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Interpreting Brothers-in-Arms

Linguistic and Cultural Encounters in the Finnish-German Military Alliance (1941–1944)

Pekka Kujamäki
Translation by Kathy Saranpa



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Pekka Kujamäki

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Acknowledgements

More than ten years ago, when I was just beginning to nurture the idea of writing a book on translation and interpreting in Finland during World War II—a book in which there would be space to consider everyday multilingual life during the Continuation War (1941–1944) and, particularly, to take a more in-depth look at military translation and interpreting activities than was previously possible in shorter publications—I could hardly imagine that the journey to the book in your hands would end up being this long. As they say, life intervened, and during the past years its twists and turns have been such that I almost lost my grip on the project.

However, the notebooks, folders and files kept whispering to me, not leaving me any peace, and in particular not allowing me to forget that they represented the efforts of so many people. For this reason, it's a fine thing that this work gives me the opportunity to once again thank Tanja Lehikoinen, Sanna Leskinen and Niina Syrjänen, who waded with me through the archives of various military associations and produced an important part of the materials upon which this work is based. At the same time I would like to thank the Academy of Finland for funding the project 'In Search of Military Translation Cultures' (SA 138 221), an act which made possible not only our archival work but also post-doc terms of varying lengths for Päivi Pasanen and Svetlana Probirskaja. They

studied language-contact issues relating to the treatment of prisoners-of-war, and I thank them as well for our work together.

The most central research materials for this study are weekly action reports by liaison officers and interpreters ordered for the German forces. The reports mainly contain official information, recorded either on command or by permission, or what the recorders chose to write down. On the other hand, personal experiences remain there in the margins. I consider myself fortunate that I had the opportunity, many decades after the war, to talk to Lotta veterans Raili Åkerfelt and Leila Salmi, who worked as interpreters, and to complement the depiction of the multilingual aspect of war with the grass-roots level memories of their experiences. At least just as valuable in this sense were the personal wartime diaries and the manuscripts based on these, which were provided to me by Elina Sana as well as Riitta Attila and Tintti Attila-Hirth. Many thanks!

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This book is an English translation of my Finnish original work first published by the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki. Over the past months, Dr Kathy Saranpa has done an enormous job in making my historical narrative available for readers outside Finland, too, a job I cannot appreciate enough.

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I would like to dedicate this book to the memory of those women and men for whom the translation and interpreting tasks they performed during the war were transformed afterwards into post-war shame—experiences that gave them reason to remain silent, even decades later.

Graz, December 2025
Pekka Kujamäki

Competing Interests The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this manuscript.

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About the Author

Pekka Kujamäki is Professor of Translation Studies in the Department of Translation Studies, University of Graz, Austria. His publications deal with Finnish translation history, translator networks, agencies in Finnish-German cultural-political exchange, and more recently, translation and interpreting in World War II in Finland. From 2011 to 2015, he was the principal researcher in the project In Search of Military Translation Cultures: Translation and Interpreting in World War II in Finland with Specific Reference to Finnish German and Russian, funded by the Research Council of Finland. His current research interests include translation and interpreting during the occupation of Austria (1945–1955). His publications include *Aseveljien tulkit* (Finnish version of the present volume) and the two-volume compendium *Suomennoskirjallisuuden historia* ('History of literary translation into Finnish'; co-edited with H.K. Riikonen, Urpo Kovala, and Outi Paloposki). He is Co-Editor of the book series Routledge Research on Translation and Interpreting History and Co-Founder of the interdisciplinary History and Translation Network. He is also one of the initiators of the FI-DACH research network, focusing on cultural relations between Finland and the German-speaking countries.

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Surveying the Translation-Historical Landscape

Lieksa's train station is bustling. The town residents of all walks of life crowd the platform to witness the arrival of the German troops. It is the beginning of July, 1941, and, just a few days previously, the Continuation War—so called because of the relatively short break after the Winter War (November 1939 to March 1940)—against the Soviet Union had begun. There is astonishment, tension, joy, relief, and even curiosity in the air. Perhaps one person is trying to understand where these troops are from and how they managed to get to Lieksa so rapidly. Another may have come to greet those coming to Finland's aid and a third may realize that he will soon be fighting side-by-side with these brothers-in-arms in garrison caps. Someone may have noticed the uniforms and headgear of the officers and the interested gaze of another could be trying to identify the weapons that the soldiers have brought with them. The most curious of the town's boys have already clambered atop the goods wagon to join the soldiers at the same time as local people have gathered around Lieutenant Viherjuuti to respond to the German's songs of greeting with their own regional tune. A number of those present watch with interest as the military propaganda photographer attempts to find the best possible camera angle (Image 1.1).

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Image 1.1 Troop train arrives at Lieksa Station on 1 July 1941. The Germans are singing; the locals listening to them join in when they know the song. Lieutenant Viherjuuti directs the 'Song of the Karelians' [SA image/24,905, Military Propaganda Photographer Specialist Lönegren. CC BY 4.0.]

If this picture had a soundtrack, we would be able to hear not only the music but also a wild babble of German and Finnish. The German soldiers may be asking each other where on earth the train has brought them from the port on Finland's west coast: What is this Lieksa, this area in the far east, where everything seems different than home? Is it just a station along the way, or have they arrived at their final destination? One fellow satisfies himself with listening to the local language, trying to catch at least one familiar word that he's managed to learn during the long train journey. Those girls and boys who managed to stay awake during their German classes at grammar school are understanding commands and greetings, and they try their best to render them in Finnish for those interested. The boldest are already exchanging a word or two with the foreign soldiers, while others are content to watch what's happening from

the sidelines without an interpreter. Somewhere in the crowd, the Finnish liaison officer is watching everything going on. The Finnish High Command has sent him to be a local guide for the German troops and the contact person in matters concerning both Finnish civil and military officials.

The present study takes this imaginary sound track of language babble as its point of departure. The brotherhood-in-arms that existed between Finland and Germany during the years 1941–1944 can best be considered a multilingual network of encounters between soldiers, officials and civilians, a web which was held together by both soldiers and civilians with sufficient language skills acting as interpreters and translators. Who were these *interpreters for the brothers-in-arms?* How did they come to be used for these tasks? What did their duties include? Under what circumstances and in what kinds of situations were the efforts of interpreters and translators required?

This list of the most pivotal questions already gives the impression that this work's approach to the three war years is above all that of the researcher of translation and interpreting, one who is making an attempt to shed light on a part of the history of translation and interpreting in Finland that, at least up till now, has for the most part remained in the dark. At the same time, however, my purpose is to supplement the way the image of encounters between the brothers-in-arms has been structured in military history research thus far as well as the significance of language and language proficiency in the everyday lives of these comrades, both at the front and behind it.

This researcher of the history of translation and interpreting has thus ended up in the field of military history, and so in the subsequent parts of this preface I will need to outline in more detail not only the researcher's place in the interstices between two disciplines but also the points of departure for this research as well as the materials upon which it is based. If desired, the reader who is less interested in the background of my research may skip directly to the following chapter, in which I depict the main players in the cooperation between Finns and Germans and sketch the *dramaturgical* baselines of the brotherhood-in-arms: following the ideas of sociologist Erving Goffman, I portray more ordinary social interactions between the parties as a dramatized performance which was

directed by basic principles the parties agreed upon and whose integrity in particular the interpreters and liaison officers commanded to the German units had to guard.

The main focus of this study is trained on the interpreters and liaison officers sent by the Finnish High Command to help German troops, but besides the official and military resources, I also pay attention to civilians, in particular the women possessing German-language skills with whose help the Germans filled in the gaps in the language resources either organized by the Finnish High Command or brought along by the troops. I explore the experiences of the women in Chap. 3 in particular, where they are depicted in more detail in the multilingual everyday life which the presence of German troops generated and its need for language mediation. Thereafter, in Chaps. 4–6, I shift to the military resources of the brotherhood-in-arms, which the Finnish High Command deployed between both the Finnish and German troops and between Finnish authorities and German military officials. The liaison officers and interpreters who reported to Finnish Liaison Staff Roi (Rovaniemi)[1] became communicative links for both the troops at the front and the numerous staff members behind the lines as well. The reports sent weekly from their posts convey a clear picture of the gamut of translation and interpreting tasks that were included in the duties of not only the soldiers, NCOs and officers reporting to FLSR but also the women working in the liaison staff offices.

The German soldiers arrived at their northern posts with particularly poor knowledge of Finland and the Finnish people. So that cultural differences and misunderstandings would not cause friction in the wheels of the brotherhood-at-war, the liaison officers needed to undertake educational tasks as interpreters of cultures and concepts. The liaison officers' spontaneous repair work and the propaganda coordinated by FLSR is discussed in Chap. 7, after which, in Chap. 8, the focus turns to an event in which a column published in Rovaniemi in the newspaper *Lapin Kansa* [The People of Lapland]—and the translation produced at the German headquarters—caused a bump in the harmonious performance of the

[1] In previous publications I have used both the abbreviation YhtERoi and the abbreviation FLSR (Finnish Liaison Staff Rovaniemi). Here I will continue to use FLSR.

brotherhood-in-arms. Finally, Chap. 9, 'Snapshots from the Ruins of the Brotherhood-in-Arms', highlights glimpses of the stages of Finland's withdrawal from the war in autumn of 1944 from the perspective of liaison officers and interpreters. The book ends with a summary in which the three-year military cooperation between Finland and Germany is examined through the eyes of a translation historian.

The Individual in Wartime

> The period of Finland's most recent wars has been conceived as a great effort, in which the lives and everyday existences of normal people were subordinate to the fact that the country was at war. As a basic assumption, the war and its goals determined their actions, which they themselves also prioritized according to military considerations. When the perspective of research focusing on wartime has been military or political history, official Finland's history easily predominates. The significant events took place in the trenches or in the cabinets. But the unofficial history of Finland is constructed of the experiences of all people, not only those who have experienced war or violence, and not only those who by dint of age, position or education are expected to have better prerequisites for evaluating their own experiences.[2]

The unofficial history of Finland's war period has opened up widely in the past couple of decades in a way that has brought the experiences of individuals to the fore instead of those of the nation as a whole or the efforts of the troops. Research focusing on war is more than ever research about the *individual in wartime*[3]—about the person who struggled to survive everyday life at the home front or under conditions dictated by the brothers-in-arms, who lived their childhood and youth in the midst of war, who saw and experienced its ugliness or whose spirit was broken

[2] Junila 2000: 33.

[3] Kinnunen & Kivimäki 2006.

by it.[4] At the same time, researchers in military history have shed light on topics which have been left in the shadows entirely or partially, such as secret police cooperation between the authorities in Germany and Finland as well as the close ties between the cultural elite, military leadership and politicians of Finland and representatives of the Third Reich. Much attention has also been paid to the treatment, mortality and deaths of POWs in Finland during different wars. Recent research has thus challenged several established narratives in historical writing, for example those regarding the treatment of Soviet prisoners or the origins and nature of military cooperation between Finland and Germany.[5]

Thus for over 20 years, a change in history culture has taken place in the way war has been treated on the national level—a development that has provided not only new focuses for research in Finnish military history but also concepts and approaches which have given this study important points of departure as well. Approaching history from the perspectives of sociological, societal, cultural, literary, psychological, gender-related and everyday history has created a so-called *new military history*, whose common denominator is the attempt to 'read past the national historical narrative, either by tackling the structures found beyond the level of the events of war, or by observing common people instead of generals and politicians'.[6] Its hard core comprises the myths and symbols of war, memory, reminiscences and fantasies, the gender segregation of violence and the influence of war on gender roles, everyday experiences of combat or the home front, the mentalities of groups and individuals, and the identity conflicts of soldiers.[7]

Nevertheless, there are issues that have still not yet been accessed, even by newer research relating to war and the concomitant broadening and diversification of perspectives. These are the multilingual nature of war; multilingual communication; the overlapping of languages, cultures, nationalities and ethnicities; linguistic barriers to everyday interactions in

[4] See Junila 2000, Kinnunen 2006, Kivimäki 2013, Lähteenmäki 1999, Näre & Kirves 2008, Näre, Kirves & Siltala 2008.

[5] For example Danielsbacka 2013 and 2016, Jokisipilä 2004 and 2007, Jokisipilä & Könönen 2013, Kauppala 2011, Kujala 2008, Silvennoinen 2008, Westerlund 2008a, 2008b and 2008c.

[6] Kinnunen & Kivimäki 2006: 10.

[7] Kinnunen & Kivimäki 2006: 15; Bourke 2006.

the different contexts of war; and, in particular, translation and interpreting as dismantlers of these barriers. Perusing the literature of the field, one gets the impression that the multilingual nature of war, along with the needs for translation and interpreting that it creates, certainly springs forth at the edges of the particular issue that is the focus of the research (for example the treatment of prisoners of war, military alliance), but at the same time it appears as such an everyday phenomenon that the structures it implies, whether unofficial, everyday ones or official and military structures, have remained simply markings in the margin, in the same way as the activities of translators and interpreters, their backgrounds and experiences, and questions of identity related to these matters have done.

One of these margin markings created the initial spark for the research background of this book. The flint against which this spark was struck was Oula Silvennoinen's doctoral thesis *Salaiset aseveljet* [Secret Brothers--in-Arms], which investigated the contacts and covert cooperation between the Finnish State Police and the German *Reichssicherheitshauptamt RSHA* (Reich Security Main Office).[8] The fundamental purpose of this cooperation, which was performed in the context of an anti-Bolshevik and anti--Semitic world view, was to screen Soviet prisoners of war to identify political officials and officers as well as Jews. As in Markku Jokisipilä's dissertation,[9] Silvennoinen's analysis of the forms of this cooperation before and during the Continuation War was a shot in the arm for the discussion surrounding the 'separate war theory', here one of the central questions in Finnish history culture, in which the part of Finland's war waged against the Soviet Union was defined as a separate war although at the same time they were allied with the National Socialists. In addition, the study took a stand on the discussion initiated in Elina Sana's work[10] regarding Finland's official participation in Finland's surrender of Jews to Germany and, more generally, the treatment of POWs in wartime Finland.

What was most interesting to me as a scholar of the history of translation and interpreting was something Silvennoinen found in the archives,

[8] Silvennoinen 2008.

[9] Jokisipilä 2004.

[10] Sana 1979 and 2003.

an item that was also significant in terms of his own theses: Among the documents of the Finnish State Police, a receipt was found for the supply of equipment to the Armed Forces. The supplier was a *Finnish interpreter* working in the operations unit of the *Einsatzkommando* (of the German security police). Silvennoinen depicts the work of the functionaries and interpreters of the state police as well in interrogations of Red Army prisoners of war and deserters in prisoner of war camps in Northern Finland and here and there refers to their backgrounds: They were 'supplied by the main office [of the Finnish State Police] from among a group of people with suitable background and known to the State Police', and many of them were born in St. Petersburg and 'were conversant in Finnish, Russian and German'.[11]

Silvennoinen's work provided the gateway to a research field which had remained an uncharted no-man's land between Finnish military history and translation studies. This is an area in which languages, language proficiency and multilingual encounters—along with translation and interpreting in their different forms—have been a clearly important part of the war's operational totality, from military publications to peace negotiations and treaties. Linguistic activities were and are a part of military intelligence, cooperation between multi-national military allies, the processing of prisoners-of-war and the management of occupied areas. Propaganda, too, was dependent on linguistic practices, whether they were intended to inform those on the home front, the troops and their brothers-in-arms, or used as enemy propaganda to erode the morale of those on the other side of the front lines. Questions of national identity, images of the enemy and conflicts had to be cloaked in language, so that the complex stories could be used as arguments for military encounters, invasions and inhumane treatment of the enemy—just as now, more than 80 years later.[12]

The intent of the present study is to chart this aforementioned no-man's land. It is based on research made possible by the funding granted by the Academy of Finland for the research project 'In Search of Military Translation Cultures'. This project explored translation and

[11] Silvennoinen 2008: 209.

[12] Baker, M. 2006.

interpretation activities, primarily during the time of the Continuation War, in the different contexts of this war: at the Finnish High Command, in the treatment of POWs, and in the brotherhood-in-arms between Finland and Germany, from June 1941 to September 1944. The latter is at the centre of this study.[13]

Specifically, military cooperation between Finland and Germany and the presence of German troops in Finland are being investigated here in the context of linguistic and cultural encounters as a *space of linguistic and cultural mediation*. Both the operational needs of the allies and interactions between soldiers and officers demanded the performance of a significant amount of linguistic mediation in different forms, as did the coexistence of the civil government, the local population and Germany's Mountain Army. To put it more simply: There was a need for both soldiers and civilians with language skills to be ready and able to act as translators and interpreters. The concept of *translation space* comprises a strong point of departure originating in translation studies and translation history: the terms *translation zone* and *translation space* have both been used to depict encounters between languages in multilingual and culturally diverse metropolitan centres precisely as polymorphic places of translation and interpreting.[14] This concept is thus more focused than the related concept of *contact zone*, which is more generally referred to in those social spaces in which different cultures come into contact with each other and which is characterized by asymmetrical power structures.[15] Wars and conflicts generate these kinds of supranational contact zones, whose communicative practices, however, should be investigated specifically as events of translation and interpreting between two languages and cultures.[16]

[13] Päivi Pasanen has investigated interpretation arrangements in Finnish POW camps in more detail; see Pasanen 2012 and Pasanen & Kujamäki 2017. Svetlana Probirskaja in turn has studied the Finnish-language interpreters of the Red Army; see Probirskaja 2016a, 2016b and 2018. The focus of Niina Syrjänen's study (2025) was multilingualism and translation cultures at the Finnish High Command.

[14] Cronin 2006; Simon 2012, 2013 and 2018; Cronin & Simon 2014.

[15] Pratt 1992: 4; Simon 2013: 181.

[16] Footitt 2016: 215.

What, then, were these 'thick spaces'[17] of language and culture, generated by military cooperation and Finnish-German everyday coexistence at the home front? What did these spaces require in terms of arrangements and tasks relating to translation and interpreting? Who were the people who were accepted or commissioned to perform translation and interpreting tasks? What were their backgrounds in terms of family or education? What was expected of them—in terms of knowledge or skills? What do the people themselves say about their tasks? How did they experience the tasks that the war blew their way?

At first, the questions listed above open up a fairly broad perspective on the contents and significance of language skill, communication, translation and interpreting, but at the same time in particular of the actors in Finnish-German wartime coexistence. Thus the questions touch on not only the official structures of the armed forces but also on the linguistic mediation activities of civilians—women, girls, boys and men on the home front. In the first half of this book, space is allotted to the experiences of civilians, in particular linguistically skilled women, as interpreters for the brothers-in-arms. Thereafter, however, the focus of this study turns to the activities of Finnish officers, NCOs and rank and file whose officially designated task during wartime was to act as a link between Finnish and German units or local civilian authorities and the German Mountain Army. As the Continuation War commenced, the Finnish High Command sent German-speaking Finnish soldiers as *liaison officers* and *interpreters* to the German troops. They were to support both the presence of German soldiers in Finland as well as the military operations of the allies in every possible way. They were there as *soldiers*, *errand boys*, *translators* and *interpreters*, but also as Finland's eyes and ears, that is, monitors of the activities and moods of the Germans. As will be seen more clearly later on (see Chap. 4, Military Support Structures of the Brothers-in-Arms), operations were organized in December 1941 under the Finnish Liaison Staff Roi, which under the command of Colonel Oiva Willamo coordinated, guided and monitored the activities of its liaison officers and interpreters placed in the headquarters, commandant's offices and paramilitary support units such as the construction unit

[17] Barkawi 2006: 170.

Organisation Todt. At the same time FLSR, directly connected to the Mountain Army, was in and of itself also a central institution, both as administrator of the connections required by the brotherhood-in-arms as well as the local representative of the Finnish High Command in Rovaniemi.

The role of FLSR as the glue in Finnish-German military cooperation has naturally already been present in Finnish military historiography. However, attention has been paid to its operations rather one-sidedly as well as superficially, focusing on either the military operations of the liaison officers, maintenance of confidential relations and communications between the Finnish and German troops, or the role of FLSR as a source of information for the Finnish High Command.[18] In part, it is the liaison officers and interpreters themselves who have determined this perspective after the war, focusing above all on the contemporary views of their own operational activities. Featuring prominently in these are personal or experienced-based perspectives on local or broader events of the war or encounters with the war's 'men of the hour'. Translation, interpreting or other mediation activities as a part of maintaining the brotherhood-in-arms only occasionally comes to the fore in these stories.[19] In other respects, research about the activities of FLSR has focused chiefly on the reports delivered by Colonel Willamo to the Finnish High Command. What was required on the grass-roots level to maintain smooth relationships between the brothers-in-arms, even before any descriptions of the situational picture ended up in reports at higher levels, has only been

[18] These emphases can be seen for example in Markku Korpinen's Master's thesis (1988), Petter Parikka's general overview (2005) published in the journal *Sotaveteraani* [War Veteran] and Kalevi Mikkonen's brief characterization of the tasks of FLSR (2017a: 21). A more comprehensive depiction of the activities of liaison officers as well as of Finnish-German relations is presented by Robert Alftan in the examples of reports collected in his work (2005) and the introduction to Markku Jokisipilä's study (2005). An interesting exception is also Matti Pörhölä's Master's thesis in political history (2016) in which he discusses how much Finland's state and military leadership knew about the fate of European Jews in Hitler's German areas during the years 1941–1944. In his study, Pörhölä goes over the liaison officers' field reports in a very in-depth manner—reports which contain depictions of the treatment and killings of prisoners-of-war in German POW camps and the related views on Jews espoused by the German officers. Liaison officer reports have been read from the same perspective by Lars Westerlund (2008a) and Mirkka Danielsbacka (2013:255).

[19] See for example Väänänen 1947, Aapa (pen name for A.O. Väänänen) 1961 or Saarmaa 1987.

found in individual allusions.[20] Thus the experiences of liaison officers and interpreters were not exploited very systematically, for example as a concrete critical perspective on those interpretations in which Finnish warfare together with the Third Reich's military troops was framed as a separate war, although they were actually also 'de facto allies'.[21]

In its own way, the treatment of this subject up until now seeps through the dismissive view of Kaarlo Hillilä, governor of the province of Lapland during the war. According to Hillilä, FLSR was only necessary 'for maintaining connections *between* the Finnish High Command and the Germans, whereby it functions primarily as a *post office* and a *spokesperson* [emphasis added]'.[22] His view pushes the liaison office and its staff into the shadows, where they have remained in the middle ground between official Finnish history and research on common everyday experiences during the war, referred to by Junila at the beginning of this chapter. Perhaps liaison officers and interpreters were pawns on the chess board of the global war who were too small to be noticed by research which focuses on the fate of a nation, the reasons for war and its consequences, political choices made or evaluating strategic military decisions post-war. But on the other hand, for a study of the everyday occurrences of war, of civilians surviving through wartime or of dealings between civilians, civilian administration and troops, this 'post office' is consequently too tightly connected with official military structures for any analytical light to reach these people as actors and observers as well.

This study takes up Hillilä's characterization and attempts to concretize it from a point of view that has thus far been overlooked. The previously mentioned research questions, which generally side-step the multilingual nature of war as well as translation, will be joined by more timely

[20] Maria Lähteenmäki (1999: 92, 102) cites individual descriptions of difficulties in backwoods fighting or on the home front by Finnish liaison officers, and Marianne Junila (2000: 203–285) illuminates the same question more broadly, above all based on the reports sent by Colonel Willamo to the Finnish High Command. Lars Westerlund (2008a: 19–20) eventually provides references to the multitasking of liaison officers by noting that, besides monitoring the German troops and brass, 'their task was to assist the Germans and promote their operations through explanations, translations and making contact with authorities and locals'.

[21] Jokisipilä 2004: 434.

[22] As in Hillilä's letter to Minister of the Interior Horell dated October 1942, see Junila 2000: 109, footnote 7; italics are the author's.

questions: What kind of interlinguistic and intercultural agency between the Finns and Germans did the tasks require? Into what kind of *intermediate space* of language, culture and ideology were the FLSR liaison officers and interpreters assigned? Who were they? What kinds of written and verbal mediation tasks did they have, along with those of the entire *post office*? Did the role of the *spokesperson* involve anything else besides the unidirectional service of keeping a finger on the pulse of the German troops for the Finnish High Command?

The intentionally ambiguous title of this book refers to precisely these questions: I will investigate the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms as a space of translation and of both *interpreting* and *interpretation*. In this way, the study extends in two directions. On the one hand, it explores the role of the liaison officers and interpreters as well as FLSR officers as a linguistic link of translation and interpreting in communication between the Finns and Germans, both at the front and behind it. On the other hand, it simultaneously pays attention to how the liaison officers and interpreters understood and explained the brothers-in-arms and the brotherhood as well on both sides of the alliance: Their tasks included monitoring the German troops so that the Finnish High Command was kept up-to-date about the prevailing atmosphere in the units while simultaneously functioning as interpreters of Finland, Finnishness and the mood of the Finns for the Germans during the war. As representatives of the Finnish Army and the Finnish High Command placed in the midst of German troops, their tasks made them interpreters of everyday problems, of both ideological and political currents, and of cultural differences—on both sides of the brotherhood. This is why I will also examine the idiosyncratic educational activities of the liaison officers and interpreters, the so-called cultural explication ('translation') for the German troops, but also more generally FLSR's Finland propaganda, which these educational activities were intended to support in a more systematic manner.

In keeping with its purpose, this book approaches war through the communicative needs, tasks and agents born of multilingualism and multiculturalism and attempts to add one more layer, missing until now, to the already multi-layered history culture of Finland in World War II. My perspective is that of the translation historian in particular, who

thanks to the object of his research has ended up in the middle ground between two disciplines: military history and translation and interpreting history, the latter with strong reference to translation studies.

Points of Reference

Languages, the multilingual nature of war and activity between languages have thus for the most part been left in the shadows of Finnish research on military history. There may be several reasons for this. One has to do with the way in which war is parsed into separate research subjects. The violent nature of war and the apparent distinctness of national stories (narratives) framing it position war within a nationalistic framework of interpretation from the very outset. In this framework, 'we' and 'others', 'ours' and 'theirs' are separated by a clear boundary.[23] This frame of reference pulls our attention away from any linguistic and cultural middle ground that is constructed during wartime, in which for example intelligence is gained about enemies, prisoners of war are processed, or joint operations are planned, and where the cultures and peoples who have ended up either on opposing sides or as allies in a war ultimately, nevertheless, overlap. If instead we focus the spotlight on precisely this middle ground and on the interactions that arise there, it quickly becomes clear that this division between 'us' and 'them' is already present among us. Soldiers of German or Russian background who served in the Finnish armed forces are one example of this: Their language abilities and knowledge of a foreign culture were a significant part of the resources through which the linguistic and cultural middle spaces during the Continuation War remained operational.

The second reason for this invisibility may be rooted in the everyday images in which translation and interpreting seem above all to be neutral as well as subordinated and a subsidiary task to a primary activity—in the context of war, for example, for obtaining intelligence, planning common operations, interrogating POWs or managing occupation. This neutral image involves a general conception of translators or interpreters

[23] Footitt 2012 and 2016; Footitt & Tobia 2013: 1–2.

acting as a switchboard (or to use Governor Hillilä's characterization, a post office) through which the message is transmitted unchanged from the sender to the recipient, from one language to another. This activity between languages is thus mechanical, innocuous and transparent, and so translators and interpreters also end up in a discursive shadow: Since they are invisible and subordinate actors without power, research has not seen any need to pay closer attention to them.

The process is, of course, far more complicated than this. On the one hand, it is a result of how languages have differentiated ways of parsing reality. When meanings are not independent of language but rather based on agreements bound up in cultural and social situations of use and, for this reason, language-specific, they cannot be shaped into neutral and transparent meanings in the transfer from one language to another. When at the end of the last millennium Nokia began to market its new 5100 model mobile phone, which consumers would be able to 'pimp' to their preference with different-coloured cases, the Finnish campaign slogan 'kullekin omansa' (to each his own) was translated verbatim as 'Jedem das Seine' in the German advertisements. This heedless translation, probably intended to be completely neutral, made Germany's Jewish community in particular hit the ceiling and Nokia break off an expensive marketing campaign at its very beginning: It wasn't until this point that they understood that the German-language slogan originated on the gates of the concentration camp at Buchenwald.[24] Thus the differences in languages produce differences in meaning even when those using it believe or hope they are acting neutrally.

On the other hand, translators and interpreters are active decision-makers just as other language users are. The role of the active gatekeeper is highlighted when we consider the idea of language as a tool that wields power, as a resource that represents, obstructs, resists or changes things.[25] In this way, we can imagine that translators and interpreters who operate between two different languages have a good deal of power. They use this power at their discretion—power granted them by one party's lack of

[24] See for example *Die Welt* 15 June 1998, 'Nokia stoppt Werbekampagne' (Nokia pulls its advertising campaign).

[25] Heikkinen 2007.

language knowledge. Characteristic of this power is precisely the fact that the parties dependent on the mediator are not as a rule able to control how it is used: Is the interpreter only conveying what was just said, or are they acting to secure an advantage for themselves or for one of the parties involved in communicating? Neutrality and impartiality are, to be sure, an essential part of expectations surrounding translation, and they also determine the profession's current ethical frame of reference. However, in the same way as other language users, translators and interpreters are actors with 'backpacks' carrying values, meanings and stories into which they have grown or in which they have become involved. The cultural and social contents of these packs also unavoidably determine their actions—working quietly in the background to affect them, or even as their central determinant.[26] Alongside their own values and intentions, they are faced with the operational environment and the expectations generated by it, which means that so-called neutral action is not very often even a choice. Under the pressures of war, any neutral space is particularly constricted.

When Adolf Hitler announced in his radio speech on 22 June 1941 that Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union had commenced, he described the Finnish and German troops as fighting *im Bunde*, 'as allies'. Under the circumstances, according to Mauno Jokipii, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs felt it was better to use the euphemistic translation *kylki kyljessä* (side-by-side, or literally rib-to-rib) in its bulletins, when several days later it tried to appear to have had nothing to do with the large attack that had just begun.[27] Even afterwards it was important for the Finnish government to utilize official expressions of these side-by-side military actions which, on the one hand, would not treat Finland as an ally of Nazi Germany nor, on the other, upset the German side, on whose strategic support (in terms of both weapons and food supply) Finland was in fact particularly dependent.[28] As Michael Jonas has shown, the German equivalent of the archaic and emotionally charged brothers-in-arms (*Waffenbrüder*) was acceptable in Berlin, whereas the

[26] Baker, M. 2006.

[27] Jokipii 1988: 545.

[28] Jokisipilä 2004, passim.

Finn's own term reserved for international communications, the English *co-belligerent*, caused indigestion precisely because of its lack of emotional connotation. Finland's attempt to depict the country's military action as a *separate war* was the result of a similar conceptual tightrope dance, which in turn caused diplomatic headaches all the way to the end of the Continuation War and the brotherhood-in-arms—when the Germans contemplated to what extent the idea of a *separate peace*[29] was lurking in the shadows of this expression as well. Words mattered, for they constructed the progress of events; they did not simply reflect them.

The romanticized image of translators and interpreters as selfless philanthropists and bridge-builders—one associated with neutrality—becomes more clouded the closer the context comes to war and the lines of combat. Instead of neutrality, what determines their actions becomes loyalty to or trust in one's own troops, the requirements of war or prevailing beliefs.[30] These goals become such a central expectation that all methods have been used, and most likely will continue to be used, to monitor the activities of those mediating language. In Hitler's Germany, an all-inclusive political indoctrination system was used in this sense, one that also extended to the training of translators and interpreters (*Sprachvermittler*) in order to transform the National-Socialist fantasies of world domination into reality.[31] Correspondingly, on the opposite side of the conflict in Britain, when citizens with requisite skills were sought after for military intelligence and other tasks, the loyalty of the candidates to His Majesty the King was ascertained through academic old-boy networks. A similar investigation of backgrounds was required of the so-called domesticated aliens, for example in the recruitment of British subjects with German background.[32] When Russian-speaking people were recruited in Finland as interpreters in the POW camps, local civil guard districts performed similar screening and control tasks.[33]

[29] Jonas 2011: 112–120.

[30] Snellman 2016.

[31] For more on this subject see Andres 2016, Kieslich 2016 and 2018, Werner 2014 and Winter 2012.

[32] Footitt & Tobia 2013; passim; Footitt 2019.

[33] Pasanen & Kujamäki 2017.

The discord in expectations and distrust in which the translators and interpreters found themselves, and continue to do in the context of war just as anyone whose competencies connect them in one way or another with the enemy, is clearly discernible in these assurance measures. Thanks to their language skills and their knowledge of culture, these individuals are an indispensable resource, but at the same time a loaded weapon which can discharge into one's own face at any moment. Therefore constant caution had to be used in dealing with these potentially dangerous people.[34] Good examples of this were the experiences of second-generation Japanese-Americans (*Nisei*) during World War II. The United States war machine trained these soldiers from the very beginning in military intelligence and for the Pacific Theatre; however, the country's behaviour changed radically after the attack on Pearl Harbor. This is when the systematic internment of Japanese Americans began. However, this harsh attitude tempered when it was discovered that the *Nisei* were an indispensable resource in warfare against Japan.

However, the distrust never fully evaporated as a result. In military areas or later on in occupied Japan, the *Nisei* were put in teams under leaders who were generally officers of Caucasian background who only knew passable Japanese. They were given the special task of monitoring those working under them. When Japan's war crimes were brought before the courts, among other places at the International Court of Justice in Manila and Tokyo, the attitude hadn't exactly changed: Among the citizens of the countries meting out justice, only few who could speak Japanese were found, and thus the Court was forced to resort to bilingual Japanese citizens serving as interpreters. This time their work was monitored by Japanese-American *Nisei*, who in turn were watched by American officers of Caucasian background. This was so that any possible sympathies for the Japanese defendants on the part of the interpreters and their monitors would not affect the administration of justice.[35]

Selected examples bear witness to the fact that in the context of activities under conditions of war and violence, rather abundant research has accumulated over the past 15 years regarding translators and interpreters,

[34] Inghilleri 2009: 207 and Rafael 2007: 245.

[35] Takeda 2007 and 2009.

and this research has provided important points of reference for positioning this study.[36] The subject has particularly interested researchers in the fields of translation studies and the history of translation and interpreting, but not only these. Scholars in the fields of political history, cultural history and linguistics have also paid attention to the persons with language skills who were needed in war as well as the multilinguistic and multicultural nature of war within various historical and political contexts.

A few examples of historical context can be mentioned here: Spanish colonialism after the expeditions and in particular Hernán Cortez' interpreter La Malinche;[37] the French interpreters[38] who supported the English troops in France during World War I; and the interpreters who were needed on both sides of the front during Spain's Civil War, both the international brigades who arrived to help the Republicans, and the Italians and Germans who supported the Nationalists.[39] Other significant subjects of study have been British language policy in Germany after World War II[40]; in Asia-Pacific, the war crimes of interpreters who were forced into the service of occupied Japan[41]; and the interpreting arrangements required in the peacekeeping and crisis management operations during the wars of disintegration in the former Yugoslavia.[42] A significant amount of attention has also been paid to the fates of those local interpreters who worked in the service of American or multinational armies in Afghanistan and Iraq in operations launched after 11 September 2001.[43]

These contexts differ vastly from each other, and all of them have given the agency of the interpreters their own distinctiveness. But considered from a sufficiently high bird's-eye perspective, we can see how this agency, shaped by war, challenges prevailing images connected with translation

[36] A good overall picture of the subject can be obtained from the compilation *The Palgrave Handbook of Languages and Conflict*, see Kelly, Footitt & Salama-Carr 2019.

[37] Brooks 2001; Valdeón 2013 and 2019.

[38] Heimburger 2012a, 2012b.

[39] Kölbl, Orlova & Wolf 2020, Baigorri-Jalón 2021, Kölbl 2021.

[40] Footitt & Tobia 2013.

[41] Takeda 2021.

[42] Stahuljak 1999 and 2000; Dragovic-Drouet 2007; Baker, C. 2012.

[43] Inghilleri 2008 and 2010; Ruiz Rosendo 2020.

and interpreting. What is at stake are the basic pillars of the professional ethics of today's translators and interpreters such as neutrality, trust and impartiality. Along with these pivotal concepts are, among others, identity, narrative, role, agency and status, and research on these has brought to the fore not only cultural and social factors but also the physical and psychological risks which limit the activity of interpreters, their operating conditions and their ability to cope in particular geopolitical situations. These factors and risks are not only the ethnicity of the interpreter and their assumed or known motivations, but also the expectations and fears of those working with such an interpreter, a person with better knowledge of both local conditions and the foreign language. In various combinations, they cast the interpreter in a very different light: as a resource or a risk, an enabler or a threat, a hero or a villain, a friend or an enemy.[44] In other words, thanks to their linguistic and cultural background as well as their competence and tasks, interpreters and other mediators embody a narrative middle ground, or a positioning between political-strategic views more or less opposed to one another and the expectations of loyalty that accompany them. Considered in this light, the figure of the translator and interpreter could be an interesting research subject outside of the disciplines of translation studies or the history of translation and interpreting as well when cultural boundaries and encounters or mutual overlapping are investigated. This is true, for example, in the field of military history.

Creating a Map

Where on earth can we begin to chart this no-man's-land? This is a question that immediately confronts the rookie in military history, interested in the work of translators and interpreters in war, as he begins to grapple with the subject. For very quickly both the strangeness of the materials and the amount of knowledge needed to interpret them—and thus the way he would have to modify his approach—become apparent. The

[44] Baker, M. 2010.

research questions will have to wait until the researcher himself has learned to move along these unknown paths without stumbling.

A scholar of the history of literary translation has traditionally had at least a set of so-called *primary text products*[45] (the original text and its translation) as a point of departure, and these texts help in finding sources necessary for developing research questions: The translator's own foreword can illuminate his or her background commitment or purpose, and through the assistance of different library and archive databases, even if the researcher has nothing more than the translator's name, this can be connected to their other production, autobiographical texts or even personal archival materials. Information about the publishing house can lead the researcher to its publication policies, whereas the identity of a guest author writing a foreword can provide knowledge of gatekeepers that may have influenced the translation and may tell of the aesthetic or ideological aspirations which the publisher may have attached to the translation. One can also frequently find information about these aspirations as well as about different stages of the translation project in the publisher's archives.

Reviews published in literary periodicals or magazines after the translation appears provide information about its reception and even about the views on translation that existed in that particular historical context. In this sense, the general views in the field of literary history can also be valuable in shedding light on the openness or reserve of each age with respect to currents from abroad. To put it succinctly: The literary translation historian has different types of materials, *relatively easy to access*, that can be combined with their own research needs. They can link translation analysis to a broader target-culture context. They can also analyse the interwoven operational network in a known sociocultural situation as well as its effect on the translation tradition in question or on an individual translation project.

Unlike translators of literature, the translators and interpreters of war are not—at least not initially—visible in any lists, databases or archives. These are primarily unknown soldiers and other individuals who cannot be traced until one knows where to look. The researcher must be carried

[45] Toury 1995: 65; Munday 2014: 65.

along by the events of the war and while doing so attempt to discern more closely those operative and communicative contexts of war which can be *presumed* to be spaces of translation and interpreting as well.[46] Within the communicative scope of war and in the spaces in which languages and cultures encounter each other, we eventually find a fairly abundant number of clues in research dedicated to the treatment and mortality of POWs; the Finnish High Command and the intelligence operations it directed; the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms along with the side-by-side coexistence of civilians and soldiers; propaganda operations targeted by Finland at foreign countries or internally; or the everyday experiences of Finns in combat and on the home front.

Occasional asides and footnotes to translation and interpreting help to place the figure of the interpreter in different contexts of war and thus to expand on the previous hypothetical points where the first markings on the map of this no-man's-land can be placed.[47] At the same time, information about the context helps in shaping those physical, social, ideological and economic conditions to which these as yet unknown translators and interpreters had to adapt their own activities. Most important, however, is finding information about them with respect to units, troops or institutions as well as the key persons who were responsible, e.g. for organizing POW matters (for example the Home Troops Staff / POW Office of the Finnish Defence Forces) or for the smooth functioning of Finnish-German military cooperation (for example the German Liaison Office Nord, established in Mikkeli in connection with the Finnish High Command and directed by General Waldemar Erfurth and, as mentioned above, FLSR, headed by Colonel Willamo). This information finally leads to those archival collections for which each unit was responsible during the war and where one can begin to look for information about both the translation spaces of the war and the actors who ended up there.

Once the researcher approaching from outside the field of military history has finally put his hands on the archival materials, he rather quickly comes face-to-face with the challenge associated with the semantics of these materials, which Luostarinen has depicted quite aptly by using the

[46] For more on this method, see Footitt 2012.

[47] Kujamäki & Footitt 2016.

expression 'another language'.[48] This is not only caused by the difficulties in interpreting texts from another time according to the corresponding mindset, but also by the placement of citations found in the texts into a larger context, either in local military operations or more generally in the events of the global war. The 'special language of the war' that appears in the documents also repeatedly forces the researcher interested in the history of translation and interpreting back to the research materials that initially sent him to these documents. Without contextualization, interpreting the sources becomes impossible.

Polyphonic Archival Sources

The thoughts presented hereafter about the interpreters and translators of the brothers-in-arms as well as other mediators, their tasks and the expectations and challenges related to them, are based above all on the materials that come originally from the archive of FLSR. As claimed in the introduction to the archive list, this 'archive has for the most part remained intact and in its own way constitutes a singular whole in reflecting those extremely eclectic problems which the German-Finnish cooperation needed to resolve during the war years'.

