

Book Reviews

Kallonen, Kari. 2017. *Olavi Alakulppi: Guerrilla Lieutenant; Knight of the Mannerheim Cross and World Skiing Champion*. Translated by Mika Roinila. Original title: *Olavi Alakulppi: Sissiluutnatti; Marskin ritari ja maailmanmestari*. Booknook.biz. 224 pages. \$4.99. ASIN B071ZWQRLS.

Kari Kallonen's *Olavi Alakulppi: Guerrilla Lieutenant; Knight of the Mannerheim Cross and World Skiing Champion* provides a new military perspective on small-unit engagements fought near the Arctic Circle during the Second World War. What makes this interesting for English-language military historians is that it provides balance to a topic dominated by German, rather than Finnish, sources. From 1941 to 1944, the German soldiers of the 20th Mountain Army and airmen of *Luftwaffe 5* occupied northern Norway and Finland in a protracted struggle over material resources and shipping lanes with the Soviet Union. Descriptions of these battles can be found in works such as Earl F. Ziemke's 1959 classic, *The German Northern Theater of Operations, 1940–1945*. Modern works on the subject include Adam Claasen's (2001) *Hitler's Northern War: The Luftwaffe's Ill-Fated Campaign, 1940–1945*, which addresses Hitler's attempts to stop Allied supply shipments to the Soviet Union through the Arctic ports of Murmansk and Archangel, along with Chris Mann and Christer Jørgensen's (2002) *Hitler's Arctic War: The German Campaigns in Norway, Finland, and the USSR, 1940–1945*, which explores the land campaigns to capture the same Soviet ports. In each of these works, the authors briefly discuss large-scale Finnish military operations in the Arctic region, but refrain from providing details on the exploits of individual soldiers.

Fortunately, a number of autobiographies and biographies praising the achievements of Finnish veterans are also available to the English-language audience. For readers interested in aviation history, Eino Luukkanen's (1963) autobiography, *Fighter over*

Finland, provides a lively account of the tremendous air battles fought during the 1939 to 1940 Winter War, along with the 1941 to 1944 Continuation War. During these aeronautical jousts, Luukkanen went on to score over fifty victories and emerged as the third-leading ace of the war. J. Michael Cleverley's (2008) *Born a Soldier: The Times and Life of Larry Thorne* chronicles the adventures of Lauri Allan Törni, who began his military career in the Finnish army, fighting against the Soviets during the Winter War, and then joined the German *Waffen SS* during most of the Continuation War. Afterwards, Törni moved to the United States, entered the American Army, and fought with distinction during the Vietnam War, where he ultimately lost his life. Recently, Tapio Saarelainen (2016) published *The White Sniper Simo Häyhä: The Deadliest Sniper in History*, which follows the short but prolific career of the sniper who killed over five hundred Soviet soldiers during the Winter War. In each of these works, the soldiers spent the majority of their military service during the Second World War along the Karelian front, near Leningrad, where most of the fighting took place.

In contrast to these large-scale battles, Kallonen's *Olavi Alakulppi: Guerrilla Lieutenant; Knight of the Mannerheim Cross and World Skiing Champion* describes the fighting waged against Soviet soldiers and partisans near the Arctic Circle. The book opens with the portrayal of bucolic rural village life, left largely untouched by the war ravaging the southern areas of Finland. The author introduces the reader to the tight-knit community of Seitajärvi, where women and children dominated the population because the men were away for military service. Only a few old men and boys remained in the town to act as a defense force. During the summer of 1944, the Soviet Union dispatched three partisan units identified as *Bolsevik*, *Poljarnik*, and *Stalinets* against this largely undefended civilian target. During the initial assault, the partisans killed several guards and civilians, looted some property, and then set fire to the village. The partisans took several hostages into a local forest, interrogated, then raped and murdered the non-combatants, leaving only a severely wounded child for rescuers to find in the wake of the destruction. Lieutenant Olavi Alakulppi, of Special Detachment Sau, a Finnish military unit charged with protecting the local population, set out with his men to track down and destroy the partisans.

