance between the facility and a higher order unit (e.g. the <i>gmina</i> office), in km	5	1
8	the number of tourist accommodation facilities in the <i>gmina</i>	4	1
9	the number of beds in accommodation facilities in the <i>powiat</i> per 1000 people	2	4
Exogenic factors TOTAL (without extra points)		30	15
Endogenic factors of the tourist attractiveness of a military facility		Punctuation	
1	visual attractiveness of the facility as a fortification (a subjective indicator) – evaluation comprises first of all elements of construction: the state of the foundations, walls above the ground, the flat roof, flooring, stairs, elevations, interior plasters, possibly woodwork and wiring	7	5
2	historical assets – understood as the year of building the facility, as well as its major functions and the historical periods it survived	3	3
3	the number of facilities forming the artillery base – the whole complex or its elements (ruins)	5	4
4	presence of historical objects, artefacts	0	0
5	the degree of dilapidation (%)	1	2
6	physical accessibility of the facility – easiness/difficulty in visiting the facility (passages between buildings, etc., marking the buildings, tour direction)	6	5
Endogenic factors TOTAL		22	19
TOTAL		52	34

Source: Authors' elaboration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourist attractiveness of selected military facilities located in the Koszalin Coastland area

The research demonstrated that both coastal artillery facilities selected for analysis received the total score of 34–52 points. Practically speaking, this means that, according to the classification presented herein, they are facilities of medium and high tourist attractiveness (Table 3).

As a result of the assessment using the metrics presented in Table 1 and 2, it was found that the anti-aircraft missile artillery site in Łeba (68. DR WOPK) received 52 points, while the anti-aircraft missile artillery site in Naćmierz (66. DR WOPK) received 34 points.

The relatively high and average tourist attractiveness of the sites in question, however, indicates that in order to become significant tourist attractions, they require more effective management and better equipment in recreational and tourist infrastructure.

As a result of the field visits and the assessments and analyses carried out, it was found that basic tourism infrastructure, such as well-defined paths and proper site signage, is practically non-existent in both cases. There is also a lack (especially in the case of the 66. DR WOPK in Naćmierz) of basic installations and quasi-tourist services, such as toilets, food outlets or souvenir stores.

Within the framework of the results of the evaluations and analyses received, the following recommendations were made:

- a. marking the area more effectively;
- b. ensuring elementary sanitary conditions (providing toilets – also for the disabled);
- c. opening (at least seasonally) catering outlets;
- d. opening (at least seasonally) information points.

CONCLUSIONS

Using the author's method of assessing the potential for alternative use of former coastal artillery military bases presented in this study (based on descriptive techniques, as well as scoring

boning methods), the educational potential and the possibility of using two former military sites located on the Koszalin Coast for military tourism purposes is presented: 68. DR WOPK located in Łeba and 66. DR WOPK located in Naćmierz.

As a result of the assessments and analysis, the study shows that both of the assessed coastal artillery sites deserve the attention of tourists, especially those interested in militaria. According to the authors of the study, due to the high level of exogenous tourist attraction factors present at both sites, as well as specific architectural and historical features (endogenous tourist attraction factors), both sites can be of interest to tourists who do not only prefer military tourism. This can be evidenced by the fact that the remains of the two military sites represent an important contribution to the history of the defense of Poland's borders. Therefore, their tourist attractiveness is assessed as medium and high.

As a result of the assessment using the metrics presented in Table 1 and Table 2, it was found that the anti-aircraft missile artillery site in Łeba (68. DR WOPK) received 52 points – tourist attraction facility, while the anti-aircraft missile artillery site in Naćmierz (66. DR WOPK) received 34 points – facilities of average tourist attractiveness.

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