For this study, the collection provides a unique perspective on the multilingual nature of war, in particular issues regarding communication, for which FLSR was forced to find solutions. The material is thus unique because multilingual communication and finding resources for it have strongly affected the organization of the archive and hence the archival visibility of people acting as translators and interpreters decades later. In the material from the Defence Administration, translators and interpreters are similarly only visible in the materials of the Home Troops Staff / POW Office of the Finnish Defence Forces. Thus the material of FLSR, in its own way, confirms the *assumption* guiding the archive search about the translated nature of these military contexts: An issue had arisen out of

[48] Luostarinen 1986: 50.

translating and interpreting that demanded attention due to the nature of the main activity: military cooperation or the treatment of POWs.[49]

As the introduction to the archive list makes evident, for all its uniqueness, the archive is not completely solid. When Finland signed a separate peace agreement with the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1944, effectively severing its brotherhood-in-arms with Germany, the Finnish High Command suspended FLSR, and a significant amount of its archival materials was burned. Documents related to administrative matters, declarations of strength and transfers as well as a part of the liaison officer archive materials from the key operational regions Petsamo, Alakurtti and Kiestinki were destroyed.[50] These gaps are still apparent, not only in interpreting individual events describing the work of authorities but also in perceiving the (re-)organization of FLSR and its agencies.

Despite possible gaps, the documents that remain provide a strong overall picture of what was included in the activities of Finnish liaison officers and interpreters. The most important items are activity reports that the liaison officers and interpreters sent for more than three years from the front or from similar areas to which they had been deployed to support German military or paramilitary units. These regular activity reports naturally contain abundant information about military events at their place of work, the smoothness of the military cooperation and any obstacles to it. In addition, observations about how the brothers-in-arms related to each other are included in these reports, as well as references by Germans to the strangeness of Finnish nature or cultural differences and, finally, to the work of the liaison officers and interpreters as a linguistic link, either between the Finnish and German troops or between the

[49] Confirmation is not found for all assumptions of this kind. A good example is provided by the archives of the Karelian Army (later the Aunus Group). From summer 1941 to spring 1942, the German 163th Infantry Division, led by General Engelbrecht, was put under the command of the army corps, and supporting this Finnish-German military cooperation was a group of interpreters (Separate Interpreter Detachment). Information about their movements and operations is particularly scattered through the diaries and archive materials of the Finnish Army. For more about the multilingualism and translatoriness of the Finnish High Command as well as related sources, see Syrjänen 2025.

[50] For more details, see Evacuation Office Roi's brief in the War Archive, 26 September 1944, 'Matter: Archive losses'. On the basis of the burning diaries attached to the brief, the bundles of documents to be burned numbered in the thousands. T-5872/57, KA. See also Westerlund 2008a: 16 for more about archive losses.

German troops and Finnish authorities or civilians. As will later become apparent, different activities and personalities are conveyed in the reports: On the one hand, there are the *observers*, who leave their own cooperation and role as mediator implicit, behind the events that occur. On the other hand, *active agents* appear in the reports whose goal is to give the most detailed image possible of their own activities for the benefit of military cooperation.

In all of its polyphony, the material is very informative. However, when interpreting it, one must remain aware of the expectations that also frame these reports: They were drafted according to the instructions provided by their recipient, FLSR commander Colonel Willamo (for more information about Colonel Willamo's instructions, see the section 'Multitasking by Liaison Officers and Interpreters' in Chap. 4), ten months after the liaison officers and interpreters began sending their reports to him in spring 1942. As a result of instructions and power structures, the reports can at least occasionally reflect the reporter's attempt to portray his or her actions expressly in the desired manner, not simply as they were in reality. In any event, it is always a question here of a single depiction, by a specific liaison officer or interpreter, of the events of war as well as of the conditions under which they were working as a translator or an interpreter in the way they were commanded; these documents do not help to access the actual interpreting event. Interpreting as an event is lost, and what is left is simply a memorandum of the conditions which required an interpreter.

Other sources central to this study, found in the collection of FLSR, are Colonel Willamo's own reports to the commanding officers of the Finnish High Command and general staff as well as the archival materials of the Command Division at FLSR, where the commanding officers' daily and staff orders are found along with briefs addressed to various divisions of the Finnish High Command. The correspondence of the administrative office of FLSR (Office X) is an important window on military and civil administrative cooperation between the Finns and the Germans. Governor Hillilä's characterization of FLSR as a post office for the brotherhood-in-arms captures the everyday functioning of the office led by Lieutenant-Colonel Carl Rothe quite well, because official correspondence ran through it in precisely this way. The office archive provides

a good picture of both the quantity and quality of the translation tasks applied before the letters and documents from local residents and civil and military authorities could be forwarded to their proper recipients. Finally the correspondence of the propaganda officer working in Rovaniemi for the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command should be mentioned, something that has helped in the sketching of not only the motives of the propaganda about Finland targeting the German troops but also its method of implementation (see Chap. 7, Interpreters of Cultures and Concepts). One of the most central of these was the distribution of translated Finnish literature to German soldiers.

Additional information about the organization of Finnish-German coexistence on the front or far behind can also be found in the various offices of the Finnish High Command, in particular the collections of the Organisation Division and the Office of Transit Traffic. Here and there I have also used attachments to the war diaries issued at the High Command of the German Army Norway (*AOK Norwegen*, later *AOK Lappland*), in particular those of its Intelligence Division (so-called Ic). These are available as micro-film collections in the Finnish National Archive and/or at the History Department, University of Oulu.[51]

Among the other National Archive materials previously belonging to the archive known as the War Archive, the documents and digitalized war diaries from the headquarters of the Karelian Army / the Aunus Group deserve mention: After the Continuation War began, the German 163rd Infantry Division led by General Engelbrecht arrived in Eastern Finland and was placed under the Karelian Army as a part of the attack at the Svir River. The Finnish High Command assembled German-speaking Finnish soldiers as linguistic links for military cooperation into a Separate Interpreter Detachment, which was placed under the command of the headquarters of the Karelian Army with the charge of supporting the operations of the 163rd Division. Their joint military operation also determined the linguistic landscape of the headquarters, and for example the intelligence cooperation supported by the translation and

[51] My thanks to Marianne Junila for her help with the Oulu microfilm collection during the summer of 2013.

interpreting can be seen particularly clearly in the materials from this army corps.

Oral History Materials

When the objective is to portray translators and interpreters as well as translation and interpreting within the structure of the brotherhood-in-arms, and when the previously enumerated materials are evaluated in light of this endeavour, the official nature of the materials is foregrounded as well as both their potential and their possible deficiencies. Answers can certainly be gained to the questions of who was translating or interpreting within which military structures and at what geographic locations, and what kinds of tasks became established under these conditions. Fragments are also found regarding the people who happened to be assigned these tasks that reveal their family background, language competence and work experience; however, they are not sufficient to delineate the person's biography and their relationships in more detail. When the documents are read in tandem with historical research on Finnish-German military cooperation and coexistence, it is possible to gain a grasp of not only military conditions but also the political, social and cultural phenomena that framed the activities of the liaison officers and interpreters—a framework that determined the activities and which in turn was also shaped by them.

In the official archival sources, such as precisely these activity reports by liaison officers and interpreters, it is significantly more difficult to find depictions of the experiences of managing the tasks, for example any reports on the performance of the interpreting task or terminology issues relating to translation commissions. The apparent problem-free nature of the tasks is just as evident as the strong *gender bias* of the material and the story based on it. The image the main archival collections convey is inevitably that of men called up for military service, whereby the civilians who ended up as the interpreters and translators of the brotherhood-in-arms—the women and young girls working in the German offices, construction site boys as well as reservists relieved of duty at the front and older men—are easily missed. This is despite the fact that both more

recent military history research[52] and documentary films and journalistic publications relating to this topic[53] have repeatedly demonstrated interpreting as one of those tasks for which the German troops paid Finnish civilians with foreign language competence, in particular women.

So that the picture of the amount of translation and interpreting required for the maintenance of the brotherhood-in-arms in this respect is at least somewhat balanced, the perspectives of the civilians who had language skills in German are presented at the beginning of this work (see Chap. 3, The Multilingual Nature of the Brotherhood-in-Arms and Its Civilian Links) where the multilingual nature and 'spaces of mediation' are outlined through the experiences of civilians, in particular of women and young girls. These perspectives are based on different types of oral history materials: On the one hand, the narrative is constructed with the help of the description of experiences from research literature in the field; on the other hand, additional voices are found in published or unpublished written autobiographical materials (diaries, memoirs, other texts) and the individual interviews conducted for this study.

The yield of the distinct—if also rather random—oral history materials of this kind are personal reminiscences of the multilingual and multicultural nature of war or encounters with representatives of the foreign army as well as individual stories of the conditions under which interpreting was performed, or even the teller's own experiences as a linguistic resource for the armed forces. They are depictions of day-to-day events, which, although they are so commonplace, are also so remarkable that they have remained in the teller's memory to be told many decades later. As such, they also complement the official perspective of the archives, which increases their weight in cases where the views of everyday experiences opened up by such materials are on one side of the scales and source-critical reservations about the fragility of memory are on the opposite side.[54] Naturally, the same expectations and reservations affect the part of the oral history materials published after the war, documents

[52] In particular Lähteenmäki 1999: passim., Junila 2000: passim. and Heiskanen 2018: 43–88.

[53] Suutari 2010.

[54] Bourke 2006.

in which Finnish soldiers return to their experiences as linguistic links in the brotherhood-in-arms.

The autobiographical texts used in this study are by nature contemporary, subjective accounts of which a part—for example the diary entries of Jyrki Kolkkala, who was deployed as an interpreter in the German Engelbrecht division[55]—were written in the midst of war, as in turn a large portion of the other materials were affected by different lengths of chronological distance from wartime experiences. To mention examples of the latter, reports by Lottas[56] and liaison officers appeared in magazines (such as the *Kansa Taisteli* [Our nation struggled] magazine), in military-historical publications or in anthologies featuring wartime experiences. Their suitability for use as sources for writing historical material is shadowed by the unreliability of memory, as well as the fact that they must always be read as a product framed by the time in which they were generated as well as the purpose for which they were written: Personal wartime experiences are constantly re-lived and re-interpreted both in the light of accumulated life experience and of knowledge framed by the spirit of the times.[57] Another factor is the target for the written experience and for publication. Often these experiences are rewritten as well, either because the original memorandum vanished or was destroyed in the heat of war, or because the memoir is directed at a new audience.[58]

With respect to the interviews, the research project this study is based on was begun rather too late: decades after World War II, the interpreters who served in the Finnish wars were very difficult to locate. As an example, neither the advertisements in national or local papers in Northern Finland nor surveys sent through veterans' organizations yielded much

[55] Sana 2017.

[56] Lottas were members of a volunteer paramilitary organization for women which supported soldiers in different ways, for example through providing clothing and food services.

[57] Junila 2000: 27; Virolainen 1999: passim; see for example Munday 2014 about the use of autobiographical and other oral history materials in research on the history of translation and interpretation.

[58] For example Kolkkala's diaries about the first months of the war suffered severely during the offense phase in autumn 1941, and in copying his writings into a new notebook, he later added information to the events that he had heard as the war progressed. Elina Sana's e-mail message, March 2017.

success. Thanks to small coincidences and personal contacts,[59] I was nevertheless able to find interview subjects, and I was fortunate enough to talk to Lotta and interpreter veterans, already above the age of 90, and to notice how much their memories had kept stored, waiting for that moment when their stories would find listeners interested in hearing them. When I think of the energy and joy with which these interviewees received this guest, because—as one of them wrote—'I still have a lot of memories from those times', I must also recollect those interviews I had already arranged that never took place, because for example the potential interviewee's descendant felt that 'Mum no longer has any need to return to those matters'. In their own way, those interviews that did not materialize reflect the victimization that the Finnish women and offspring born of relationships with Germans were subject to for years after the war.[60] It is difficult to even guess at the amount of information that has been silenced, or which has gone with those silenced ones to the grave.

The value of the interviews is naturally encumbered by the same factors as other oral history materials. The limitations and unreliability of memory arose here and there in this study's interviews as well: When the same issues were discussed repeatedly, some details were remembered differently. Many such details had to be checked against written sources, whereas the repeating of certain themes reveals precisely what the teller, in the moment of narration, feels were the essential factors that defined their lives. As Marianne Junila says:

> Stories or comments that repeat in one's memory in the same way have an important meaning for how an ordinary person understands their own past. They repeat and encapsulate something essential that in the view of an ordinary person was relevant in the interactions between Finns and Germans, either when they occurred or in evaluating them later.[61]

[59] I would like to thank Marianne Junila, Satu Aklikokou, Anne Männikkö and Heikki Särkkä for the newspaper clippings collected over the years as well as hints that helped me track down the interviewees.

[60] For example Wendisch 2006 and 2009.

[61] Junila 2000: 30.

The question of what is or was relevant to each teller is important to ask, both about those interviewed and when approaching other oral history material, published or not. And in particular: Was the act of interpreting or translating of such a nature that the person felt it necessary to remember? There is no unambiguous answer, for although some of those interviewed were even able to provide a detailed image of their translation and interpreting tasks, others focused on completely different memories despite the cautious guidance of the interviewer and repeatedly returned, for example, to praise given by the doctors at the German military hospital, difficult experiences in the wake of the war, or memories of their own mothers. Under these circumstances, sometimes the overriding impression remains that the experiences related to wartime translation and interpreting have been similar to daily meals, things that are such self-evident parts of everyday routine that remembering them felt either difficult or non-essential. This is evident in many other autobiographical materials as well: The narrator is often someone who has already lived a long life and whose interpreting tasks have moved into the shadows of other wartime experiences and encounters as the years passed. The (military) historical narrator also emerges in these stories more quickly than the interpreter remembering past commissions. However, now and again, these tasks also rise to the surface of the oral history materials and complete the story that is possible to tell based on the archival sources—even though they have remained in the margins of the larger narratives.

Other Material

Diaries, contemporary reports published after the war and other autobiographical texts are examples of informal documents which military history research investigating human, everyday experiences has reviewed alongside more official archival documents or instead of them. Other materials that new military history has unearthed are photographs, letters and literature as well as artefacts of material culture that can relay the values and beliefs of the wartime past to the present.[62]

[62] Bourke 2006.

Photographs and a few novels set during the Continuation War also play a small role in this study. In the digital Finnish Wartime Photograph Archive of the Finnish Defence Forces ('From the Front Line to the Home Front 1939–1945'), occasional pictures represent the conditions for interpreting to some extent and supply a glimpse of the faces of individual interpreters or liaison officers. Otherwise, what they provide is rather meagre from the perspective of the present subject matter: There are, all told, very few pictures of interpreters and situations of interpreting in the material, and the greater part of these have to do with the treatment of Red Army prisoners, local cease-fire negotiations or speeches given by international guests. At the same time, the anonymity of the interpreters is striking.[63]

The literary texts, on the other hand, are among those that deal more generally with the multilingual encounters of the brotherhood-in-arms: Through war novels, the contents of collective memory are illuminated, material that provides a connection decades later to the more than three-year period when Finland was ally and brother-in-arms to the Third Reich.[64] One should also mention other types of literature such as dictionaries and text books relating to the multilingual nature of war. These are books that the civilian or military interpreters kept with them, or that soldiers on both sides of the brotherhood used in their attempts to learn the basics of the other side's language.

[63] See http://sa-kuva.fi/webneologineng.html. For more information on the performance and presentation of interpreters in photographs depicting war and diplomacy, see Fernández-Ocampo & Wolf 2014.

[64] The figure of the interpreter has emerged strongly in recent years as part of the cast of characters of literature set in wartime Finland. As examples of this one can mention the Norwegian Roy Jacobsen's *Hoggerne* (2005) [*The Burnt-out Town of Miracles*, English translation by Don Bartlett and Don Shaw], Katja Kettu's *Kätilö* (2011) [*The Midwife,* English translation by David Hackston], Heidi Köngäs' *Dora Dora* (2012) and Petra Rautiainen's *Tuhkaan piirretty maa* (2020) [*Land of Snow and Ashes*, English translation by David Hackston]. The depiction of interpreters and multilingual encounters in Finnish war literature, for example from Annikki Kariniemi, Niilo Lauttamus and Paavo Rintala up to the present day, deserves its own research project.

Lines of Demarcation

It has already been noted that the focus of this study is on the interpreters and liaison officers sent by the Finnish High Command to Northern and Eastern Finland and on the activities of FLSR. There is also room—within the limitations of the available materials—for those civilians with language skills, in particular women, who ended up being a link between the Finnish and German sides of the brotherhood-in-arms under various titles. This kind of focus inevitably pushes the treatment of some clearly interesting contexts and issues to the sidelines, both regarding the present topic and in the broader history of translation and interpreting. One of these is the Mikkeli Headquarters and the content and significance of the translation and interpreting in the intelligence and propaganda operations that it oversaw. Another is the cooperation between Finland's military leadership and the German Liaison Staff Nord directed by General of Infantry Waldemar Erfurth. In our research project, both of these topics were covered by Niina Syrjänen.[65] Threads extend from both of these to the grass-roots workings of the brotherhood-in-arms at the fronts or in the areas behind them, and different aspects come to the foreground in this study as well, particularly in considering the operating conditions under which the liaison officers and interpreters performed their tasks.

It is also worth mentioning the activities of the wartime State Information Bureau (*Valtion Tiedoituslaitos*, VTL) as a governmental propaganda and censorship authority. The VTL will be discussed later, particularly in connection with the educational work that FLSR performed for German troops or when the VTL had, in the Germans' opinion, been unsuccessful in its control activities and liaison officers ended up having to react in one way or another to what had been written in the press. However, entirely its own subject would be the multilingual translation work performed by the organization's different departments and offices: Based on Eino Jutikkala's post-war account, we know that the wire-tapping office of the monitoring unit was constantly following the

[65] Syrjänen 2025. The English title of her study is *Languages and Translation in War—the Finnish High Command as an Operational Environment and a Definer of a Wartime Translation Culture in 1939–1944.*

broadcasts of foreign radio stations, which were collected for the use of Finnish newspapers by 'news bulletins' translated into Finnish by Armi Hallsten-Kallia. The Foreign Department distributed news materials and Finnish-related publications abroad and supported the activities of foreign journalists, for example by providing newspaper reviews translated into their own languages. Trips to the front were also organized for these journalists in cooperation with the Finnish High Command's Propaganda Division. The VTL's own translation office, led by Professor Pekka Katara and later Erik Tallqvist, was kept busy with propaganda materials prepared at the VTL as well: Beginning with the famous author Mika Waltari, a group of writers, including Finnish academics, was commissioned by the Production Office to write their own series of columns, not only for Finnish papers but also for the organization's own series, and many of these were translated at least into Swedish. Materials produced in the VTL were also given to the Germans to use; the liaison officer supporting these activities in the German direction was Emil Öhmann.[66]

When the objective is to figure out who was translating or interpreting during the Continuation War within the structures of the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms, or when one wishes to reconstruct the practices (as well as the reasons and consequences) that affect translation and interpreting, research lands firmly in the intermediate space between two disciplines: on the one hand the history of translation and interpreting linked to translation studies, and on the other hand military history. In other words, in terms of its basic questions, the research is translation-historical, but in terms of the answers to these questions (in the same way as the interpretation of the material), abundant knowledge of the military-historical context is required, beginning with the deployment of German troops and reaching all the way to local or, during the phases of the global war, official Finnish-German cooperation and everyday interactions. For the current study, this means that military history is discussed only to the extent necessary for clarifying the operational environments of both civil and military interpreters and liaison officers. This of course bears its own risk. For professional researchers of military history as well as for buffs, my presentation may seem rather superficial at times, but my objective is

[66] Jutikkala 1997: passim.

that it be sufficient for those readers interested in the translators and interpreters of the war.

Chronology is one of the dimensions that hereafter will receive little notice. Unavoidably, starting with the next chapter and continuing for the entire study, the beginning of the Continuation War at the end of June 1941 and its end in September 1944 set the framework simply because the interpreters for the brotherhood-in-arms were almost without exception active as such precisely during the war. Once peace came, they no longer returned to these tasks. The stories of some of the interpreters and liaison officers are of course loosely associated with the rough main phases of the war, but these phases bear little relevance to the analyses below. The dynamics that were produced by the different phases of the war, and even the changes made in spring 1942 in the front responsibilities of the Finnish and German units—dynamics that affected the everyday events of the war—naturally played out as the interpreters and liaison officers of FLSR were sent from one place and from one task to another, but the tasks in and of themselves remained essentially the same. Thus in the coming chapters I will not be following individual interpreters and liaison officers systematically on their journey through the war. Instead, the focus of my analysis will be on the task profile in *either* the so-called offices serving in the areas behind the front line, the German local commandants and aviators and the paramilitary units, *or* at the front, where FLSR soldiers served as links on joint patrols and battles, as translators and interpreters for front-line staff, or liaisons for German generals. My goal is that a kind of transillumination of the translating and interpreting performed in these contexts will convey a comprehensive picture of the content and amount of translation communication under the responsibility of the interpreters and liaison officers, the expectations connected with their activities, and their pain points. The war, and very particularly the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms as a translation space, will thus move from the shadows into the light.

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2

Cooperation Between Finland and Germany, 1941–1944

When the Continuation War commenced in June 1941, it was also the beginning of Finnish-German military cooperation. During this time, Finland was not only the site of transfer and deployment of several German divisions. It was also an ally to the Third Reich against common enemies. Hitler's Operation Barbarossa had brought these German troops to Finland as had the German military industry's interest in the mineral deposits of the Kola Peninsula. Finland's own political and ideological influences were also at play, as well as the country's efforts to assert its economic and military position.

The first soldiers had already arrived in Finland in September 1940, ten months before the joint war effort began. At that time, Finland was recovering from the Winter War, but as World War II continued, rebuilding the country coincided with the preparations for a new war. In spring 1940, Germany made strong advances in western Europe, and when the Soviet Union occupied Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania a few months later, Finland's alternatives for plying foreign trade and securing weapons began to run out. Given the remaining options, Finland's political leadership chose to avail itself of Germany's support.[1] An obstacle on the road to

[1] Vehviläinen 2002: 78.

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normalizing open relations, however, was the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany, which had been signed before the Winter War. According to an attachment to this pact, Finland was under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence and left the country—to the deep disappointment of both the political leadership and the cultural elite in Finland that leaned in the direction of Germany[2]—without the support of the Germans against its eastern neighbour.

In the months following the Winter War, Germany still acted officially within the framework of the agreement signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov, but quietly detached from it behind the scenes. At first, Germany permitted Finnish exports, but then, beginning in July 1940 at the latest, it also became open to military cooperation as Hitler began to prepare its operation targeting the USSR—with the intention for Finland to have its own share of obligations as well. As a sign of the reciprocal overtures, Hitler agreed to provide Finland access to weapons, and Finland permitted the transport of German troops through its territory to northern Norway.[3] As a result of this transit agreement, the Germans established a maintenance route that extended from the Finnish harbours of the Gulf of Bothnia to the troops of the Mountain Army deployed in northern Norway (*AOK Norwegen*). At the same time, Germany's army deployed a detachment consisting of around one thousand soldiers who performed the logistical, communication and intelligence tasks required for these transport operations. As Vehviläinen has stated, in the shadow of these ostensibly modest operations, Germany was able to strengthen its northern forces against the Soviet Union, performing terrain

[2] Hiedanniemi 1980: 168–181; Jokisipilä & Könönen 2013: 505.

[3] Vehviläinen 1984: 322 and 2002: 77–83; Meinander 2011: 66–69; Jonas 2011: 94–96; for more information about the phases of development of the political, economic and military relationships between Finland and Germany from the end of the Winter War to the beginning of the Continuation War, see Jokipii 1988. The study by Jokisipilä and Könönen, *Kolmannen valtakunnan vieraat* [Guests of the Third Reich], and in particular, its sub-chapter 'Aseveljeyden pohjustajat' [Primer for the Brotherhood-in-Arms] convincingly argues that the transit agreement and the entire Finnish-German relationship of alliance during the years 1941–1944 took shape 'as the result of a quiet process of preparation and maturation which had already begun prior to the Winter War'. Jokisipilä & Könönen 2013: 231.

intelligence operations[4] and building food, weapon and fuel stores for a significantly larger unit—one operating from Finnish soil and arriving later.[5] The preparation phase ended in June 1941 when Germany declared war against the Soviet Union and began a broad attack to the east, reaching from the Black Sea to the Arctic Ocean.

The Soviet ambassador to Germany, Vladimir Dekanozov, was informed of Germany's military operations during the night between the 21st and 22nd of June in the office of Reich Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop in Berlin, at Wilhelmstrasse 76. The notification was given as a memorandum. The ambassador and his interpreter, Valentin Berezhkov, were summoned to the office by the Russian interpreter and translator of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Erich Sommer. In his memoirs, he describes the occasion in the following way:

> Ribbentrop's aides, in military dress, took their positions and raised their arms in greeting, and the Chief of Staff led us into Bismarck's office. Ribbentrop was standing in front of the former Reich Chancellor's desk, and at his side was the chief secretary and main interpreter of the ministry, Dr. Paul Schmidt. A bit farther away there was a small group of officials, at most three or four people. Ribbentrop's barely concealed agitation shone through, but behind his artificial suntan, he didn't seem flushed at all. He took a few steps towards Dekanozov and greeted him with a silent handshake.
>
> Dekanozov was about to begin speaking to convey the notification of the Soviet government, a German-language version of which Berezhkov had in his hands. Ribbentrop interrupted him by noting that he did not intend to receive any kind of notifications from the Soviet government, but rather, on the contrary, that it was his intention to present the Reich gov-

[4] Intelligence-based preparations fell under the auspices of *AOK Norwegen's* Intelligence Division (Ic). In its activity report from January 1941, it reports thorough terrain reconnaissance in Northern Finland and Karelia including the Kola Peninsula and the production of two maps: 'Es wurde eine ausführliche Beurteilung des Geländes von Nordfinnland und von Karelien einschließlich der Halbinsel Kola zusammengestellt, dazu 2 Karten hergestellt' [A thorough assessment of the terrain of Northern Finland and Karelia, including the Kola Peninsula, was compiled; in addition two maps were produced]. 'Tätigkeitsbericht [action report] der Abt. Ic des A.O.K Norwegen vom 1.1.–31.1.1941', T-312/993, OMF.

[5] Vehviläinen 1987: 346.

> ernment's memorandum for the ambassador's information. At a sign from the Foreign Minister, Schmidt stepped forward and began to read the multi-page document. The memorandum began with a preamble consisting of several points, in which the Soviet Union was accused of hostile policies and breach of contract towards Germany, followed by a list of incidents at the border, violations of German airspace and a catalogue of the details of other actions which, as a whole, showed that the Soviet Union was about to 'betray Germany, which was fighting for its existence'.
>
> When Berezhkov, who was standing next to his ambassador, had whispered the translation of the 'ideological' preamble and began to interpret the details and times of the border incidents as well, Dekanozov interrupted him. The consequences of the memorandum were easy to predict.

After Dekanozov left for his consulate, memorandum in hand, a reception followed for the representatives of 'friendly' and neutral states. After the representatives from Italy, Japan and Hungary, it was also Romania's and Finland's turn:

> Hungary as well as Romania and Finland, whose ambassadors Bossi and Kivimäki arrived five minutes apart, had already joined Germany's eastern campaign and during the next two weeks sent their divisions to the front. The ambassadors thus had no other task than to raise their glasses to the recovery of the Romanian and Finnish territory which Soviet forces had occupied in 1940. Kivimäki arrived particularly excited, a stocky, powerful, but rather agile Finn, and at 4:25 a.m. he took the stairs to Ribbentrop in a hurry and, radiant with joy, grasped the man's extended right hand in both of his and shook it.[6]

Operation Barbarossa, or Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, commenced on 22 June. On that morning, Hitler announced that Germany was fighting in an alliance with Finland ('*im Verein mit den finnischen Kameraden*').[7] But in Finland, the war did not begin until three days later,

[6] Sommer 1981: 166–167, 170.

[7] Here I quote Hitler's speech 'Proklamation an das deutsche Volk' (22 June 1941) in its text version as it appears in the key texts and documents of National Socialism used in the course taught by Dr. Kurt Bauer (University of Vienna, Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Kriegsfolgenforschung [Institute

after the Soviet Union bombed Finnish cities and harbours. For Finland, which presented itself as a neutral, Western-style democracy, Hitler's announcement of its alliance was a difficult foreign-policy issue. Formally, Finland attempted to frame its part as a separate defensive war alongside Germany against the Soviet Union and bolshevism, regardless of joint military preparations on the Finnish territory and Finland's tolerance of Germany preparing for invasion.[8] The fact remained that at the beginning of the Continuation War, the Air Fleet of the Third Reich was already operating from Finnish airfields, and several divisions of the German Mountain Army had begun their advance from northern Norway and Salla towards Petsamo and the Murmansk railway, according to the objectives of Operation Silver Fox (*Silberfuchs*). Its task was to ensure control of the Kola Peninsula's nickel mines and to cut off the Soviet Union's connection to its Western allies as well as the supply and equipment line from the Arctic Ocean.[9] Additionally, around the time of Hitler's radio address, the 163rd Infantry Division began to march from Norway towards Joensuu, where it joined the Finnish Karelian Army in its attack at the Svir River.[10] In his orders of the day at the beginning of July 1941, General C. G. E. Mannerheim greeted the troops of General Lieutenant Engelbrecht, newly arrived at the front:

> I am proud of the fact that the military command of Germany has placed the experienced 163rd Division under my command. As Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish Defence Forces, I pronounce the Division Commander General Lieutenant Engelbrecht and his valiant troops welcome to the Finnish theatre of war.[11]

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for Research on Consequences of War]). See http://www.kurt-bauer-geschichte.at. Accessed 14 October 2022.

[8] For more information about the Finnish government's attempts to maintain equilibrium nationally and internationally between its efforts to be neutral and the realities of the brotherhood-in-arms, see Jokipii 1988 and Jokisipilä & Könönen 2013; for the effects of this balancing act on media censorship see Rusi 1982.

[9] Vehviläinen 1987: 345 and 2002: 87–88; Jokipii 1988: 355–513.

[10] Tuunainen 2011: 152–157.

[11] War Diary of the Karelian Army Headquarters' Operative Branch, 7 July 1941. Collection of War Diaries, War Diaries from the Continuation War and the Lapland War. War Diary 14,298. File 45, KA. Cited 12 January 2023.

Point Guards of Finnish-German Cooperation

Once the German troops had arrived in Finland, a Finnish-German joint area[12] was created that remained in force for three years, reaching from Eastern to Northern Finland. Here the military operations and the maintenance of the German troops as well as the visible presence of the soldiers in sparsely populated Finland required effective operational and administrative structures. These were formed and modified both according to the groupings and operations of the armed forces and as a result of coordination between military and civilian authorities.

At the beginning of the war, General Eduard Dietl's Mountain Army Norway (*Gebirgskorps Norwegen*) was responsible for operations in the Petsamo area, and General Hans Feige's XXXVI Army Corps focused on Salla. The German Air Fleet (*Luftflotte 5*) was under the command of Colonel General Hans-Jürgen Stumpff, while the commander-in-chief in Finland was Colonel General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst. By spring of 1942, the German troops had formed their own Lapland Army in Northern Finland (*Lappland-Armee, 20. Gebirgsarmee*) under Senior Commander Eduard Dietl. This group consisted of three Mountain Army corps: General Ferdinand Schörner took command of the XIX Mountain Army Corps in the Petsamo area while the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps, led by General Karl Weisenberger, was sent to the so-called Salla-Kantalahti front area. The southernmost sector at Kiestinki-Uhtua was placed under the command of General Franz Böhme.[13]

The Mountain Army with its headquarters in Rovaniemi (*AOK Norwegen, Befehlsstelle Finnland,* later thanks to a new arrangement of the troops *AOK Lappland* or, in abbreviated form, *AOK 20*), represented the highest military authority to which the Finnish troops were subordinated, whereas the provincial government of Northern Finland and other local authorities were responsible for the region's civil governance.[14] In Eastern

[12] Lähteenmäki 1999: 9.

[13] For more details about the organization of German troops in Northern Finland, see Aapa 1961: 3–4 and 77; Vehviläinen 1984: 323–325 and 1987:347–349; and Junila 2000: 60–67.

[14] Lähteenmäki 1999: 9; Tuunainen 2011: 153.

Finland, on the other hand, the 163rd Division, led by General Erwin Engelbrecht, was under the Finnish Aunus Group up until the aforementioned reorganization of troops and fronts. For Finland, at least in theory, German soldiers comprised an independent and self-contained military community which functioned under extraterritorial jurisdiction subject to German law and which was also responsible for its own maintenance. Northern Finland rapidly became a rear area of the German army, in which its central maintenance, security, transportation and construction units were located. Mountain Army communications and maintenance moved through this area and the Germans also built a broad network of POW camps here.[15]

The number of people needed to maintain operations was significant and the range of nationalities broad. Along with the military power of the Third Reich, a labour force arrived in Northern Finland from Germany and the areas it had occupied. Volunteers also came to Finland from other areas, representing such nationalities as Belgian, Dutch, Ingrian, French, Swedish, Danish and Estonian. In addition to these individuals, the POWs taken at the German front in the north or other fronts represented all of the nationalities of the Soviet Union. A visible role was played by troops from *Organisation Todt*, including *Organisation Speer* and the *Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrerkorps*, which was responsible for transport. In addition, the *Reichsarbeiterdienst* and *Hilfswillige* working groups were made up of both compulsory workers and volunteers. Complementing this array of arrivals were the civilian workers who accompanied the army. Members of this *Wehrmachtsgefolge* [parties accompanying the *Wehrmacht*] included the armed forces' own workers as well as salaried employees in offices, military hospitals and service clubs, comprised largely of Finnish and German women.[16]

The oft-cited quote from the Governor of the Province of Lapland, Kaarlo Hillilä, that the local labour market was beginning to resemble 'the times of Babel', is in this sense fitting, because the Biblical reference highlights both the mixture of languages and the needs it generated for

[15] Vehviläinen 1987: 346; Junila 2000: 68–70; Otto 2008; Westerlund 2008a and 2008c.
[16] Junila 2000: 68–74.

mediation and mediators.[17] All things considered, the presence of the German troops and the labour force of the *Wehrmacht* more than doubled the population of Northern Finland. As early as July 1942, one year after the beginning of the war, almost 160,000 soldiers were stationed in the region, whereas the area's own population consisted of around 150,000, including its soldiers at the front. At the peak, German troops numbered over 200,000.[18] In light of all this, it is more than understandable that in contemporary memory, the Germans were visible everywhere and everyday encounters with them were practically unavoidable, both in northern towns and in remote areas as well.

The presence of the foreign military force was particularly palpable in Rovaniemi, a small market town that became 'the heart of the Mountain Army'.[19] The headquarters of the Mountain Army (*AOK*) and the army's dozens of offices and units including the field hospital, the key service units and, all told, over 60 German staffs increased the population of the town from 7500 residents to 13,500. Rovaniemi developed into 'the most significant German centre in all of Finland', the heart of Finnish-German coexistence.[20]

Military operations, divided administrative responsibility and the coexistence of soldiers and civilians inevitably required numerous coordinated, official procedures for interactions and operations between German troops, local authorities and civilians. On the most visible level, assorted military and governmental authorities were responsible for smooth relationships and military cooperation between Finns and Germans. The German Liaison Office Nord, located adjacent to the Finnish High Command and in particular General of Infantry Waldemar Erfurth, represented German military leadership in Mikkeli, whereas for example Lieutenant General Harald Öhquist held the same position in Berlin in the German Armed Forces High Command (*OKW, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*). In Northern Finland, the most

[17] Vehviläinen 1984: 324; Junila 2000: 74.

[18] Vehviläinen 1987: 348; Junila 2000: 67.

[19] Junila 2000: 91.

[20] Junila 2000: 90–96; see also Lähteenmäki 1999:100; Vehviläinen 1984: 324 and 1987: 248; and Virolainen 1999:17.

important military authorities were the staffs of the Mountain Army's squadrons and Air Fleet in Rovaniemi, Parkkina, Alakurtti and Kananainen. Behind the front lines, the commandant for these areas (*Kommandant des Rückwärtigen Armeegebietes*, abbreviated *Korück 525*) had responsibility for different security and organizational matters such as guarding the German POW camps, ensuring the maintenance operations of the army, handling reimbursements related to use or damage of Finnish property and managing quartering arrangements for the German officers and troops.[21] Working under *Korück 525* were also numerous German local commandants (*Ortskommandatur*) located in operationally central regions such as Alakurtti, Ivalo, Kuusamo and Salla.

On the Finnish side, the provincial governments of Lapland and Oulu and the police authorities represented the civilian administration coordinating the cooperation and determining limitations on the German presence. The main actors of the armed forces, on the other hand, were the Finnish High Command and the liaison officers and interpreters sent to the German headquarters and units. Their work was organized by Liaison Staff Roi (FLSR) under the command of Colonel Willamo in December 1941. According to Vehviläinen, Governor Hillilä took a particularly visible role in determining shared administrative responsibility: In his opinion, the Germans were Finland's allies, and Finland ought to support their military activities in order to pursue its own goals. Hillilä also highlighted the importance of formalities that would ensure that the presence of Germans did not resemble an occupation. In addition, Hillilä emphasized that conflicts were to be resolved by consensus and at the lowest possible administrative level.[22] For larger issues Governor Hillilä himself would be in constant contact with the headquarters of the Mountain Army, but problems caused by communication at the grass-roots level would be left to FLSR or the local authorities to handle. Additionally, Finnish-German cooperative bodies were established to consider policies to regulate issues that caused repeated disagreements. These were 'among other things traffic violations, resolving disputes pertaining to civil rights, the procurement of wood for the Germans' needs, the use of Finnish

[21] Vehviläinen 1984: 325 and 1987:351; Junila 2000: 85.

[22] Vehviläinen 1984: 328–329 and 1987: 351.

labour for German jobs and support for children born in Finland to German fathers'.[23]

The brotherhood-in-arms, seen in the light of coordination of its cooperative endeavours, the delineation of the interfaces between military authorities and the civilian government, and in particular the management of the forms of interaction and clashes in everyday encounters, resembles nothing so much as a dense network of social contacts that directs our attention from military operations to the everyday or ceremonial communicative practices behind them. Here, then, we finally arrive at languages and actors mediating between them. The phenomenon of living side-by-side manifested in many ways, from everyday encounters on the home front to general operations at the front, from individual soldiers working together to collaborative projects between authorities on a higher level. These interactions were regulated by a frame of reference determined by certain agreements, both written and unspoken, which could be described as a compromise framed by certain cultural, political and ideological perspectives at odds with each other. Add to this the effects of local conditions, the national political climate and the more general situation of global war. One part of the framework was coloured from the beginning of the hostilities by Finnish leadership balancing between the 'separate war idea' aimed at the international community on the one hand and, on the other, the rising support of Germany's military actions for Finland's own military and economic reasons. This balancing act determined social encounters in common areas, the *dramaturgy* of the brotherhood-in-arms, all the way to its deepest levels.

The Dramaturgy of the Brotherhood-in-Arms

In his study *The Presentation of Self in Every-day Life*, sociologist Erving Goffman analyses the structures of social establishments and encounters by viewing them as staged dramatic performances.[24] In this dramaturgical approach, the concept of the performance determines all of the

[23] Junila 2000: 110.

[24] Goffman 1959.

communicative actions that belong to the performer's role through which he or she attempts to influence the other participants in routine situations of everyday life. The 'performer' can be an individual or a 'team', a group of people who carry out cooperative work for the individual or the performing teams, in other words in front of the 'audience'.[25] When I think about the forms of interaction between the Finns and the Germans, I see above all how this group, working as a cooperative whole, enacts a performance.

In Goffman's approach, the entire action of the performing group is adapted to the kind of *situational picture* or impression it wishes to convey in the specific situation of interaction. This requires an emphasis on those actions, contents and purposes that are congruent with the given definition at the same time as attempts are made to keep those actors who disrupt or endanger this definition hidden from the audience. The situational picture, in turn, represents a team's understanding of reality, a 'working consensus' regarding whose interests are the most important and whose expectations can be suppressed for the time being instead.[26] Accordingly, this determines daily performances: Issues that are considered essential with respect to the definition of the situation enter the stage in front of the 'public' audience, whereas the group's internal disputes, internal criticism and other 'secrets' that affect the performance and the participants are handled away from the view of the audience, 'backstage'.[27] In other words, the performances conceal any harmful information that could reach the audience and call into question the integrity of the dramatized reality, which would ruin its intended effect. An example from an advertising agency can show how this works. Two agency employees may be assigned to make a client presentation together, and the agency head may ask that they focus on certain strategies. However, any disputes the employees may have regarding the content that should be presented and any heated discussions about accidental slips of the tongue that occurred during the presentation itself are to be left outside the meeting room, backstage. The most important thing is the impression of the most

[25] Goffman 1959: 32, 97.

[26] Ibid. 21, 56, 80.

[27] Ibid. 114.

intact and harmonious activity possible. Indeed, Goffman has claimed that this kind of information management is central to many performances involving everyday interactions.[28]

Goffman's dramaturgical approach provides the possibility of examining social and cultural encounters between Finns and Germans during the Continuation War as 'performances' which are targeted at local, national and international audiences and to which both of the brothers-in-arms were committed. As a point of departure, one could take the situational picture or the impression which determined the entire framework of the brotherhood for both sides of the team. At the most general level, the core of the brotherhood can be described using the catchphrase 'side by side and triumphantly against the East'.[29] For the Germans, the context for the functional framework of the brotherhood was defined by June 1941 through either the repeated daily commands of the Mountain Army commander or the instructional printed materials intended for military use and distributed to all soldiers (for example the *Merkblatt für das Verhalten deutscher Truppen in Finnland* [Instructions for the conduct of German troops in Finland]).[30] Among other things, the instructions emphasize the fact that German soldiers are not in Finland as occupiers of an enemy territory but rather as brothers-in-arms in a friendly country. Because of this, soldiers are expected to treat both the local people and their belongings with respect. In May 1942, General Eduard Dietl, the new commander of the Mountain Army, defined the general principles of the brotherhood-in-arms as follows:

a. Finland is Germany's friend and ally. While in Finland, the German soldier is not master of a conquered territory, but rather a guest in a friendly country. How he appears in public will define the Finns' attitudes towards Germany. For this reason, the soldier must always behave himself in an exemplary fashion; what is demanded of him is military posture and impeccable discipline in saluting conventions. In

[28] Ibid. 141.

