From 26 August to 11 September 2000 the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat organized a cultural science expedition to Spitsbergen (SWEDARCTIC 2000) under the scientific leadership of Urban Wråkberg, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. Pär Eliasson, Umeå University, was leader of project “History of Climatology in the Arctic: German Weather Stations at Spitsbergen 1941-1945” and I had been invited to join his group as German expert.

It is well known that Germany supported naval weather stations at Spitsbergen from 1941 to 1945. Since 1939 data of foreign weather services were no more available to prepare the important forecasts. So the German navy and airforce decided to install their own weather stations in the Arctic at Spitsbergen, Hopen, East Greenland, and Franz-Josefs-Land. They were supported through new designed automatic stations on land at Spitsbergen, Bear Island, Labrador, and Nowaya Semya as well as buoys on sea. They should fill the gap of missing meteorological information from the Arctic, which was essential for wartime activities concerning England and Russia.

Some original reports and popular books have been published about these weather stations and their operation, while Selinger (2000) had described their history in detail. Unpublished diaries, pictures and even documentary movies are still in private possessions. Personal contacts made it possible to receive valuable information to plan our visit at Spitsbergen.

Station „Haudegen” (1944-1945) at in Rijpfjord on Nordaustlandet is the only German station, which had not been destroyed after its discovery. The house is still existing, but it is in a bad shape and should be conserved very soon. ”Haudegen” is a highlight of official tourist cruises at Spitsbergen, so it is visited nearly every second year. Although the Cultural Heritage Regulations and the Tourist Regulations of Spitsbergen protect all installations and material originating before 1946, not every private expedition obeys. Therefore something has to be done to preserve and protect station “Haudegen”.

During SWEDARCTIC 2000, we wanted to document the remains of German naval weather stations at Spitsbergen called “Knospe”, “Nussbaum”, “Kreuzritter”, and “Haudegen”. Due to unfavourable ice conditions, we could not visit the „Haudegen” site on Nordaustlandet. Instead we turned to station „Kreuzritter” (1943-1944) at Liefdefjord at the north west coast of Spitsbergen. It was not easy to locate the winter station from the information given in the literature. A party went ashore to search for the grave of the expedition leader Hans Robert Knoespel, who died by accident when he tried to defuse some explosives in a small hunting hut near by. The grave and the station were successfully located by the SWEDARCTIC team. A GIS-system was used for measuring the remains of the station, which were more or less concentrated on one spot, as well as the surroundings (figure 1). At the same time the most prominent remaining materials (rusty aerial-delivery container for supplies, 20 litres fuel tanks, standard U-boat provision boxes, antenna parts, batteries and woodwork) were identified using the information of the German reports. Detailed documentary photographs were also taken (figure 2). The findings will be compared with the original checklists of the weather stations. As the stations were easy to be made invisible during wintertime, the personnel had to retreat...