In the first chapter, Kallonen backtracks to the early history of Olavi Alakulppi and his formative years. Readers learn that his

family supported Finnish independence from Russia and public education, and encouraged outdoor sports for health and recreation around their home in Rovaniemi. From an early age, Olavi excelled in cross-country skiing and especially enjoyed ski-jumping, much to the chagrin of his parents. In 1935, he entered military service, training as a Lapland border guard and continued to improve his skiing in local competitions. By 1939, Alakulppi's skills had improved to the point that he won a gold medal at the world championships held in Zakopane, Poland. This victory would have allowed him to compete in the 1940 Winter Olympics that were scheduled for Japan, but the 1939 Soviet Union invasion of Finland and the expansion of the Second World War to Europe and Asia would prevent any games from being held.

Chapter two begins with Alakulppi's baptism of fire during the Winter War as he and the men of Separate Battalion (*Erillinen Pataljoona*) 25 fought to prevent Soviet troops from taking Rovaniemi, the capital of Finnish Lapland. The outnumbered and underequipped Finnish soldiers not only stopped the Soviet advance, but they achieved significant victories at Suomussalmi and Raatteen tie (Raate Road). In early January, Alakulppi was promoted from corporal to sergeant major for his contributions to the war effort. As a trained skier, he spent the remaining months of the Winter War conducting patrols and trying to contain further Soviet advances, contributing to a negotiated peace with Russia and the preservation of Finnish independence.

During the brief interlude between the conclusion of the 1939–40 Winter War, and the outbreak of the 1941–44 Continuation War, Alakulppi continued to represent Finland in international skiing competitions while also commanding troops in preparation for the arrival of German troops in Finnish Lapland. Thus, chapter three focuses on Finnish military cooperation with the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union, called Operation Barbarossa. The arrival in Lapland of the 20th Mountain Army, under the command of Colonel General Nicolaus von Falkenhorst, brought both regular *Wehrmacht* troops along with elite Nazi *Waffen SS* soldiers to Northern Finland. Troops from the Finnish 6th Division, including the recently promoted company commander, Second Lieutenant Alakulppi, invaded Soviet territory to seize the town of Kandalaksha, thereby isolating the port of Murmansk from the rest of Russia. As military operations continued, Alakulppi and his men excelled in reconnaissance work while also taking part in direct assaults against fortified positions. These acts of bravery

resulted in Alakulppi's winning Finland's highest military honor, the Mannerheim Cross, along with the German Iron Cross.

Chapter four returns the reader to 1944 and the Soviet partisan attack against the villagers in the Seitajärvi region. Alakulppi's Special Detachment Sau had spent the intervening months patrolling the region and protecting the population from Soviet incursions. After the attack, Alakulppi's men, with assistance from the Germans, tracked down a Soviet partisan to a remote area north of Salla. During the subsequent assault, he was severely wounded by machinegun fire and evacuated to the hospital in Salla for treatment. Many of the German troops refused to help the Finns in eliminating the Soviet partisans, who returned safely to their own lines. As a result of the outcome of the battle, General Dietl, the German commander, gave Alakulppi a medal for bravery, and then had several German officers shot for cowardice.

The author uses chapter five to discuss the aftermath of the battle and how the civilian population coped with the horrific losses in the tragedy. Additionally, the Soviets stepped up their incursions and assaults on civilians, with a recovered Alakulppi returning to the field to chase down marauding partisans. After a July 1944 partisan attack on another village, Alakulppi's men tracked down and killed several of the attackers. In the wake of the unprecedented violence, readers learn about Finnish families torn apart and the adoption of surviving children by neighbors, along with forensic evidence that murder victims had been subjected to rape and torture by the Soviets.