[29] Junila 2000: 184.

[30] Junila 2000: 105, 136–146; Vehviläinen 1987: 349.

addition, the soldier must be considerate and ready to help in every situation.

b. The accomplishments of the valiant Finnish people deserve all respect. The Finn is defined by a strong sense of nationality and freedom. He is German-minded. Anything that can offend his national views is to be avoided.[31]

The German soldier was supposed to treat not only a Finn's property but also their character with respect. Despite their obvious sluggishness, the Finn was an intelligent person who would not be particularly impressed by shouting or pressure. The instructions characterize the Finn as being reserved and distrustful with respect to strangers, and their trust could only be won through an open attitude. But for the person who succeeds in doing so, 'the Finn will help them in all possible ways'.

For Finland's part, the situational picture was defined by the previously mentioned balancing act that Finnish leadership pursued between two political aspirations. Governor Hillilä, as already noted, navigated these aims in a rip tide: it was possible to advance Finland's own.

military efforts through supporting Germany's actions, and therefore this main purpose had to be reflected in all of its other operations together with the Mountain Army. At the same time, Hillilä emphasized the importance of dignity in all of its encounters so that under no circumstances would the impression be left that Northern Finland was occupied. In order to maintain this arrangement, any differences of opinion had to be resolved at the lowest level possible among representatives of the military or civilian government—thus, in Goffman's terms, backstage.

Hillilä's conception of the various levels of the brotherhood-in-arms provides the opportunity to parse the dramaturgy of this brotherhood as well into several different 'stages' and their respective 'backstages', depending on how public they were. The performance at the highest level took place between sovereign nations and received the most attention from a national and international audience. Playing the starring roles in this performance were the countries' leaders, in particular President Risto Ryti,

[31] 'Merkblatt für das Verhalten deutscher Truppen in Finnland' [Instructions for the Comportment of German Troops in Finland], Armeeoberkommando Lappland O Qu./Qu.2 No. 1000/42, 1 May 1942. T-17215/1–2, KA.

Marshal Mannerheim and Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler, and one of its climaxes was Hitler's surprise visit to Finland on the occasion of Mannerheim's 75th birthday on 4 June 1942 (Image 2.1). This was naturally touted in



Image 2.1 Adolf Hitler visits Finland on the occasion of Commander Mannerheim's 75th birthday on 4 June 1942 [SA image/89819, military propaganda photographer unknown. CC BY 4.0.]

the media as 'the news sensation of a quiet year'.[32] In *Suomen kuvalehti* (No. 24/1942, a Finnish picture magazine similar to the American *Life*), a photo reportage of four pages, 'Hitler in Finland to Congratulate Mannerheim', was devoted to the visit, and the cover of the magazine featured a photograph of Mannerheim receiving his guest. He returned Hitler's visit a bit later that same month. This event, too, received ample notice despite Mannerheim's wishes to the contrary and the VTL's censorship guidelines.[33] In a Finnish Defence Forces' News Flash, which in its entirety was devoted to Mannerheim's return visit, the article in *Uusi Suomi* [New Finland] was quoted which well depicts the ideological context of the brotherhood-in-arms for its own propaganda purposes:

> It was a meeting of two soldiers, both of whom are leading the troops of their united nations on their battlefields in the fight against bolshevism and who know that the other party is committed, with iron-bound determination, to preserve freedom for their country for all time.

The depiction quoted here reflects the spirit of the times, which breathes a message into the performance. This runs like a red thread from the panegyrics of the state and military leadership of the brotherhood-in-arms to the soap-box speeches directed to the brothers in canteens at the front and all the way to censored public media. When Mannerheim visited Rovaniemi in April 1942 after the difficult winter to hear about the German mood in General Dietl's headquarters, they exchanged all of the pleasantries that the situational picture required in front of approximately 50 prominent guests over lunch at the Hotel Pohjanhovi. Lieutenant Colonel Peitsara recorded the following remembrance in the war diary of the Finnish High Command:

> At lunch General Dietl gave a speech to the Commander-in-Chief [Mannerheim] in which he described in strong words the Marshal's enor-

[32] Perko 1971: 146; for more on the significance of Hitler's visit in terms of propaganda see Rusi 1982: 205–208.

[33] According to Rusi, 'Mannerheim's apparent intention was to use prohibitions to suppress the rumours which speculated that Hitler was demanding a more active effort on the part of Finland in military operations', see Rusi 1981: 207.

> mous life work for the good of Finland and as leader of its third war of liberation.[34] He also assured him of the trust in the brotherhood-in-arms in its fight against bolshevism, finally offering a triple *Sieg Heil* salute to Field Marshal Mannerheim and the valiant, victorious Finnish army. The Marshal responded to the speech by thanking General Dietl for his beautiful words. Expressing his great joy that AOK Lapland had successfully endured the bitter winter in Lapland, he raised his glass to General Dietl and his valiant soldiers. He proposed four-fold cheers to the Supreme Leader of the German armed forces, the Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler.[35]

At the highest level, this stage remained intact up until the point when Finland signed a separate peace agreement with the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1944. After deciding to lead Finland out of the war, Mannerheim wrote Hitler a letter on 2 September 1944 in which he once again sketched the definition of the situation that framed the brotherhood-in-arms. In his letter to Hitler, Mannerheim wrote the following:

> Our roads will probably soon part, but the memory of our German brothers-in-arms will live on. In Finland the Germans have certainly not been the representatives of a foreign usurper, but helpers and brothers-in-arms, but even though that be the case, the position of foreigner is bound to be a very difficult one. I can assure you that during the past years nothing whatsoever has happened which could cause us to regard the German troops as oppressors or invaders. The conduct of the German Army in northern Finland towards the local population and the local authorities will, I think, stand out in our history as an almost unique example of correct and friendly relations in similar conditions.[36]

As Goffman intimates, part of the contents of the performance of the everyday can be directed to the stage instead of to the public, to the

[34] The three wars referred to here are the Finnish Civil War (1918/1919), the Winter War and the Continuation War, and in mentioning all three, General Dietl was giving a nod to the Marshal's illustrious and long career.

[35] 'Report on the Field Marshal's Trip to Rovaniemi 1-3 April 1942', Finnish High Command War Diary (1941–1943). Collection of War Diaries, War Diaries from the Continuation War and the War of Lapland. War Diary 20,880. Files 110–111, KA. Cited 29 March 2023.

[36] Mannerheim 1954: 495.

performers themselves.[37] This has been seen both in the speeches and in Mannerheim's letter: Through visits, propaganda and official messages, the brotherhood-in-arms was performed not only for the citizens in the brothers' own countries and, through the press, for an international audience as well, but also for the representatives of the brotherhood themselves, in order to keep the façade intact. Accordingly, for example, the aforementioned Armed Forces' News Flash contained a description of how, at the time of Mannerheim's visit, Finnish and German officers were getting to know each other and the brotherhood-in-arms was given 'substance whose durability nothing can change'. For the press, then, this performance and its goals meant that it was confronted with clear boundaries for the discussion of the brotherhood-in-arms, the German operations in Finland or on other fronts of the global war. As Alpo Rusi has stated, the press and articles relating to Germany were considered a relationship 'barometer', and keeping the relationship 'on the warm side' required round-the-clock vigilance, not only of propaganda but also of censorship, throughout the entire war.[38] Thus propaganda and censorship functioned hand-in-glove as stabilizers of the desired situational definition. It is known that this certainly did not always succeed, at least not in the way wished for by the Germans: In their opinion, journalists had in many respects too much leeway. As will be seen later on, there was plenty of work in this area for liaison officers as well.

The second level—and in terms of dramaturgy, a very critical one—comprises Northern Finland and the rear area of the war. Starring roles are played by the provincial government led by Kaarlo Hillilä, FLSR and Colonel Willamo as its commanding liaison officer, and the senior leadership of the Mountain Army. On this level, the performance is directed in particular to the local population and the public, and the main theme presented is a smooth and correct coexistence corresponding to the prescribed impression.[39] This dramaturgy became visible in the photographs taken by the military propaganda photographers depicting official events and courtesy calls according to protocol, and thus for a broader public as

[37] Goffman 1959: 110.

[38] Rusi 1981: 271.

[39] Compare 'game of polite interaction', Goffman 1959: 205.

well. However, it was also accomplished and confirmed in the dinner speeches of the liaison officers or on general occasions for the brothers-in-arms such as sports events or the Finnish Independence Day celebration organized in the *Haus der Kameradschaft* [House of Comradeship] in Rovaniemi. As Junila has remarked, Hillilä himself called attention to his attempts to make 'the cooperative efforts at least appear to be functional and good'; the official brotherhood-in-arms presented in a positive light functioned as a model of coexistence which both German soldiers and Finnish civilians could learn something from. As Junila expresses it:

> What really mattered is what the cooperation looked like from the outside. The local inhabitants, particularly in Rovaniemi, noticed the cooperative activities of the Finnish and German 'gentlemen', and the perception of its smooth progress could function for the common people as a sign of how they too should work together with the brothers-in-arms.[40]
>
> Finnish and German authorities strove to guide and monitor interactions between soldiers and civilians on the home front. They functioned as both organisers of cooperation behind the front lines and as models of it. Organised interactions were intended to create and maintain a certain mood, a spirit of brotherhood and morale, through such events as gathering to celebrate holidays, culture, sports, work parties and volunteer efforts.[41]

The common goals of the military and civil authorities meant abundant backstage work. The authorities were continually holding meetings about the principles and flaws of the brotherhood-in-arms and exploring general policies for tackling problems. For example, when in autumn 1941 the unruliness of the German troops and their arbitrariness towards Finns and their property began to affect the attitude of the local civilian population in an undesirable way, authorities on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms addressed the issue. In this way, the problems did not end up depressing the mood to the point of crisis within the brotherhood.[42]

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[40] Junila 2000: 109.

[41] Ibid. 327.

[42] Ibid. 281–285.

The third stage and level of analysis, and ultimately the most everyday one, is found at the front and the rear areas, in the common warfare of the Finnish and German soldiers and in the everyday encounters between representatives of the Mountain Army and the Finnish civilian population.

> For the people on the home front, the brotherhood-in-arms did not remain entirely foreign, profoundly patriotic and a mutual activity pursued by noble gentlemen. Although in speeches it was terribly grandiloquent and even far from reality, in practice it appeared concretely as actions in the ordinary course of civilian life.[43]

Into this normal everyday life of the soldier or the citizen, we must also place the lowest administrative level emphasized by Hillilä, the so-called basic backstage, where all of those disputes and problems caused by interactions that could endanger the credibility of the script had to be handled. The interactions between Finns and Germans possessed many different facets, and as a result, the dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms seems particularly idealized because it conceals various sorts of definitional disruptions, in other words differences of opinion amongst the members of the groups performing (Image 2.2).[44]

If we examine the performance from either the entire group's perspective or from that of its individuals, the Finnish-German joint area constructs a dynamic stage for social encounters. This stage brought together people of very different backgrounds, whose actions were guided on the one hand by military aims and on the other by human needs, beginning with the attempt to manage given the scarcities caused by war. Aims, needs and resources did not always match up, which inevitably also caused friction between the parties. Friction naturally created 'scenes'[45] as a sign that either the performers of the brotherhood-in-arms or their audience were at that moment dissatisfied with prevailing circumstances and thus wanted to blow the whistle on the performance. Some of these events can be or were already explained by communication issues related

[43] Ibid. 2000: 341.

[44] Goffman 1955: 44.

[45] Ibid. 205.

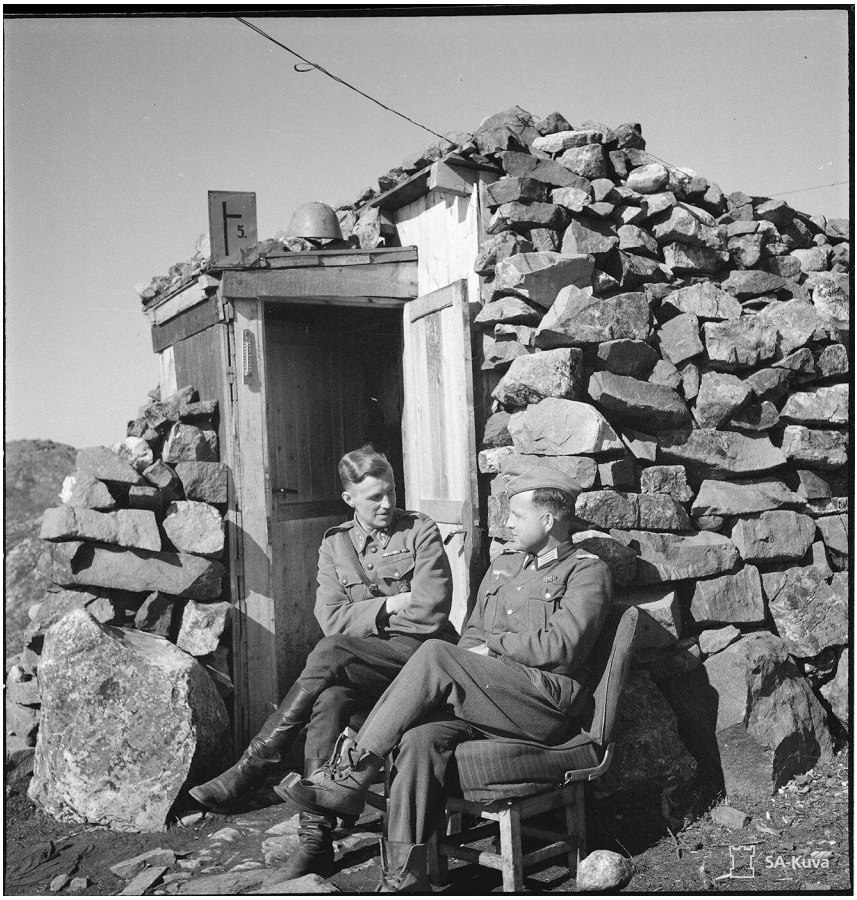


Image 2.2 Unknown German lieutenant and Lieutenant Vartia in Litsa on 27 July 1942 [SA Image/102532, Military Propaganda Photographer Esko Töyri. CC BY 4.0.]

to deficient language skills, for example. Quite often they were also caused by differences in military cultures or lack of knowledge about Finnish history and culture on the part of the Germans or the Germans' disregard for Finnish property based on a conqueror mentality. Just as often, the friction could be generated by crimes committed by Finns against the soldiers or the property of the Mountain Army. The use of alcohol by Finns and romantic encounters bubbling up between local

women and German soldiers in light of the prevailing wartime morality also played their part.

Hillilä's philosophy was to tackle all such bumps backstage, as a kind of buffer—in other words to attempt to handle matters off the agenda before they managed to get out in public and gnaw away at the foundations of the entire performance. The important actors in this context were the provincial authorities,[46] the local German and Finnish commandants, the staff officers of the troops at the front and, assisting all of these, the liaison officers, interpreters and other employees of FLSR. Their express mission was to support general military operations as soldiers, organizers, translators and interpreters, but at the same time to function as the eyes and ears of the Finnish military command, as monitors of German operations and mood. In later chapters it will be inferred from the instructions for the liaison officers and interpreters and in the weekly reports that one of their main tasks was to act as gatekeepers so that grass-roots problems, conflicts or lack of knowledge did not undermine the stability of the brotherhood-in-arms. Sometimes they succeeded well at this mission—but not always.

[46] Junila 2000: 108–111.

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3

The Multilingual Nature of the Brotherhood-in-Arms and Its Civilian Links

The dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms, 'together against our common enemy', played out in the social encounters of the war at its different levels and degrees of formality. In different areas of Finland, Northern Finland in particular, where larger numbers of German troops and their detachments were deployed, new kinds of German-Finnish contact zones were formed over the course of three years and a couple of months. What these zones had in common was a state of multilingual contact and boundaries between languages and cultures. These had to be surmounted in one way or another if there was to be any chance of sustaining the aims and the situational picture of the alliance. Social encounters were thus, above all, linguistic and cultural encounters, and their depth determined just as much the official displays of the brotherhood-in-arms—and the everyday concrete brotherhood that was enacted behind the front lines—as the official and mundane encounters between civilians and soldiers. The central question guiding Marianne Junila's research—how did cooperation with the Germans work—can be focused here on 'How did cooperation with the Germans function linguistically?'. This question first draws our attention to the more general conditions of interaction in the everyday workings of the brotherhood-in-arms. It subsequently prompts

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a consideration of those unofficial or official *translatory*, linguistic and cultural vehicles of mediation on which the social encounters between Finns and Germans were dependent on both sides of the brotherhood. As Kari Virolainen has also stated, the presence of the Germans in Finland created a new kind of social network, consisting of both public and individual relationships.[1] The glue holding this network together comprised soldiers and civilians who had proficient language skills.

The point of departure, of course, is a foregone conclusion: The foreigners brought a new language to Finland, one that also became an essential everyday language for both military and home-front situations. At the same time, this point of departure is as such a coarse simplification when one bears in mind previously mentioned references to northern conditions in particular, the multilingual conditions resembling a 'Tower of Babel'. The multinational work force the German military brought along as well as the POWs taken at the northern front, or other POWs transferred from other fronts, created a mixture of languages that the locals could not fail to notice. When letters sent from the north were inspected by the German field post office, they were found to be written in quite a number of languages besides German, Finnish and Norwegian: There were also letters written in Estonian, Dutch, Polish, Slovakian and the Czech language, as well as languages that could not even be identified.[2] In any event, with 200,000 soldiers at the height of the German presence, German was inevitably the language that fundamentally set the tone in the Northern Finnish linguistic landscape, both acoustically and visually, and which in one way or another people had to be able to understand, either through their own language abilities or by relying on those of others.

This chapter presents above all *reminiscences* from everyday encounters with a foreign language and culture. These provide a view of civilians skilled in language as well, above all women who had studied languages who could thus provide linguistic links in the home-front contact zones. The zeal with which the German units recruited German-speaking women for their offices shows how important they were in supplementing interpreter resources provided by the Finnish High Command as well

[1] Virolainen 1999: 13.

[2] Junila 2000: 68–69.

as those of the German Mountain Army. They did not find their way into archival sources of more official military authorities, although many of them ended up working in permanent positions as interpreters for the German units.[3] For this reason, these women's activities as interpreters for the German-Finnish brotherhood-in-arms are depicted above all through their own stories. Their experiences aid us in contemplating the multilingual nature of the brotherhood-in-arms and help fill out the image of their interpreters, people who in later chapters are depicted in a very military and masculine manner.

'Foreign Words Burst Into Our Consciousness'

In the reminiscences of Northern Finns,[4] there are repeated mentions of both astonishment at the surprise arrival of the Germans and recollections of seeing German troops as an everyday appearance. These memories most likely reflected the everyday feelings of Finns throughout the country on a more general level. 'Well, yes, nobody really knew what was happening', is how Leila Salmi described her astonishment when the first troops arrived under the transit agreement at Vaasa harbour in autumn 1940.[5] Salmi was 17 years old when she watched the first German troops marching through the centre of the city:

> Well yes it was pretty magnificent to see them marching and I still remember the song they were singing then [sings:] 'hi-lee, hi-low, ha-la, hi-lee, hi-low, ha-la', and then their iron boots smacked against the cobblestones and *Edelweiss* in their hats and it was just so gorgeous, it was. They, they said it was mountain songs they were singing, maybe a lot of them were from Tyrol and maybe also Bavarians who were speaking their own dialect, and Austrians.[6]

[3] At least one exception can be mentioned: the interrogation records which the Finnish State Police produced in camps for Finns returning home to Hanko after the war. All returning Finns were interrogated in the camp, and thus also those women working as interpreters who had left the country with the German troops in autumn 1944. For more on this topic, see Heiskanen 2018: 31–42.

[4] Arrela & Rännäli 1991.

[5] The first transit troops arrived at Vaasa on 22 September 1940; Vehviläinen 1986: 218.

[6] Telephone interview with Leila Salmi, 4 January 2021.

None of those present had known in advance about the impending arrival of the first troops to town, so the city-dwellers watched 'gape-mouthed', wondering 'what is this supposed to mean'.[7] And when the German troops reached small villages in the north a year later, it was just as memorable an experience for the local residents there, one that—as Eino Dannberg remembered it—'turned village life upside down in many ways'.[8] In her diary, Tuulikki Soini wrote about how in Parkkina, a small village in Petsamo, all available space was crowded with the barracks of the Mountain Army: 'The Germans' *Feldpost*, field post, is almost right across the street from the kiosk.'[9] Troops being transferred to the front or returning from it were put up in the village schools and the officers in private homes. Those who lived in the towns of the north and at intersections of main traffic routes saw how the Germans established their headquarters, telephone exchanges, railroads, equipment warehouses and even their own breweries or sausage factories in their neighbourhoods.[10] At the same time they tried to understand both the new situation and the people who had brought it with them. As Junila has stated, citing her own survey materials, 'the newcomers, along with their foreign language and strange habits, were "a little like a theatre for the quiet village"'.[11]

The towns and villages of Northern Finland, Rovaniemi naturally most prominently, were provided with the most lively of the plays produced by this theatre. German was spoken on the streets, in the hospitality businesses, in the barber shops, restaurants and construction sites. German words of command or military vocabulary were heard on the street and at public celebrations as well, and the broadcasts (*Soldatensender Lappland* [Soldier Station Lapland]) of the German propaganda company (PK 680), which featured music programmes and talk shows in both German and Finnish, made this soundscape become an everyday phenomenon for many people.[12] Every listener grasped words, phrases or even broader

[7] From an excerpt from Leila Salmi's diary, 'Reminiscences from the War Years'.

[8] Arrela & Rännäli 1991: 76.

[9] Soini 1997: 161.

[10] Arrela & Rännäli 1991: 151, 199.

[11] Junila 2000: 293.

[12] For more about the establishment of German radio stations in Rovaniemi and Vadsø, see Vihonen 2011: 257–259.

language skills for their own language use according to how attentively they listened. As Leo Hynynen recalls, encounters in the Salla region with arriving German troops increased the vocabulary of little boys and filled their pockets with sweets:

> The railroad was finished at quite a rapid pace, the German Mountain Army and the SS units arrived and the aerial bomb warehouses dotting the village were full of big and little ones, maybe several kilos of bombs. The side track and its trolleys were a fun place for the boys to be, and at the same time the place where we first met the Germans. We became acquainted. Foreign words burst into our consciousness and even the 'Heil' greeting flowed just like the real soldiers said it. They must have liked us, because the chocolate, marmalade and bonbons, or candies, never stopped coming. The German soldiers made sure of that, soldiers whose own children were far away and for whom we were partial replacements for now.[13]

The German language also comprised part of the visual linguistic landscape on signs the Germans posted to rename buildings that already existed in the province or ones they built themselves as the offices of the foreign armed forces. This naming 'translated' Finnish properties and places into German military areas and expressed not only a new use but also the arrival of a new authority.[14] German-language placards and road signs reminded the locals of the presence of foreign troops even when there were no soldiers around.[15]

In this respect, too, the most visible presence was in Rovaniemi, where the town's school buildings and many other crucial properties ended up in the use of the rear area German troops: the local schools ended up hosting the *Armeeoberkommando* (High Command of the Mountain Army), the office of the *Ortskommandatur* (local commandant) and the *Frontleitstelle* (front transit office) of the German troops. The town's sports field was transformed into the *Lager Alter Kolonnenhof* (vehicle service centre) with its mechanic shops and housing barracks, and the sports field that the Germans established was grandiloquently named

[13] Arrela & Rännäli 1991: 108.

[14] Compare with the 'power of naming' in Pratt 1992: 33; Footitt 2012: 225–226.

[15] Junila 2000: 75.

after Rommel, the *Sportsbahn Feldmarschall Rommel* (Field Marshal Rommel Athletic Field). As the town's signs changed, buildings appeared in which the health of the German soldiers was tended to (*Zahnstation Heer*, 'Army Dental Surgery'; *Feldlazarett*, 'Field Hospital'; *Entlausungsanstalt*, 'de-licing station'), where soldiers who were transferred from the front or who were on leave were housed (*Urlauber-Lager*, 'holiday camp'; *Barackenlager*, 'barracks camp'), or where the soldiers could rest or amuse themselves (*Soldatenheim*, 'soldiers' home'; *Soldatenheim Fliegerhorst*, 'airmen's home').[16]

When the soldiers arrived in Northern Finland, German culture arrived as well. The artist visits arranged by the German propaganda company and other programmes featuring both entertainment and education—as well as the Mountain Army's own book shop—offered a way to pass the time for both the soldiers of the foreign army and for the local population.

Someone writing under the name 'Reetta' remembers the cinema evenings the Germans offered the villagers:

> The Germans had an interpreter named Alexander Lutter, and every time a new film arrived, he went around inviting the soldiers on leave and other villagers to come watch it. We didn't understand much of them, a word here and there, but the moving pictures and the music were enough to capture the attention of us young villagers. The reviews of what was going on in the war were horrible: ships submerged, airplanes crashing, banging, explosions. You had to watch them because they came before the feature film. Besides watching the films, the interpreter came to ask the older girls to their barracks to dance. The parents didn't really like that very much.[17]

In a class by itself in this respect was the *Haus der Kameradschaft* ('House of Comradeship') (Image 3.1), which was built in the centre of Rovaniemi—commanding a view in every direction—and finished in

[16] Mikkonen 2017a: 71–76, 130 and 179; the second part of Kalevi Mikkonen's study contains a detailed description of the use of land, buildings and dwellings rented to the Germans in the town of Rovaniemi and in the province. References to the linguistic landscape of the town can also be found in Pertti Hartikainen's online publication 'Saksalaiset Rovaniemen seudulla 1940-1944' [Germans in the Rovaniemi Area].

[17] Arrela & Rännäli 1991: 113–114.



Image 3.1 *Haus der Kameradschaft* (House of Comradeship) in Rovaniemi, August 1943. Constructed by the Germans, it hosted German and Finnish-German entertainment events [SA Image/140925, Military Propaganda Photographer Lieutenant Pekka Kyytinen. CC BY 4.0.]

1943. Behind its doors, the Mountain Army's own celebrations were held and Finnish holidays were also spent there. Many cultural events were accessible to locals as well, and some even targeted them directly, such as the Christmas party organized for the children of the area. As a result of its offerings, the *Haus der Kameradschaft*, after it was completed, became

the central stage for the performance of the brotherhood-in-arms behind the front lines.

The 'brother-in-arms' was thus visibly present, 'a concretely existing actor, a part of everyday life in Northern Finland', linguistically as well.[18] The presence of German troops in the normal lives of Finns signified both passive exposure and, now and again, an active familiarization with the new language in very different ways. The children of Rovaniemi got to know the path General Dietl took from his log cabin to the main headquarters and to call it 'Pompomstrasse' (or 'candy street') because the commander was in the habit of distributing sweets (*Bonbons*) to the children he met.[19] For a while, the German language became part of everyday experiences of Northern Finland—at work on German construction sites, on horseback, in the kitchen or office, in commercial trade and informal bartering or '*besorkkaus*',[20] and just as often in more private activities, for example in the sauna, which the Germans visited with local people they had become acquainted with in exchange for bread, canned food and cognac. Children ran errands for the Germans as well as for their parents and other villagers, snapping up German words and sayings for their use by hearing them or by reading them on placards and road signs. And the more their language knowledge accumulated, the more they relied on it.

Olavi Heikkinen was 14 years old when the first German and Austrian Mountain Army soldiers arrived in his area:

> I also gradually got to know those sentries, who were mostly men from Austria. In my opinion, I learned the German language with surprising ease, and thus it was easier to get along with them. I was still attending grammar school and I worked quite a bit for them as a delivery boy. On my way home from school I often brought them post cards, stationery and letter envelopes. I was paid in chocolate and candies.
>
> Then they started to ask whether they might go to the sauna. I asked my father and mother for permission, which I got. I told them right away,

[18] Junila 2000: 304.

[19] Mikkonen 2017a: 98.

[20] A Finnish word based on the German word *besorgen*, which can mean several things including 'procure' and 'take care of'.

> which made them happy. After that, the sauna had plenty of visitors. They brought us loaves of bread and canned food, which of course we very much needed.[21]

Rakel Hyvärinen tells about boys playing at war and their contact with the German troops:

> The boys had played guerrilla warfare all summer. They stormed every train and had learned quite a bit of German as well—these grammar school pupils outdid the secondary school kids at speaking. They were masters at gesturing and figuring things out. So it was no wonder that the boys had a constant supply of chocolate. Sometimes they even brought canned food and other things to eat.[22]

If the German troops' own interpreters or the Finnish liaison officer were not available, people had to get along with non-existent or deficient language abilities ('Neither Maija nor anyone else in the house could speak German, but they gestured in German'[23]). Otherwise they were forced to get help from neighbours or from villagers, ranging from school-aged children to the elderly, whose language abilities were sufficient.

In her girlhood diary entries, Tuulikki Soini describes the arrival of the German troops in Petsamo, who drove straight into her yard:

> The first couple of cars pulled up right in front of the steps. Then the drivers went down to the bluff at the beach and returned with a birch they'd cut down there. Those guys camouflaged their car with it. With Mother's birch tree!
>
> This made Grandma furious. I am sure I will never forget my angry grandmother who went right up to the men, yanked the saw out of their hands and screamed: 'Niht röören, niht röören privatvermöögen' [Don't touch, don't touch private property]. I guess Grandma had learned something from serving Ida's German customers.

[21] Arrela & Rännäli 1991: 95.

[22] Hyvärinen 1983: 285.

[23] Arrela & Rännäli 1991: 80.

> Grandma was able to make the men understand that they needed to get their birches from the forest, and then they left to go get them there. It was the pastor's forest, and it was a job to spare that, too.
>
> Grandma began to ask where the 'offitser' was, and one was brought to her. The man was Hauptmann Singer, who in turn brought in an interpreter for a meeting. The interpreter's name was Willy Caspari. He spoke Finnish poorly, but enough so that Mom's birches ended up being saved. Singer even apologized for the damage caused. He also promised to be sparing when they took trees from the pastor's forest, but many had already been felled to make space for their barracks.[24]

There are many descriptions in contemporary reminiscences of how German soldiers were eager to visit the homes of locals, which of course gave rise to both impromptu and planned opportunities for language learning. Soini tells of how the previously mentioned interpreter Caspari began to come to their home regularly in the evenings and brought along his Finnish-German dictionary, which he then used to teach German in their Finnish home.[25]

The Foreign Customs of the Brothers-in-Arms

Foreign language and strange customs were also part and parcel of life for the Finnish soldiers at the front, naturally. For them, the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms became tangible in joint military operations and fighting, in preparing for them and in their coexistence between battles, during their free time. Stories of differences and foreignness began to articulate these encounters and interactions with each other during that time, and they have remained a permanent part of the Finnish collective memory. The Finnish soldier's own experiences of the brotherhood-in-arms or his views on German soldiers adopted from rumours, recollections of the foreign customs and differences of military culture between Finns and Germans are condensed in these stories (Image 3.2).

[24] Soini 1997: 151.

[25] Soini 1997: 150–171.



Image 3.2 The Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms: boys playing the accordion outside of Kiestinki on 21 August 1941 [SA-image/43671, Military Propaganda Photographer Hedenström. CC BY 4.0.]

In Annikki Kariniemi's novel *Veren kuva* [Image of blood], northern Finn Janne vents his irritation at how German soldiers look in a letter to his wife:

> They have the energy to wash themselves every morning and shave and spray their eau-de-cologne to the point that it disgusts me. I just can't wait until a mosquito arrives soon so I can start spreading pitch oil on my face and beard. Then when they've finished these morning ceremonies, they'll soon be ready to continue on their way, and I wouldn't wonder if they had their 'krakut' [ties] around their necks. So they're all dolled up even here in the backwoods. But do they think this is how they'll win the war? Huh? Those Swedish volunteers who were here during the Winter War come to mind. They, too, forgot their aftershave and their meatballs and their sugar drinks and their cinnamon rolls when the war really got going. So in this respect I'm looking forward to better times because you can imagine what a Finnish man looks like here, both soldiers and officers. Well, you don't

> smell any cologne on this mug and it sure isn't glossy from aftershave, but proper guerrilla stubble sticks out from each and every face, even covering the cheeks of the youngest ones.[26]

In both historical and literary sources (autobiographies, semi-documentaries and fiction) that deal with the brotherhood-in-arms, the Finnish collective image of the German soldier emerges as a smooth warrior who enjoys his comforts and for whom the Finnish backwoods was a paralysing place, a soldier who embraced military discipline and hierarchy to the very end. These experiences are distilled into a stereotypical image and comparison in which the Finnish soldier was at a great advantage precisely in that which was essential in the narrator's context, in other words in the struggle against a common foe: The enemy was conquered by this soldier's superior skills at skiing, orientation and combat, and in the initiative-taking abilities that the situation required, and not as much by military discipline or eau-de-cologne.[27]

In Finnish memories, another recurring story features the brother-in-arms who is well-supplied in terms of food but plagued by poor preparation for northern winter conditions (at least at first). This provided the opportunity for trades between them: Germans got warm wool, Finns a warmer for their bellies—a warmer that apparently even helped rectify linguistic deficiencies as well. First Lieutenant V. Arrela gossiped about this in the paper *Kansa Taisteli* [Our Nation Struggled] in his story 'The Glass Dictionary':

> The interim peace in the autumn of 1940 brought the first German greencoats to Lapland. The 'baubatallonit' [a bastardized German word in Finnish meaning 'construction battalions'] arrived to knock up the barracks along the road to Petsamo and especially to Rovaniemi at such a rate that one wag said that no baldies in Rovaniemi dared to take off their caps, because the Germans were setting up barracks wherever there was open space. That's where the first brothering started happening with these future

[26] Kariniemi 1971: 56.

[27] See for example Vehviläinen 1984: 336; Lähteenmäki 1999: 92. An image of German functional ability that is particularly critical also comes across in the diary of surveillance officer Taavetti Heikkinen2010.

> brothers-in-arms. The beginning, however, continued through the help of 'nixkonjak' [nichts-Kognak, no-cognac, a term resulting from a linguistic misunderstanding]. At the border-guard field, the first canteen was erected where even the Finnish grey-coats were able to get help in wetting their dry throats. There the first comrades began walking with their arms around each other—green-coat and grey-coat, the Germans because of their gaiety and the Finns warmed by the Germans' cognac. There was no need to know each other's language.[28]

The availability of alcohol and its abundant use attains nearly mythic proportions at times in the recollections of both soldiers and the folks at home, not least of all because it was precisely there that both the overindulgence and strangeness of German catering and one of the central stereotypical cultural differences between the brothers-in-arms was crystallized. In its own way, this also determined the everyday relationships between the brothers: for the Mountain Army, its common self-evidence and basic element of catering; for the Finnish soldiers, a longed-for rarity, whose consumption the government attempted to rein in through pricing and sales restrictions. When abundantly used—the Germans enjoying it, the Finns racing to intoxicate themselves—it caused bumps in everyday coexistence: disputes, acts of violence and even fatalities. Resolving and explaining these, as shall be seen later, required significant effort on the part of the interpreters and liaison officers of FLSR.[29] But simultaneously there are also related stories about situations in which alcohol functioned almost as a tension-reliever within the brotherhood-in-arms, a softener of impacts and a relaxer of the Finn's tongue.

A bit later on, Arrela describes his encounter with Hauptmann Manntay, the commander of the Wehrmacht's renowned elite battalion:

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[28] Arrela 1957: 1; a story with the same content can also be found in *Sotasavotta. Korsuelämää 1939–1944* [About war. Life in the dugout], writings about customs in the dugouts. See Nyman and others 1974: 200–201.

[29] For more details see Vehviläinen 1984: 336 and 1987: 355; about the use of alcohol and crimes and vagrancy related to it see Junila 2000: 244–262. In this connection, Junila's way of condensing it is particularly emblematic: 'According to contemporary accounts, German cognac carried Finnish men off the same way German men carried off the women.' ibid.: 244.

> Quite a jovial fellow. When I happened to be working in his battalion for a couple of days as a liaison officer, I got to know him better. Since my German wasn't among the best, before our meetings Hauptmann commanded his messenger to 'fetch the dictionary!' Ordinarily, this dictionary was a glass bottle, but in leafing through it, it was easier to understand each other.[30]

This image of alcohol helping to seal coexistence and filling the gaps in deficient language abilities is, of course, just a part of the larger picture, in particular when one considers the fact that the common soldier's experiences with the 'dictionary in a bottle' in conversations with his brothers-in-arms differed vastly from those of the officers. As Maria Lähteenmäki has described, everyday life for the military brass in the barracks of the tundra and the wilderness went on in an entirely different way, and with considerably better rations, than the interactions of common Finnish construction workers and servicemen with the German soldiers. However, there were sufficient supplies for raising glasses together with the 'comrades', even for the rank and file, on German-Finnish 'drinking days'.[31] Anecdotes about the solving of problems with the assistance of alcohol reveal at the same time the problem itself, in other words the communication issues between two people speaking different languages but engaged in military cooperation. Language, and in particular the lack of a common one, defined the coexistence of the brothers-in-arms and their joint operations, and they attempted to surmount the language barrier through all means possible. Veikko Laitinen recalled joint language classes at the front:

> Our tent was right in the middle of their, as the Germans called it themselves, 'punka' [bunker]. When then as now there was long darkness, there were no lights in the Germans' bunkers, excepting possibly the campfire, so our two closest neighbours were in our tent every evening. We didn't know any German and they didn't know any Finnish, so we had quite a bit of fun during those language classes. Of course, the things you could draw could be sorted out, but understanding some matters was tricky, and funny. […]

[30] Arrela 1957: 5.

[31] Lähteenmäki 1999: 84 and 94.

> In any event, our comrades were nice and polite. Sometimes we went to their 'bunker' even though only one guest at a time could go and the smoke got in our eyes.[32]

Between battles, there was naturally time for soldiers to get to know their combat brothers and their language through gesturing or drawings, but their 'learning goals' were most probably determined by basic human needs. They wanted to achieve a basic level where they could exchange just a few words about food, drink, clothing, the weather, weapons, equipment or, when pulling out a picture carried in a breast pocket, a family waiting far away. Any communication issues experienced during the fighting itself would hardly be fixed by these language sessions. On the front lines, the different military cultures confronted each other at their most concrete in shared Finnish-German patrols, where the Finnish fighters were vexed not only by language difficulties but also by German command culture.[33]

Janne, a character in Annikki Kariniemi's novel, has been transferred together with his unit away from where the Germans are and describes in his letter the cooperation between the 'regular guys' and Prussians:

> To be honest we're all pleased with this [new] assignment. There are more of us who speak the same language. There've been problems in this crew here sometimes. Imagine if you can a German and Finnish soldier next to each other! One of us and a Prussian—there's a damned big difference. But I have to say that in battle we're well matched, nobody hides behind another's back, both move bravely forward. And everything is even, provisions and quarters. The soldier's life is always the same shit a thousand times over when you're at war. And when you're fighting, you don't end up bickering. And how would you even, since you don't have a language in common, and what a shame that the Germans don't have those pithy swear words like our 'fucking hell' and 'Jesus fucking Christ'. Of course they have their own oaths, but in the Finnish ear they just sound like lullabies.[34]

[32] SKS KRA. Laitinen, Veikko Korsu 24. 1973. Translation KS.

[33] Lähteenmäki 1999: 92.

[34] Kariniemi 1971: 129–130.

Kariniemi's fictitious soldier gives one kind of literary testimony to the differences between German and Finnish troops and their lives. Concrete documents about the lives of these soldiers—and their sudden end—are found in the weekly reports of the liaison officers. In the following excerpt from one such report, Lieutenant Luomi reports on a joint patrol which was sent to follow some partisans who had assaulted a Finnish woman.

> In the morning of 14/10 I left with Lt. Col. Wahlin to organise the pursuit. At that time, Pioneer 2nd Lt. Pentti Perttunen was already on the scene together with ten pioneers from Märkäjärvi. There were 1+20 Germans. The unit left, commanded by Lt. Col. Wahlin, to follow the tracks, which could be seen although there was little snow. (I myself received the command to leave to mediate in Kelloselkä, because three of the six Russkies had also been seen on 9/10 moving around in the area, and later at Salla to take care of wounded. 2nd Lt. Perttunen, who spoke German, worked as an interpreter on the pursuit.) The group advanced towards the northwest with the Finns at the lead towards Majavaneva. After about seven km the Russkies noticed they were being followed and attempted to shake us. Lt. Col. Wahl was walking with his runner and his dog about ½ km. behind the main group. At that point, the dog suddenly began to stare at a thicket some 20 metres away, and Lt. Col. Wahl noticed a Russkie aiming a tommy gun, so he dropped to the ground and began to shoot at the Russkie with his pistol. A brief skirmish ensued, in which Wahl felt it wiser to retreat. The Russkies had too great an advantage in terms of firepower. 2nd Lt. Perttunen and his men then walked towards the shooting. He advanced with Corp. Lähdemäki at his side. Once again unexpectedly, fire came from the ambush, Lähdemäki was hit in the belly and fell. Perttunen began immediately to contain the enemy. Circling from the left, Corp. Lammassaari was wounded in the knee. In the final skirmish the Russkies who were already wounded did not wish to surrender, at which point the German LMG put an end to the skirmish.[35]

Many of the recollections and stories of how the German soldiers in the north of Finland were able to cope concern, above all, how mercilessly the military skills of the visiting army were tested in that first year, and in particular during the winter of 1941–1942. The hoped-for

[35] Communication from Luomi to Willamo on 25 October 1942 [T-5471/1–3].

successes remained far from the soldiers' grasp, and they experienced significant fatalities. When it became clear how dependent the German soldiers were on the scouting skills of the Finns who knew the terrain, the image the Finnish wilderness warriors had of the German brothers-in-arms began to deteriorate.[36] Nature in the north created an entirely different stage for the German fighters than what they had been accustomed to on front lines in more southerly climes. Shock, fear, disappointment and astonishment: these must have been some of the feelings that Germans experienced when they arrived at their new assignments in the Finnish wilderness in the summer of 1941. Once the days began to get shorter again, and in particular when the Arctic night approached, it was difficult to keep morale up, never mind to raise it. Lieutenant Arrela describes the mood of the Germans in the Finnish wilderness as follows:

> For them, the forest was *die Hölle*—hell—which terrified them, these residents of open landscapes and cities. It created in them a fear of being alone, which erupted in whiny shouts as soon as the other person was behind a bush, out of sight: '*Max! Wo bist du? Hier Fritz!*' (Max! Where are you? It's Fritz here!)
>
> We understood right away and helped them. Later on, we found out that they had learned their lesson too well. That is, when our brothers-in-arms were forced by circumstances to become our enemies.
>
> […]
>
> On our left wing, for example, there was a German unit with which we became friendly. I remember the young Lieutenant Hancken, who was from south Germany. I remember his heartache when the sun set in the winter sky.[37]

Differences in language, culture and military culture as well as the foreignness of the wilderness in both Eastern and Northern Finland—as well as the physical and mental difficulties they caused—set the framework for contacts between Finnish and German soldiers. The mediation work of soldiers and civilians with language skills was needed from one front to the other, from the combat zone to the home front, so that these

[36] Vehviläinen 1987: 356, Lähteenmäki 1999: 93.

