

KANDALAKSHA, Mu-
gion — With balloons a
Norway's Princess Märth
two young sisters opened
dren's Village last wee
North.

The princess and sist
Zhenya, two of the first
of SOS Children's Villa
sha, cut three ribbons tet
balloon to officially ope
the Murmansk region or

"I'm confident tha
friendship between our
will continue to prosper
and we should keep in m
starts with the childre
Märtha Louise said.

"If we give our child
care, there is a much g
that they will become to
loving members of soci
"This is the long-term
SOS Children's Village
SOS Russia, the mothe
dren all the best here in

The children gave a
the princess and other
the village's family hous

The village is the re
nual television appeal
gian Broadcasting Cor
raised \$17 million in ju
SOS Children's Villag
The money was used to
dren's villages in five co
ing one in Kandalaksha
give orphaned and dest
safe and permanent ho



ALEXANDER BELENKY / MT

One of the houses in Karelia believed to have belonged to Karl Gustav Mannerheim.

War-Time Legends Help Sell Real Estate in Karelia

By Sophia Kornienko

STAFF WRITER

ST. PETERSBURG — In their at-
tempts to win the hearts and money of
potential customers, out-of-town real es-
tate agencies in Karelia often appeal to
the public's affection for tragic legends.

Many cottages in the northwestern
republic of Karelia claim to have a con-
nection to Finland's first president and
national hero, General Karl Gustav
Mannerheim, who had his troops posi-
tioned in Karelia — a
former Finnish terri-
tory and the front dur-
ing heavy fighting be-
tween the Soviet
Union and the Finns
during the 1939-40
Winter War.

"This cottage Man-
nerheim built espe-
cially for his daughter,

and she really lived here," a local resi-
dent told Delovoi Peterburg earlier this
month, referring to a deserted white
mansion on Karelia's picturesque
Glubokoye Lake. "And several years
ago, a 90-year-old man came here and
sat on the doorstep for a long time, cry-
ing. We don't know why he was crying —
he spoke only in Finnish."

However, historians say, it is unlikely
that any of the local cottages have any
connection to Mannerheim. He never
owned property in Karelia, but lived at
the general headquarters in Mikkeli

during the war and in a house the
Finnish government rented for him in
Helsinki the rest of the time, official re-
ports say.

Many cottages sold as "Manner-
heim's summer cottages" are in fact the
former houses of Russian aristocrats,
Delovoi Peterburg said.

The myth about the numerous Man-
nerheim cottages originated from propa-
ganda spread among Soviet soldiers
after they occupied Karelia.

The Mannerheim myth originated from propaganda spread among Soviet soldiers.

Most of the sol-
diers were seeing
Western Europe for
the first time and the
Soviet authorities
wished to hide the fact
that the houses they
were occupying be-
longed to ordinary
Finns and the Russian
intelligentsia. Instead,

the soldiers were led to believe they
were taking over the houses of the rich,
primarily Baron Mannerheim, historical
reports say.

"I know eight 'Mannerheim summer
cottages.' Houses connected with such
legends are easy to sell," Yury
Vorontsov, director of the northern
branch of the Bekar Out-of-Town Real
Estate Agency, told Delovoi Peterburg.
"Many people have some sort of nostal-
gia toward the region's history. That's
why they often choose real estate with
some story about it."

Co

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