The events of July 1944 carry over to chapter six with a massive Soviet assault launched against Finnish troops in Karelia. This successful operation forced the Finnish government to sign a peace agreement with the Soviets, which included a demand that the Finnish army push all German troops out of the country. In September 1944, the recently promoted Captain Alakulppi led his men to the area near Oulu, where military operations began against the German army. As the Germans retreated back to Norway, they burned towns and cities, including Rovaniemi. At the end of the Lapland War, Captain Alakulppi was one of many officers worried about the possibility of Soviet troops annexing Finland. As a precaution, officers began to assemble secret weapons caches around the country to resist a possible Soviet occupation. The Finnish and Soviet governments learned of these developments and began to arrest the officers and seize the illicit weapons. This situation blurred the line between patriots and traitors among

Finnish officers, including Captain Alakulppi, who was arrested for participating in the program. Rather than endure protracted imprisonment, he escaped captivity and fled the country to Sweden, where he joined a growing cadre of fugitive Finnish officers.

In Sweden, the Finnish officers struggled to find employment, while also facing the possibility of expulsion from the country. During the period of 1946 and 1947, diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the United States began to deteriorate into the onset of the Cold War. As a result, the American government was looking for soldiers experienced in fighting the Russians, just as Alakulppi needed to leave Sweden. This led Alakulppi and several other Finnish officers to obtain visas to enter the United States, with the express purpose of joining the American army. After the men arrived in New York, they received extensive support from Finnish immigrants in the region.

The officers' American military careers begin in chapter eight, with their naturalization and induction into the army. After a rocky start, the Finns began training American soldiers in the art of cross-country skiing. This progressed into designing winter warfare supplies and equipment for the military. On a positive note, Alakulppi's wife and children arrived in the United States. The elated father then embarked on a new career as a coach and athlete in competitive cross-country skiing.

The renewed interest in competitive skiing (chapter nine) led to a promotion to captain, thus returning Alakulppi's rank to that obtained in the Finnish Army during the Second World War. The brief bliss of being reunited with his family was cut short by an international crisis. In 1950, Soviet-backed North Korea invaded American-backed South Korea, touching off the 1950–53 Korean War. Alakulppi was sent to Japan, to begin training soldiers in winter warfare, then to the front. In early 1953, he helped stem a Chinese Communist offensive, which led to the Bronze Star medal for bravery in combat. In 1954, Alakulppi returned to training duties first in the United States and later in Germany. His years in Germany gave Alakulppi an opportunity to return to Finland and reestablish contact with former soldiers and rehash wartime experiences. In 1959, Alakulppi's son Vesa entered West Point Military Academy, following in his father's footsteps as military officer.

Chapter 10 begins with the 1960 Winter Olympics held in Squaw Valley, California. While not a competitor, Alakulppi helped behind the scenes, making sure the Finnish athletes and sports commentators had everything they needed for the competition. The

period also propelled Alakulppi into a Finnish-Soviet debate of war crimes, specifically the Russian partisan attacks against Finnish civilians in Lapland during the Second World War. The increased hostility of the Soviet government reflected the growing tensions of the Cold War.

American participation in the 1960–73 Vietnam War also increased tensions with the Soviet Union and served as a transition for events described in chapter eleven, where the father, Olavi, retired from the military and his son, Lieutenant Vesa Alakulppi, deployed to Vietnam for a combat tour. In 1968, Vesa died in combat against Vietcong guerillas. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Olavi Alakulppi then flew to Vietnam to collect his son's remains and returned them to the United States for burial.

The final part of the book, chapter twelve, explores Alakulppi's retirement years, his devotion to family, and his interactions with Finnish veterans. A new generation of Finns were again interested in the story of the famous athlete and soldier. The brief epilogue details the death and burial of a man who served two countries with distinction and honor. The Alakulppi family, friends, and surviving veterans laid the hero to rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

In all, *Guerrilla Lieutenant* provides readers with an interesting new perspective on Arctic warfare during the Second World War. Well written and organized, the book will appeal to a variety of readers and age levels. The only issues with the book can be found in the introduction, where a flurry of names and details about Finnish families and history can be confusing to people unfamiliar with the topic. Some enhancements to the footnotes would solve the problem and increase the overall flow of the book. In short, this is a good book that deserves a read by anyone interested in the region or military history.