[37] Arrela 1957: 3 and 6.

differences and difficulties in communication would not endanger military operations and thereby cause disruption to the public image of the brotherhood-in-arms. For this reason, the Finnish High Command resourced liaison officers and interpreters to support the presence and operations of the German troops around the northern fronts and behind them, but the workload fell on civilians as well.

Language Proficiency as Capital

Knowing German ended up being a resource which had both economic and social significance. For those who could speak the language, it was easier to intervene when villagers or family members experienced misconduct by the German troops. They could also help mitigate the disadvantages of wartime food rationing and build personal relationships with the soldiers while simultaneously advancing their own economic position in the employ of the German troops. Research on the significance of the brotherhood-in-arms has shown how much the German military forces meant for the economy of Northern Finland—and for the Finnish economy in general—as well as for individual households.[38] The operational needs of the Mountain Army were not fully met by its own soldiers; many jobs for local residents were created in Northern Finland. In addition, the purchasing power wielded by the German soldiers was significant. This growing need for labour was seen everywhere in the economy, and so people with language abilities in German were increasingly needed during the Continuation War to serve in the import and export offices of Finnish businesses where Germans were customers. For example, in the autumn of 1941, there were repeated advertisements in the main Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, looking for correspondents or office workers who could speak both German and Finnish. In addition to being able to type and take shorthand, they were expected to translate, particularly from Finnish to German and the other way around.[39]

[38] See for example Junila 2000: 305–327, Westerlund 2008a: 132–145 and Mikkonen 2017a: 33–37.

[39] For example *Helsingin Sanomat* 16 October, 23 October, 2 November and 22 November 1941.

Young people with language proficiency were also needed in the offices of the Finnish military units, in intelligence and in communications tasks. These units were either subordinate to the Mountain Army or were themselves superordinate to German military units. Kyllikki Villa was one of the young women who ended up in a position requiring both typing and German skills: a signal Lotta—a kind of switchboard operator. As Villa further developed her German skills, both by reading German literature and by speaking with the soldiers of the German units, her German-Finnish dictionary was in constant use: 'The boys praise my spoken German a lot.'[40] Command of German became indispensable by the time she worked as a telephone Lotta at the aerial surveillance centre of the Tiiksjärvi military airfield so that the messages transmitted through the centre on a daily basis reached the right recipients. Towards the end of August 1942, Villa wrote to her mother from Rukajärvi:

> In this connection I remember that I want to ask you to please bring me a German-Finnish dictionary. I've been trying to read a few poems etc. in German, but without a dictionary it's not really possible. It would also be good because I end up speaking it every day, too. Just three weeks ago, I wouldn't have believed that I could speak German on the phone, and now I have long conversations every day. Maybe it's best to really take advantage of this opportunity and really learn German here. Otherwise I can't really say that I particularly like the German men. For ex. they are always a little too well-groomed and slick for these conditions, including well-kept nails, always dressed in tip-top shape with their gloves—our own airmen stroll about wearing ragged jump suits and unshaven etc.—and they feel familiar, safe and reliable. But I date those Stab gentlemen also now and again—not seriously, you know that—also to practice my language.[41]

Language abilities meant additional duties, since the Finnish soldiers needed interpreters to see German dentists, and the Germans needed them to talk to Finnish builders.[42] There was a particularly pressing need for locals and Lottas who knew German in precisely those places where

[40] Villa 2006: 132.

[41] Villa 2006: 175–176.

[42] Villa 2006: 230.

Finns and Germans worked side by side or among those German troops who were deployed as neighbours to northern Finns and whose own interpreter resources, recruited and trained in Germany, were in no way sufficient to meet actual daily needs. Everyone who was able ended up being an interpreter, and as the story of 'Annikki' found in Junila's study shows, an interpreting assignment with the German headquarters arriving in the home village could come pretty quickly:

> After six I ran home (from the air guard) and straight to my father's office, as we used to call it. There, my astonished father and the Germans were waiting for an interpreter, the village's only student, as the Gruppe von Bleyer's headquarters was being placed with us… The Germans thought I was Ilma, the aforementioned student. When I told them in German that I wasn't, I was caught. I wasn't any further along than just starting to study German… But I had to become an interpreter on the spot anyway.[43]

To make a gross generalization, one could say that the further away one got from the ditches of the road-building projects and the more into the offices and headquarters of the German unit headquarters, the greater the need for workers with language skills, and the better the conditions were for locals who possessed these skills to climb the economic and social ladders to a higher position than they could have done in peacetime. In July 1942, one liaison officer, Second Lieutenant Gert Stude, reported the harsh treatment of POWs and also mentioned in passing the advantages the young Finnish interpreter enjoyed:

> It seemed that the prisoners are now being kept under strict discipline, and so one prisoner was shot because he repeatedly failed to obey commands, nor did he do proper work. As the interpreter working in Ivalo, Specialist Bo Gadolin (18 years old, civilian, who has the right to wear the uniform of the Specialist Lieutenant, receives 4000 marks per month as salary from the Germans, also has a free apartment) said, previously one POW had escaped from that workplace, and the guard suffered serious injuries as a result.[44]

[43] Junila 2000: 322.

[44] Communication from Stude to Willamo on 18 July 1942 [T-5471/1–3, NA].

Knowledge of German acquired while observing the soldiers, even rudimentary skills, turned young boys into horsemen, errand boys or even interpreters at construction sites. The pay received for interpreting could be many times what their teachers had received under normal circumstances. The German they learned in public school or at university was sufficient to qualify young girls and women for well-paying office jobs and as interpreters behind the front lines in the service of maintenance units, air force, military air fields and hospitals, the offices of the commandants or the construction projects carried out by the German National-Socialist *Organisation Todt*.[45]

In the service of the Germans, language ability was an essential and indispensable skill. For those workers who could only speak poor German, tasks in the kitchens, canteens, laundries or offices served as a language bath which helped them gain indispensable linguistic skills. When Wellamo Paananen became a waitress in the officers' canteen of the High Command of the Mountain Army, she learned the 'kitchen language along with the necessary courtesies' in the canteen kitchen during breaks in her waitressing. Only very few Germans knew Finnish, so the Finnish waitresses had to study every day in order to chit-chat with their officer guests, at least at the most basic level. As Paananen recalls, she had to be clever and a quick thinker, but the 'most important tool of all' was the dictionary. Her language skills were tested daily, so her 'dictionary got dog-eared in the pocket of her apron':

> While I was waiting on the generals' table, I felt uncomfortable when I wasn't able to give straight answers to the questions they asked. I quickly learned to understand everyday things, but in order to answer I had to ask for help. For example, Colonel General von Falkenhorst had a habit of asking me almost every day how my little daughter and my husband were doing. […].
>
> In order to get away from pointless discussions, I learned to answer the General by using a few standard phrases, changing my tone of voice and my facial expressions, and this made it easy to get away quickly. I would say 'Jawohl, Herr Generaloberst, Danke Schön, Herzlichen Dank' ('Of course, Colonel General, Thank you, I thank you sincerely'). I often managed to

[45] Heiskanen 2018: 35 and passim.

escape by saying 'Alles gut, Herr Generaloberst, Sie sind sehr freundlich' (It's all fine, Colonel General, you are very friendly'), and so forth.

Even the briefest of exchanges and pleasantries were noticed, and through their repetition, they created an everyday camaraderie between general and waitress. The fruits of this were the packages Wellamo Paananen was able to send to her small daughter, full of chocolate, sweets, jam and other delicacies.[46]

The exchange value of this language capital was not only seen in large salaries but also in other benefits such as princely provisions and the amassing of cultural capital: The jobs offered by the brothers-in-arms also introduced Finns to different kinds of customs and manners, and at the same time an entrance to the brothers' cultural events opened up the larger world beyond the one the workers had experienced up to that point.[47] The experiences that Leila Salmi recalls are good examples of this.

'I Left Because I Wanted to Use This German Language'

When the Mountain Army's Jaeger troops marched in downtown Vaasa in the autumn of 1940, Leila Salmi wasn't hearing German songs for the first time in her life.[48] The language bug had already bitten Salmi when she was a child. Returning from a business trip to Germany, her father had brought a child's gramophone as a gift as well as a number of records of German children's songs. Together with her brother, she listened to the songs and sang along, and the words stayed with her. They inspired an interest in the little girl to learn other languages besides German. And

[46] Paananen 1998: 95, 103, 105 and 117; more about Paananen in Heiskanen 2018: 67–68.

[47] Lähteenmäki 1999: 117, Junila 2000: 315, passim., Heiskanen 2009: 154.

[48] This story told by Leila Salmi (née Rajala) is based on an extract from Salmi's diary, 'Recollections from the War Years', the published story based on it in a work edited by Soilikki Suoranta, *Lottatoimintaa Vaasassa vuosina 1919–1945* (Lotta activities in Vaasa during the years 1919–1945, 2016), Anne Laurila's article in the newspaper *Ilkka-Pohjalainen* (Ilkka-Ostrobothnian, 20 September 2020) and, in particular, a phone interview with Leila Salmi on 4 January 2021. The quotations are all from the transcript of this interview. I would like to thank Leila Salmi warmly for the interview and for the materials she gave me to use.

when she learned both Swedish and Finnish at the same time, both at home and then in Vaasa, it was easy to 'struggle with other languages since I knew two of them as a small child'. Salmi's interest in languages was so keen that when the language programme at the Vaasa co-ed school did not work out for her, she felt it was wiser to transfer to the business school after her fifth year, because more languages were offered there.

> Well, there was Swedish first and Swedish trade correspondence, German, German trade correspondence and English and English trade correspondence. This was very different from normal language, because there you learn all of these in order to be a professional correspondent.

She benefitted from the skills she learned both during the war and in particular afterwards, when Salmi managed the foreign correspondence for a local mill. Before that, she accumulated her life and work experience in the employ of the German troops in Rovaniemi.

An old schoolmate who was working at what would become Salmi's workplace in the north got in touch with her and told her that the German Mountain Army needed a German-speaking correspondence clerk and interpreter as soon as possible for a local construction unit (*Heeresbaudienststelle 123)* in Rovaniemi. The Finnish engineer who had held the position up to then was unable to continue moving about from one construction site to the next because of his advanced age

> […] and he sat there in the office and needed a person who could go to the construction sites and interpret between the builders and their developers, for conducting their business, and also to take care of the correspondence for them.

The job description was just what Leila Salmi needed—the opportunity to practise her language and her independence. Salmi's mother had been left a young widow and perhaps this is why she was very protective and not happy about her daughter's plans, but the 20-year-old was not easy to convince otherwise. However, her mother's mind was eventually put at ease when she visited Leila in Rovaniemi and saw how comfortably her daughter's situation had been arranged. Helping matters, too, were the letters and packages sent from Rovaniemi which contained goods

from the German canteen. These gave Leila's mother good currency for exchange in her home region: 'among other things from the canteen she got Cointreau liqueur, which had been plundered from the French and other fine beverages, so I sent them to my mother then.' The Germans took such good care of their labour force that it remained in her memory permanently. Her salary was much higher than back home in Vaasa, and in addition

> […] it included food and lodging, and then all of my doctor and dentist appointments were taken care of. And first we got studs nailed into our shoes and our ski boots too when the time came, and everything was taken care of, and they gave us *Alpensonne* ['Alpine sun'] in the winter and vitamins and such. So they took such wonderful care of us in every way, and there was good food.

Her job description included 'the usual office work' or trade correspondence with Finnish companies who were providing materials and supplies to the Germans. In addition, Salmi travelled by car to the numerous construction sites where she interpreted between the Finnish labourers or 'dowsers' and the German engineers. The Finnish workers also came to her office about building supplies, for example, and the names of the supplies and tools she used while interpreting stayed 'indelibly in my mind'. Her work went smoothly, because 'the language these construction workers used was rather simple, after all'.[49]

Her colleagues were the women on the payroll of the German headquarters (*Stabshelferinnen*) with whom Salmi also lived for most of the time. A group of military specialists and officers was also working for the German unit, and their professions as civilians had been engineers and architects, a peaceful group—with the exception of one tough, bossy member of the SS—who worked together and organized relaxing evenings, sang many German *Schlagers* or went skiing in the hills nearby. Much time was also spent at the *Haus der Kameradschaft,* whose *Kraft durch Freude* ('power through joy') programme of concerts, operas and

[49] In our interview, Leila Salmi recited long litanies of German-language vocabulary pertaining to building materials and tools—from memory.

theatre visits along with other 'valuable programming' spiced up everyday life. 'It sure made the time pass', as Leila Salmi said.

Almost 80 years later, Salmi could still recall her experiences during the war years working as a correspondent at the *Heeresbaudienststelle* and as a construction-site interpreter quite clearly, and warmly. 'The people there were so lovely and friendly […] that I remember that time with great fondness, that it was so wonderful to be there.' These good memories could not even be dimmed by the frightening and 'terrible time' that ensued right after the war when 'I wasn't even able to dream of telling anyone publicly that I had been working for the Germans.'[50]

'You Have to Try Everything'—A Medical Lotta at the German Air Force Hospital

All over Finland, the operational abilities of the Finnish military hospitals as well as the POW hospitals and the German military hospitals were in many ways dependent on the efforts of Finnish women who volunteered. One of these was Raili Åkerfelt, who spent her war years as a medical Lotta among the Finnish, Soviet and German wounded.[51]

Åkerfelt was studying English, German and Swedish at the University of Helsinki, and she had just finished her bachelor's degree when at the end of November, the Winter War forced her to interrupt her studies. Åkerfelt ended up working in aerial surveillance, but her memories of the first months of the war also touch on experiences in Southern Finland at the military hospital established in a local club house and in the foreign

[50] Salmi 2016: 174.

[51] Raili Åkerfelt's story is based on her own manuscript, 'Kolme komennusta' (Three assignments, Åkerfelt 1995, first published in 1989 in Pentti Eertamo, ed., *Lohjalaista vapautta turvaamassa 1939–1945* [Ensuring the freedom of the people of Lohja], Jukka Nurmilaakso's article 'Olimme Suomen asialla' (We strove for Finland) in the paper *Länsi-Uusimaa* (Western Uusimaa, 24 November 2012) and Åkerfelt's interview at her home in Lohja 22 July 2013. In all three sources, the chronology is narrated somewhat differently, but I am basing my version on the oldest source. All quotes, however, are from the aforementioned interview. It is interesting that in the first version of her story, which appeared in 1989, Åkerfelt does not address her German abilities at all, and in particular her work as an interpreter is not mentioned until the interview. I think about this Lotta veteran, already back then 97 years old, with warmth, and I would like to express my gratitude for permission to use the memories of her experiences in my study.

ambulance unit, in particular as a German interpreter for a doctor in the town of Lohja:

> And also, now I remember, the German ambulance came to Finland, also. It had doctors, nurses and so that's how I became one doctor's interpreter, so I always went with him on his rounds.

This was probably one of the working groups from the surgical medical unit sent by the Swiss Red Cross. A group consisting of ten surgeons, eight nurses and two medics arrived in Finland at the beginning of March 1940 and brought enough supplies to care for 500 patients. The operation was begun at the Finnish Red Cross hospital in Helsinki and at the Pälksaari military hospital (25th SotaS). After the war ended, patient care for the wounded continued in Helsinki as well as in Lohja and Nummela in Vihti.[52]

Åkerfelt brought up two memories in particular from her experiences as an interpreter for the Swiss doctor. In one of these, the young Finnish interpreter had advised the hotel staff in Lohja about how to heat the doctor's room, because he was afraid of carbon monoxide poisoning. In the second, she talked about the everyday routine of patient care from the perspective of an interpreter unaccustomed to the surgical procedures performed by the group of doctors:

> And once I had to, well this doesn't have to do with medical care, but the one doctor was staying at the hotel, the one whose interpreter I was, and once he asked me to come to the hotel to explain something, because there, well, he claimed that there were carbon monoxide fumes in his room, because of course there was wood heating, and I had to explain to them, don't shut the damper too early. That it seemed like they were only trying to get the doctor's room as warm as possible. […].
>
> Well then, it was like this, that the hardest thing of all was when I, when I had to go into the operating room with the doctor, and the patients spoke Finnish, and I always had to be there, be at their side and ask the patient, if he could manage, if he could answer, and, well, it was such a tricky thing, because that club house was never meant to be a hospital, and there was

[52] Forsius 2003 and 2011.

> poor lighting, for example there in that room, which had been chosen for the operating room. So that the doctor demanded 'more light, more light', and when they found some table lamp then and when I had to stand on a chair holding the table lamp when the doctor was operating there at the operating table, and on the first day, the first day I shoved, shoved the lamp on someone next to me and ran out the door for a little while and then I came back, and after that I didn't feel sick during surgeries. … So you have to try everything, this kind of thing, I got to experience that too.

Åkerfelt's work as an interpreter ended in May 1940 when the Swiss medical unit returned home. During the interim between the Winter War and the Continuation War, she continued her studies for a while and attended a medical Lotta course 'together with her cousin' in Helsinki. This practically made her specialized for work at military hospitals. As Åkerfelt herself said, 'I got the training and the following years also went more easily although they were difficult otherwise.'

These difficult times began with the Continuation War, and in December 1941 Åkerfelt was sent to the field hospital at the Svir River as a medical Lotta. The exhausting nursing work soon took its toll, and she ended up leaving the field hospital in the late winter of 1942. She spent her convalescence as a classroom language teacher at the co-educational school in Lohja, but already by the end of June she was sent along with three other Lottas to Kemi. Lottas with language skills were now needed in the military hospital of the German Air Fleet (*Ortslazarett der Luftwaffe*), just outside of the city of Kemi. There were German doctors and Finnish head nurses at the hospital as well as Finnish and German Lottas (*Schwester* in German). The latter worked either in a medical capacity or in the kitchen. Åkerfelt ended up in the specialized internal medicine and surgery ward, but was also sent to the eye clinic to care for the wounded there.

In her earlier writings as well as in journal articles published later, Åkerfelt describes her assignment through the eyes of a medical Lotta involved in medical work, but in the interview done for this study, what unexpectedly came to the fore in her memories was the German language and the work of an interpreter in particular. When asked about her daily routine and use of German, Lotta Åkerfelt answered as follows:

> It was this, this way, that those patients, I went with them when the patients started to get ready for their day—and then I didn't end up taking care of them. You see, I was just an interpreter the whole time there.

Åkerfelt gradually put together pieces from her memory in which she ended up not only performing care work but also interpreting between Finnish medical Lottas who at best had passable language skills ('unless they could speak it, as they'd studied it in school, too') and German nurses and doctors. But she also functioned as a linguistic link between the Finnish Lottas and the German patients, or the wounded Finnish soldiers and the German doctors when determining the extent of the former's injuries and in establishing care routines:

> Well, the patients were always asked, when I had to ask them then, I was along with the nurse and, well, there were, were a few Finnish patients too, of course, yes, then, and they told me about how they would rather have Finnish nurses because they're a lot more clever.

The labour of Finnish nurses was required because there weren't enough German ones for all the hospitals along the broad front, but during our interview, Åkerfelt repeatedly mentioned the way Finnish nurses and medical Lottas were appreciated in the German military hospitals. As she recalls, the Germans had noticed how 'they hadn't received as good an education at all as we did in Finland'. This is also why Finnish nurses were a sought-after resource in German military hospitals.

Interpreting work felt difficult, particularly at first, but gradually it began to flow smoothly. What caused trouble in nursing was the need for medical terminology, which she 'had to learn right away', but in addition there were difficulties with the German patients' individual dialects—understanding them took time:

> Well, it was like this, that several, several speak a little, and in particular not all the patients speak standard German, so they always speak the dialect of their own regions, and there were also Austrians, and their language is a little different.

While learning medical vocabulary, the 'Latin dictionary' that she had received during her medical Lotta course in Helsinki was a good help.

This was a medical dictionary for Latin and German, which as Åkerfelt remembers had been compiled by the central committee of the Lottas specifically for those women who were assigned to work in German hospitals. The Latin she had learned at university ended up being used in her everyday life:

> Fortunately back then when I studied language, you had to take two introductory courses which were called pro-studies. One was Latin and the other was the language you were going to start studying, another language, so the basic Latin vocabulary stuck in my head somehow anyway.

The posting to Kemi was interrupted in the winter, and for a few months Åkerfelt concentrated on her university studies. However, her duties as a medical Lotta continued already in June 1943 when she was sent to Vyborg, to the military hospital located in the former Konkkala Sanatorium.[53] But by the end of the same month, she was already on her way back to Kemi, to the same German military hospital and to the interpreting tasks she had previously performed. Only the prevailing mood had changed: When during her first posting the image of the global war was very positive with respect to the Germans, and Åkerfelt too had 'a feeling that they were the bosses', by summer of 1943, the mood in the hospital was much more grave. Bad news was reaching them from both the front lines and from back home in Germany as well, and the Red Army's attacks were felt in the hospital's eye clinic as distressing times. Åkerfelt recalls how ever younger soldiers began to come to the hospital as the war dragged on:

> Many times it sure was a shame that those who started to come were such young boys, patients who weren't even twenty yet, all the older ones were already on the job, and so the younger generations started.

Åkerfelt's recollections as well as the notebooks she took down from the bookshelf during our interview held stories of countless human fates which crossed the path of the young university student for a brief moment

[53] Åkerfelt 1995: 315; she was probably posted to the 64th POW Hospital located in Sorvali in Vyborg; see Westerlund 2008b: 134.

in time (Image 3.3). In particular, drawings and poems of gratitude written in these notebooks bear witness to the fact that a Lotta who knew the soldiers' native language was an important person in their lives—a soldier who was not only far away from his own familiar surroundings and loved ones, but was also seriously ill or injured, perhaps even close to death. Under such dark liminal or borderline circumstances,[54] the presence of a person with whom the soldier could speak his own familiar language brought hope, or, if the situation was hopeless, perhaps a bit of solace.

This is unequivocally the case in the wartime diary entries of Jenny Paulaharju from Oulu as well. Thanks to her language abilities, Paulaharju, already 63 years old at the time, ended up at the provincial hospital in Oulu, where she not only became the hospital's German interpreter but also a trusted person for the German wounded—a replacement mother to whom they could confide their sorrows and fears or simply tell about their lives before the war, and who could also convey their messages to those back home in Germany:

> Many of those who'd been wounded weren't able to write at all, nor to read. They could dictate their letters to Jenny and she also often read the greetings from loved ones back home to the patients. They soon began to consider her their 'Mutti', a kind of replacement mother for the Germans.[55]

In this respect, Åkerfelt's stories about a Jewish Soviet POW are also significant, as he wanted to speak German with the medical Lotta and secretly asked her for things to read in German, or her anecdote about the wounded German who had an English mother and tried to exchange a few words with Åkerfelt despite the strict surveillance in the hospital. These stories show how the interpreter's language abilities were a link for the wounded to their own background, family and culture—factors that helped them hold on to their identity at a time when their life had been turned upside down.

Åkerfelt's eventful service as a Lotta ended in her home region in late summer 1944 at the 9th Military Hospital, established for German soldiers. She had already returned from Kemi and decided that she would

[54] Bourke 2006.

[55] See Paulaharju 1989: 412.



Image 3.3 A thank-you poem to Lotta Raili from patients of the military hospital of the German Air Force. (Raili Åkerfelt's personal notebook.)

no longer take on new assignments because 'I could sense that I was feeling a bit tired, too'. However, the director of the Lottas in Lohja was able to convince her to work once again as an interpreter for the hospital unit established at the elementary school in Nummela.[56] She was familiar with the work from her time in Kemi: 'I always had to go when there was a doctors' round, go where they needed to ask the patients about one thing or another.' One memory from those final months came up during our interview, of a badly wounded German whose wife had been informed of her husband's condition. This woman had travelled from Germany to Denmark and then through Sweden to Tornio, and from there by train to southern Finland.

> And she was able to get to her husband's bed in time, but I don't know because her husband was in such a weak condition, she wasn't allowed to be there overnight so she had to be somewhere else, so she was with me too overnight a couple of kilometres away in some house, and we stayed in the small room of some family. And, well, every morning when I woke up, at six o'clock, she had already left to go to her husband's bedside […].

Ultimately, Åkerfelt's encounters and work with German and Finnish colleagues, with wounded German soldiers and with their family members continued until September, when the brotherhood was split apart. The departure of the Germans came as just as big a surprise to her as their arrival had been to many civilians over three years earlier. On one September morning, when the Lottas went to work as usual, the patient rooms in the hospital shouted in their emptiness: 'There was nothing there, all the rooms were emptied, cleaned and the patients gone.' Farther south in Finland, the German units and soldiers had begun to leave Finland through Hanko towards Germany.

[56] See Tolonen 2020: 21–22 for brief information about the establishment of the 9th Military Hospital and its location in the area of Lohja and Vihti.

The Miss at the Shoe Shop Who Spoke German

Many roads led to the task of interpreting. For some it began with work for the Germans on the recommendation of acquaintances and friends, some Lottas were sent by their Lotta district, and some ended up with these jobs by pure coincidence when a person's language ability was revealed at just the right moment. Nineteen-year-old Lahja Ikonen was working as an assistant in her aunt's shoe shop when the German soldiers began to visit Kajaani as well, doing their shopping and other errands. An army rations camp (*Armeeverpflegungslager 517*) for the Mountain Army had been established in Hyrynsalmi, and the soldiers working there began to do regular business at the shoe store when they found out that the young miss who worked there as an assistant could speak German.

Lahja Ikonen[57] was born in Vyborg and spent her early school years in this multilingual, multicultural city. Her family moved from there to Kannas, the parish of Jääski on the banks of the Vuoksi River (now Russian Lesogorski). Her language studies had already taken off in elementary school, and when she was in the second grade, German joined the curriculum as a new language in Imatra. At that point she began to exchange letters in German with pen pals in Italy, Hungary and Switzerland. Her German-language diary entries tell about her interest in German from her school days, as do her autodidactic studies later on, when she was learning German vocabulary more systematically in Savonlinna. Her father's new posting had brought the family there during the interim peace between the wars in 1940: For one reason or another, Ikonen had taken on the task of 'learning around 20 new words a day and to find a way to use them in my thoughts'. She played games in her mind involving questions and answers that used the vocabulary that had stuck with her.

[57] The story of Lahja (beginning in 1949 Katja Inkeri Irja) Ikonen is based on two of her unpublished memoires, based in turn on her diaries: 'Matkamuistelmia 3/9–44–3/9–45' (Travel memories 3 Sept. 1944–3 Sept. 1945) and an untitled autobiographical manuscript written in the 1990s. I would like to thank Riitta and Tintti Attila for entrusting the manuscripts to my care for my research and for permission to report on Ikonen's experiences under her own name. This subchapter is partially based on previous articles; see Kujamäki 2016a and 2020.

These thought-and-question games were transformed into real dialogues in the Väisänen family's shoe store in Kajaani. In addition to the store's own range of products, the German-speaking customers were interested in the shop assistant with the language skills who helped them translate the lists they had prepared for their errands in the town before they moved on to other shops. At the same time Ikonen assisted her 'Uncle Väisänen', a family friend, in 'orchestrating' his deals:

> 'Uncle' wouldn't have been a merchant if he hadn't smelled a business opportunity here. He asked if they had anything to trade, such as tobacco, coffee, cognac or other things worth bartering, and they certainly did. In the back room I made the deals, the Germans got warm felt boots, silver fox capes, etc., and 'Uncle' got tobacco, coffee and cognac, which he in turn bartered with other merchants. Almost everything was rationed for us. 'Uncle' himself didn't smoke nor did he drink much, but as payment for rationed goods they were needed.

As Ikonen continued to develop her language skills, and as knowledge of these skills spread, she ended up interpreting in several other shops, either by telephone or preferably 'face-to-face so I could use my hands to help me'. Before long, word of the shop assistant who could speak German reached German headquarters in Hyrynsalmi, which sent Ikonen an offer to begin working at the German army rations camp 'as interpreter and office worker'. Despite 'Uncle' Väisänen's warnings, Ikonen decided to attend the job interview during which her abilities were scrutinized thoroughly: After brief, friendly chit-chat in standard German, her typewriting skills were tested based on dictation. Because of her previous work experience and her German-language hobby, Ikonen passed the initial test without any trouble, but the following section of the test rattled her. The purpose of this part was to interpret for a local contractor Tolppanen, who had come from Kajaani for a tender for building plans for the Germans, and Ikonen doubted that her vocabulary in the field of construction would be sufficient. But thanks to the contractor's help, Ikonen got the job she was hoping for:

> When Tolppanen arrived—I knew him because he was one of 'Uncle's' acquaintances from Kajaani, and I told him that it depended on him whether I got the job or not. He asked if I knew the word 'blueprint' in German, and of course I did. He said that if he could just get the blueprint into his hands, then I could simply tell him whatever stories I wanted and he would understand just from that. So that's how it happened and I got the position. My salary was 2000 marks more than in Kajaani with the same benefits.

Ikonen thus became a copyist and an interpreter (*Schreibkraft und Dolmetscher*) for the Hyrynsalmi army rations camp, which provided supplies for several German units. Her work began on 10 October 1942, after she had first listened to her father's instructions as well as her mother's and 'Uncle's' futile objections: 'I was just so stubborn, so what good did that do?' Interpreters were primarily needed to mediate between Finnish construction workers and German builders, and as copyist, Ikonen was in charge of keeping records of the camp's incoming and outgoing goods. She also took care of regular inventory so that the meat, chocolate, sausages and litres of wine that ended up going to the warehouse's own staff were carefully recorded as spoilage caused by frost or transport damage.

The staff, NCOs and officers at the warehouse behind the railroad station in Hyrynsalmi were from different German areas at the time, some from Prussia and some from Austria:

> In terms of their nature, these two groups were completely opposite. The Austrians were relaxed and even their language sounded softer, but the Prussians for example drank and 'exploded' more loudly. Our cook was from Vienna and he was a really good cook, too, and we certainly had what was needed to make delicious food.

Besides the soldiers of the Mountain Army, Ikonen had a Finnish colleague as well at the camp along with Ukrainian POWs whose labour was used in the kitchen, in the canteen and to heat up the rooms in the barracks.

Ikonen had no trouble in learning the cultural customs of the camp and of the German soldiers—how the officers were addressed formally as well as notifications and military greetings. Her language abilities developed, but surrounded by the men of the army rations warehouse, Ikonen found her language usage affected by features that would have been considered utterly inappropriate outside life in the camp. Because she listened to the soldiers talking, expressions ended up in her German whose meaning became clear to her the hard way:

> I remember once in the beginning when the barracks were being finished, I was asked if the walls should be lined with cardboard or if I wanted wallpaper, I quickly responded 'es ist mir Scheiss egal' (I don't give a shit about it). This was followed by a very puzzled look and then they told me that it was 'Landserausdruck' (soldier talk) and that women didn't use such language.

At the same time, crude phrases learned from the 'old hands' were beneficial as well: Ikonen managed to get out of 'many tricky situations by using harsh language', when astonishment at these unexpectedly coarse phrases gave her more time 'for other defensive tactics'. When reading Ikonen's recollections it becomes quite clear that there were plenty of suitors for women's company, both at the camp in Hyrynsalmi as well as later, when after the brotherhood-in-arms ended, she followed the German units through Norway to Germany. In her 'Travel memories' Ikonen writes how she noticed over and over again 'that it wasn't easy to be a woman in such a big group of men'. There were more than enough overt or covert propositions on a daily basis as many German soldiers considered it obvious that a Finnish woman must be following along with the troops seeking precisely this kind of 'adventure'. The situation calmed down once Ikonen and her supervisor developed a kind of relationship for a time, which served as a shield against other suitors,[58] but

[58] Ikonen relates that her name changed to Katja at this time: Her real name, Lahja, was difficult for the Germans to pronounce and easily was twisted into Laaja ('wide'), so her partner began to call her Katja 'and then from that he began to use the nickname "Zar". Thus we were a Czar and Czarinna in the camp'. Ikonen 1991: 39. This is probably a reference to the relationship between Jekaterina Dolgorukowa and Czar Alexander II at the end of the nineteenth century in Russia.

later on, repulsing undesired double entendres required all of her 'sisu' and language ability. A quote from 'Travel memories':

> I didn't care about being tactful. My German was good enough at that point that I had no problem at all in presenting my opinion in an appropriate manner if and when it became necessary.

There was not very much free time, nor were the programme offerings in Hyrynsalmi on the same level as the ones that Ikonen's interpreter colleague Leila Salmi, for example, enjoyed in Rovaniemi. When the opportunity presented itself, Ikonen and her Finnish workmates went to the sauna in Hyrynsalmi and on picnics or participated in the camp parties. Adolf Hitler's birthday, 20 April, was an annual holiday, and as Ikonen describes it, that was when the entire staff of the camp would gather around the radio to listen to the *Führer*'s speech:

> I don't remember if I even understood the half of it when he shouted and people kept cheering now and again. It was how it was then. I think that our group must have had propaganda men who took care that the Führer's support didn't sink nor that people of different opinions got to speak, if there even were such people. I too was like a blind kitten whose eyes hadn't opened yet.

The months of the war passed by. In the late winter of 1944, the Finnish military leadership began to prepare the troops at the Karelian Isthmus for a large attack by the Red Army, which came a bit later, in June 1944. As part of these preparations, the plan was to move Finnish units located in Uhtua in Eastern Karelia farther south to the Karelian Isthmus, while the Mountain Army would be moved into the vacated Finnish positions in Uhtua. An interpreter was needed for the negotiations involved in the shift in positions, and Katja Ikonen was sent to do the job. After she was advised on strict confidentiality, she and two officers were driven to the border between Finland and the Soviet Union and from there to the Karelian countryside near Uhtua. There she worked for three days as an interpreter for the negotiations, took notes on the details of the agreements made during the conversations and established phone

connections through the local military switchboards. The Finnish and German army corps worked on an agreement for the transfer of troops and supplies, and after the agreement was finalized, it was Ikonen's job to make a clean copy of it. She spent her short nights tortured by bugs in the Lotta dugout, but despite being tired, her tasks did not seem to create any unreasonable difficulties:

> I guess I was going at half-throttle sometimes, but I felt that what I was doing was important work and I had to be accurate so that everything would turn out right. It was really easy to translate the warehouse things because I was constantly in the warehouses and was working with their vocabulary. The best way to learn a foreign language is to use it. I didn't always know the Finnish equivalent for every single thing. This task ended well, too, and I returned to my unit in Hyrynsalmi.

However, the end of the war was already approaching, and just a few months later, the major attack by the Soviet army at the Karelian Isthmus led to peace negotiations between the USSR and Finland. At the beginning of September 1944, Ikonen heard the news on the radio that the countries had agreed to the terms of a separate peace, and under them Finland would not only have to break off its alliance with Germany, but also expel its troops from its territory. When in addition to this there were rumours that 'the Russians are going to occupy the north and are hanging any Finns who had worked together with the Germans', Ikonen decided to try her luck in Germany and Nuremberg. She had already thought of going to Germany after the end of the war: For a long time, Ikonen had been exchanging letters with the family of a certain NCO at the army rations camp, transferred a part of her salary paid in German marks to them, and through a correspondence course had studied German sales tax law and bookkeeping. Her intention was to begin to work for the family in the office of a woodworking plant. After the radio news and the rumours, her decision was an easy one to make.

The officers at the food storage warehouse did not object to Ikonen's plans to leave along with the retreating German troops, but confusion reigned when Ikonen's mother suddenly came to Hyrynsalmi and tried in

vain to get her daughter to give up her plans to go. Decades later, the grief she caused her parents was still pressing on Ikonen's mind:

> There was such a mood of panic. In retrospect I've regretted that what I did caused my parents grey hair and shame that their daughter left with a foreign army for an uncertain fate.

The trip with the German troops through Norway and on to Germany began in mid-September 1944. We will return to the twists and turns of her journey later in the penultimate chapter of this book as one of the snapshots from the ruins of the brotherhood-in-arms.

About Dictionaries

The importance of dictionaries as study material and a guide to conversation is repeatedly mentioned in recollections of interpreters and translators. Of course it is difficult to say which dictionary was carried around by Message Lotta Kyllikki Villa, the German officers' canteen waitress Wellamo Paananen or the German interpreter who helped Tuulikki Soini's family, Willy Caspari. Ikonen never mentions the title of the dictionary she used in her language studies, either.

During the war years, there were certainly plenty to choose from. In the advertisements in newspapers from the beginning of the Continuation War, we can conclude that Finnish publishers saw there was high market demand for bilingual dictionaries. For example, under the rubric 'Dictionaries for soldiers etc.', the publisher WSOY was marketing the *Suomalais-saksalaista taskusanakirja* (Finnish-German pocket dictionary) edited by Pekka Katara 'with modern needs in mind', Walter Olof Streng-Renkonen's *Saksalais-suomalaista pienoissanakirja* (Small German-Finnish dictionary) along with the *Suomalais-saksalaista piennoissanakirja* (Small Finnish-German Dictionary) edited by Siiri Siegberg. Numerous Russian dictionaries and guides also reflected contemporary needs.[59] Another Finnish publisher, Otava, had produced a volume of reading materials on

[59] For example *Helsingin Sanomat* 24 October, 28 November and 4 December 1941.

military issues, *Saksalaisen sotilaskielen lukemisto* (A compilation of German military language), put together by Lieutenant Colonel Erik Voss, as well as Emil Arnold Rosenquist's *Suomalais-saksalaisen, saksalais-suomalaisen sotilassanasto* (The Finnish-German, German-Finnish military glossary).

Publishers in Germany also reacted to the contemporary need for dictionaries. To support Finnish-German operations and coexistence, there was at least one bilingual dictionary, *Wörterbuch für Wehrmachtssprachmittler Finnisch-Deutsch und Deutsch-Finnisch* (Dictionary for *Wehrmacht* language mediators Finnish-German and German-Finnish) edited by Werner Demelt in 1943. Based on its name, it was designed expressly for interpreters of the ground forces. The precise target group and purpose are reflected in the participating parties, its source materials and its contents. As is mentioned in the editor's foreword, the dictionary emerged as a group project that was promoted both by the Mountain Army's High Command in Rovaniemi, in particular the Intelligence Division (Ic) and the supervisor of local interpreters, Dr. Bauer, as well as other German liaison offices in Finland. Among the Finnish assistants are mentioned in particular Colonel Duncker, the Finnish representative of the German army at the headquarters in Berlin, OKW (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*) who acted as assistant to General Talvela. Its publisher was Sprachmittler-Verlag, which focused on training materials for interpreters. With the help of its supporters, source materials were collected as a basis for the glossary; Demelt mentions first and foremost Finnish and German military codes of conduct and manuals, technical dictionaries and releases from the armies and their propaganda companies. This glossary was used as the basis for a two-part book containing around 35,000 entries[60] with essential vocabulary on military language and military geography; it was also able to offer considerable support in matters involving encounters with the civilian population as well.

The second interesting dictionary that wandered north along with the German soldiers was the German-Norwegian-Finnish picture dictionary

[60] This number is a rather rough estimate based on a count made from 'standard' pages selected at random; the editor himself did not reveal the number of entries in his 365-page dictionary.

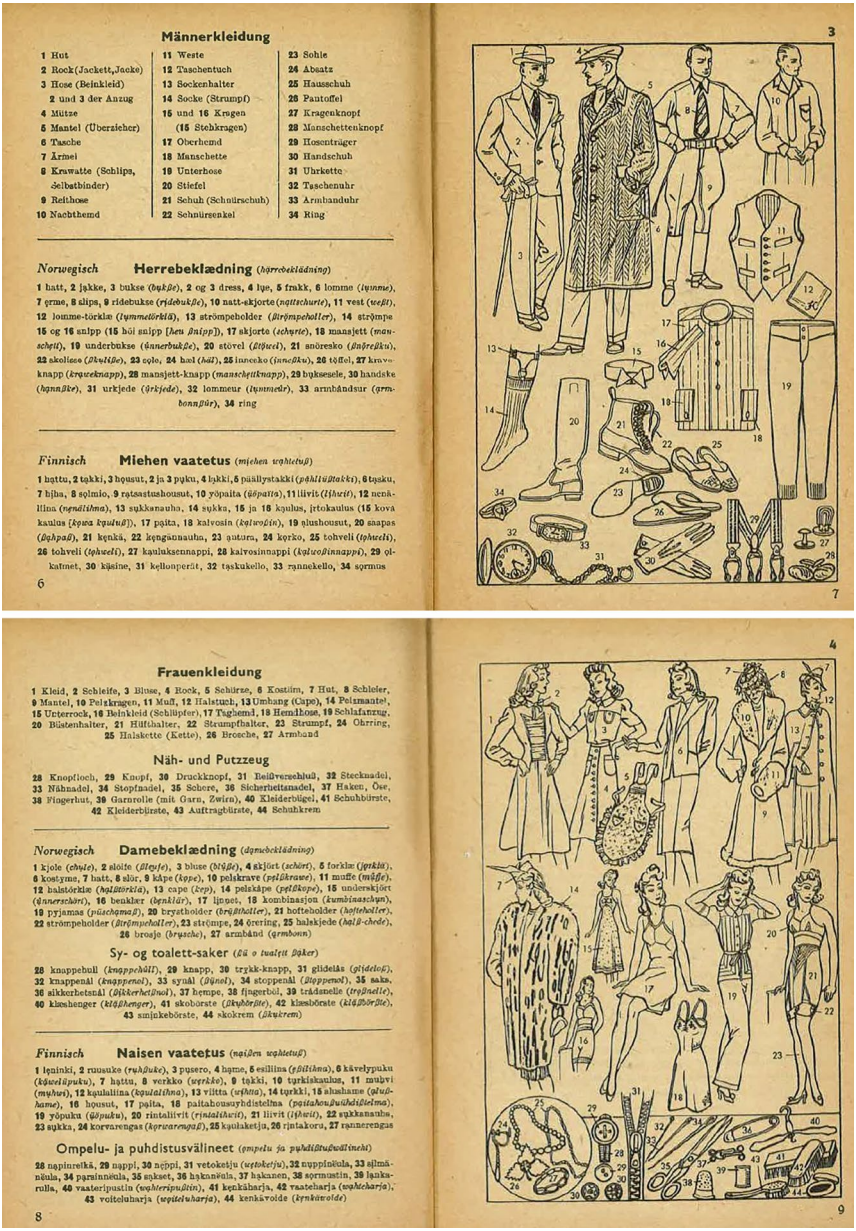
published by the Leipzig Verlag Bibliographisches Institut, *Der kleine Bilderduden, Heft 4, deutsch-norwegisch-finnisch*. Unlike Demelt's dictionary, focusing specifically on military vocabulary, this 66-page notebook, divided into three main parts, primarily offers general vocabulary and phrases for everyday use. The first part features 25 plates (*Bildtafel*) with people, clothing and homes as well as illustrations of places for work and play common for the time.[61] The details of these plates are provided in three languages on the left-hand leaf when the page is opened; instructions for pronunciation are also given for the Norwegian and Finnish equivalents (see Images 3.4 and 3.5). Words for abstract and yet important concepts for each topic that were difficult to illustrate are also given in separate vocabulary lists. At the end of the section there is also an index that presents all of the German expressions from the plates in one place; an index for the Norwegian or Finnish words is not included. The same principle of delivery reappears in the other sections as well: they start with German-language words and phrases, and the equivalents in the other two languages follow. The volume is thus designed in the first place for use by Germans in dealing with the residents of foreign countries (‘*mit den Bewohnern fremder Länder*’); the vocabulary for Norwegian or Finnish users is more difficult to browse.

The second part of the work is devoted to everyday phrases which have apparently been deemed necessary in speaking with, greeting, or thanking Norwegians or Finns, or when asking for help, advice or knowledge (for example, *Kann ich ein Mückennetz bekommen? / Saanko sääskiverkon?* [May I have a mosquito net?]).

Warnings and other interjections, time expressions, and phrases of apology are included as well as requests needed for traffic and train travel. Finally, the last section of the volume contains vocabulary for the days of the week, the months, weather expressions, colours, military ranks and numbers in all three languages.

Other than the military ranks in the book, there is only scarce mention of any vocabulary pertaining to the military operations involved in

[61] The topics are: People, Family, Men's Clothing, Women's Clothing, House, Living Room, Kitchen, Tools, Shop, Restaurant, Theatre (misspelled in Finnish!)—Cinema, Office, Repair Shop, City Street—Town Square, Harbour, Shoreline Drive, Countryside—Country Road, Farm I and II, Pets, Animals, Hunting, Trees, Useful Plants and Dressing Station.



Männerkleidung

1 Hut
2 Rock (Jackett, Jacke)
3 Hose (Beinkleid)
2 und 3 der Anzug
4 Mütze
5 Mantel (Überzieher)
6 Tasche
7 Ärmel
8 Krawatte (Schlips, Selbstbinder)
9 Reithose
10 Nachthemd
11 Weste
12 Taschentuch
13 Sockenhalter
14 Socke (Strumpf)
15 und 16 Kragen (15 Stehkragen)
17 Oberhemd
18 Manschette
19 Unterhose
20 Stiefel
21 Schuh (Schnürschuh)
22 Schnürsenkel
23 Sohle
24 Absatz
25 Hausschuh
26 Pantoffel
27 Kragenknopf
28 Manschettenknopf
29 Hosenträger
30 Handschuh
31 Uhrkette
32 Taschenuhr
33 Armbanduhr
34 Ring

Norwegisch **Herrebeklædning** (*herrebeklædning*)

1 hatt, 2 jakke, 3 bukse (*bukse*), 2 og 3 dress, 4 lue, 5 frakk, 6 lomme (*lomme*), 7 ærme, 8 slips, 9 ridebukse (*ridebukse*), 10 natt-skjorte (*nattskjorte*), 11 vest (*vest*), 12 lomme-tørkle (*lommetørkle*), 13 strømpeholder (*strømpeholder*), 14 strømpe 15 og 16 snipp (15 høi snipp [*høi snipp*]), 17 skjorte (*skjorte*), 18 manasjett (*manschett*), 19 underbukse (*underbukse*), 20 støvel (*støvel*), 21 snøresko (*snøreskø*), 22 skolisse (*skolisse*), 23 sole, 24 hæl (*hæl*), 25 inneskо (*inneskø*), 26 tøfel, 27 krave-knapp (*kraveknapp*), 28 manasjett-knapp (*manschettknapp*), 29 buksesele, 30 handske (*hgnnske*), 31 urkjede (*ørkjede*), 32 lommeur (*lommeur*), 33 armbåndsur (*ærmbonnør*), 34 ring

Finnisch **Miehen vaatetus** (*miehen vaatetus*)

1 hattu, 2 takki, 3 housut, 2 ja 3 puku, 4 lakki, 5 päällystakki (*päällystakki*), 6 tasku, 7 hiha, 8 solmio, 9 ratsastushousut, 10 yöpaita (*yöpaita*), 11 liivi (*liivi*), 12 nenä-liina (*nenäliina*), 13 sukkanauha, 14 sukka, 15 ja 16 kaulus, irtokaulus (15 kova kaulus [*kova kaulus*]), 17 paita, 18 kalvosin (*kalvosin*), 19 alushousut, 20 saapas (*daapas*), 21 kenkä, 22 jengannauha, 23 pohja, 24 korko, 25 tohveli (*tohveli*), 26 tohveli (*tohveli*), 27 kaluksennappi, 28 kalvosinnappi (*kalvosinnappi*), 29 ol-kahnet, 30 käsine, 31 kellonperät, 32 taskukello, 33 rannekello, 34 sormus

6

3

7

Frauenkleidung

1 Kleid, 2 Schleife, 3 Bluse, 4 Rock, 5 Schürze, 6 Kostüm, 7 Hut, 8 Schleier, 9 Mantel, 10 Pelzkragen, 11 Muff, 12 Halstuch, 13 Umhang (Cape), 14 Pelzmantel, 15 Unterrock, 16 Beinkleid (Schlüpfer), 17 Tagshemd, 18 Hemdhose, 19 Schlafanzug, 20 Büstenhalter, 21 Hüfthalter, 22 Strumpfhalter, 23 Strumpf, 24 Ohrring, 25 Halskette (Kette), 26 Brosche, 27 Armband

Näh- und Putzzeug

28 Knopfloch, 29 Knopf, 30 Druckknopf, 31 Reißverschluß, 32 Stecknadel, 33 Nähnadel, 34 Stopfnadel, 35 Schere, 36 Sicherheitsnadel, 37 Haken, Öse, 38 Fingerhut, 39 Garnrolle (mit Garn, Zwirn), 40 Kleiderbügel, 41 Schuhbürste, 42 Kleiderbürste, 43 Auftragbürste, 44 Schuhkrem

Norwegisch **Damebeklædning** (*damebeklædning*)

1 kjole (*kjole*), 2 sløife (*sløyfe*), 3 bluse (*bluse*), 4 skjört (*skjört*), 5 forkle (*forkle*), 6 kostyme, 7 hatt, 8 slør, 9 kåpe (*kåpe*), 10 pelskrave (*pelskrave*), 11 muffe (*muffe*), 12 halstörkle (*halstörkle*), 13 cape (*cape*), 14 pelskåpe (*pelskåpe*), 15 underskjört (*underskjört*), 16 benklær (*benklær*), 17 linnet, 18 kombinasjon (*kombinasjon*), 19 pyjamas (*pyjamas*), 20 brysholder (*brystholder*), 21 hofteholder (*hofteholder*), 22 strømpeholder (*strømpeholder*), 23 strømpe, 24 örering, 25 halskjede (*hals-kjede*), 26 brosje (*brosje*), 27 armbånd (*armbånd*)

Sy- og toalett-saker (*Sy- o toalett saker*)

28 knappehull (*knapphull*), 29 knapp, 30 trykk-knapp, 31 glidelås (*glidelås*), 32 knappenål (*knappenål*), 33 synål (*synål*), 34 stoppenål (*stoppenål*), 35 saks, 36 sikkerhetsnål (*sikkerhetsnål*), 37 hempe, 38 fingerhut, 39 trådsnelle (*trådsnelle*), 40 klesbenger (*klesbenger*), 41 skobørste (*skobørste*), 42 klæsbörste (*klæsbörste*), 43 smörkebörste, 44 skokrem (*skukrem*)

Finnisch **Naisen vaatetus** (*naisen vaatetus*)

1 leninki, 2 ruusuke (*ruusuke*), 3 pusero, 4 hame, 5 esiliina (*esiliina*), 6 kävelypuku (*kävelypuku*), 7 hattu, 8 verkko (*verkko*), 9 takki, 10 turkiskaulus, 11 muhvi (*muhvi*), 12 kaulaliina (*kaulaliina*), 13 viitta (*viitta*), 14 turkki, 15 alushame (*alushame*), 16 housut, 17 paita, 18 paitahousuyhdistelmä (*paitahousuyhdistelmä*), 19 yöpuku (*yöpuku*), 20 rintaliivit (*rintaliivit*), 21 liivit (*liivit*), 22 sukkanauha, 23 sukka, 24 korvarengas (*korvarengas*), 25 kaulaketju, 26 rintakoru, 27 rannerengas

Ompelu- ja puhdistusvälineet (*ompelu ja puhdistusvälineet*)

28 napinreikä, 29 nappi, 30 nöppi, 31 vetoketju (*vetoketju*), 32 nuppinöula, 33 silmä-nöula, 34 parsinneula, 35 sakset, 36 hakaneula, 37 hakanen, 38 sormustin, 39 lanka-rulla, 40 vaateripustin (*vaateripustin*), 41 kenkäharja, 42 vaatteharja (*vaatteharja*), 43 veitsiluharja (*veitsiluharja*), 44 kenkävoide (*kynkävoide*)

8

4

9

Images 3.4 and 3.5 *Der kleine Bilderduden*, pp. 6–7 and 8–9

the expansion of the Third Reich or of any attempt to make its vocabulary conform to ideology. However, it is possible to see references to the official structures of military activity, at least in the final topic of the plate section 'Dressing Station' (*Verbandplatz*), in which a field hospital of the Red Cross is pictured, as well as in individual phrases in the list of expressions (*Beschwerden sind an den Ortskommanden zu richten* [Direct any complaints to the local command]) or commands that by their nature would probably not have belonged to the common vocabulary of a traveller at the time (for example *Führen Sie mich zum Ortsältesten [Bürgermeister]!* [Take me to your leader {mayor}!]; *Gehorchen Sie!* [Obey!]).

Based on available sources, it is difficult to tell how much German soldiers in Finland or Norway used Demelt's interpreter dictionary or *Der kleine Bilderduden*. In any event, at least the latter was one of the materials that the headquarters of the Mountain Army distributed more widely, at least for use by those Finnish soldiers who were engaged in tight cooperation with German troops at the front. In autumn 1942, Lieutenant Edmund Luther, the liaison officer who served with Finnish Light Infantry No. 3 at the time, reported to Colonel Willamo that the unit had received 70 dictionaries to support the troops to start studying basic level German. The little books, however, were never passed out:

> The dictionaries were set up so that the explanations for the words were in pictures, and around 70 books came to Lt. Inf. 3 to be distributed to the troops. The idea, of course, was that the men would be able to look at them in their free time and so they could learn at least a few words of German. The books didn't contain anything that would be in conflict with moral standards of the day. Even so, the Commander of Lt. Inf. 3, Captain Salonen, prohibited the books from being distributed because in his opinion, it was completely useless to give out this kind of literature. The matter could easily draw attention if it came to be known by the Germans, which is why I wanted to mention it in my reporting.[62]

[62] Communication from Lieutenant Edmund Luther to Willamo on 10 September 1942 to Willamo [T-5471/1–3].

It is not known whether the situation was remedied later on. In any event, the view of Captain Salonen, head of the Finnish unit, was presumably that there was no need nor time for studying German and thereby supporting interactions between Finnish and German soldiers. He held this opinion even though as commander, he was apparently dependent on availing himself of the efforts of the liaison officer, Lieutenant Edmund Luther, as a linguistic link in Finnish-German operations.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning the so-called Russian 'mute interpreter' (*Stummer Dolmetsch*). At the beginning of the 1940s, a German-Russian translation machine was developed. This 'machine' was made from two pieces of cardboard fastened together, and on one of them, 20 numbered German-language commands (*Befehle*), questions (*Fragen*) and phrases needed during interrogation (*Verhör*) and reconnaissance (*Erkundung*) as well as quartering (*Quartier*) were printed on both sides. The second piece of cardboard, a text wheel, was fastened inside and could be turned to the number of the corresponding item, which would show the required Russian translation in the device's response window. By using the pictures associated with the text (for example a finger pointing), one could find additional meanings and variations on the questions. The device seems to have made its way to Northern Finland as well, because towards the end of 1943, Lieutenant Mikko Jaakkola, who worked as a liaison officer for *Organisation Todt*, sent one of them to FLSR for their information and reported that the said 'Mute Russian Interpreters' were distributed both to the troops at the front and to *Organisation Todt*. According to Jaakkola, they were intended 'as a guide for those who had to deal with the civilian population, but it can also be used when interrogating a POW, for example' (Image 3.6).[63]

[63] Communication from Jaakkola to Väänänen on 26 November 1942 [T-5471/12, NA].

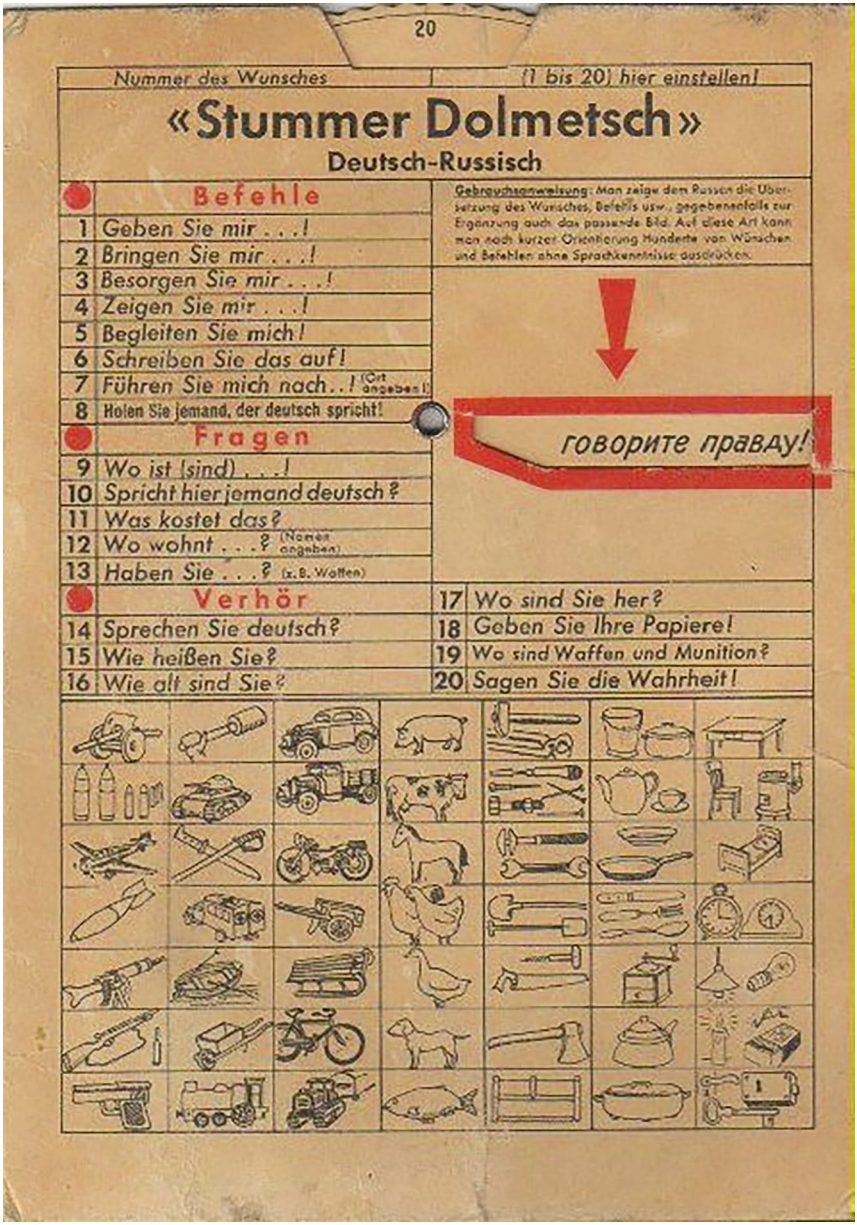


Image 3.6 *Stummer Dolmetsch* or 'Mute Interpreter' developed for the eastern front ['Stummer Dolmetsch. Deutsch-Russisch, 1940. 19 x 13.5 cm.' ICOTI, 132003.]

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4

Military Support Structures for the Brotherhood-in-Arms

When military cooperation between Finland and Germany commenced at the end of June 1941, the Finnish High Command had created—or was in the midst of creating—structures to support and monitor the operations of the German troops that had been deployed in different parts of Finland. The Office of Transit Traffic (*Kauttakulkuliikenteen järjestelytoimisto*, or OTT) had already been established in September 1940 for issues that needed to be settled between the Finnish and German authorities with respect to the supply and transportation of German troops travelling through Finnish territory from Germany to Norway or back. Its main sites of operation were Helsinki and Mikkeli, and Rovaniemi was assigned its own subsidiary office to handle maintenance of daily routines. Once the war began, the bailiwick of the OTT was broadened to include the greater share of those financial matters that concerned joint operations.

In summer 1941, the Finnish High Command began to build a network of Finnish *liaison officers and interpreters* deployed in the German headquarters and units. Colonel Willamo began as the network's highest-ranking liaison officer at the headquarters of the German XX Army Corps

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P. Kujamäki, *Interpreting Brothers-in-Arms*, Palgrave Studies in Languages at War,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-19060-4_4

(AOK) near Rovaniemi.[1] The Finnish High Command simultaneously formed the Separate Interpreter Detachment (*Erillinen tulkkijoukkue* [Er. Tlk.Joukk.]), whose individual interpreters were deployed to units of the 163rd Infantry Division, commanded by General Engelbrecht. These were subordinate to the headquarters of the Finnish Karelian Army (later the Aunus Group).[2]

In typical fashion for the army's operations, these structures were shaped according to both the events of war and the rearrangements of other organizations. As the scope of tasks to be performed by the liaison officers grew and expanded into special administrative tasks as well, for example, as support persons in the commandant's offices and civilian agencies, it became necessary to coordinate their operations centrally.

The following is an excerpt from the war diary of the organizing office of the Finnish High Command on 6 December 1941:

> In Rovaniemi, the liaison officer with the Germans, Colonel Villamon [sic], the staff reporting to him and the entire staff of the Finnish High Command's individual divisions made up Liaison Staff 'Roi'.[3]

On the suggestion of Colonel Willamo, the Finnish High Command gave the order in December 1941 to establish a *Liaison Staff Roi* (FLSR) with direct connection to the High Command of the Mountain Army in Rovaniemi. Willamo was named its commander. At the same time, the Rovaniemi branch of the Office of Transit Traffic was briefly transferred to Willamo's staff before the entire office was turned into a liaison staff in June 1942 and was subordinated to the Finnish High Command under the Ministry of Defence.[4]

The Separate Interpreter Detachment continued to support the Engelbrecht division at the Svir River until the late spring of 1942. A few months earlier, in the early spring of 1942, a reorganization of the front

[1] Vehviläinen 1984: 325, Junila 2000: 108.

[2] Command of the headquarters of the Karelian Army No. 3, 11 July 1941 [T-5030/1, NA].

[3] War diary of the organization office of the Finnish High Command, 6 December 1941. War Diary collection. War Diaries of the Continuation War and the Lapland War. War Diary 20902. Tiedosto [file] 7, NA. Cited on 20 January 2023.

[4] Väänänen 1947: 3–5, Vehviläinen 1984: 325.

defence and the German troops had been undertaken, during which the Finnish units were transferred to more southerly sectors of the front while Engelbrecht's troops were moved correspondingly farther north to Alakurtti. However, some Finnish troops remained to strengthen the flanks of the German units and for patrol duties.[5] The Finnish Separate Interpreter Detachment was dissolved and the interpreters were transferred to the supervision of FLSR in Northern Finland in June 1942 and sent either to new German entities or to the Finnish units working together with them. At the same time, the liaison officers were transferred once again. Colonel Willamo delegated the reorganizations to his senior liaison officers as follows:

> The senior liaison officers shall immediately commence action in their own jurisdictions for the placement of liaison officers and interpreters in the designated German headquarters and units. The liaison officers and interpreters in each section shall be directed to take the shortest path to their own senior liaison officer. Should liaison officers and interpreters be lacking, they shall be sent from Liaison Staff Roi as soon as possible.
>
> Regarding Aun.RE: the med.ex.cards and milit.passes of the officers and interpreters moving from the headquarters of the Aunus Group to FLSR shall be sent here as soon as possible.
>
> Once the transfers indicated in the placement table have been completed, this shall be reported to me in connection with the weekly reports.[6]

The reorganizations meant that the tasks were also expanded. The primary work of FLSR was to serve as a *connection* between the Finnish High Command and the German army, to *support* the operations of the German units in Finland, and at the same time *to keep* the Finnish High Command *up-to-date* on what the German units were doing and what the mood was in all three of the northern front sectors—in Petsamo, Alakurtti and Kiestinki. In addition, this charge included monitoring and supporting the Finnish units under the command of the Germans as well as to care for the property of the Finnish State left in Northern

[5] See, for example, Aapa 1961: 77.

[6] Willamo 24 June 1942, 'Regarding: liaison officers' [T-5872/57, NA]; regarding the placement, see Table 2.

Finland and to guard the interests of the local civilian population. As Major Väänänen—head of the Command and War Issues Division of FLSR and later also Chief of Staff—stated, the tasks ranged broadly, including everything from the home region to the front lines, and they were generated by both German soldiers and military authorities as well as Finnish civilians and civilian authorities.[7]

FLSR was divided into two main divisions and offices under its jurisdiction according to tasks. These offices employed both military and civilian personnel. The Command Division and its Command Office directed both the activities of liaison officers and interpreters posted at German headquarters and within units and those of the FLSR's own staff. Its other offices were responsible for such matters as pastoral care and education for the Finnish troops or propaganda activities directed at the Germans (Education Office) or military intelligence, situation briefing, interception of partisans and training of troops (Military Matters Office).

The second of the main divisions was the extensive Maintenance Division, of whose numerous offices the most interesting for this study is Office X, the administrative office that handled administration, law and military police issues. Its administrative and legal matters relating to law enforcement, compensation and war damage as well as in particular to the German troops' presence in the country made it the office with which not only German military authorities—above all the Commandant of the Rear Area along with its headquarters (*Kommandant des Rückwärtigen Armeegebietes 525*, or *Korück* for short [Commandant of the Rear Army Area]) and its local commandants—conducted their business but also the officials of the provincial governments of Oulu and Lapland as well as local-level officials and some civilians. In this capacity it also became, as will be shown later, the *central translation bureau* for FLSR and thus for the entire brotherhood-in-arms. Through its own resources it managed to put into practice the idea Governor Hillilä emphasized: Individual disputes were to be solved at the lowest administrative level possible before they made headlines on the front page of the brotherhood-in-arms.

[7] Väänänen 1947: 4, 7 and 256.

Number of Staff Members and Need

A more concrete image of the scale of the cooperation between the brothers-in-arms emerges when one looks beyond the structures to the staff recruited to work within them. When combining lists of persons and other documents, the result is a group of about 260 soldiers and civilians.[8] Of these, around 200 people were performing tasks delegated by FLSR, either as liaison officers and interpreters or staff officers, office NCOs, specialists or as members of the secretarial staff. The others found spots on the lists as special reserves in the event that there was a need to supplement.

With respect to their titles, obtaining an overall picture is not easy, because as the structures changed over the war years, so did the postings of individual soldiers, and because of transfers, the content and titles of the tasks changed as well. The transfers took place from the offices to the front and the other way around, and a number of the officers posted to Rovaniemi could find themselves doing several jobs at once. For this reason, the numbers mentioned here can only be an estimate. Another difficulty is that the lists of persons often contain a miscellaneous category, given various titles, in which, for example, the numbers of office workers, typists and messengers are listed, but no names. Nevertheless, an attempt must be made to identify the civilians behind these numbers through the aid of other archival documents. Although complete coverage can never be achieved for them either, it is nevertheless important to try to track down these names, if only because it is precisely in the corners of these lower-level offices that a significant number of the translation and interpreting operations necessary for the brotherhood-in-arms took place.

Given these reservations, the overall situation seems to have been the following: From summer 1941 to September 1944, at least 30 soldiers were posted as *interpreters* and 100 as *liaison officers* within the structure

[8] Willamo to the High Command on 19 February 1942, 'Regarding: Liaison Staff Roi's list of persons' and 12 August 1942, 'Regarding: a list of officers and specialists in permanent posts' [T-17615/3, NA]. Lists of the liaison officers' postings (see following sources) in addition to personal information have been taken from the weekly reports of the liaison officers, the letter diaries of FLSR, Colonel Willamo's daily and headquarters commands and A.O. Väänänen's account of the lists of persons.

of the Finnish-German military cooperation—a number of them for the entire duration of the Continuation War, a number under short-term commissions as certain operations and needs so required. In addition, a varying number of women who had both language and typing skills worked at FLSR.

As an example, after late June 1942 when the responsibilities for the front sectors had been reorganized, both within the German army and in the regroupings of the German and Finnish troops, and when the Separate Interpreter Detachment had been merged with FLSR, Colonel Willamo notified the German commandant in Rovaniemi of both the composition of the liaison office he was leading and the placements of the 55 liaison officers and 13 interpreters (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). They were posted either to the headquarters of the German troops at the front, in the agencies of the local commandants of the 'German regions' not far from the front lines, or in the so-called rear area behind the front line, for example, in the German headquarters in Rovaniemi or to the harbours or the railroad stations in Kemi and Oulu that were important for the maintenance of the German troops. Liaison officers were also sent to Alakurtti, Ivalo, Liinakhamari in Petsamo and Salla as local Finnish commandants for joint operations with their local German counterparts. Liaison officers and interpreters were for the use of the Finnish troops serving under the German army, and the German propaganda company (*Propagandakomppanie PK 680*) was provided with its own liaison officer in Helsinki.[9] In September 1944, just days before the end of the brotherhood-in-arms, there were 43 liaison officers in various postings according to the dated list; interpreters were no longer mentioned separately on it.[10]

There were thus a significant number of liaison officers and interpreters in the field, but nevertheless consistently not as many as were wanted. The planned transfers also caused grumblings on the German side, in particular in those places where the activities of the liaison officers and interpreters in executing joint operations between Finns and Germans

[9] Communications from FLSR to Willamo on 20 May 1942 and 27 June 1942 [T-5872/57, NA] .

[10] FLSR, Willamo, undated, 'Placement of Finnish liaison officers 1 September 1944' [T-5872/63, NA]. The list is in Finnish, and thus probably intended to inform the Finnish High Command as a basis for preparing for evacuation.

Table 4.1 Placement of liaison officers and interpreters in different front sectors in June 1942

Placement	Liaison officer	Interpreter
1. Petsamo sector		
XIX (Mount.) AKE	Lt. Co. C. Wahren 2nd Lt. V. Reinikainen 2nd Lt. H.T.A. Müntzel	
2nd (Mount.) Div.	Lt. K.G. Backman 2nd Lt. F. von Veh	Pvt. O. Pasanen
5th (Mount.) Div.	Lt. H. Warva 2nd Lt. G. Stude	Pvt. J. Pälsi
6th (Mount.) Div.	2nd Lt. E. Thodén 2nd Lt. O.T. Lindroth	Private First Class. N. B. Grandell
Parkkina air field	Lt. V. Viljakainen	
Office of local commandant in Liinakhamari	Lt. U. Mäkinen	Sgt. O. Lempinen
Office of local commandant in Ivalo	Lt. L. Molander	Sgt. 1st class K. Jokikokko
2. Alakurtti sector		
XXXVI (Mount.) AKE	Maj. K.S. Parviainen Lt. B. Saarmaa 2nd Lt. J. Puputti	Corporal O. Karttunen
163rd (Mount.) Div.	Lt. E. Sneitz 2nd Lt. T. Aue	Pvt. S. Andersson
Arko (artillery unit) 109	Lt. H. Idman	
Office of local commandant in Alakurtti	Capt. A. Ilander 2nd Lt. A.S. Helenius	
Alakurtti air field	2nd Lt. O. Auterinen	
Office of local commandant in Salla	Lt. T. Mäki 2nd Lt. E. Luomi	
169th Infantry Div.	Lt. S. Viikari 2nd Lt. F. Jernström	Corp. J. Kolkkala
3. Kiestinki sector		
XVIII (Mount.) AKE	Maj. V.G. Vieska Lt. E. Helkama 2nd Lt. L. Schaterin	
SS-Div. Nord	2nd Lt. K. Hahnsson 2nd Lt. H. Henriksson	Sgt. A. Hofmeister
7th (Mount.) Div.	Lt. K.A. Arell Lt. N. Herlin	Sgt. K.A. Wikström
Arko (artillery unit)	Lt. T. Kalima	
Pontsalenjoki air field	Spec. G.M. von Essen	
(motor.) Anti-aircraft unit I/47	2nd Lt. V. Ruoho	
Office of local commandant in Kuusamo	Lt. H. Groundström	Pvt. W. Wladimirov

Table 4.2 Placement of liaison officers and interpreters in different sectors in the rear area and among Finnish troop units in Northern Finland in June 1942

Placement	Liaison officer	Interpreter
4. Rear area		
Headquarters of the Mountain Army (AOK)	2nd Lt. G. Schütt 2nd Lt. C.H. Sothmann 2nd Lt. V. Surakka	
Office of the local commandant in Rovaniemi	Lt. T.Å. Nerdrum	Sgt. Maj. G. Fock
Rovaniemi air field	Lt. A. Voionmaa	
Headquarters for the air force field organization, Rovaniemi (*Standortverwaltung der Luftwaffe*)	Spec. F. Von Hoyningen-Huene	
Organisation Todt, Rovaniemi	2nd Lt. E. Krantz	
Hanhikoski air field	Spec. V.E. Krauel	Private First Class W. Ainamaa
Mäntyluoto port warehouse	Lt. M. Grönlund	
Propaganda company 680, Helsinki	Lt. V. Jaatinen	
Station office, Pietarsaari	Capt. G. Nordblad	
Pori air field	2nd Lt. P.A. Ilmoni	
Finnish units		
Unit Pennanen	Lt. V. Kurri	
Fortification Company 14	2nd Lt. S. Seppänen	
Border Jaeger Battalion 7	Lt. Å. Svensk	
Light Infantry Unit 3	2nd Lt. E. Luther	
Jaeger Battalion 3	Lt. A. Savolainen	
Fortification Battalion 15	2nd Lt. Å. Frey	
6th medical train	Lt. U. Savolainen	

were deemed crucial. There was apparently a lack of Finnish soldiers with language skills throughout the Continuation War, and when a good communicative link was found, attempts were made to keep hold of them, especially since it was not an easy matter to find a replacement.

In July 1942, Colonel Willamo sent a request to the Command Office of the Finnish High Command asking for a suitable liaison officer for the German air fields:

> *Luftgaustab z.b.V* [The Air Section for special duties] has asked for liaison officers for Sodankylä, Vuotso, Nautsi and Salmijärvi.
>
> If sufficient officers who speak German are available, they should preferably be transferred to Liaison Staff Roi in the first instance and specifically to report directly to me. It would of course be most beneficial if the officers in question have served with the Air Fleets or are familiar with air transport and air fields.[11]

The requests for supplementation from the German army corps were conveyed to the Finnish High Command in Willamo's messages, which meant that the Organisation and Command Office had to consider to what extent a soldier proficient in language could be released from his current duties for the use of the liaison office. As for Willamo himself, he ended up in the position of evaluating where it was most critical to place the available resources. From time to time, the joint operations at the front were prioritized over the administrative needs of the rear area headquarters, in which cases FLSR's own offices had to compensate temporarily by the German staffs having to lose translation resources. In August 1942, Willamo had to notify his neighbour, the Mountain Army High Command (AOK 20), about the transfer of a liaison officer there:

> At the present time, Liaison Staff Roi is experiencing a severe shortage of suitable liaison officers, and thus Lieutenant G. Schütt is to be transferred to other duties. In the event of urgent translation commissions, the AOK has at its disposal the military matters office of the Liaison Office, which works in the AOK building.

The lack of resources itself was, of course, not alleviated by temporary compensation, and, for example, on Christmas Eve 1942, FLSR informed the Finnish High Command of such a huge shortage of liaison officers and interpreters that 'without immediate replenishment, continued effective operations will become overwhelming'. In different German units, there was an urgent need for supplementation by at least eight liaison officers and six interpreters, and in order to speed up the process, a list of

[11] Willamo to the Command Division of the Finnish High Command on 17 July 1942 [T-5872/57, NA].

people FLSR knew were proficient in German was included in the letter. According to the office, for example, those working in the headquarters of the army corps could be mobile invalids, and at the same time the office pointed out that for the German SS division there were 'particularly suitable and desirable officers of this kind, who have previously served in the SS units, so getting them into other liais. offcr. duties would be very advantageous'.[12] This request, however, did not produce the desired outcome, and so Willamo communicated with the Finnish High Command once again just one month later:

> In the attached copy of my previous letter, Liaison Staff Roi reported that the lack of liaison officers and interpreters is 9 + 6 = 15. Of the German-speaking officers mentioned in the letter, we only received one. Because the lack of liaison officers and interpreters is constantly growing, which once again results in our operations becoming more difficult, I ask you for replenishment in short order.
>
> According to what I know, the persons named below who have German language skills would be suitable liaison officers: […].[13]

This new request contained 18 names. Information about the suggested individuals had probably come Willamo's way from different sources such as direct inquiries among the units, from the civil guard districts and the State Information Bureau. FLSR also collected information about 'German M.A.s' or 'students of Germanistik'. It also occurred that individual soldiers who knew German applied for the jobs themselves from time to time. In any event, the recommendations sent to the Finnish High Command were not generated randomly without an investigation into the individual's background. In fact, in this very case, an archived table was appended to Willamo's letter in which, in addition to the birth year of the liaison officer or interpreter candidate, information about their civilian occupation or academic status (e.g. 'M. Phil.' or 'B.A. [germ.fil.]', 'student of linguist.'), their place of posting or home

[12] FLSR/Frey to the Organisation Division of the Finnish High Command on 24 December 1942 [T-5872/57, NA].

[13] Communication from Willamo to the Command Division of the Finnish High Command on 23 January 1943 [T-5872/57, NA].

address, and remarks about the person's characteristics were provided. In addition to language proficiency ('prof. particularly good. Res. in Germany', 'Second mother tongue German', 'fair language ability'), other qualities were also noted in the evaluation ('an appropriate representative', 'quiet and dependable' or 'suitable and calm') and background information considered essential ('member of the AKS'[14]). Recommendations were also indicated. In several cases, these were provided by Professor Pekka Katara; one each came from Professor Kaarlo Hildén and Senior Teacher Irja Maliniemi, all at the University of Helsinki.

Apparently, Willamo looked for officers with an SS background needed for the German SS division through his own networks, in particular through the help of his acquaintance Esko Riekki, the former head of the Finnish Secret Police and responsible for the recruitment of Finnish SS volunteers a few years earlier.[15] In January 1943, Riekki delivered the personal details of five Finnish officers of the Waffen-SS to Willamo 'referring to a [previous] discussion'.

> In my opinion, all of them are certainly suitable […] they'll certainly be able to operate independently too under your guidance. I don't believe you'll be disappointed. Just start the ball rolling. Let me know if anything comes of this.[16]

The list of names was collated by a Mrs. Siiri Tuomola, who belonged to the SS volunteer committee,[17] but Riekki had written his own descriptions in pencil next to the names, such as 'very handsome, correct, diligent', 'has *perfect* grasp of the language, was there in Lapland, serious and deliberate, humble', 'was wounded in the SS in summer 1941, quiet' or 'energetic boy, I don't know him very well, German probably isn't great'.

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[14] Akateeminen Karjala-Seura, or Academic Karelian Society, an organization established shortly after Finland's independence in 1917 and devoted to the improvement and growth of the country. After the end of World War II, the organization was labelled 'fascist' and disbanded.

[15] See Swanström 2018: 38, Westerlund 2019: 17 about Riekki's central role in the recruitment of SS volunteers.

[16] The list of persons Riekki sent to Willamo on 21 January 1943, 'I recommend the following officers for positions as liaison officers', was signed by Siiri Tuomola [T-5872/57, NA].

[17] Swanström 2018: 196 and 429.

In the margins of the document, Riekki wrote further remarks about the candidates in general and his wish that the matter be moved forward. This is also what happened, and Willamo supplemented the previous recommendations sent to the commandant office with the ones he had received.

> Referring to my previous communication, I further request the transfer of the officers mentioned below, who have served with the SS troops and were posted back to the Finnish army last year, to Liaison Staff Roi as liaison officers for the German troops. […]
>
> The German SS troops have presented their express wish to have liaison officers who have served with SS troops.[18]

Willamo and his headquarters were probably not particularly satisfied with the results of their communications. The pencil markings made in the margins of the copies of letters sent to the Finnish High Command ('Received') and the responses from the Command Office bear witness to the fact that of the 41 people Willamo had presented to that point, only 5 could be transferred to tasks at FLSR. In addition, one officer who was serving at the front at the time and who was not on the list was transferred. The others could not be taken away from their posts. To be sure, a summary of the current situation ('Need: 8 + 8') was written in the margin of the notification of transfer that arrived from the Command Division of the Finnish High Command at the end of January 1943. The needs were divided into front sectors—Alakurtti, Kiestinki and Petsamo—and altogether, each one needed a total of eight more liaison officers and interpreters.[19] The situation seems to have remained unchanged to the end of the Continuation War. Lieutenant Colonel K.-E. Lindeman, who at the time was the most senior liaison officer in Petsamo, commented on the liaison officer situation in 1944:

> The training programme that has picked up the pace lately in our army and the resultant longish training holidays, the transfers that have taken place

[18] Communication from Willamo to the Command Division of the Finnish High Command on 26 January 1943 [T-5872/57, NA].

[19] Finnish High Command, Command Division 31 January 1943 [T-5872/57, NA].

> for which we have not received replacements, and the heavy load of courses have had a huge effect on the operations with the current officer strength, which must be considered insufficient even under normal circumstances. This is already apparent to a concerning degree in activity reports, for example, which have become sporadic and scanty. The constant absence of liaison officers from their areas of operation has meant that our cooperative work with the Germans has suffered as a result.[20]

According to the estimates of the Finnish High Command, the Finnish army's own needs at the front did not permit the release of personnel for the cooperation of the brothers-in-arms to an extent that would satisfy what was considered in Northern Finland to be sufficient manpower for smooth military cooperation. And thus it is understandable that the German army also recruited workers proficient in language skills for their units behind the lines, in their headquarters, offices and construction sites from among local residents on an ongoing basis.

Background and Selection Criteria

Even just a quick glance at the scale of the cooperation can provide an approximate idea of the places where liaison officers and interpreters were sought and the criteria that were applied to their tasks. The key selection criterion was obviously language proficiency, and officers and servicemen were screened for knowledge of German throughout the armed forces in the same way as those knowing Russian were sought for different intelligence tasks and for processing POWs.[21] Those searching for proficient speakers and evaluating their language skills probably relied on a variety of information and sources: What was written on military master cards about language abilities generated an invitation to the civil guard district, where at least the candidate's verbal language skills were tested as needed,

[20] Among Lindeman's activity reports from the year 1944 there is an undated attachment, 'Need and requirements for liaison officers' [T-5471/8, NA].

[21] Korpinen cites his own interview materials in his master's thesis and states that 'the better one knew German, the more suitable the man was for the duties of a liaison officer,' Korpinen 1988: 28. Regarding the basis for selection of interpreters who spoke Russian in the POW camps, see Kujamäki & Pasanen 2019.

most probably the way it was done for those recruited at the very beginning of the Continuation War during the mobilization of reservists and troop formation.[22] As the war continued, replacements were still sought by inquiries directed to the units and through personal networks. In these cases, the assessments of recommendations, language proficiency and other aptitudes were outsourced, for example, to the State Police, to university faculty members or other persons considered reliable.