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Paul Lubotina
Walters State Community College

Kirstinä, Leena, editor. 2012. *Nodes of Contemporary Finnish Literature*. Studia Fennica Litteraria 6. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. 199 pages. €45.00. ISBN 9789522223593.

Nodes of Contemporary Finnish Literature is the sixth volume in the series Studia Fennica Litteraria published by the Finnish Literature Society, as noted in the foreword to the edition. This volume's dual purpose is to present to its readers trends in recent Finnish literature and to offer an idea of the nature of the future of Finnish literary history. The series presents topics and trends in the broad spectrum of Finnish literature from its inception to the present, with this volume taking as its focus contemporary literary works and critical approaches.

This volume, then, takes for its topic the explication of some dominant features of contemporary Finnish literature, providing a finite glimpse into the subject, as is formulated in “initial observations,” from which the editor hopes we can be “satisfied” with a valid hypothesis (10). The context of this hypothesizing is set, as the editor, Leena Kirstinä, notes, within “Poststructuralism [which] found the way back to intertextuality [following New Criticism and Structuralism] via intertextuality, with the help of the chains of ideas, figures, and tropes, used in literatures, that can be followed between times and places” (9). Thus, Kirstinä locates her project, which examines the literature of Finland from the 1980s onward when, in Finland, “there were ruptures and mixes of modernism and postmodernism” (10).

The introduction, divided into sections, delineates the broad developments in Finnish literature from the 1980s to the present, marking 1985 as an important moment in the “Crisis of Mimesis” with movement away from realism toward self-reflective metafiction and a problematized relationship between language and reality.

By 1998, Kirstinä asserts, identity discussion came to the forefront with immigrants, complicating Finnish cultural homogeneity (14). That year, too, the editor asserts, found the rise in vocalization

of a new kind of feminism, which received a response as Kirstinä characterizes as “men wrote back in 1999” (16). At the turn of the millennium, ideas of community were challenged by the emergence of the heterogeneous individual constituent with topics such as Finnish identity, racism, Christianity, war, and alienation.

Within these broad strokes that sketch recent Finnish literary history, or what Kirstinä identifies as nodes, the critical work of this volume is developed. Lyytikäinen examines the production of the author “and the creation of its ethical, existentially toned worldview” (21). Foreignness, or the “outsider,” and “what is happening to the modern subject in postmodern conditions” are examined by Hallila (22). Koivisto’s article centers on the “phenomenon of the large I-narration” (22), and Malmio explores work that “transgresses the boundaries between children’s and adults’ literature” (22). Referentiality, mimesis, and historical truth form the subject of analysis in the Hatavara article. Oja examines poetic voice in the digital age, while Heikkilä-Halttunen explores parallels between children’s and adults’ literature during the period. Ojajärvi delves into “the critical construction of social reality” (22) and the naturalization “of the liberal marketplace as an essential part of family life” in his examination of two novels (23). In the final article, Lehtimäki elucidates the role of the novel in the era of “e-mail and other electronic devices” (23).

The ideas of author, referentiality, intertextuality, identity, and social categories, at the intersection of the modern and the postmodern, form the nodes of discussion. This volume opens up the discussion of contemporary Finnish literature for the English-speaking audience.

Taken together, the series functions as an indispensable introduction to Finnish literature and works as a vehicle to broaden discussion of Finnish literary history to the extra-Finnish academic community. Because of this important function I want to mention the full series to date, with this volume falling somewhere in the middle.

Other works in the series are as follows:

Changing Scenes: Encounters between European and Finnish Fin de Siècle, edited by Pirjo Lyytikäinen, 2003.

Women’s Voices: Female Authors and Feminist Criticism in the Finnish Literary Tradition, edited by Päivi Lappalainen and Lea Rojola, 2007.

Metaliterary Layers in Finnish Literature, edited by Samuli Hägg, Erkki Sevänen, and Risto Turunen, 2008.

The Emergence of Finnish Book and Reading Culture in the 1700s, edited by Cecilia af Forselles and Tuija Laine, 2011.
Aino Kallas: Negotiations with Modernity, edited by Leena Kurvet-Käosaar and Lea Rojola, 2011.