Another issue of importance in the performance of their duties may have been their military or family background, which was assumed to cover at least passably the requirements for collaborative tasks. The so-called Jaeger officers ended up taking on duties in the German army units' headquarters as well as at FLSR. These officers had received their military training, their first experience at the front and their contact with the German language during World War I in the Royal Prussian 27th Jaeger Battalion as had their commander, Colonel Willamo. For example, collaborative operations in the Kiestinki front sector were supervised in June 1942 by senior liaison officer Major Valter Vieska and in May 1943 by Lieutenant Colonel Erik Voss. In Petsamo, Lieutenant Colonels Rainer Ahonius and Lauri Gulin served as liaison officers. The local branch of the Office of Transit Traffic in Rovaniemi was run by Major Harry Wihtol, and a colleague from the 27th Jaeger Battalion, Lieutenant Torsten Hallonblad, reported to him. Captain Arne Ilander, who was also trained in the Lockstedt military school in Germany during the Great War, worked at the headquarters of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps and later on, beginning in summer 1942, at the local commandant office in Alakurtti.[23]

Language proficiency and other aptitudes such as special familiarity with military culture, the correct ideology, anti-Sovietism and German affinity were presumably also present in the Finnish volunteers of the SS division Wiking. These men had not only received military and ideological training in Germany and Austria, but also first-hand experience in SS unit operations at the eastern front. Despite the joint efforts of Willamo and Riekki, few of them ended up as liaison officers: Of the SS-affiliated

[22] Saarmaa 1987: 130, Korpinen 1988: 28 and Sana 2017: 19–20.

[23] *Suomen jääkärien elämäkerrasto 1975* [Biographies of Finland's Jaegers].

officers requested in January 1943, the Finnish High Command transferred only Lieutenant Veikko Viikama and Second Lieutenant Mauno Myllykangas to serve under FLSR. At least the latter of these two officers was posted specifically as liaison officer for the SS Division Nord in Kiestinki later on.[24] This group also included Private First Class Erkki Summanen, posted in summer 1944 to Alakurtti as interpreter and secretary for the liaison officers. He also excelled as a cartoonist for the SS volunteers.[25] When one considers the fact that a total of 1408 Finnish volunteers served in the ranks of the *Waffen*-SS, their subsequent roles as liaison officers or interpreters remain nearly insignificant.

A different kind of feeder group was Finland's German community, and Baltic or St Petersburg Germans, for example, could be expected to have both solid language skills and other cultural capital which made them suitable candidates as interpreters or liaison officers for the brotherhood-in-arms.[26] Among the staff of the Separate Interpreter Detachment and of FLSR as well, there are members of the Aue, von Bagh, Klaile, Luther, Müntzel, von Pahlen, Sothmann and Stude families, all with German backgrounds. The same kind of cultural capital was also found among students of the German language; however, such potential candidates rarely became liaison officers. According to Korpinen's study, five liaison officers had a background 'in linguistics', all of them 'students of German philology'.[27] A few of the liaison officers had acquired their language skills when they spent time in Germany during their school years or as adolescents.

As needed, if the matter was urgent or there was a lack of options, those who had studied German as a hobby had made a brief visit to Germany or on the basis of a (sometimes exaggerated) self-evaluation of one's own language skills as passable could be hired for liaison officer duties. The

[24] Communication from Myllykangas to Voss on 10 August 1943 [T-5471/10, NA].

[25] Swanström 2018: 125–126.

[26] Lars Westerlund (2011: 18) uses the term 'Finland's German community' ('Suomen saksalaisyhteisö' in the original Finnish), which he defines as 'a group of people made up of Finnish Germans based on a community of Germanness as well as its internal network'. Key criteria for belonging to this community are solid language ability and a German identity, which manifests, for example, in active participation in the operations of the community's society and institutions.

[27] Korpinen 1988: 32–33.

employee could come up against their limitations later if a brief posting turned into more permanent interactions with a brother-in-arms.

In any event, language skills were accorded the highest value. In recruiting, it was precisely the language of the brother-in-arms that was emphasized as a competence required for joint operations, whereas knowledge of the Finnish language was noticed at the latest during mediation tasks when translation and interpreting jobs which demanded good language ability began to exceed available resources. As was seen later on, the usefulness of a liaison officer and interpreter was cast in a critical light if their translations turned out to be weaker than desired because of deficient language ability. Proficiency in Finnish was also needed for drafting regular activity reports. For Finland-Swedish liaison officers, whose native language was generally Swedish instead in bilingual Finland, reporting in Finnish could present difficulties from time to time. In these cases, if their language proficiency proved to be inadequate for this task, individual liaison officers were encouraged to write their reports in Swedish, and these Swedish-language reports were sent to the officers at FLSR for translation into Finnish before they ended up on Willamo's desk.[28] Several interpreters and liaison officers of Baltic or St. Petersburg German background, for example, could also speak Russian, for which there was plenty of use at the front in interrogating POWs and for translating materials that were captured as spoils of war.

The attempt to find people who possessed not only language proficiency but also a smooth manner of interaction along with an all-round education shines through in the sources; it was also desirable that they had enough background information about the branch of military that the units belonged to in their own place of service as well as an inclination to work between two different military cultures. Bearing this in mind, the Jaeger officers were a sure bet for the German army's senior liaison officers: A common military training and ideological framework (anti-Bolshevik) created a good basis for joint and mediation

[28] See, for example, the weekly reports of Gunnar Fock, Frank Jernström and Georg Nordblad; even the German-language reports from the Hungarian Paul von Pandy, who served in Petsamo as a 'reindeer officer', were translated into Finnish, either as group work by the liaison officers in Petsamo or in the office of FLSR [T-5471/1–3 and 8, NA].

operations.[29] When writing to his superior about the lack of liaison officers in his own area of operations in Petsamo, Lieutenant Colonel Lindeman shared his own views as well on what characteristics were required for the post. He believed that the main goal of the liaison officers' activities was taking care of matters in a smooth way under the varying circumstances of war, making deductions based on their own observations and reporting on these observations objectively, which required that liaison officers have 'considerable mental sophistication'.

> It is also advisable that the person in question himself have a strong desire to interact with the brothers-in-arms and that he also has the requirements necessary to do so. This kind of interaction requires one to be rather broadly informed in different areas so that the interactions take on a flexible character and consequently lead to closer relations. In addition, the candidate should be in such physical condition that he has both the desire and the ability to move in the terrain of the area of operations, something necessary for making first-hand observations. I am of the opinion that one should generally avoid choosing candidates who are too young; rather, one should try to focus primarily on their mental maturity, for which any academic degree earned is a guarantee. In their activities, liaison officers often come into close contact with German officers whose military rank is well above theirs. In such a case, age and the mental maturity achieved will lend authority to the liaison officer regardless of rank and will make it easier to work with those of higher rank.[30]

It was preferable to retain the liaison officers and interpreters who fulfilled the criteria and who also excelled at their jobs in their current posts, but they could also be recommended for other suitable positions if such a command arrived. On the other hand, if their performance was not up to snuff, they could be subject to rude criticism as well. In the fall of 1942, Lieutenant Colonel C.G. Wahrén, who served as senior liaison officer in the Petsamo sector, evaluated one of his subordinates in the following words:

[29] For more information about the common ideological framework see, for example, Jokisipilä & Könönen 2013, passim.

[30] Lindeman, undated note' [T-5471/8, NA].

> My personal opinion is that Lieutenant B. [Backman] seems a bit too slack and his upbringing has made him too simple to adapt to the strictness and formality of the German officers in the unit.[31]

In January 1943, the senior liaison officer received a phone message relaying suggestions for specialists from among interpreters. The liaison officers in Petsamo responded with the following recommendations:

> Of the liaison officers in the Petsamo district, the Finnish Army recommends that the following be designated specialists: Corporals Nils Bertel and Achmed Grandel, who have served for the entire duration of the war as interpreters; first in the 163rd Division and then in the Petsamo district they proved energetic and particularly capable in their duties and are in terms of their conduct very suitable for the tasks of liaison officer. Gunner Jooseppi Pälsi, who served from the beginning of the war as an interpreter, has been observed to be particularly suitable in terms of his flexibility and his conduct.[32]

Writing a history of FLSR after the war, A.O. Väänänen reflected on the characteristics demanded of liaison officers (the writer refers only to them in his book and not to interpreters) for the tasks assigned to FLSR. One of the most important of these was maintaining 'confidential and immediate' relations with the Germans, but another of the office's crucial tasks was to provide the Finnish High Command with up-do-date information about the German troops, including observations about battles and munitions, construction work and maintenance, troop strength and changes among the officers, disciplinary matters and propaganda. Both of these main missions were the responsibility of the liaison officers posted to the German staffs and units, which is why Väänänen believed they were required to have strong mental and cultural capital, in other words 'thorough military training, a good all-round

[31] Communication from Wahrén to Willamo on 17 July 1942 [T-5471/1–3, NA].

[32] Phone message from Major Väänänen on 24 January 1943, telegraph from the Petsamo district liaison officers to Major Väänänen on 27 January 1943 [T-5872/57, NA].

education—and language proficiency, correct conduct and restraint in the use of alcohol'.[33]

It is emblematic that Väänänen does not go into concrete mediation activities any further, translation and interpreting, so critical for creating the aforementioned relationships for both liaison officers and interpreters alike. These mediation activities were, of course, very visible in the weekly reports of the liaison officers which, as head of the Command Division, Väänänen himself had access to.

All of this is in line with what we know about the training of language-proficient officers who were selected to be liaison officers, either before their regular posting or later, when the experiences they had amassed during the military cooperation gave rise to an invitation for the liaison officers to a joint 'day of negotiation'. The liaison officers were given an orientation to all of their duties except those which also became a part of their daily routine: translation and interpreting.

Multitasking by Liaison Officers and Interpreters

As both the officers' job title and the name of the office that directed their activities suggest, a unit of soldiers operated in Eastern and Northern Finland whose main task was to shape a functioning *connection* between the Finnish and German troops. The creation of this connection naturally included a very versatile agency which was determined by the foreign army's needs, the physical circumstances of the place of operation, the moods of the German troops or local feelings between Finnish and German troops. It was also determined by the Finnish military leadership's own expectations.

The needs of the foreign army were generated by, among other things, the fact that it was alone in a new, strange operational environment. It was also in a place where it could not determine its methods of operation arbitrarily based solely on its own military perspective. Although a military community with almost absolute operational authority, it was also

[33] Väänänen 1947: 24.

dependent on cooperation with local residents, civil authorities and, above all, the Finnish soldiers. Language was one of the barriers to functioning communication, but the nature surrounding them, cultural customs and differing methods of operation, and not least of all the difference or even foreignness of Finnish military culture, presented others. Liaison officers and interpreters were needed to provide a communicative link that could promote the German army's war efforts and solve conflicts, preferably before they even arose, according to the methods prescribed by both the Finnish High Command and Governor Hillilä. The task was thus to ensure frictionless military operations and interactions.

However, the Finnish military command broadened the purview of liaison officers with other kinds of liaison tasks. The Finnish High Command not only wanted to stay up-to-date regarding the successes and failures of the German troops' operations; it also wanted information about the feelings about the war that prevailed among the officers and soldiers as well as attitudes towards Finland and the Finnish people. This kind of double agency was probably that which Lindeman was thinking of when he emphasized mental maturity, in particular given the fact that the German brothers-in-arms were quite cognizant of the two-way nature of mediation activities, and, as needed, they were prepared to interpret them as espionage rather than as part of the job description of the liaison officer sent by their brother-in-arms.

When the following chapters examine in more detail those tasks that comprised the mediation and liaison work, the main attention will be focused on linguistic *liaison* and *mediation activities*—communication, translation, interpreting and cultural explanation. A primary result of this activity comprises the crucial material here: the weekly activity reports of the liaison officers and interpreters. Besides these reports it would be interesting to study the detailed instructions which FLSR provided regarding the communication activities which would guide those sent as contact persons to the German detachments. However, no reference to such instructions can be found in the archives, nor is any information saved about training days organized for the liaison officers by the office in which the policies governing their work and problems were discussed under the guidance of more senior liaison officers. Given this lack

of materials, the best way to approach the matter is to explore the *reporting guidelines* sent to the field. Here we can continue on to the agency of what was reported itself.

Colonel Willamo's Guidelines

The liaison officers' and interpreters' duty to report began immediately upon posting, but how the reporting was done was apparently for some time left mostly to the reporters' discretion. In March 1942, approximately three months after the establishment of FLSR, Colonel Willamo noticed the heterogeneous contents of the reports that arrived and the varying ways in which they were written, and he felt it necessary to give both liaison officers and interpreters detailed instructions on how to write an activity report. It was to be done every week (on Saturday) and be sent straight to the commander of FLSR. The activity reports were to be standardized both in terms of content and structure so that every topic had its own numbered item in the report. That same month, Willamo directed his liaison officers in this manner:

> So that the weekly reports may be consistent, from now on they must contain the topics listed below in the given order:
>
> 1. Accounts of combatant activity in the reporter's area, in particular battles in which the reporter has had to act as a leader, liaison officer or interpreter.
> 2. German criticism, possibly connected to tactical factors of Finnish troops or Finnish methods of fighting.
> 3. Corresponding criticism by Finns about the Germans.
> 4. Out-of-the-ordinary incidents occurring at the reporter's post which have given one side or the other reason for criticism.
> 5. The attitude of Germans at the reporter's post to Finland and the Finnish people.
> 6. Any changes in officers at the reporter's post. What is the reporter's own evaluation of them and what is that of the Germans?
> 7. Finnish decorations possibly proposed for Germans (SURNAME and Christian names, date of birth and place, unit, brief justification).

8. Any wishes expressed by Germans regarding the reporter's activities.
9. Any other activities by the reporter during the week.
10. Mentions of other matters and observations interesting to the military; even what may seem to be minor or trivial matters, observations and statements, etc., is not prohibited. […][34]

The interpreters were given their own guidelines in a separate attachment:

> So that the weekly reports by interpreters may be consistent, from now on they must contain the topics listed below in the given order:
>
> 1. Out-of-the-ordinary incidents happening at the reporter's post which have given one side or the other reason for criticism.
> 2. The attitude of Germans at the reporter's post to Finland and the Finnish people.
> 3. Any wishes expressed by Germans regarding the reporter's activities.
> 4. Other observations, matters, acts, speech, conversations and statements on the part of the Germans which have importance for preserving good relationships between the Germans and the Finns. Mentioning other matters and observations interesting to the military, even what may seem to be minor or trivial matters, observations and statements, is not prohibited.
> 5. The reporter's own activities during the report week should be explained briefly. […]

These reporting guidelines not only reveal what was expected of the activity reports in the first case, but also what the liaison officers and interpreters were expected to do during the reporting period.[35] The list of items shows quite clearly what kinds of concrete investigative tasks were performed to maintain the brotherhood-in-arms. The liaison officers and interpreters were expected to provide comprehensive coverage of events that took place during the reporting period, such as combat activities and

[34] Willamo to the liaison officers and interpreters of FLSR on 4 March 1942 [T-5872/57, NA].

[35] FLSR directed the keeping of 'in addition to the designated journal' notes about matters, news, events and statements that seemed insignificant as well. This directive was also repeated in the instructions given separately to interpreters. According to Korpinen (1988), the liaison officers had made a joint decision to destroy the diaries when the cooperation ended in autumn 1944.

transfers within the officer corps, but the activity reports were also required to contain information about the troops and their opinions, as well as differences in views, criticisms and hopes regarding combat activities, on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms. Emphasis was placed on all observations made at the particular person's posting about the relationship of the Germans to Finland and to the Finns, and to observations which could 'have significance in preserving good relations between the Germans and the Finns'. In this respect we are already approaching a basic pillar of the dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms. Reading between the lines in these guidelines, a balancing act emerges in which the Finnish political and military leadership was engaged between the expectations of the German allies present on Finnish territory and their own military goals, touted both at home and to the general public as a 'separate war', albeit in alliance with the Third Reich. Nevertheless, according to the activity reports, this also involved a good deal of cultural education work, through which the liaison officers and interpreters reacted to the issues, misconceptions and even disputes born of cultural differences.

Olli Auterinen, a liaison officer at the Alakurtti air field, later recalled his job description:

> We liaison officers served as a kind of scouts for the Finnish High Command among the German troops. We were encouraged to talk in particular to those returning from leave in Germany and others who were being transferred away from the front to get an idea of the mood and situation. At the same time we reported on the Germans' attitude towards the Finns. In all possible contexts we were supposed to emphasize that Finland was conducting its own war. Making this clear was particularly important in the Air Fleets, where airborne units were relocated from one European front sector to another.[36]

As an interpreter for German units, Jyrki Kolkkala also ended up emphasizing to the Germans that Finland was never at war with England or the United States the way the Germans were: 'They really didn't seem

[36] Auterinen 1991: 28.

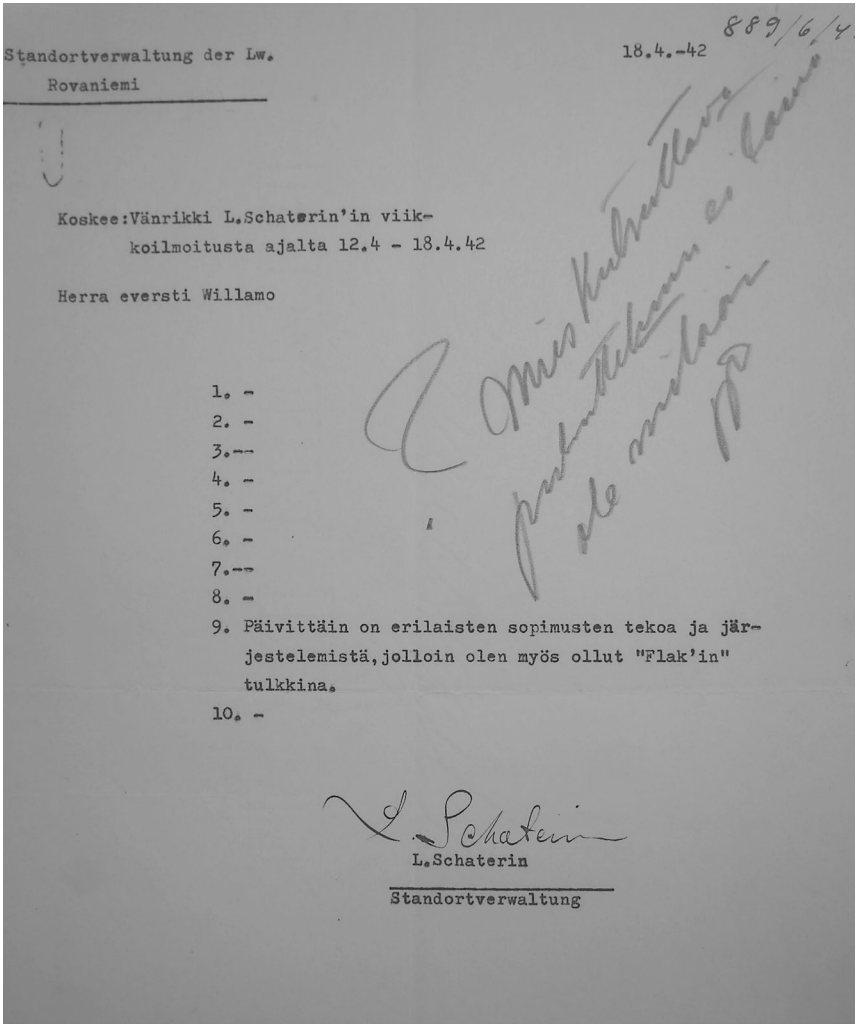
to know that Finland was only involved in its own "private war" against the Soviet Union.'[37] It is difficult to say how much hindsight, acquired after the war and through conversations, is involved in these memories besides the genuine experiences, but even such as they are, they reflect the frame of reference of the war years rather well. In terms of their position and their obligations, the liaison officers and interpreters participated in a dual relationship, in a sense, to the dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms: their task was both to attend to the smoothness of communication and thus the integrity of the dramaturgy, and to report on its state and any factors that threatened this integrity.

Interpreting and translating were essential parts of this first-mentioned area of responsibility. The descriptions regarding these tasks appeared in the liaison officers' reports in Numbers 1 and 9, especially under the first rubric, 'Accounts of combatant activity in the reporter's area, in particular battles in which the reporter has had to act as a leader, liaison officer or interpreter', and again in the latter miscellaneous category for other activities during the reporter's week (Image 4.1). The interpreters' descriptions of their own activities also included a similar 'explain briefly' category. It is nevertheless interesting that these are precisely those areas in which quite a few liaison officers and interpreters really had the most to report.

Willamo's Own Mediation Activities

Willamo's attempts to harmonize the regularly delivered weekly reports is explained at least partially by how dependent he himself was on the contents of these explanations for his own activities. It is understandable that observations made in the areas at the front or behind it by liaison officers and interpreters guided the commander's own decision-making process, and this is why he read them very carefully as well as critically. This can be seen in the markings in the margins of the reports, which can sometimes be rather snappy (e.g. 'Didn't he get the instructions?'; 'This kind

[37] Sana 2017: 90; Jyrki Kolkkala's war experiences will be further discussed later in the book.



Standortverwaltung der Lw.
Rovaniemi

18.4.-42

889/6/4

Koskee: Vänrikki L.Schaterin'in viikkoilmoitusta ajalta 12.4 - 18.4.42

Herra eversti Willamo

1. -
2. -
3. --
4. -
5. -
6. -
7. --
8. -
9. Päivittäin on erilaisten sopimusten tekoa ja järjestelemistä, jolloin olen myös ollut "Flak'in" tulkkina.
10. -

L. Schaterin

L.Schaterin

Standortverwaltung

Image 4.1 Lieutenant Schaterin's weekly report to Colonel Willamo from 18 April 1942. A comment added next to the question mark reads: 'The man should be given a lecture. This isn't anything' (Communication from Lieutenant Schaterin to Willamo on 18 April 1942 [T-5471/1–3, NA])

of announcement is of no use'; '[…] with indiv. instructions this man has got to figure out what he's writing and what is of any use, what isn't').[38]

Simultaneously, the weekly reports from the liaison officers and interpreters were raw materials for Willamo's own reports, in which he in turn informed the Finnish High Command of the current status of the brotherhood-in-arms. The individual activity reports were often delivered first to the most senior liaison officer at each military area, who added an expanded summary of the reports. At the end of July 1942 during the absence of Lieutenant Colonel C.G. Wahren, the most senior liaison officer, Lieutenant Unto Mäkinen sent the Petsamo sector's weekly reports from the liaison officers to FLSR:

> Attached please find a summary of the liaison officers' weekly reports from the period 24 July – 31 July 1942 as well as the weekly reports from Lieutenants Warva and Mäkinen, Second Lieutenants Reinikainen, Thoden, Fr. v. Veh and Tolsa, and Lieutenant Backmann.[39]

Willamo's staff used the summary as a central basis for his own reports, seasoning them, however, with straight citations taken from other action reports as well. In other words, the picture the military leadership eventually received of the status of the brotherhood-in-arms was a *collective construction* that had gone through various phases of translation, interpreting and condensation: For example, the liaison officers subordinate to Lieutenant Colonel Wahren in the Petsamo front sector wrote their own reports on the week's events either in Finnish or Swedish as well as summaries of what they had heard while being around Germans or interacting with them. Wahren subsequently picked the items he interpreted as significant and added his own descriptions of events and conversations from the period in question.[40] The final interpretive layer was added in

[38] About the comments in margins see also the communication from Lieutenant V. Kurri to Willamo on 4 December 1942 and from Lieutenant Åke Svensk to Willamo on 13 June 1942 [T 5471/1–3, NA].

[39] Communication from Lieutenant Mäkinen to Willamo on 31 July 1942 [T-5471/1–3, NA].

[40] Communication from Lieutenant Colonel Wahren to Willamo on 20 October 1942 [T-5471/1–3, NA].

Willamo's FLSR before the situational picture was sent to the Finnish High Command in Mikkeli.

From the perspective of this study, it is also worth mentioning that in the accounts ending up at the Finnish High Command, the interpreters' work in Finnish-German operations and the liaison officers' linguistic mediation activities in planning these operations, or in other activities supporting the German staffs, is completely diluted by descriptions of operations, moods and interactions on a more general level. This may also be a partial explanation for why the indispensability of the liaison officers and interpreters as a communicative link in the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms was not always apparent to the offices of the Finnish High Command.

Willamo also sent independent accounts about the phases of military activity in Northern Finland as well as impressions from the German High Command, where he was working as a senior liaison officer until FLSR was established. While working there, Willamo was in particularly close contact with the commanding generals (such as Dietl and Feige) at official staff meetings and on a daily basis as well as on hunting and fishing trips or sauna evenings.[41] He sent summaries about conversations from his interactions with the generals and other observations to the Finnish High Command, first to Colonel Lars Melander and beginning in May 1942 to the Chief of the General Staff, Erik Heinrichs. Because of his position, Willamo also ended up accompanying key figures in the German establishment such as Reichsminister Fritz Todt and Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, on their visits to Rovaniemi. The speeches made in connection with these visits were forwarded on to the Finnish High Command through translated summaries provided by Willamo or his subordinates. When Himmler visited the headquarters of the Mountain Army (AOK 20) in Rovaniemi in April 1942, General Dietl invited his guest to a banquet at Pohjanhovi Restaurant. Willamo was also there, and he summarized Himmler's speech to General Dietl as follows:

[41] Väänänen 1947: 200, Junila 2000: 115, Mikkonen 2017a: 21.

> When he responded to [Dietl's] speech, he in turn cited his own personal reflections that they were prepared for battle, and that a good spirit and an excellent sense of humour reigned among the troops. He expressed his appreciation for the Finnish SS battalion in the Wiking division. The Finns had proven to be true to their reputation as soldiers, although they were fighting under circumstances that were very foreign to them. They had endured the difficulties of the winter well and acculturated themselves to the various units they were fighting together with, Danes, Norwegians, Flemish, Dutch etc. In the beginning there were language difficulties, but now they were no longer a problem. […] In particular, he was delighted to see the good comradeship that prevailed here between the Finns and the Germans.[42]

Willamo's reports are a particularly detailed depiction of meetings and conversations with the Germans. In addition to general mood, eschewed attitudes and arrogance on the part of the Germans ended up in the reports, behaviours that ate away at the official image of the brotherhood ('just as if they were in some occupied country and not with their brothers-in-arms'[43]). They also included notes about problems the Germans experienced while waging war in the winter. The creation of such detailed descriptions required copious amounts of translation work either by Willamo himself, his liaison office or the men sent to the German units as communicative links, although this circumstance remained between the lines in his accounts.

Who was a 'Liaison Officer', Who was an 'Interpreter'?

Liaison officers and *interpreters* are separated by title into separate categories in the list of names and the placement tables at FLSR as well as in Willamo's instructions. This bears witness to clear differences in the job descriptions of those to whom these titles were assigned. The boundaries of the categories begin to blur, however, as soon as one looks at the activities of both groups in the light of the weekly reports sent to Willamo.

[42] Communication from Willamo to Melander on 10 April 1942 [T-17215/1–2, NA].

[43] Communication from Willamo to Melander on 16 October 1941 [T-17215/1–2, NA].

There seems to be considerable overlap in tasks and in both cases. These include not only translation and interpreting but also organizing daily needs, supply or housing for the troops, solving disputes, observing the German troops, planning operations, acquiring intelligence and finally, of course, functioning as a link between joint German and Finnish patrols. Above all else, the *job title* seems to reflect the person's military rank and place in the military hierarchy and, at the same time, the status of the liaison person as a representative of the Finnish army sent to a German unit: Officers who were proficient in German were named liaison officers, and they represented the Finnish Defence Forces and division headquarters alongside their other tasks. The interpreters sent by FLSR, on the other hand, were NCOs, rank and file or specialists whose position was subordinate, both to the area's liaison officers and to the officers commanding the German troops. The latter, in other words, had more commanders to run for than the former.

On the other hand, the *contents* of their activities, or the focus, prerequisites and concrete physical circumstances of the tasks, were largely determined by where the liaison officer or interpreter was posted. A rough division between the area of military operations and the rear area provides one point of reference for describing the tasks (and will help classify them in more detail in the following chapters). The weekly reports sent by the communicative links posted to the area of military operations show the prototype of the military interpreter involved in the liaison tasks required by Finnish-German war operations—a person who moved and, as needed, fought alongside German or Finnish troops. On the front, the activities of the liaison officers and interpreters were determined by the immediate proximity of the war and the need for liaison work and communication arising from concrete military operations with the German comrades-in-arms.

In the rear areas, on the other hand, the war was farther away, and with respect to the tasks of liaison officers and interpreters, something that was coordinated, supported and prepared for, a place to which one was going or from which one was returning—on holiday, on leave or on the way to the military hospital. A German soldier was also a brother-in-arms who became a 'new neighbour' to the civilian population, whose presence defined all areas of the everyday lives of Finns on the home front during

wartime. This created situations in which FLSR's liaison officers were required to serve as a linguistic link between representatives of the Mountain Army, the Air Fleet or *Organisation Todt* and the Finnish authorities during their encounters. In the rear area, the interpreter was primarily in the service of the local population and both civil and military authorities, in a way similar to a modern community interpreter.

As will be seen later on, this line of demarcation is rather superficial as well despite the clear individual emphases. Liaison officers posted in or close to the area of military operations also ended up solving disputes between the civilian population caught up in the war, civil authorities and the foreign army, assisting in arranging quarters, or functioning as messengers in any manner of issues that had to do with troop supply. This was seen in particular in the activities of the liaison officers that ended up working as local commandants.

On the whole, the job descriptions of the liaison officers in the areas of military operations, as well as the quality and amount of the translation and interpreting tasks, vary significantly depending on the location of the posting. The (senior) liaison officers reporting to the commanders and headquarter/staff officers of the German army were above all monitors of the brotherhood-in-arms and its operations, and their goal was to obtain a general picture of the activities of the German troops, participating as representatives of the Finnish armed forces in consultations between German and Finnish commanders. At the same time they supervised and guided the activities of the other liaison officers in the areas of operation in question and, as established, they assembled large reports of their own and their subordinates' activities for Willamo's use. In these upper front-sector headquarters or staffs, junior liaison officers were the ones whose job it was to translate and interpret according to the headquarters' or staffs' needs. The contents of the activity reports tend to confirm that there was more daily translation work the closer one got to the front and the operative units and the further away from the senior officers' casinos and headquarter dugouts. At this level, the tasks performed under the titles *liaison officer* and *interpreter* seem to be the closest of all to each other, but with the difference that even junior liaison officers were still above interpreters in the chain of command.

In this connection, an interesting detail is that just as the FLSR's interpreters did, the liaison officers themselves also often received 'special tasks' in Colonel Willamo's daily and headquarter commands, very often precisely as *interpreters* for German officers in different parts of Finland for their projects, planning or holiday travels. After the special task was completed, they returned to their everyday military work, among other things interpreting between German and Finnish officers. For example, headquarters command no. 5/1942 mentions that Second Lieutenant P.G. Schütt was performing special tasks in assignments in Oulu, Kajaani, Jyväskylä and Vaasa, the nature of which Schütt himself describes in his activity report as follows:[44]

> During the period 29 July – 2 August 1942, the undersigned followed *Oberstabszahlmeister* [chief paymaster] Jung and *Oberarzt* [senior physician] Vieregger as an interpreter on the trip to Oulu-Kajaani-Iisalmi-Kuopio-Jyväskylä-Vaasa-Oulu and Rovaniemi. The purpose of the assignment: to investigate the suitability of schools and boarding houses recommended by the Finnish High Command as convalescence homes for the 20th Mountain Army. Results: the only ones suitable are the folk high schools Mieslahti and Lapinlahti near Kajaani and Iisalmi, and the Tähtiniemi boarding house situated in Korpilahti near Jyväskylä.

There are also references here and there to the fact that some liaison officers found it frustrating to work at tasks for which an interpreter 'would have been good enough': Lieutenant Tauno Kalima had been posted to the Kiestinki German air field at the beginning of winter 1941–1942 as a liaison officer, and on the basis of his reports, it appears he worked as a jack-of-all-trades: a representative for the Germans, an organizer, a messenger boy, a signaller, a terrain intelligence scout and a leader of joint Finnish-German patrols. Once his activities had stabilized in March 1942, Kalima eventually felt that his resources were being wasted since the tasks that remained could have been easily handled by a mere interpreter: 'My perception is that the need for liaisons at the Kiestinki air field at this point is quite questionable', Kalima reported

[44] Headquarters command 5/12 August 1942 [T-5872/39, NA]; Communication from Second Lieutenant P.G. Schütt to Colonel Willamo on 8 August 1942 [T-5471/1–3, NA].

and said he estimated that 'an interpreter with sufficient German language skills would be able […] to handle the tasks that need to be done here quite well.'[45]

Kalima's goal may have been a headquarters liaison officer post with duties more aligned in that direction, and this was arranged as well in summer 1942. First he was assigned to the German artillery (*Arko*) in the Kiestinki area, then to Division XVIII of the Mountain Army Corps, in the Finnish units under it and for a few weeks also as the sector's senior liaison officer. Based on the reports, however, it does not seem that this move from the air field to the divisions' headquarters actually changed Kalima's translatory job description. As the following excerpts show, both Kalima's verbal and written language skills were needed to maintain connections between the Finns and the Germans and to take care of ongoing matters.

> I arrived in Kananainen on Saturday 4 July and reported to Major Vieska. […] Because the XVIII A.K. didn't have any use for me, at least just then, and because my posting even created difficulties for them because of the lack of space, Major Vieska commanded me temporarily to the headquarters of Battle Group Puroma, where they needed German-speaking officers. On Monday 6 July I reported to Colonel Puroma who sent me to the artillery commander and chief of staff Lieutenant Colonel Hülphers for orders. Lieut. Col. Hülphers assigned me the job of familiarizing myself with the tasks of a fire prevention officer. On Thursday 9 July I accepted the role of fire prevention officer for Battle Group Puroma, which I have been handling temporarily. In addition to this I have translated various commands into German and Finnish.
>
> During the past week, I have constantly worked at the headquarters of Battle Group Puroma doing translation work in German and Finnish. I have not yet had anything to do in the area of fire prevention.
>
> I have handled ongoing matters, correspondence, communication with Finnish units and bodies of the East Karelia military administration as well as performed various translation tasks. I have tried to follow war efforts

[45] Communication from Kalima to Willamo on 14 March 1942 [T-5471/1–3, NA].

> quite closely by asking Ia [the commander] and Ic [the chief of staff of the Intelligence Division] explanations of specific issues in order to complete the daily reports. The answers are generally given very willingly and without reservation.[46]

In any event, the hierarchies and rankings were clear, and the chain of command naturally had a different effect on different levels. To the interpreters, there were so many officers giving orders, both Finnish and German, that it was painful. On the middle level—where lieutenants like Kalima worked as junior liaison officers—the commands came from more senior liaison officers as well as German officers, but on the other hand they had the opportunity to accompany headquarter officers to eat in their canteens and casinos. On the highest level, the only interpreting and translation tasks liaison officers had to do was delegation to others—unless a representation event required them to perform these tasks themselves.

The nature of the work performed at these levels and the cooperation in different areas—at the front and behind it—that the liaisons and clerks at FLSR had to deal with will be studied in more detail in the next chapters.

[46] Kalima's activity reports to Willamo, 11 and 18 July and 15 August 1942 [T-5471/1–3, NA].

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5

The Translators, Interpreters and Runners Behind the Front Lines

When over 200,000 German soldiers from the Mountain Army, the Air Fleet and paramilitary organizations along with other staff suddenly arrived in sparsely populated Northern Finland, the everyday life of the local population was inevitably transformed in many ways. New actors had arrived to be their neighbours, and they were settling in the public buildings, staying in hotels and private homes, constructing housing and maintenance barracks on the property of private individuals or municipalities, and establishing air fields to be used by the Air Fleet as well as anti-aircraft bases to protect them. The roads of Northern Finland were filled with German military vehicles, transporting equipment, machinery, building materials and foodstuffs in a never-ending flow as well as soldiers by the thousands, both to the front and away from it on holidays or leaves. These transfers of troops and equipment put a strain on the Northern Finnish road system, which was not initially built to support military traffic.

The German military forces in Northern Finland were well-prepared and organized actors in terms of maintenance. The units behind the front were trimmed down to ensure the operations of the German troops and their well-being in the areas of military operation on the one hand, and

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on the other the supply, discipline and organization of the troops behind the front line. The German army in Finland was not subject to Finnish law, but even regardless of their extraterritorial rights, they would not have been able to act on their own, but had to adapt their entire operations to both the prevailing circumstances and to the political context limiting the military cooperation: Methods employed in occupied areas would not do in the politically sovereign host country. Instead, all behind-the-lines operations required cooperation and agreement with the provincial government, local authorities and civilians. For construction projects and road work, the Germans needed on-site and local knowledge, materials and labour to supplement their own. When the needs and the seemingly bottomless wallets of the German military forces came up against Finnish society and the operational requirements of the Finnish army, both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms had to specify both their activities in general and the clear boundaries of their projects in particular.

No boundaries, whether in terms of military discipline or regulations on purchase or pricing, are unsurpassable. Under conditions of war, moral thresholds with respect to crossing boundaries and finding loopholes are loosened, and individual needs, or those dictated by military operations, become the justification for seizing an opportunity when it arises. The abundance and freight transportation of German supplies on the one hand and the wartime scarcities and rationing on the other naturally created a basic position that gave rise to both individual small-scale exchanges of goods and more organized criminal trade on the black market. Here, the goods and property of the German armed forces stolen by Finns or provided by the Germans themselves went into circulation. Crimes targeting German property kept the German and Finnish authorities busy for the entire period of the brotherhood-in-arms as did thefts and arbitrary acts of arrogance or disregard involving Finnish property or failure to observe local ordinances. When making procurements or utilizing Finnish labour, the German troops did not always remember, or did not always want to comply with, the regulations of the host country—rules that were essential for keeping the host society performing well.

All of these matters—quartering issues, construction and local projects, maintenance of discipline and organization, the processing of criminal cases and settling of compensation claims—required many kinds of

cooperation between the Finnish and German authorities. What was at stake here was not only the functional ability of the German troops, but also the smoothest coexistence possible between the foreign army and local civilians. The integrity of this coexistence was something that leadership on both sides was unwilling to risk under the circumstances. On the Finnish side, authorities of the armed forces as well as the police and the local and provincial governments participated in arrangements and monitoring. A large part of this work fell to the offices of FLSR as well as the liaison officers and interpreters posted to the various German units, working as linguistic links for the administrative work and as case officers for the Germans. Employing these individuals on the German side for cooperative work and negotiating tables were above all the Finnish unit (*Einsatz Finnland*) of the construction unit *Organisation Todt* (*OT*) and the commandant (*Kommandant des Rückwärtigen Gebietes, Korück 525*) for the areas behind the front, responsible for the security and rear-area policing of the German army. A significant employer of liaison officers and interpreters behind the front was also the German Air Fleet.

A very important node of cooperation behind the front was naturally FLSR itself, located in immediate proximity to the High Command of the Mountain Army in Rovaniemi and other important German staffs. It directed the liaison persons posted to the German units at the front and supported the activities of the offices of *Organisation Todt*, offices of local commandants and the Air Fleet, and it transmitted information that was filtered from activity reports from the front about the state of cooperation so that the Finnish High Command could assess the situation. At the same time, FLSR was an important actor in the games in which the all-round smoothness of Finnish-German cooperation and coexistence were at stake. Its numerous offices (see Chap. 4, Military Support Structures for the Brotherhood-in-Arms) coordinated military cooperation between the Finns and the Germans, but Finns who wished to do business, or found themselves forced to do so, with German soldiers or military authorities as well as Germans who required action by Finnish authorities or were the subject of decisions made by such authorities also had dealings with FLSR. Within the framework of their own activities, all of the offices of FLSR were in contact with the German military authorities.

However, in becoming acquainted with the archival sources, one cannot help but get the impression that the further away from issues related to the upper levels of military cooperation one gets towards the everyday interactions of the brotherhood-in-arms in the midst of the local Finnish population, the conducting of business, administration and the German soldiers and military authorities, the stronger FLSR's role as a mediator became. At the same time, translation acquired an essential role in its operations. Seen from this point of view, the Office of Transit Traffic (OTT) and the administrative Office X step into the foreground, and most particularly the officers and clerical staff working in their offices, the translators of the brotherhood-in-arms.

The Clerks of the Office of Transit Traffic

As previously mentioned, the Office of Transit Traffic (henceforth: OTT) in Rovaniemi was only under the supervision of Colonel Willamo's headquarters for a few months after FLSR was established until it was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence in July 1942.[1] Independent of command relationships and its name however, the work of the OTT, which was under the direction of Major Harry Wihtol, continued during the entire duration of the Continuation War in the immediate vicinity of FLSR. It had its own relatively clear objective: to aid and monitor the Germans in their operations with respect to procurement, construction projects and rent issues. In practice, the office was a Northern Finnish licensing authority responsible for ensuring that the German projects were carried out within the limits of general contracts. Beginning as early as autumn 1940, its tasks also included issues concerning the transport of German troops and materials, first to Northern Norway and subsequently Northern Finland.

[1] Translation work performed in the Liaison Office of the Ministry of Defence in Helsinki lies outside the purview of this study. The office was responsible for the main lines of projects and corrective work relating to the cooperation and thus, in practice, it guided the operations of the Rovaniemi office led by Major Wihtol. See, for example, Mikkonen 2017a: 31; if desired, an idea of the translation work done by the office can be found, for example, in the folder T-17944-17951/45, NA.

The OTT overlapped with other liaison office operations particularly in terms of staff, since the job descriptions of both the NCOs of the OTT and the other clerical staff as well were essentially rather multi-layered throughout the structure of the FLSR and the brotherhood-in-arms itself. For example, in December 1941, NCOs belonging to the staff of the OTT and privates were posted to the service of Lieutenant Colonel Carl Rothe, head of Office X, to serve as interpreters. This office, an administrative branch of FLSR, received Corporal Matti Sainio, and Private Waldemar Ainamaa was posted to Kemijärvi to work for the German Air Fleet. Senior officers serving under the German XXXVI Mountain Army Corps, Lieutenant Colonel Ilmari Rytkönen and Captain Arne Ilander, were also provided with their own interpreters by the OTT: Corporal Tor Rundberg and Private First Class O. Karttunen. In addition to these, a group of interpreters and NCOs working with current issues served on site in Rovaniemi, Corporals Ralph Hackmann and Kauko Lauri and Private First Class Mauri Toiviainen, for example, under their commander, Staff Sergeant Kalle Jokikokko.[2]

During the late winter of 1942, when the operations of the liaison office were being reorganized in other ways, a command was also issued for 'the clerical staff of the former Office of Transit Traffic' to form the FLSR's clerical staff, whose activities were determined by the head of the Command Office, Major A.O. Väänänen.[3] The interpreters who were already working in the various headquarters at the front simultaneously decreased the staffing of the OTT, but a group of NCOs remained in Rovaniemi. Their job descriptions were quite broad and included interpreting and translation tasks, officer-on-duty tasks and office work, or more generally assisting the German NCOs as well as rank and file with ongoing matters. The aforementioned Hackmann, Jokikokko and Lauri already belonged to the clerical staff, and in addition to them, Jaeger Sergeant First Class Vilho Jalo, Sergeant O. Mörck, Corporal Sandström and Private Häggblom, among others, ended up taking on the same tasks. The clerical staff comprised not only servicemen; women also belonged

[2] Office of Transit Traffic of the Finnish High Command on 15 December 1941 [T-17944-17951/95, NA].

[3] Communication from FLSR on 11 February 1942 [T-17944-17951/95, NA].

to the staff, and their job description is mainly noted in the documents as including registry, correspondence and typing tasks. However, at least Miss Regina Kariniemi and Miss Elsa Galle, who worked as Major Wihtol's secretary, worked in the office on translation tasks as well. Also employed in the OTT, and later in the secretariat of the liaison office, were Misses Kallio and Lemström as well as Mrs Hynninen and Mrs Irja Ahonen.[4] Their efforts as translators were also significant given how often they appear, as do Kariniemi and Galle, as verifiers of German or Finnish translations (with the remark *Übersetzung bestätigen* or *Käännöksen vakuudeksi*, 'verifying/witnessing the translation').

A comprehensive picture of who translated, what they translated and by command of which office remains somewhat unclear in the final analysis. Based on the source materials, it looks as if there were quite a bit of cooperation on work between the offices of the OTT and FLSR. The translation work as well as other clerical tasks was divided between the offices and their resources, as they were located so close to each other, and translations were also assigned to the interpreters and liaison officers in the German units close to FLSR. More relevant than the question of command chain in this connection was that there was so much translation work to do that 'transit' took on a new meaning for the Office of Transit Traffic. The office functioned as a centre through which all the different documents flowed, whether they announced German military authorities seeking Finnish cooperative partners and materials or granted permission for necessary procurements, or whether they were sent by Finnish businesses, organizations, municipalities or individuals asking for mediation assistance in dealing with Germans. The Finnish documents arriving at the OTT were translated into German and then forwarded on to the respective German parties. In the same way, the German documents were sent onwards as Finnish translations to their recipients, who ranged from individuals all the way to the Finnish High Command.

Requests for action, for example, arrived from Trustivapaa Bensiini Oy about missing fuel tanks and from Pohjoismaiden Yhdyspankki Oy about tracking cash boxes that failed to return. The Mountain Army had

[4] FLSR on 21 April 1942 and 16 June 1942 [T-17944-17951/95, NA]. Unfortunately it is not always possible to track down the first names of the persons involved in the available sources.

accumulated overdue invoices for six Mercedes Benz automobiles purchased from Veho Oy. The administration of the province of Lapland as well as its road and construction administration or individual Finnish units was hoping for help from the OTT in mediating with the Germans to secure fuel or lubrication oil from them so that the maintenance of roads used to transport troops would not be interrupted, for example. None other than Wihtol's office received regular communications from the electric power plant in Rovaniemi about issues pertaining to the Germans' power consumption. As for the major himself, he was keeping an eye on their procurement of wood from Finnish companies, among other things; correspondence and regulations, including admonitions directed at the Finnish businesses regarding methods of operation, were always translated into German. Likewise, all of the costs accrued by the Accommodations Board of the provincial government for housing the German troops were delivered to the OTT, where they were translated into German-language invoices before they were sent to the quartermaster of the Mountain Army for further processing.[5]

In other words, the range of topics as well as the amount of text was extensive, and when one considers that the greater part of these translations was rendered in a language not native to the translator, the clerk-translators needed not only good general knowledge and a broad acquaintance with the subjects and glossaries of specialized areas, but also fluent translation skills in order to handle the various matters without unnecessary delay. Elsa Galle and Regina Kariniemi, for example, on whose desks all of the aforementioned tasks landed for translation, were particularly busy for the entire period of the brotherhood-in-arms. A wide array of issues pertaining to everyday interactions between Finns and Germans came to Office X to be solved, guaranteeing that there was more translation work than there were workers.

[5] Examples from the collection of the Office of Transit Traffic, sub-office in Rovaniemi [T-17944-17951/96, NA].

Office X: The Translation Agency of FLSR

In October 1941, Private First Class Völkel felt that he had suffered abuse when the doorkeeper at the Lapinmaa Restaurant in Rovaniemi sent him to the back of the queue after he had snuck into the already chock-full venue. This incident developed into a case of Finnish-German official government business, in which the amount of and the reasons for the force used were investigated: In the private's version, the bouncer grabbed his throat in a stranglehold while at the same time the second doorkeeper, returning from his break in a hurry, accelerated his removal by striking him with a rubber baton. The Finnish party naturally denied 'any use of force whatsoever'—he had simply grasped the front of the German brother-in-arms' uniform to remove him from the restaurant and out on the Rovaniemi street. One way or another, attempts were made to settle the issue immediately after the scuffle. The German private, indignant after ending up in the street, met with the local commandant's patrol and reported the treatment he had experienced. The officer leading the patrol returned with Völkel to the scene of the crime, taking along a Finnish police officer who happened to be nearby. The local Finnish commandant was conducting business in the restaurant, and he asked that the matter be put in writing, whereupon he would be able to process the matter.

This is what happened, and a notification was written in the German commandant's office to the effect that Völkel described having experienced violent treatment, which on top of that insulted his military honour. From the commandant's office the notification was taken to the administrative office of FLSR, where it was translated into Finnish by Specialist Matti Sainio. The translation was forwarded a few days later to the local criminal police who questioned the Finns suspected of having something to do with the matter, and they collected a vast investigation protocol that was returned to FLSR to be translated into German and subsequently delivered back to the German military authorities, however not until two months later.[6] As far as the administrative office is concerned,

[6] Communication from the local commandant's office in Rovaniemi to the Finnish local commandant on 13 October 1941; communication from Rothe to the police chief of the town of Rovaniemi, undated; investigation protocol by the Rovaniemi criminal police on 24 October 1941; communi-

the processing of the event seems to have ended here. It is not apparent from the documents whether any subsequent measures were taken as a result of the report other than a remark in the diary of the commandant's office, or whether the German private's honour was restored. It is most likely that the event, in all its triviality, was not deemed worthy of further correspondence.

The encounter between Völkel and the doorkeeper of the restaurant is but a tiny drop in the enormous stream of texts that landed at Office X to be processed, and specifically to be translated as a basis for follow-up for the Finnish or German authorities. All the by-products of Finnish-German coexistence that required action by the Finnish civilian administration and the German military authorities—and thus official cooperation—were funnelled through this office under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Carl Rothe. The tasks generated by quartering and rental issues as well as labour used by Germans and their projects seem to have overlapped with those handled by the OTT, but Office X had its own special field of activity in which criminals and witnesses were searched for and compensation and punishment for crimes that occurred on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms were handled. Cases of theft or damage of Finnish or German property ran through the office, but other matters also found their way there to be processed, such as traffic violations, spats between soldiers or even violent crimes, relationships between Finnish women and German men or maintenance and support issues that followed such relationships, trespassing, violence targeting women, and vagrancy and prostitution.

Thanks to the Private First Class Völkel incident, we have an idea of how crimes against German soldiers and their property progressed through the bureaucratic mills. However, the processing of damage caused by German troops followed a similar pattern: The injured party reported what they knew or suspected to the local police, who after looking into the matter sent the investigation protocols and the applications for compensation to the provincial administration. From there they went

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cation from Rothe to the local German commandant in Rovaniemi on 15 February 1942 [T-5857/25, NA].

on to FLSR, which had the task of following up on the resolution of the case with the German military forces.[7]

In practice, handling cases meant that the documents that arrived in the office were either translated into German or Finnish, whereupon they were forwarded on for action to the other brother-in-arms. For the German military authorities, the documents were directed primarily to the commander of the rear area (*Korück*), Lieutenant General Heunert, whereas Finnish recipients were the local police authorities, the provincial governments of Oulu or Lapland, the local authorities in municipalities and towns, or private individuals.

There was plenty of material to be translated as a result of compensation cases alone. Using criminal record books from the police and statistics compiled by FLSR together with other sources, Marianne Junila has estimated that from summer 1941 to autumn 1944, approximately 750 different cases of damage were reported, and by summer 1944, compensation was applied for to the tune of just under 600 million Finnish marks. Including other violent crimes and murders as well as collisions, a total of 1300–1500 cases had to be processed by the provincial authorities of Lapland. Junila is certainly correct in claiming that this number is small in comparison with the 'number of soldiers and other mobilized groups accompanying the German army' and the time they spent in Finland.[8] However, if the number is even roughly converted into the number of documents that ended up being translated instead and then compared to the translator resources of the associated liaison office, the number of occurrences already feels much higher. Taking the aforementioned Lapinmaa Restaurant incident as an example, the complaint generated an eight-page investigation protocol sent to Office X to be translated. As will be seen later, the amount of material that needed to be translated grew to be so enormous that it delayed the processing of the matter at various points and caused extensive correspondence between the Finnish and German authorities about the necessary procedures—which, ironically, in and of itself only increased the number of documents to be translated.

[7] Junila 2000: 206.

[8] Ibid., 209, 212 and 234–235.

A random sampling of the documents from Office X provides a picture of both the sometimes macabre by-products of German relations and of the material with which the office NCOs and the clerical staff of FLSR had to struggle for over three years: The texts to be translated dealt with a skirmish between Finnish and German soldiers in a café in Rovaniemi, the theft of goods from Germans, the puncturing of tyres on a German lorry, the seizure of a German quartermaster's pistol and the fur coat and ration card of a Finnish restaurant guest, the robbery of sacks of German field post mail, illegal dance soirées and the theft of spirits from the liquor store in Rovaniemi. Occasionally translators were kept busy with problems regarding German trash collection in the town of Rovaniemi, and in Kuusamo, with the graves found near the civilian settlement of prisoners of war who died in the German POW camps or with 'bounty hunters' requesting their reward for captured POWs in northern Finland. Support cases for children born out of wedlock as a result of relations with Germans caused abundant correspondence and translation work: In general, the mothers who were left alone and without support made contact with the closest police officer, who then moved the issue on to the liaison office mediating with the main headquarters of the Mountain Army, and from there all the way to the German embassy in Helsinki for processing. Among translation tasks there were also groundless or justified suspicions of venereal disease or investigation protocols sent by the Petsamo police chief regarding the suspected 'rape of a calf'.[9]

Correspondence between the organizing office of the Finnish High Command and the main headquarters of the German Mountain Army or commandants behind the front lines regarding POW matters also produced an enormous amount of translation work. In the documents to be translated, the placement of the POWs and the use of them as labour were discussed as well as abuse detected in their treatment and prisoner exchanges between Germans and Finns. Part of the processing of POWs included interrogation of those imprisoned as well, and the information gathered was delivered regularly in Finnish translations for the use of the

[9] According to Junila 2000:256, beginning in 1943, the Germans filed around 500 reports with the Finnish authorities in which Finnish women were the suspected source of contagion. Many translated sources show that these suspicions were often groundless.

Finnish High Command. Three of the translators who worked full-time with correspondence and reconnaissance were Specialists V. Lehtiranta and Matti Sainio and Miss Kerttu Lähde.[10] The general impression of the administrative operations of FLSR as a translation agency for the brotherhood-in-arms is thus rather strong.

However, all of the above-mentioned activity should not give the impression that the administrative office's task was simply to guide texts in a mechanical way from the complainant through the translators to a representative of the recipient and the other way around. The office strove to operate actively in a way that would allow the processing of matters to flow as smoothly as possible and in a particularly positive spirit without allowing differences of opinion or other jolts to blemish the overall image of cooperation unnecessarily. In many cases it was enough to allow the aforementioned texts to pass along 'neutrally', but there were also situations in which Office X felt it necessary to intervene in terms of both the content and the tone of a message. In these cases the options included minor revisions to the documents to be transmitted, either by means of omissions that could mitigate the tone of the text, or through additions, in which, for example, the requests of lower-ranking Finnish authorities were given better leverage that could help expedite the matter. The following section presents a few of these interventions.

Back to School

Many schools, both in Rovaniemi and in other places in Northern Finland, had been taken over for the quartering of German troops, beginning as early as the middle of June 1941. As a result, school attendance for children came to a halt for an extended period of time. School had also been interrupted during the Winter War, and when instruction could not be provided regularly in the interim period either, there was concern in many quarters during the war about its effect on the children.

When the Continuation War had gone on for about a year, there were already signs of children's inappropriate ways of living and partial

[10] See the envelope 'Sotavankiasiat' [POW matters, T-5857/12, NA]; for translated correspondence see also file T-5857/25, KA.

vagrancy. The schoolteachers were not able to intervene because they were employed elsewhere, supporting the war effort in Finland. According to law, however, the schools were required to reopen no later than the beginning of October 1942. As a result, the wish was expressed that the Germans cease using the schools for quarters so that the children could resume their education. For example, the board of the Sinettä school in Rovaniemi decided 'at the common wish of the residents of the village' to turn to the liaison office so that the soldiers from *Organisation Todt* who were living in the village school could be moved as quickly as possible to other premises and that any damage suffered by the property or other school possessions could be repaired before the pupils returned.[11]

From the beginning of September 1942, several similar requests were sent to FLSR. One of these arrived from Inari about the village school in Ivalo. This time, however, the communication went through the Finnish High Command to Rovaniemi and Office X. There the letter was translated and sent along to the German commander of the rear area. The cover letter, signed by Willamo and Rothe, first referred to the Finnish High Command's request to initiate the required measures, and thereafter it was emphasized that the attached letter from the board of the school in Inari, translated into German, did a fine job of presenting the circumstances proving that returning the school to its original functional purpose was an urgent matter. The signers also pointed to other circumstances which spoke for the particular importance of facilitating the school attendance of Northern Finnish children. According to Willamo and Rothe, Northern Finland was in a particularly disadvantaged position compared to other areas of the country, both in terms of culture and other matters. They said that the situation had only grown worse because of the war, at which time the province of Lapland became the centre of military operations. In order to mitigate this disadvantageous situation, the liaison office wanted to support the application in question as warmly as possible, 'in particular because this is a case that deals with issues so crucial for the future, such as the education of the people'.[12]

[11] Communication from the Board of Sinettä Grammar School to FLSR on 3 September 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

[12] Communication from FLSR /Office X to the commander of the rear areas.

The strong entreaties did the trick, and during the autumn of 1942, the Germans left the school buildings so the pupils could return in Ivalo at Inari and in Sinettä in Rovaniemi as well as in other places in Northern Finland. When the German military authorities—in the case of the village school in Sinettä, for example, *Organisation Todt*—had completed the necessary organizational tasks, Office X was notified. It in turn forwarded the response, translated into Finnish, to both the board of the school and the provincial administration of Lapland.[13]

Reindeer Shooting

Compensation matters regarding damage to reindeer kept both the administrative office of FLSR and other civil and military authorities occupied for the entire time that German troops were present in Northern Finland.[14] Attempts were made to protect the reindeer herds of Northern Finland by issuing regulations to the soldiers of the Mountain Army, among other measures. These regulations emphasized that the free-roaming reindeer herds were the livestock of the local people in the same way as domestic cattle were to the Germans. Under the rugged circumstances, this living property of farmers and this source of nutrition had to be protected, so that in the spring of 1942, for example, General Dietl notified his troops that shooting reindeer would be cause for court-martial.[15] Despite these measures, reindeer were shot, as is apparent from a statement by the provincial government signed by Governor Hillilä which was sent to FLSR. For example, there were several incidents observed around Inari during the autumn of 1942 in which Germans had hunted reindeer in the immediate vicinity of the roads. According to Hillilä, unproblematic were cases in which Germans had believed that reindeer were wild deer and right after noticing their mistake had also

[13] Communication from Rothe to the provincial government of Lapland on 25 September 1942, and to the board of Sinettä Grammar School on 25 September 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

[14] Junila 2000: 209.

[15] 'Merkblatt für das Verhalten deutscher Truppen in Finnland' [Instructions for the Conduct of German Troops in Finland], Armeeoberkommando Lappland [High Command of the Mountain Army Lapland] dated 1 May 1942 [T-17215/1-2, NA].

compensated for the damages. Instead, the letter drew attention to the possible consequences of intentional actions and that the targets were regrettably often other tame reindeer used for pulling sledges.

> It is thus clear that the Germans are shooting reindeer, perhaps in most cases without knowing but sometimes also intentionally, and this has the natural consequence, as has already been claimed, that Finnish thieves take advantage of the situation as well to steal reindeer, because the thefts in this case can be claimed to have been committed by Germans. However, the most disturbing aspect is that the victims of these shootings don't seem to belong to reindeer herds but are usually quiet, tame reindeer at the side of the road, used for pulling sledges. Since these animals are accustomed to human beings, they don't realize that they are in danger so they can avoid it.[16]

Because the stock of tame reindeer was already small, and in any event smaller than either the Finnish or German soldiers needed for their use, and because the shooting of reindeer was still unequivocally against the law, Hillilä asked FLSR to take measures so the German military leadership would process the matter in the requisite manner.

As in many other similar cases, the governor's statement was translated into German. However, it was not sent on as a translation. Instead, it was sent by the administrative office of FLSR as a letter, signed by Colonel Willamo, in which the matter regarding the shooting of reindeer was forwarded at the request of the governor of Lapland for the information of the recipient and to ask that measures be taken. This approach was probably intentionally chosen, for an apparent summary of Hillilä's views gave the possibility of using the original text a bit more freely. For comparing the texts more closely shows that what was sent to the German commanders, otherwise almost a word-for-word accurate German translation, has left out any mention of the prospect of intentional hunting of reindeer resulting in Finns stealing the animals as well. The same piece of text is crossed out in pencil in the original letter that arrived at the administrative office.

[16] Communication from Hillilä to FLSR on 26 September 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

This raises the question, of course, about why this part has been left untranslated: Was it considered a detail that felt superfluous in light of all the circumstances? Or did Willamo and the second signer of the letter, Rothe, read in the revision a more or less concealed barb that the German authorities could blame themselves if the Finns bothered them with what the Germans felt were unjustified claims for damage—an issue which certainly caused much hand-wringing between Finnish and German authorities? It was probably a good idea to stifle this kind of needling for the smoothness of both joint and liaison operations.

Live-Fire Exercises Around Oulu

At the beginning of September 1942, a communication arrived at Rothe's office from a police inspector in the province of Oulu. This communication requested additional leverage in wrestling with the local German commandant about local policies. Everything had begun at the beginning of August during what was apparently an illegal firing exercise: Locals working near Oulu to bring in the hay had been badly shocked when grenade-launcher ammunition suddenly began to fall in the immediate area. The Finnish authorities had not received any prior warning at all about the use of live-round shooting, so a police investigation was started; the results were also reported in German to the German authorities. The response of the local German commandant in Oulu to the investigation protocol was that in all probability, the firing exercises were done without his knowledge by a unit that was marching past.

One month later, the provincial administration received a notification about a new firing exercise, to which it responded positively, but it urged the Oulu police to get in touch with the local German commandant anyway so that it would take care of the matter ahead of time, both with relevant newspaper notices and precautions as well as compensation for damage. However, the commandant's reaction left room for improvement in the eyes of the police, particularly since in his own words he had not seen fit to run after the local landowners; in addition, he did not agree to place a few newspaper announcements until after several

demands. According to the police inspector, there was reason to handle the matter above the level of the local authorities:

> The recent reaction of the current commandant of the Oulu commandant office to the suggestions of the Finnish authorities is not as positive as one would expect of someone in the position of ally. Rather, it resembled how one would treat an occupied country. The undersigned himself does not have negative experiences in this regard, but according to the notice from the police station, things have not gone as they did under the previous commandant. In any event, it seems unavoidable that senior-ranking officials should be giving the local commandant clear instructions in which there will be an obligation to take note of the considerations that I have presented above. Specifically, the city of Oulu and its surroundings is a populous region in which hikers engaging in berry-picking and mushrooming etc. are moving through the forest in large numbers as well, so that cleaning up the area after the firing exercises is also important.[17]

Two weeks later, Willamo and Rothe wrote about the matter to the commander of the rear area, Lieutenant General Heunert. The description of the police inspector from Oulu is again referred to in German in this letter, which cited both the dangers presented by unauthorized shooting and the meetings with the local commandant, but this translated version, which follows the Finnish version with particular precision otherwise, ends before the previously cited situational picture given by the Oulu police. Instead, the commanding officers of the liaison office dictated their own evaluation of how the German authorities could influence relations between Finns and Germans:

> The importance of taking precautions should be blatantly clear, in particular in densely populated areas such as that around Oulu. In addition it must be noted that the trust of the local population in the operations of the German army in Finland is to the largest extent dependent on the official attitudes of German authorities. The same precautions are also binding on the Finnish Defence Forces, and it is to be hoped that the representatives

[17] Communication from the police inspector for the province of Oulu to Rothe on 9 September 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

> of the German army also regard these measures appropriately and thereby deepen mutual trust.[18]

In the communication of the administration office, the direct criticism levelled by the Oulu police at their local commandant is hidden between the lines, and here it is emphasized to the German commander of the rear areas that the prevailing opinions of the Finns regarding the state of the brotherhood-in-arms were ultimately in the hands of the German authorities themselves more than in anyone else's.

Heunert's response did not arrive until after a month and a half, because the matter was settled together with the local commandant of Oulu before then. In his response, Heunert said that the misunderstanding about the procedures had now been rectified, and if a more permanent area for live-fire exercises were to be arranged, other security measures between the different authorities would also be easier to manage. At the end of his response, Heunert characterized cooperation with Finnish military authorities in Oulu to be particularly good, and this was why the problems associated with the exercises were able to be resolved in good faith and understanding: 'It is obvious that the local commandants are to do everything possible to strengthen mutual trust.'[19] The mediation work of Willamo and Rothe had produced the desired results.

Disputes About Facilitating Compensation

One corrosive factor working against cooperation and mutual trust was the compensation issues that preoccupied both Finnish and German authorities, beginning from the moment German troops set foot on Finnish soil and throughout the war. Both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms agreed that compensation claims took an unnecessarily long time to process, something that caused resentment among the local residents who had experienced losses and plenty of research for both German and Finnish civil and military officials. However, there were differences of opinion concerning the reasons for the delays and who was responsible

[18] Communication from Willamo and Rothe to Heunert on 21 September 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].
[19] Communication from Heunert to FLSR on 5 November 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

for them. In Heunert's opinion, the civilians who had suffered losses and the Finnish authorities acted entirely too sluggishly, and they slowed the processing even further by submitting vague and even inappropriate claims for compensation. As for the Finns, they felt that the cause was the attitude of the Germans and their inability to pay attention to prevailing circumstances in Finland. In an area characterized by long distances, some losses—for example, a pile of wood purloined from a timber lot far from town—could remain undetected for quite a long time, and in addition, claimants who lived that far from villages and cities did not always know where to apply for compensation. As Junila has noted, the procedures were certainly made known by the end of 1941, but it took time 'before the Finns learned to file their claims with the correct organisation'.[20] Correspondence pertaining to the matter shows that the arm wrestling about the issue between the commander of the rear areas, the provincial administration and FLSR continued at least until the end of 1942. The documents highlight the essential role of translations in both the compensation procedures in general and in adjusting the pertinent policies. As for the latter, repeated references are made to the kind of summarizing translation mentioned above, in which the sharpest barbs of the texts from the provincial government were smoothed before the communications were forwarded on to German readers.

In May 1942, Heunert lamented yet again to the liaison office that claims for compensation for damages occurring during 1941 had been piling up in the headquarters of *Korück* during that spring. He drew attention to the fact that damage had not been reported until months after the events, or that the demands for compensation had been lying on the desks of Finnish authorities for an inordinately long time. Since on top of everything these reports were rather vague, it was in Heunert's opinion nearly impossible to discern who was responsible for the damage. But in order for the claims for damages to be appropriately processed, he asked FLSR to forward a request to expedite the processing of the damage reports to the provincial administration officials.[21] This was also done, but matters improved more slowly than desired, and so

[20] Junila 2000: 206.

[21] Communication from Heunert to FLSR on 9 May 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

Lieutenant Colonel Rothe had to write about the matter to the provincial administration of Lapland repeatedly during the spring and summer of 1942.[22]

In August of the same year, Rothe sent another letter to the same body in which he yet again emphasized how German military officials were constantly criticizing the delay in the processing of criminal and civil compensation matters by Finnish officials. Punishments and damages were particularly difficult to mete out or award, depending on the case, when the incidents could not be dealt with promptly. Rothe found many reasons. The parties themselves were slow to file a report, but the official processing of matters, including at the liaison office, also left much room for improvement.[23]

> Under these circumstances, the Liaison Staff Roi is in a difficult position, as its small staff does not permit it to turn around documents pertaining to criminal and compensation matters quickly enough. This mostly results from German military officials demanding not only translations into German but also Finnish transcripts or copies of the documents for each case. Since there is only one permanent translator available in the administrative office, who in addition to this work also has plenty of other translation work to do, for example, and since the officer responsible for the office must himself perform a large portion of the clean-copy work, it is obvious that bottlenecks and delays are created in processing these matters. Thus the matters that suffer the most end up being those that require extensive, time-consuming translation and clean-copy work, naturally, because during the time it takes to process them, it is possible to send on smaller cases that can be translated by other members of the staff who are proficient in language as their side tasks. This is why there are complaints from certain parties that these matters are not processed in the order they are received.

Insufficient translation resources caused a bottleneck in the processing of criminal and compensation matters, which gave both the Finnish parties

[22] Rothe wrote to the police superintendent of the province of Lapland, Armas Alhava, about the processing of damage claims, at least on 20 May and 29 June 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

[23] Communications from Rothe to the provincial government of Lapland on 11 August 1942; a message with the same contents was also sent to the provincial government of Oulu on 11 August 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

and German military authorities heartburn.[24] There was no prospect of additional staff, and because resolving this matter was, after all, to the advantage of the entire population of the province, other measures were necessary. Rothe asked the provincial authorities to consider ways in which they could inform the local population about the importance of avoiding delays when reporting crimes and submitting compensation claims to Finnish officials. In addition, he implored the provincial government to attach a Finnish transcript or copy as well as a translation into German to interrogation protocols, statements and other documents sent to FLSR. Also helpful in expediting processing would be attaching to such documents a statement by a local expert or official regarding the appropriateness of any demand for damages.

However, this matter remained a thorn in the side of the commander of *Korück* and his subordinates, and in November 1942, Heunert once again expressed his astonishment at how claims for damages based on events that happened as early as summer 1941 were still being brought to the German authorities for processing. Heunert sent to FLSR examples of incidents which had all either ended up in the books of the Finnish police with a very long delay, or their journey on the path of Finnish bureaucracy to the Germans had taken an unreasonably long time. He once again emphasized how hopeless it was to settle these matters. After the German units had been transferred elsewhere, all that remained were the witness statements by local Finns. According to Heunert, in these cases there was a danger that the claimants only wanted to enrich themselves at the expense of the German army with baseless or unreasonable demands. FLSR was, therefore, requested once again to contact the Finnish authorities and to expedite the processing of the cases and, in addition, to ensure that incidents that had occurred in 1941 would no longer be registered for further processing. However, Heunert no longer requested translations from FLSR, because as he understood it, all of the agencies of the local German commandants had now been assigned their own interpreters for the translation tasks in question.[25]

[24] The permanent translator whom Rothe mentioned was most probably Specialist Matti Sainio.

[25] Communication from Korück 525/ Heunert to FLSR on 6 November 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

Heunert's letter was translated immediately in the administrative office and then forwarded to the police inspectors in the provinces of Lapland and Oulu as well as to the governors for their responses. Rothe, in his cover text, deemed that the suggestions to shorten the processing time were justified, at the same time emphasizing that notification should still take place through the Finnish police. As for the incidents dating back to 1941, however, Rothe stated that 'one could not prohibit the involved parties from presenting claims for damages', even though the hopes for receiving compensation were rather low.[26]

The administrative office asked to meet with the Germans soon after Heunert's letter arrived, and here a proposal was drafted for measures whereby Finns could expedite processing of their cases themselves. This proposal repeated previous suggestions for the most part, but there was also a suggestion that it would be made clear to the population of the province that 'it was their responsibility' to ensure 'through their own first-hand actions' that there would be no opportunity for abuses or transgressions. They were also to be urged to monitor their own property and to store it properly, among other things. At the meeting, the attitude towards old incidents that had happened in 1941 was also softened: Claims that were this old could still be accepted, but it was the Germans' wish that an investigation be appended by the Finnish authorities explaining what the reasons for the delay were in the request. In this way, 'a presentation of demands based on speculation would be prevented.'[27]

The governors and police inspectors of the Northern Finnish provinces reacted with extensive objections to the demands presented in Heunert's letter and the proposal drafted in the meeting between FLSR and the German military authorities. There is a more or less covert vexation here about how little the Germans understood the conditions in Northern Finland, which included great distances and large police precincts, which meant that, in the final analysis, the Finnish police were struggling with precisely the same problems that the German military authorities were after them. First of all, it was not reasonable to expect that the population

[26] Communication from Rothe to the police inspectors in the provinces of Lapland and Oulu on 9 November 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

[27] Communication by FLSR /Office X, Lieutenant Manner to the police inspectors in the provinces of Oulu and Lapland on 14 November 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

in outlying areas, half of whom were fighting at the front, would have the time to inspect their property on a daily basis. In the second place, it should be noted that the workload of the police had increased in other ways during the war because crime was on the rise, and therefore the processing of crimes committed by Germans had to experience delays. Particularly sharp criticism was directed at Heunert's proposal that incidents occurring in 1941 would no longer be forwarded on to the Germans. Governor Hillilä and Police Superintendent Armas Alhava invoked the rights of Finnish men, 'who have been a help to the Germans at the front and for this reason they [the Finnish soldiers] have been prevented from tending to them in a timely fashion':

> It would certainly be strange if these men were to find out, after they returned home, that crimes were committed against them by Germans in their absence, but that they no longer had the right to make claims based on these same crimes. For this reason, the demand that incidents occurring in 1941 no longer be eligible for compensation is strongly repulsive.[28]

The responses also listed measures that had been taken by the provincial governments to guide the operations of the local officials both in terms of expediting processing and in preventing inappropriate claims for damages. At the end of their own response, Hillilä and Alhava stressed once again that the German military authorities in this respect, too, had reason to trust the methods of the Finnish authorities:

> In inspecting the claims for compensation that have been filed in this province, the provincial government has striven to investigate all incidents well and impartially. It has never sent any claims to the Germans that were found to be unnecessary or erroneous. Whereas in many cases circumstances are also such that detection of the perpetrator is impossible, the provincial government expects that the Germans not find the Finnish investigation suspect in cases in which the German police are not able to find the guilty party either. The provincial government has full faith in the work of the German police, but it also expects that the results of the work performed by the Finnish police be trusted.

[28] Communication from Hillilä and Alhava to FLSR on 1 December 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

After the arrival of the provincial government's responses at FLSR, a German-language summary of them ('*Zusammenfassung*') was prepared, this time for Heunert to comment on. The document forwarded by Rothe contains both straight translations of the provincial authorities' messages and summarizing sections of the common views of both provincial governments. The opinions of the governors and the police inspectors are all still present, but—as can be read in the following back-translated text excerpt—the tone of the message in the compilation is a degree or two milder. In the summary of the processing of cases from the year 1941, the following is stated:

> The stipulation presented in the aforementioned attached copy stating that claims are no longer to be presented for damages caused by Germans during the year 1941 contravenes Finnish law on the statute of limitations. In addition it is to be noted, as previously mentioned, that in the event that this aforementioned stipulation be put into force, it would make it difficult for men at the front or at work to present claims for damages. Under these circumstances it would be both inappropriate and offensive to the people's sense of justice if those persons in the service of the fatherland were to be denied the ability to receive compensation for damages for which they themselves are not responsible. For this reason, the proposal that damages occurring during 1941 not be presented for compensation claims should not be approved.

In this part of the text, reference is also made to the meeting that had taken place in which the German party had already concurred with this opinion. In terms of Hillilä's and Alhava's exhortation to rely on the work of Finnish officials, the summary stated the following:

> Finnish officials have striven to investigate all cases thoroughly and impartially. Demands have not been relayed to the German authorities that have been considered baseless or false. Because many incidents occurred under circumstances in which it is impossible to identify the perpetrator, the Finnish officials expect that Finnish explanations shall not be called into

> question in cases where the German police, in whose work the Finnish officials have full faith, are not able to find the guilty party.[29]

In the summary that Heunert received, it was considered unnecessary to include a reference to that questionable matter of Germans having interfered with the property of Finnish soldiers at the same time as the latter themselves were on the front helping German soldiers. Hillilä and Alhava's plea to trust the functioning of Finnish authorities also seems to have been given less emphasis.

Office X: A Bridge that Joined and Separated?

After what has just been discussed here, Governor Hillilä's almost simplistic contemporary view of FLSR's role as the *post office of the brotherhood-in-arms* mentioned at the beginning of this book attains significantly more concrete and realistic dimensions. The administrative office of FLSR was a mediator through which, thanks to its translation activities, the German side of the brotherhood was able to understand current issues that could gnaw at the brotherhood and the contents of the claims for damages or the accusations presented. And thanks to the Finnish translations of the German documents relayed by the office, many Finnish officials were also able to better judge the measures in these texts that they were being asked to implement. The distinctive feature of translation activity in the German direction was its discretion: The examples discussed above create the overall impression that those working in the administrative office of FLSR thought a great deal about what kinds of messages would be most advantageous to send to the German authorities in a situation where what was at stake was both the interests and rights of the local population on the one hand and the smoothness of the brotherhood-in-arms on the other. The basic arguments in the cases sent by the provincial officials always arrived, but before they were forwarded along, they were stripped of unnecessary verbal barbs and inflammatory language. In this respect, it is striking that the method used for communications from the other side of the brotherhood, for example, the

[29] Communication from Rothe to Heunert on 16 December 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

messages from the commander of the rear areas himself, was sent in very accurate Finnish translations for the use of the provincial authorities. The comments and interpretations of the commander of FLSR and the administrative commander were transmitted with special cover letters.

When all is said and done, the *communicative* and *pragmatic* significance of the translation work performed in the offices of FLSR is abundantly clear: It worked as a linguistic link between the parties, ensuring through regular lubrication that the administrative wheels of the brotherhood-in-arms also rolled without friction. But is this the entire truth? For one can consider the following: In all likelihood, Governor Hillilä was not the only official of the Finnish administration who knew good enough German to be able to meet with German commanders about contemporary local issues, go on bear-hunting expeditions with General Dietl or as needed even 'slam his fist' on General Schörner's desk so that he did something about the questionable occupier-attitude of the German divisions and their disregard for the rights of the local population of Petsamo.[30] Given this circumstance, the translations of correspondence no longer seem indispensable to the success of communication at all, but rather the *symbolic* significance of the translations and the entire translator activity emerges into the foreground next to this communicative function. Translation was part of the activity conducted by FLSR and other bodies through which the bedrock of the integrity of the brotherhood-in-arms, professed by both sides, was protected, in this case specifically to ensure that the presence of the Germans did not begin to resemble an occupation. The Finnish language was not the language of an occupied or conquered people, nor German that of the occupier or conqueror, and the Finnish authorities, in the same way as the local residents, were able to go to the offices of the German authorities to take care of business in their own native language.

Thanks to their communicative and symbolic function, the translation activities in Office X reflect, in a sense, the paradoxicality of translation revealed by translation scholar Sherry Simon: It is a bridge that both joins and separates.[31] On the one hand, it brings the parties together and sup-

[30] Vehviläinen 1984: 330; Junila 2000: 205.

[31] Simon 2012: 12–16.

ports their interactions with each other, but on the other hand, it is also a way of keeping the parties far away from each other as needed so that the power structures and the situational picture that limit their interactions do not become blurred. In this case, translation was one concrete way of keeping the German military authorities and the Finnish civilian government in two discrete administrative categories.

Finnish Guards of *Organisation Todt*

The tasks of the paramilitary *Organisation Todt* (OT) included maintenance and staff transport, all of the fortification work required by military operations, and the construction of transport connections and quarters. Upkeep of the Arctic Ocean Highway that connected Rovaniemi and Liinakhamari as well as establishing and maintenance of repair phases belonged to its special duties. A railway to Petsamo was one of its planned projects, although this was never built. The headquarters of OT's Finnish units, the barracks, the maintenance centre and the vehicle depots were located in Rovaniemi, and these employed several thousand staff members. In addition to professionals and Germans who were not suitable for serving at the front, OT units comprised volunteers from occupied areas and forced labourers. As additional manpower, POWs were used.[32]

OT's own barrack fields in and around Rovaniemi as well as maintenance and storage areas along the Arctic Ocean Highway, a lifeline for the German Army, were already sizeable building projects, and to these were added extensive road and bridge construction endeavours as well as the needs of the German military forces. Materials, goods and labour brought north from Germany did not meet the vast demand, and thus OT had to supplement its resources on site. The need for timber was immense, to mention one example, but cooperation with the Finns in general was required to add to the store of supplies and to implement construction work as well. During the Continuation War, subcontracts offered by OT were a significant source of income in Northern Finland for numerous

[32] Vehviläinen 1984: 324, Junila 2000: 70, Westerlund 2008a: 188–197, Korpi 2011, and Mikkonen 2017a: 111–118 and 2017b: passim.

Finnish businesses in the areas of construction and maintenance.[33] It was also necessary to lease land for these construction projects.

To streamline the negotiation processes required for these projects and leasing agreements, OT requested an interpreter from FLSR for their use in December 1941.[34] The following month, Second Lieutenant Erkki Krantz was assigned to the task. From the very beginning, Krantz' weekly reports show the special profile of a liaison officer working in the rear area as a conductor, negotiator, fixer, translator and interpreter; multilingual communication emerges as a central element of the profile. His main work was expressly translation tasks.[35]

As can be seen in the following examples from his reports, Krantz verbalizes what he perceives as the clear difference between the negotiation and interpreting tasks given to him. OT evidently delegated leasing agreement meetings with Finnish landlords to Krantz, and in addition he conducted business on a daily basis with various enterprises and agencies—either alone or as an interpreter for the OT representative. During the last week of February 1942, he had spent his time on the following tasks:

> My work as liaison officer for Org. Todt in the reporting week 21-28 February 1942 has been as follows:
>
> On assignment from Org. Todt, during the week I negotiated leasing and project matters on several days. As a result new leasing agreements have been signed and old ones both renewed and made more specific. The latter was important because the landlords had been taking advantage of unclear wording and for example even fleeced the town sawmill for a profit of over 100%.
>
> The project matters have exclusively dealt with projects approved by Liaison Staff Roi. On 26 February Org. Todt signed a […] timber procure-

[33] Westerlund 2008a: 194; for more information on the operations of OT in Rovaniemi and elsewhere in Northern Finland, see Mikkonen 2017b.

[34] Senior liaison officer's post diary on 15 December 1941 [T-5872/1, NA]; FLSR, commander's daily command 1/42 on 14 February 1942 [T-5872/39, NA].

[35] The job description of Erkki Krantz and other liaison officers who appear in this chapter can be compared to present-day local 'fixers' who help in situations of catastrophe and warfare either working for international assistance organizations and military units or as foreign actors for necessary everyday matters. One of their central tasks in this situation as well is precisely interpreting. See, for example, Palmer 2007.

ment agreement for which there hadn't been a written approval but Forester Räsänen himself notified me personally that he'd made a personal agreement with Major Wihtol.

For dealing with supplies procurement, I've been in regular daily contact with Liaison Staff Roi and received the necessary instructions from them. Thus the procurements that Org. Todt has signed with Rovaniemi have been organised completely according to regulations.

In addition to the above, I have negotiated in various matters between the government and the civil guard district. These have concerned for example accessibility of electricity, constructing telephone connections, organizing transports etc. I've worked several times during the reporting week as an interpreter in different negotiations, for example in negotiations with the road and water construction districts.

Besides the activities mentioned above I have performed a significant amount of written translation work required by procurements, preparing contracts in German and Finnish etc.