Subsequent volumes are thus far:

White Field, Black Seeds: Nordic Literacy Practices in the Long Nineteenth Century, edited by Anna Kuismin and M. J. Driscoll, 2013.

Helsinki in Early Twentieth-Century Literature: Urban Experiences in Finnish Prose Fiction, 1890–1940, edited by Lieven Ameel, 2014.

Novel Districts: Critical Readings of Monika Fagerholm, edited by Kristina Malmio and Mia Österlund, 2016.

Mysterious Minds: The Making of Private and Collective Consciousness in Marja-Liisa Vartio's Novels, by Elise Nykänen, 2017.

Beth Virtanen
South University, Online

Remlinger, Kathryn A. 2017. *Yooper Talk: Dialect as Identity in Michigan's Upper Peninsula*. Languages and Folklore of the Upper Midwest. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press. xxi, 183 pages, illustrations. \$24.95. ISBN 9780299312503.

One of the most inspiring topics in immigration history research in the twenty-first century is how immigrant cultures have shaped new countries and their cultures. So, besides just by asking how the immigrants were changed by mainstream culture or supposedly by other ethnic groups in their new homelands, modern scholars have also become more interested in analyzing the social and cultural changes the immigrants and their subsequent generations have catalyzed in their new environments. Kathryn Remlinger's new study on the "Yooper dialect" of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (from now on abbreviated just as the "UP") is a fine example of the phenomenon, and it also has a good eye for the historical, economic, and political processes that shaped the culture of the area as we know it.

The main focus in Remlinger's work is on the regional dialect, identity, and history, but contextualizing themes and concepts such as "commercialism," "authenticity," and "guilt" are also discussed through the lens of sociocultural linguistics. In the case of the UP,

this is very rewarding because the story of the peninsula is unique. What is understood as “yooper culture” today (the word *yooper* derives from “UP’er,” a citizen of the Upper Peninsula) is actually a history of a remote American regional culture not precisely fitting the historic ideals of US assimilation projects such as the Melting Pot and 100-percent Americanism (even though there were Finnish pro-assimilation voices too, see Niemi 1921). Back in the heyday of the copper- and iron-mining boom in the first two decades of the twentieth century, an estimated 40 percent of the UP population were born outside the United States. The radically multiethnic mix in the mines, homesteads, and community halls in the UP fascinated leading American folklorists as early as the late 1930s when Alan Lomax started collecting folksongs in the area. Lomax was followed a decade later by perhaps the most influential folklorist of his generation, Richard Dorson (2008). Overwhelmed by the cultural and ethnic diversity of the area, Lomax proclaimed the UP “perhaps the most interesting country I have ever travelled in” (Cohen 2010, 100) just as Dorson pronounced “the fabulous Upper Peninsula” to be “one of the richest storytelling regions in USA” (Leary 2008, xii). The storytelling tradition and the musical life of the UP are still very much an academic interest among scholars. Recently, Leary (who also co-wrote, with Joe Salmons, the foreword for Remlinger’s book) published a Grammy-nominated book combined with five CD’s and a DVD entitled *Folksongs of Another America: Field Recordings from the Upper Midwest, 1937–1946* (2015).

How does this all connect with Finnish studies or Finnishness then? More than just a little, it appears. The UP was one of the most common destinations for Finnish immigrants during the great immigration era of 1880 to 1920. During this period, an estimated 350,000 Finns left Finland for the United States in high hopes of a better future in the new land. In the urban environments of the U. S. East and West Coasts, Finns usually worked as maids or construction workers, and, in the rural parts of the country (such as the UP), they employed themselves in the mining industry, commercial fishing, or forestry before establishing their own farms, often in remote homestead lands with Finnish settlement names such as Toivola, Nisula, or Tapiola.

Finnishness is very much present in the UP even today, namely in terms of highly influential ethnic organizations, such as the Finnish American Heritage Center, Finlandia University, bilingual

street signs (English/Finnish) in downtown Hancock, annual ethnic festivities such as the Heikinpäivä and Juhannus celebration in Toivola, and preservation of the old Finnish homestead of Hanka in Askel. In Houghton County alone, a fascinating 32.5 percent of the population (now running in third and fourth generations) still reported Finnish ancestry in the US Census data of 2010. However, as Remlinger points out (against the popular myth of yooper culture being exclusively Finnish), it is not all about Finns or Finnishness when it comes to dialect variations in the UP. This is not the case even in the Copper Country and Marquette areas, where Remlinger conducted her sixteen years of fieldwork since the early 2000s. Because of the settlement history of the region since the mid-1840s, the regional dialect has also been affected by German, French Canadian, Slovenian, Croatian, Swedish, Italian, and indigenous influences in terms of grammar, pronunciation, sounds, and vocabulary. Typical dialect features such as *eh*, *yah*, *da*, and *holy wah* do have a multiethnic history. Remlinger also points out that there are several different variations of the dialect in the UP alone, largely depending on the location or the speaker or the speech situation. Also some linguistic features of “yooper talk” can be found elsewhere in the United States.

As the title suggests, perhaps the most crucial part of Remlinger’s work is how she carefully connects regional dialect with regional identity. In *Yooper Talk*, dialect is not merely a “brogue” spoken in some random geographical area, but it is also a marker for identity-making and a source of regional pride. According to Remlinger, we have witnessed at least three different historical interpretations of the talk so far. The form of English that was at the first stage stigmatized as “immigrant,” “rural,” or “ethnic” was in the second phase transformed into a distinctive “regional dialect” not to be confused with “broken English” or a “class” dialect anymore. Regional identity also started to parallel ethnicity at this stage, and the first public expressions of regional identity started to take place. In the third and final stage, the dialect became a widely recognized source of regional identity, and it even became commercially utilized in the regional tourism industry, heritage institutions, media, and other venues.

I find Remlinger’s theoretical model rather fascinating when comparing it with Finnish-American history in the region. Changes and cultural expressions in the UP Finns’ ethnic identity seem to follow somewhat similar patterns at the generational level. Immigrant Finns of the great immigration era often struggled with English

and were stigmatized with derogatory words such as “Finlanders” because of their supposed “clannishness” and lack of language skills (look no further than John Toivonen’s heartfelt struggle in Michael Loukinen’s [1983] *Tradition Bearers*). The first American-born generation of the UP Finns, on the other hand, learned English in school and in some cases became bilingual, which allowed them to play with the languages and which connected them closely with local dialect. In this light, Wilbert “Wimpy” Salmi’s self-made street signs of “Kowsit Lats Rd.” and “Ageet Peech”¹ (or Jingo Viitala Vachon’s or Heino “Hap” Puotinen’s wonderful dialect stories) of the 1960s and 1970s can perhaps be portrayed as first-level signs of utilizing regional identity and “yooper talk” in the Finnish-American context. As time progressed, utilizing dialect and regional identity became more conscious and more institutionalized. Regional institutions such as Da Yoopers’ Tourist Trap in Ishpeming or the commercialized Yooper figures Eino and Toivo from the 1980s onward are the clearest examples of the case.

Yooper Talk is a finely crafted study which connects identity and dialect to social, economic, and cultural history in a very delicate manner. I am convinced that the work will be warmly welcomed by all scholars interested in the US Upper Midwest, and not just scholars of history, Finnishness, or linguistics alone. Remlinger’s work can also be labeled as a pivotal effort in deepening our understanding of American culture, ethnicity, and regionality in general, from the ethnic perspective. For the UP Finns, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan has equalled “home” for the last one hundred years or so. It is a home that is different now from what it was in the early 1900s, 1940s, or 1960s because interpretations and expressions of Finnishness have also changed during the close contact with regional culture. It is about time for the rest of us to “say yah to da UP,” too!

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1 These spellings attempt to portray the Finnish phonological renderings of *Cowshit Flats* and *Agate Beach*.

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Jari Nikkola
University of Turku