I have not noticed any activities in Rovaniemi that are in violation of regulations.[36]

In Krantz' activity reports, the duties of a negotiator authorized by OT—a negotiator who within the framework of his authorization is able to help the local projects of the labour organization move along their way—are highlighted. At the same time, his tasks included monitoring cooperation on both sides to ensure that it remained within the prescribed framework. On the Finnish side, Krantz had to put the brakes on the eagerness of local landlords to raise their prices to the 'skinning degree', which according to his reports only succeeded once he had appealed to FLSR or the regional rental board.[37] Krantz also monitored OT's procurements to ensure that they complied with the regulations that were applicable to them. During the autumn of 1941, it had been discovered that the quartering and supply needs of the German army as well as purchases made by individual soldiers emptied the shelves of the local shops and caused prices to increase. At its worst, it also made Finnish business activities difficult. To stop this development, German military leadership

[36] Activity report by Krantz to Willamo on 28 February 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[37] Activity report by Krantz to Willamo on 21 February 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA]. For examples of rents being raised by a factor of two or three, see Junila 2000: 306–308.

commanded all units located in Finland to obtain approval from Finnish authorities when submitting all local tenders, construction activities and leasing agreements. Coordination and monitoring of this were assigned to the jurisdiction of the German Liaison Staff in Finland, *Verbindungsstab Nord* (Mikkeli).[38] As previously mentioned, the local coordinator of the matter in Northern Finland was the Office of Transit Traffic connected to FLSR, under the command of Major Harry Wihtol at that time. Krantz also received his instructions from this office or verified the permissions for OT's projects.[39]

Naturally, the need for ongoing supervision suggests that the regulations and instructions were not always obeyed. From the perspective of OT, the process of applying for permits slowed down the purchase of supplies necessary in the building projects, and this is why the regulations were circumvented through informal trading. One method used to avoid procurement restrictions, also by the German divisions, was to send officers or specialists who knew Finnish or Swedish in civilian clothes to cities in Southern Finland, for example, on leave, and while there, they made their necessary supplemental procurements outside the supervision of officials.[40] This strategy worked quite well, for example, for the paymaster (*Zahlmeister*) who served in the 169th Division in Alakurtti who managed five such trips worth half a million marks—until he got caught.[41]

There was also irritation at the limitations concerning the use of labour. Lieutenant Mikko Jaakkola had come to OT in Rovaniemi as liaison officer in October 1942, and at that time he spent a few weeks on the organization's trips to procure wood, for example, as an interpreter in negotiating the transport of 200,000 logs purchased from a Finnish forest agency and 'giving advice on how they should conduct business with Finns'. In his reports Jaakkola presented both the factors that OT staff believed were putting the brakes on their operations and the solution

[38] Oberkommando der Wehrmacht [Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht] on 18 December 1941 [T-17944-17945/95, NA].

[39] See also Väänänen 1947: 203–208 for the problems caused by the purchasing power of the Germans and efforts to restrict their projects.

[40] Communication from Kalima to Willamo on 30 November 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[41] Väänänen 1947: 205.

models they found for them. In his first report, Jaakkola managed to write the following after a long trip around the region in November 1942:

> The only thing I've heard dissatisfied statements about has to do with procuring Finnish supplies. Not everyone understands that a purchasing permit must always be secured, and that this must be done through *Verbindungsstab Nord*. It often takes too long. Then it's easy to resort to buying on the black market, mediated by some (Finnish) acquaintance. This cannot in any way be efficiently monitored and it always happens to some extent. The following statement is telling, which I heard from the mouth of a certain German: 'If we can't get a purchasing permit or in general have no time to wait, we'll go to the home of some acquaintance, we'll chat with them and we'll promise something. Then the matter is taken care of. *Alles auf Schwartz* [sic] *gekauft* [everything bought on the black market]'.[42]

In November 1943, Jaakkola cited the OT director of labour (*Frontführer*), who examined his feelings about the difficulties surrounding acquiring labour:

> Finnish officials are strange. There are thousands of small matters that could be organised with a little good will. For example, here the Finns don't seem to care about the railroad at all [the one being built in Salla], may the Germans tackle it if they can, if they don't provide any labour, then they don't seem to be interested in the railroad at all.[43]

The illegal provision of OT's property to Finnish businesses in exchange for needed supplies in order to expedite matters was one side of the black market. The other was the 'reselling' of German property, often acquired systematically, by the employees of OT directly to Finns or through the local black market.[44] These violations of regulations kept both Finnish civil authorities and German military officials busy, and along with them Finnish liaison officers and interpreters as well. In particular, the

[42] Communication from Jaakkola to Willamo on 25 November 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA]. See, for example, Lähteenmäki 1999: 156 and Junila 2000: passim. for limitations regarding labour.

[43] Communication from Jaakkola to Väänänen on 20 March 1943 [T-5471/12, NA].

[44] See Vehviläinen 1984: 334 and Junila 2000: 242–243 about OT's underhanded trading.

underhanded trading practices of OT were seen in the weekly programmes of the local commandants and their Finnish communicative links.

Interpreters of the Local Commandants

One of the central actors in the rear area that affected not only the smooth operation of the German troops but also the experiences and opinions of the Finns with respect to how smoothly the brotherhood-in-arms was functioning was the commanding officer of the rear area, whose headquarters was also located in Rovaniemi. The broad field of activity of the Commandant Office (*Korück 525*) included quartering the units, overseeing the secure maintenance of the army, tending to military security matters in the rear area, guarding the POW camps and monitoring traffic. For the execution of these tasks, the Commandant Office had at its disposal units of police, field gendarmes and security as well as the offices of the local commandant (*Ortskommandatur*), which were located not only near the town of Rovaniemi but also close to the front sectors or farther away in the rear area. As the war progressed, military discipline and order surveillance were added to the tasks of the local commandant, and in particular it fell under the local commandant's responsibility, as already seen, to investigate and rectify damage that the German troops caused to the civilian population.[45]

The liaison officers and interpreters sent to help the local commandants, just as well as the Finnish local commandants under FLSR in Petsamo, Ivalo, Salla and Alakurtti, were at the heart of coordination of the brotherhood-in-arms. Under the circumstances of the divided authority, the issues under the purview of the German *Korück* required constant negotiations and adaptations with local Finnish officials, and for these activities, the mediation work performed by FLSR seems to have been important. Issues of security, organizing quarters for the troops and the compensation matters relating to them as well as control of public order and maintaining discipline were issues which caused both headaches and

[45] Junila 2000: 81, 85.

everyday friction on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms. In order to prevent or manage them, a vast amount of translation work was required.

The weekly reports of Second Lieutenant Tauno Teräs, who worked in the office of the local commandant of Rovaniemi, provide a good image of not only the amount of translation work but also what it comprised. Teräs primarily assisted the work of the gendarmerie, where his charge was to work with the local police in resolving matters pertaining to different types of crimes and traffic accidents that occurred in the town area. In addition to this he attended various meetings about the quartering of the Germans. Teräs reported the following about his activities during the last week of February 1942:

> During the past week I've kept working on a previously mentioned case in which property belonging to the German state has been sold and fenced. Because of this case I have once again happened to be in places where the goods have been sold and where those fencing the goods have been seen. I've still been working as an interpreter in connection with this matter for discussions between the German and Finnish investigators. I've also translated a longer interrogation protocol by the criminal police about the first phase of the case into German.
>
> The criminal police confiscated goods from the hiding places of the boys who had stolen field post, and I have taken these goods back to the German units. In this connection it's become apparent that the boys in question had also got their hands on a smaller party of German fur gloves, a German automobile tire and Finnish field letters.
>
> In addition to the aforementioned, I have ended up working as an interpreter for a certain German officer reporting a missing fur, where based on everything it seems no Finns have any part, and I helped a certain local business and the criminal police in their attempts to figure out who was responsible for the fact that concrete blocks had been driven from the warehouse of this business to the building sites of a certain German construction unit although no one had said anything to the management of the business.
>
> I have drafted sub-contracting leasing agreements for certain barracks as interpreter for the head of the accommodations office of the commandant and attended meetings of the accommodations board, and likewise seen the director of the board regarding accommodations matters.

> At the commandant office I have worked on ongoing issues and translated a couple of shorter interrogation protocols into German.[46]

This activity report from the end of February gives an example of how Teräs was practically in constant motion as an interpreter for the field gendarmerie and the Finnish police, assisting in particular with crimes involving either German or Finnish property. The equipment the Germans brought with them, and particularly their food supply, interested a broad range of Finns living under economic restrictions and generated not only small-scale 'procurements' between individual German soldiers and Finnish civilians, including the pilferage and vandalism by boys, but also professional thefts targeting transport of goods and warehouses.

At the same time, individual German actors attempted to exploit Finnish demand, hawking property belonging to the German state on the black market to buyers or selling it directly for their own account. This also included bartering and other methods mentioned previously in connection with OT, whereby Germans attempted to circumvent certain procurement restrictions and prohibitions related to Finnish consumer goods. Crimes also came before the court regarding transgressions and malicious mischief targeting Finnish property committed by Germans.[47] There were thus perpetrators and targets of the crimes on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms, and all told, these events kept Teräs fully employed as an interpreter and translator for the entire time he worked for the local commandant in Rovaniemi.

For example, in May 1942, Teräs worked as an interpreter for the gendarmerie during a trip through the province. During this trip, incidents were investigated in which persons who had been serving in OT and with the SS troops had hawked German automobile parts, in particular tyres. In Rovaniemi he worked as an interpreter during an interrogation of purchasers of Finnish petrol in which attempts were made to determine the origin of the fuel that was being sold. A petrol container had been taken

[46] Communication from Teräs to Willamo on 28 February 1942 [T-5471/12, NA].

[47] Junila in particular discusses these kinds of problems within the brotherhood-in-arms in more detail, 2000: 203–244.

from a local businessowner's warehouse, and Teräs ended up acting as an interpreter on site during the investigation. With his help, a nameplate lost 'from some doorway' was searched for as well as a soldier who had failed to return from his afternoon leave, and money was traced that had been stolen from the gendarmerie office, as well as a spare wheel stolen from an OT lorry. A Finnish labourer was caught near the German meat refrigeration plant at Ounasvaara. He had hidden a small amount of meat under a nearby barrack, and the investigation into its origin was carried out by both the police and the interpreter. In addition, Teräs interpreted for a POW camp located near Rovaniemi where the rumour of a major bombing in close proximity to the town had caused anxiety among the POWs; the basis for the rumours was finally traced to unnecessarily talkative Finnish auto mechanics:

> I was interpreting at interrogations which a German police officer conducted for the matter and here it became clear that a couple of Finnish mechanics who were working in the German vehicle depot had said something to some Russkies working there about hearing in the Russkies' Finnish-language radio broadcast that they promised to bomb Rovaniemi on the days mentioned. Those Russkies had then spread this information onward. The Finnish mechanics in question were warned not to say anything to the Russkies from this point on that wasn't absolutely necessary for performing their work. As far as I know, the German secret police has contacted the corresponding Finnish body, so the matter has probably already been reported.[48]

All of the criminal incidents ended up on Teräs' desk, along with the weekly traffic offence reports, as interrogation protocols which needed to be translated, either into Finnish or German, before the case could be forwarded onwards for a decision. And Teräs regularly finished his activity reports by listing all of the translations of police interrogation protocols and letters that he had finished alongside seeing to other ongoing matters during the reporting week. At the end of the final report for May 1942, Teräs wrote:

[48] Communication from Teräs to Willamo on 14 March 1942 [T-5471/12, NA].

> During the week I've translated the interrogation protocols for the aforement. matters and also for various previous things that I've done. In addition I've been in meetings about several leasing matters as well as mediated in certain ongoing matters.[49]

As referred to previously, the commander of the rear area had responsibility not only for maintaining order but also for quartering the German troops. In practice this meant constant meetings between *Korück* and the Finnish authorities about occupying local properties and about compensation.[50] The rural accommodation board or the area's other landowners were often sitting with Teräs on the other side of the negotiation table from the local commandant of Rovaniemi; the interpreter had abundant work relating to the quartering of the Germans and matters pertaining to the leasing of land areas. At the beginning of April 1942, Teräs described his activities in the preceding week as follows:

> 1. – 8. […]
> 9. During this past week I have worked as an interpreter in the following matters and meetings regarding accommodation:
> At the town's rental board meeting handling quartering matters for the Germans;
> Temporary building inspection held in the orphanage;
> Inspection held in the community building;
> Met several times with the building supervisor about the community building rental agreement;
> Attended a meeting discussing the leasing of the fire brigade building for use by the propaganda company for organizing viewings of moving pictures and clearing related measures regarding fire, safety, additions to building etc.;
> Prepared the rental agreement for the area being used by the German field post.[51]

[49] Communication from Teräs to Willamo on 30 May 1942 [T-5471/12, NA].

[50] For more details about the regulations, responsibilities and compensation issues around military housing see Junila 2000: 305–310. Mikkonen 2017a contains an elaborate depiction of how the Germans occupied properties in Rovaniemi and its environs and about the construction projects of the Mountain Army.

[51] Communication from Teräs to Willamo on 4 April 1942 [T-5471/12, NA].

Three weeks later, Teräs also reported on issues relating to quartering:

> I've worked as an interpreter in the accommodations issues at the meeting of the rental board as well as in other meetings; for example a matter was discussed in which a smaller shed was moved from a property close to the central primary school to a neighbouring property and barracks had been erected there instead without notifying the property owner about the matter in advance.[52]

Among other things Teräs reported on from the meetings and inspections at the beginning of April 1942 were the conversion of the town's former orphanage into a hospital for the German military forces and the leasing of the Social Democrats' People's House for use by the Germans as quarters.[53] There were large issues on the table. From the German point of view, the emphasis was on smooth operations on all fronts, whereas for the Finns, the issue was simultaneously appropriate compensation. As Junila has noted, the rents the Germans paid rose to significant amounts in larger villages and towns, but the rents paid on housing and land parcels benefited not only the municipalities, the associations and the businesses, but also individual citizens. This was not a matter of small sums, for in the rural area of Rovaniemi alone, the local commandant had paid around 65,000 marks in January 1943 for quartering alone.[54]

Interpreting was obviously needed at all meetings where local movable or immovable property had been tampered with, where accommodations had been taken over outside the proper processes, or when they were left in poor condition after use. Information about such events came to FLSR through communicative links in the offices of local commandants close to the front as well. When Lieutenant Holger Idman, for example, summarized his entire weekly activities in October 1943 at the office of the local commandant in Salmijärvi in the single phrase '8. Translations, investigation into compensation for damages and other ongoing matters',[55] he could have been reading from the weekly schedule for local

[52] Communication from Teräs to Willamo on 25 April 1942 [T-5471/12, NA].

[53] Mikkonen 2017a: 75 and 131.

[54] Junila 2000: 306 and 309.

[55] Communication from Idman to Lieutenant Colonel Gulin on 4 October 1943 [T-5471/7, NA].

commandants or other liaison officers and interpreters working for them from Liinakhamari in Petsamo all the way to Kiestinki. In addition to meetings regarding rental agreements, Finnish commandants also travelled as interpreters for the military police or civilian officials and were acting as guides for generals, monitoring order, researching compensation matters or investigating thefts or violent crimes. The local commandant issued orders to attempt to maintain discipline and order, and translating these into Finnish and distributing them for the information of both the Finnish soldiers and the local inhabitants were a part of their everyday 'regular' translation and office work, often not specified in the reports.[56]

Lieutenant Tauno Mäki was working as the local commandant in Salla in June 1942, and this is what he reported about his activities:

> The use of local fields has been providing me with a lot of work, because the Germans, who have at least 600 horses in Salla, require pasture which the landowners desperately need themselves if we want to start rebuilding and farming. Last summer the property owners relinquished trampled-down meadows for use by the Germans without a problem. Invoking the law that went into force on 6 December 1942 [should be 1941], the landowners are asking if rent will be paid for the use of their land. For the time being I've managed the situation by referring to the fact that we are at war and to the sacrifices made by the Germans.[57]

As for Specialist Kalle Jokikokko, he reported the following from the office of the local commandant in Ivalo in July 1942:

> A couple of small thefts were reported by the Ivalo police. In one case the Germans had stolen logs and in the other a puppy. The investigation is continuing.[58]

When the liaison officers or interpreters of the local commandant reported to Rovaniemi that there had been 'quite abundant interpreting

[56] Communication from Helenius to Willamo on 29 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[57] Communication from Mäki to Willamo on 5 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[58] Communication from Jokikokko to Willamo on 25 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

work between the civilian population and the Germans'[59] during the reporting period, the tasks involved very different issues in terms of their nature and scale, from minor nuisances all the way to issues that affected the pursuit of livelihood. All the same, once a report was filed with the local officials, it required immediate action. In the eyes of the Finnish communicative links, the opaqueness of operational guidelines and military hierarchy made the processing of these matters more difficult, as did attitudes and expectations from both sides.

When Second Lieutenant Pentti S. Heikkinen was assigned to the Finnish commandant in Salla in autumn 1942 to replace the aforementioned Tauno Mäki, he did not really have any idea what he was being sent to do. After the war, Heikkinen wrote a multi-part story in the *Kansa Taisteli* [*Our Nation Struggled*] magazine in which he also described his initial astonishment as he began his new duties in the commandant at Salla:

> So I was supposed to start working here as a liaison officer! As if anyone had explained to me what the duties of a liaison officer in fact were! In his own words, Mäki had described himself as some kind of self-made commandant, but he had vanished out of there so quickly that he didn't have time to explain what 'self-made' meant.
>
> In Joutsijärvi, the current Lieutenant Eino Luomi had the same kinds of tasks. I might hear from him how he had got on. Lieutenant Luomi came after a few days to visit. He said he'd ended up doing the work with basically just as short rations. […]
>
> There were also Finnish liaison officers in Alakurtti. The senior liaison officer for this sector was there, but Lieut. Luomi didn't know whether there were any command or hierarchy relationships here.
>
> Maybe things will become clear at some point.[60]

[59] Communication from Heikkinen to Willamo on 25 October 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[60] Heikkinen 1971: 107. The particulars of Heikkinen's story correspond in terms of personnel accurately to the image produced by the archived weekly reports: Luomi ended up serving as Mäki's substitute at the commandant in Salla in June and from there was transferred to Joutsijärvi in October 1942. Mäki, the one who 'vanished' quickly, had been sent to Rovaniemi on 10 September 1942. See communications from Luomi to Willamo on 20 June 1942 and 10 September 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

For Heikkinen, relations between Finns and Germans, as well as the maintenance of them, looked very haphazard. At the highest level of the brotherhood-in-arms, a broader 'big picture' could be seen and the 'tones were clear'. But on the field, at the grass-roots level, things were much more complicated and vague, and what was required was more like improvising on site according to the reigning mood and needs: 'We were pushed around in a crowd, and you had to take care that you didn't get pushed over.'[61] The pushing was done on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms.

Lieutenant Unto Mäkinen, who served as the Finnish commandant at Liinakhamari in Petsamo, commented on his position in March 1942:

> To me it felt as if several gentlemen in the *Korps* were wondering 'why am I still here although the Finnish units have left'. Apparently they can't comprehend how often I end up having to mediate matters for them and that there are civilians here as well whose interests also have to be taken into consideration somehow.[62]

Sergeant Oiva Lempinen reported from the same post during the first days of July 1942:

> As has often happened previously, this week there were a lot of complaints that individuals whose property the Germans have, in one way or another, taken over and then either broken or damaged have not received compensation although the necessary interrogation protocols and other documents were already submitted to the police authorities last autumn or winter. Nor has the commandant office been able to provide any explanation about these things to the affected parties since we aren't informed about how or in what order the pertinent compensation requests are processed.[63]

To the local residents, the liaison officers and interpreters of the commandant offices were Finnish officials who were expected to act on behalf of Finnish interests and to use all possible methods to further compensation

[61] Ibid., 108.

[62] Communication from Mäkinen to Willamo on 14 March 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[63] Communication from Lempinen to Willamo on 4 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

matters to the advantage of the locals. These civilians turned to them when their demands became bogged down with the German authorities or when responsibility was shoved back on the Finns, requiring them to present precise information and proof of the units causing the damage before any payment of compensation could be considered at all. Simultaneously however—from the viewpoint of the Germans—they were also the communicative links sent by the Finnish Defence Forces, specifically there to support the war efforts of the Germans locally. The chafing caused by the coexistence of local residents and the foreign army was of secondary importance in this light, which is why the presence of the Finnish local commandants, not to mention the civilians, was not always understood in the areas where the Germans were conducting warfare.

For a long time, Petsamo was a special case in this respect because of the arrogant attitude of General Ferdinand Schörner, commander of the German troops, towards the Finns.[64] But frictions generally amplified further where the attitude 'to the victors the spoils' prevailed—as Corporal Vladimirov, the interpreter working at the Kuusamo commandant office, described the predominant attitudes among the officers there. The daily commands of German military leadership and other regulations had not been able to quash this attitude completely. When the high-handedness of the Germans was also combined with indifference and the perception of any criticism towards them from Finns as evidence of prevailing communist attitudes, the feelings of the locals, which had flared into enmity, would hardly be cooled down.[65]

In managing these kinds of situations, liaison officers and interpreters had to position themselves in some way, but the activity reports contain very little information about how they did. This becomes particularly clear in Teräs' reports, for example: On the one hand, they are informative, perhaps exceptionally so, in their nearly single-minded focus—besides references to individual personnel changes—on those interpreting and translation tasks which were generated during each week as he went around together with the representatives of the commandant office. Front

[64] Vehviläinen 1984: 330, Junila 2000: 205.

[65] Communication from Vladimirov to Voss on 13 June 1943 [T-5471/9, NA].

and centre are the subjects of his interpretation or translation task and a straightforward description of the reporting party's role in the situations discussed, but otherwise, Teräs' reporting is rather laconic. He does not really present his own opinions about events nor does he express any intervention on his part to the benefit or detriment of either party. Based on these weekly reports, Teräs could be characterized as a neutral link between the German and Finnish military authorities, who had also been able to act this way. There is not a word in the reports suggesting that Teräs was ever expected to deviate from such a role, or to act to the advantage of either the German or the Finnish party.

Descriptions of situations in which liaison officers or interpreters for one reason or another assumed a kind of gatekeeping role remain generally rare. For Lieutenant Lukander working in Rovaniemi, it was 'repellent' to be an interpreter for the Germans, because they tried in all ways to bypass the routes required for military procurements.[66] The aforementioned Mäki's way of invoking 'the German sacrifices' to rein in demands looks like an example of an attempt to smooth out the everyday bumps of coexistence to the Germans' advantage. In the same way, Krantz' activities at OT show that the demands and wishes of the local residents were curbed when it was obvious that attempts were being made to skim the most off the top of the German commandants' resources when the situation presented itself. In such cases the matters were addressed either on site during processing or later by putting the brakes on the progress of the documents so that while the matter was continuing to be processed, the central German translation was left undone.

At the end of June 1942, Lieutenant Tor Å. Nerdrum was doing the same job as Teräs in the office of the local commandant in Rovaniemi. Interestingly, he produced action reports for FLSR next door that were quite different from those written by Teräs. Nerdrum focused above all on the moods and attitudes of the brother-in-arms, for example, the relaxed atmosphere in the German canteens or the glorification of the strict discipline in the POW camps. In terms of his own contributions, he provided only a brief acknowledgement of his own activities such as 'my

[66] Communication from Lukander to Willamo on 1 October 1942 [T-5471/12, NA].

activities were mostly limited to translation tasks'.[67] In his first report, Nerdrum describes an event in which he left an interrogation protocol untranslated, one that had been drafted with an eye to subsequent measures by the local commandant, because he suspected that the town's police had managed the matter to achieve the outcome he desired:

> The first week of activity for the undersigned as liaison officer for the office noted above has gone peacefully and without incident.
>
> However, I feel the following matters are worth mentioning:
>
> An interrogation protocol had arrived from the Rovaniemi criminal police regarding the theft of a certain crate of bottles occurring at a local railway station. This happened in the middle or end of last month. The freight office at the railway station notified the criminal police that the theft was noticed when the crates were being released for delivery on 20 May. The packing master said in turn that he had noticed the crates were already missing on 16 May when he was giving them out. In the notification by the freight office it was claimed that on 19 May the German military shipment leaving from the Rovaniemi station took the crates along. The packing master's statement however contradicts such a claim, but that regardless of this, a long protocol had been drafted on that date, apparently to claim damages from the German military authorities. The undersigned returned the protocol to the police chief for checking without translating it into German, because our brother-in-arms would otherwise have got a poor impression of our civilian officials if they saw it.[68]

In Nerdrum's assessment, someone was trying to charge the lost or stolen crates of bottles to the Germans despite the proof that they were already missing, which is why he felt it was better to interrupt the entire process and return the interrogation protocol to the desks of the criminal police in Rovaniemi. As a liaison officer, Nerdrum had the authority to refuse translation work when he felt that such a document would give a bad image of the methods of the Finnish authorities and consequently could also undermine the local dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms.

[67] Communication from Nerdrum to Willamo on 15 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[68] Communication from Nerdrum to Willamo on 27 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

Jack-of-All-Trades for the Air Fleets

The operations of the Fifth German Air Fleet (*Luftflotte 5*) spread across an extensive area in Northern and Eastern Finland. Their activities were directed from headquarters in Rovaniemi as well, but the air fields that the German machines used (which in the archival sources go under the names *Fliegerhorst*, *Gefechtslandeplatz*, *Kommando Flughafenbereich*) were located both farther away in the rear area (Kemi, Kemijärvi, Pori, Rovaniemi) and in close proximity to such front sectors as Parkkina (Petsamo), Alakurtti, Pontsalenjoki (Kiestinki) or Lieksa. Due to this, the activities of the liaison officers and interpreters sent to assist the air forces should not be viewed as organization work behind the front lines only: The closer to the front they were, the more likely they would find themselves cooperating in operative dimensions such as interpreting in meetings discussing joint military operations or mediating between different units in air surveillance and reconnaissance. 'Mediate' is a verb repeated in the reports, and quite a variety of everyday bilingual cooperative tasks were encompassed in its meaning.

Lieutenant T. S. Kalima served as a liaison officer at the German ice air field in Kiestinki during winter 1941–1942. In his report from Sunday 15 February 1942, he wrote the following notes about his activities:

> -- I mediated [the Finnish] II Army Corps' air surveillance requests for the flights to be done on 16 February 1942.
> -- I mediated the requests for ploughing and rolling of the Div. J's pion. batt. field and directed both jobs on site.
> -- I mediated the requests for the placing of lighting cables by the construction battalion in the sick bay we're building.
> -- I organised horses and their drivers to be fetched from Div J's off. IV to collect firewood on 16 February 1942.
> -- I arranged an opportunity to have a sauna bath at the pioneers' sauna for some of the staff at Gefechtslandeplatz Kiestinki.[69]

[69] Communication from Kalima to Willamo on 22 February 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

Flight operations also overlapped quite a bit with ground-based air defence, and in particular where the German anti-aircraft unit was protecting Finnish fighter planes, the detailed coordination of their joint operations was a top priority for protecting the brothers-in-arms. This was the case, for example, at the Tiiksjärvi air field located on the shores of Rukajärvi Lake, where the Finnish Lentolaivue [air squadron] 14 worked in concert with the German motorized anti-aircraft unit. Second Lieutenant Viljo K. Ruoho arrived at Tiiksjärvi with this group in May 1942, and his weekly reports provide a good picture of the liaison officer tasks that not only supported the Germans as they settled in Tiiksjärvi but also their military cooperation with Finnish pilots and ground forces. As an interpreter, Ruoho assisted Finnish and German officers during meetings in which joint plans for action for the Finnish fighter planes and the German ground-based air defence against enemy air attacks were established, and he interpreted in a meeting in which the use of anti-aircraft weapons in support of attacks by land forces was discussed. Ruoho also ended up trailing enemy scouts in the vicinity of the air field as a second-in-command in joint Finnish and German patrols, or was assigned to travel along with German officers on procurement trips to Helsinki. Under the sub-heading 'Other activities', Ruoho summarized other mediation tasks from the preceding week:

> In both of the last two reporting weeks, I have mediated outcomes from POW interrogations and intelligence activities by the [Finnish] 14th Div. interesting to the units in my branch of service.
>
> During the meetings between Oberstlt. Meise and Maj. Magnusson, new positions for certain anti-aircr. weapons necessary for the expansion of the field were agreed.
>
> During training on anti-aircr. batteries I ended up mediating the commands of the battery commanders during the target plane period for those guiding the target planes by radio.
>
> I've been continuously taking care of wood procurements from Unit 4/14th Div. as well as correspondence with Finnish units and other such ongoing matters.[70]

[70] Communication from Ruoho to Willamo on 20 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

With the exception of individual coordination events between pilots and anti-aircraft operations or other special issues relating to their proximity to the front, the range of tasks performed by the Finnish communicative links working in the air fields and in the service of the Air Fleet was to a rather large extent similar to the ones they had in OT or at local commandants. Interpreting between Finnish construction and pioneer battalions and the German developers was required in order to build air fields and maintain them, and additional interpreting tasks included meetings with tenants of properties and accommodations as well as those delivering Finnish supplies. The liaison officers functioned as interpreters on the commanding officers' trips to the city and their visits to barracks or the front. Running parallel to all this were their ongoing translation tasks, from translating proposals and invoices into German to translating bids and military police interrogation protocols into Finnish.

As an example, Private W. Ainamaa, the interpreter at the Hanhikoski air field construction site, reported about his duties on 31 May 1942:

> 29 May: All day long at the building site at the air field, in the evening delivery of drunken men to the patrol. At night a knifing occurred and apprehension of the attacker, delivery of the victim to the hospital as well as interrogation.[71]

Another example is from Specialist G.M. von Essen, reporting on 15 August 1942 from the German field in Pontsalanjoki:

> As far as my individual activities are concerned, I don't currently have many other duties than translating some air force leaflets and phone calls about engaging civilian labour with Capt. Käkelä at Roi.[72]

In April 1942, Second Lieutenant L. Schaterin, liaison officer at the headquarters of the German air force's field organization, summarized what he was doing at the time in a single sentence:

[71] Ainamaa 31 May 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[72] Communication from von Essen to Willamo on 15 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

> On a daily basis there are different things to do with agreements and organising, whereby I've also been working at 'Flak' [anti-aircraft force] as an interpreter.[73]

'Mediating', like 'organizing', included all of the tasks of a small local military liaison office, where liaison officers were monitoring Finnish labour and helping on the airfields with a range of procurements from map sheets all the way to filling the stores of firewood and swedes, or cataloguing deceased POWs according to the requirements of the Finnish Red Cross. To spice things up, there were disorder and crimes against Germans or Finns to deal with, together with civilian and military authorities, as well as the Finnish-language flyers dropped by the enemy, the contents of which the German brothers-in-arms were naturally very curious about.

Second Lieutenant Olli Auterinen was one of those liaison officers who served as an errand boy at German air fields throughout the war. His activity reports and his short biographical text[74] show not only one particular perspective but also what liaison officers had to say about their experiences decades later.

When the Winter War broke out, Auterinen was 18 years old and had just passed his matriculation exams at the Helsinki Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu [Helsinki Finnish Co-Educational School]. After his graduation party, he had time to travel to Germany for a brief time, and that is where he acquired the language skills he would need later on. His trip confirmed the opinion his father also held, critical against National Socialism, and gave him a presentiment of the war to come. In summer 1939 Auterinen had time for volunteer fortification work at the Karelian Isthmus for a few weeks, and after that he registered at the University of Helsinki to study the medicophile line in preparation for medical school. However, his programme was immediately interrupted by the so-called special manoeuvres as the mobilization of Finland's field army was called. Auterinen was posted to the Helsinki civil guard district accommodations centre in order to prepare for the needs of the defence forces in

[73] Communication from Schaterin to Willamo on 18 April 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[74] Auterinen 1991.

schools, for example, and his duties continued except for brief interruptions until February 1940. That was when Auterinen volunteered for his military service with the coastal artillery. His service continued during the interim peace at the NCO and reserve officer school, later as an officer candidate and reserve officer in different garrisons in Suomenlahti.

On the threshold of the Continuation War in June 1941, Auterinen, now promoted to Reserve Second Lieutenant, got his first taste of the tasks of a liaison officer helping the German troops when he was assigned to a secret mission in the Inkoo archipelago as a communicative link for the German mine squadron:

> On 15 June 1941 the commander of the [Mäkiluoto] stronghold invited me and a couple of other reserve 2nd lieutenants to his office. He asked if we spoke German and each of us answered that we could speak passably. The major notified us that we would be assigned a secret mission. We were brought about twenty kilometres to the west of Mäkiluoto over the open waters near Porkkala to the Inkoo archipelago and each of us was put ashore at a different island. […] On the next day, a motorboat came from the direction of the village of Inkoo and it dropped a phone cable into the ocean, and they brought a telephone to my room. I saw that I was able to use it to call Mäkiluoto, Suomenlinna and home to Helsinki, but I still hadn't been told what my job was.
>
> On the morning of 20 June, the landscape had changed thoroughly: Out on the water several German war ships were at anchor. Soon a boat came to the island from one of the ships and there were three naval officers on it, the highest-ranking of them *Kapitän zur See*, which was the equivalent of a Finnish Captain (N). He asked if there was a phone on the island so that he could call the admiral of the fleet at the German embassy. Now I understood why I was on the island.[75]

Germany attacked the USSR two days later, and one week after the Suomenlahti mining operation was completed, Finland was at war as well, and Auterinen returned to his own duties as a battery officer at Mäkiluoto. A couple of months later he was training infantry recruits in Hamina, waiting to be sent to the front:

[75] Ibid., 23.

> You can understand how bored we must have been since, when one day the message came from the Finnish High Command that they were in need of officers with German language proficiency who were prepared to go to the front, we all signed up, no matter the true state of our language abilities.
>
> Two of us were deemed qualified, and I was one of them. I had the advantage that I could say that at the beginning of the Continuation War, I had already been the Germans' liaison officer in the coastal artillery.[76]

Auterinen's autobiographical text gives a rather self-critical image of the writer's 'true language abilities' at the start of the cooperation. He came up against their limits right away during his first task in the village of Paakkola near Kemijoki, where he helped Germans in the Salla sector returning from the front to recuperate when they looked for quarters in the homes of the small village. 'My German skills were lacking' is how Auterinen characterized it, but matters were finally settled well anyway.[77] Auterinen was sent from Paakkola back to the headquarters of the field organization of the German Air Fleet in Rovaniemi *(Standortverwaltung der Luftwaffe)*, where he received information about a new command, now as a liaison officer closer to the front at the German air field in Alakurtti (*Fliegerhorst Alakurtti*). His chit-chat with the headquarters officer who gave him the news did not go without a hitch.

> '*Macht es Ihnen Spaß*?' the sympathetic colonel asked me. This phrase '*Spaß machen*' (to be fun), used quite often by Germans, wasn't familiar to me, so I believed it meant just the opposite. I quickly answered, '*Gar nicht, Herr Oberst!*' (Not at all, Sir!) The colonel looked at me a bit perplexed, but then realized that I'd misunderstood the question, and our brief conversation ended cordially.[78]

Auterinen's posting took him to the Salla front sector, and there he worked all the way to late winter of 1944, when he was transferred to another air field, this time Pontsalenjoki in Kiestinki. Thus one could say that Auterinen specialized himself as an air field liaison officer, although

[76] Ibid., 25.
[77] Ibid., 26.
[78] Ibid., 26.

he himself had hoped at some point to make it to the front line with the German troops to experience the war 'more concretely'. However, his duties remained the same during all three years of his assignment as liaison officer, and these were determined primarily by construction and maintenance of air fields, with which the Germans were helped by a Finnish fortifications company.[79] The company consisted of men who had been relieved of military duty and were performing work duty and there were Lottas and civilian women in the company kitchen. In addition to these, the Germans had also hired Finnish women for the kitchens, laundry and cleaning.

Auterinen recalls that the fortifications company managed with their own interpreter and the company head who knew German to some extent, so his own help was needed above all in dealing with disorderly conduct and personal problems relating to civilians in the employ of the Germans. Without task instructions, the liaison officer's job description initially remained very vague, and in Auterinen's opinion he ended up as a type of 'social officer'.

> I took my meals in the officers' canteen associated with the field organisation at the air field, and we often ended up staying on long after supper chatting over a glass or two. After lunch, the German officers generally took a siesta lasting a couple of hours and so they were always wide awake in the evening. During these evening get-togethers the alcohol sometimes flowed rather freely. I wasn't that enthusiastic about it, although I wouldn't say no to a glass.
>
> My language skills were put to a hard test, because several of them spoke some kind of dialect and it was difficult to follow the conversation. Thanks to practice, I got better […].[80]

However, the archived activity reports transmit a more diverse job description than this. They contain references to the fact that the presence of a liaison officer with proficiency in the German language was quite often necessary to supplement the language resources the Finnish construction company had on hand. To be sure, get-togethers attended

[79] Ibid., 26 and 34.

[80] Ibid., 27.

by an alert 'social officer' gave abundant material for taking the temperature of the moods and feelings reigning among the officers, as Willamo had requested, but during the day, Auterinen served above all as a translator and an interpreter, who through his work supported the progress of the construction of air fields in the direction the Germans demanded. This is quite evident in one of his weekly reports from 1942, for example:

> During this activity week, I've worked on interpreting tasks, primarily between the commander of the Finnish construction company, Capt. Pajukari, and the head of Field Construction in Alakurtti, Baurat [building official] Keller, regarding certain construction issues.
>
> All week long, interpreting activities, particularly between the commander of I/Fortif. Bat. 115, Capt. Pajukari, and Baurat Keller regarding certain construction issues.
>
> Worked as an interpreter primarily for construction issues.
>
> Translation of letters and invoices. Interpreter primarily for construction issues.[81]

Here, Auterinen's job description is very similar to that of other Finnish liaison officers and interpreters posted at German air fields. Of all of his daily interpreting work, however, Auterinen only brings up two events in his written reminiscences. One of them took place in Pudasjärvi just before the Lapland War, when Auterinen was ordered to monitor the evacuation movements of the Germans as well as the evacuation of Finnish civilians. In connection with this, Auterinen writes about his work 'as an interpreter and communicative link in meetings between Germans and Finns' without, however, going into any details about the content of those meetings. The other mention takes place in a story in which the abundance and diversity of the Germans' rations comes to the fore and in which a Finnish liaison officer felt that he had arrived 'in a completely different world than that to which I was accustomed in the Finnish army'.[82] Not only was there enough food to send to those back home; the kind of food itself was cause for astonishment.

[81] Auterinen, activity reports from 21 February 1942 and 7 March 1942 and weekly reports from 18 April 1942 and 11 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[82] Auterinen 1991: 26.

> In working as a liaison officer for the Germans there was also that side that you got to take part in the Germans' food supplies and other rations. They stayed at the same level until the end of the war. The food was varied and delicious. For breakfast and supper there were many kinds of preserved foods, and the rations included tobacco, alcohol, coffee and chocolate rations which were issued regularly. I usually saved my coffee and chocolate for my sister in Helsinki. The eating habits of the Germans differed significantly from ours. When many Finnish units received supplies from the Germans, there were difficulties in consuming them, particularly in the beginning. Shortly after I arrived in Alakurtti, a lot of large tin cans was found in the forest, left by some Finnish detachment. There were sauerkraut and blue cheese in them, which had been left behind unused by the Finns: spoiled food! Later I was an interpreter in courses in which the cooks of the Finnish units were taught how to use German food supplies.[83]

Mention of interpreting work for field kitchen courses organized by the Germans is also found in Auterinen's activity reports, and likewise there is mention of a reindeer husbandry course, organized by the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps, for which he also worked as an interpreter.[84]

In the final analysis, the activity reports from the war and the recollections written a good 45 years after the war give rather different pictures of Auterinen's work as a liaison officer and particularly of the linguistic mediation work required by the brotherhood-in-arms. It would certainly be odd if they did not—each text was written under entirely different circumstances and with different purposes and readers in mind.

Above all, the activity reports were issued for Colonel Willamo, according to his commands and instructions: The authors of the reports were to inform him of any observations on the phenomenon of the brotherhood-in-arms as well as the author's own actions in furthering the war effort. As such they were documents which would form the basis of evaluating the agency of the person reporting. The memoir, on the other hand, is more broadly intended for the public as a depiction of a first-person narrative from the war and the particular experiences that defined him decades

[83] Ibid.: 30.

[84] Communications from Auterinen to Willamo on 8 March 1943 and 21 November 1943 [T-5471/4, NA].

later. His everyday experiences of translating and interpreting did not rank among those experiences, although he certainly did not forget them entirely. For three years, translating and interpreting, writing and speaking were central aspects of Auterinen's wartime life, but to his readers he naturally presented what he believed they would find most interesting: his command posts and the staff there, his single experience of combat, his relationship to the pilots, his encounters with sympathetic German officers or fanatical Nazis, adventures on fishing and rowing expeditions in the nature of Lapland, and the end of the war. The writer is an observer and an experiencer; his own agency remains backstage. Auterinen is almost a humble sidekick who admits that he 'got through the war very easily' and who is constantly astonished at the path his career and activities took, which in his own opinion he did not really have the prerequisites for.[85]

Ultimately Auterinen's memoir, published in a collection by the Finnish Awakening Society (a Pietist organization), is also a picture of the journey of a young soldier to a religious turning point, which brought him through the Finnish Seamen's Mission to the position of active force within the church's lay ministry.[86]

> While working with the Germans, I learned the German language and acquired new outlooks on life. A very genuine brotherhood-in-arms between Germans and Finns could not help but have a great influence, either. Without these experiences, I would hardly have left in 1956 to work for the Finnish Seamen's Mission in Hamburg, and at that point my entire life's work was thereafter devoted to the church.
>
> Nevertheless, the most significant experience I had during the war years was my spiritual awakening. The religious conversion I experienced then has marked my life up to this very day.[87]

[85] Auterinen 1991: 39.

[86] Huovinen, *Kuka kukin on* [*Who's Who*] 1978, 'Auterinen'.

[87] Auterinen 1991: 40.

In their own way, the experiences of this liaison officer held traces of the war for decades. As Bishop Irja Askola of the Helsinki diocese wrote in his obituary, Olli 'Auterinen's life was guided by the building of bridges and the promotion of honest dialogue.'[88]

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[88] Askola 2008.

6

The Communicative Links at the Front

As one might expect, the largest number of liaison officers and interpreters was posted to the front, in the immediate vicinity of the events of war or even in the midst of them, with the German army corps and division headquarters or in those Finnish units serving under the German troops. There, Finnish-German cooperation was specifically military collaboration, and its oversight and coordination was a central part of the tasks of the Finnish communicative links. The precise nature of these activities, however, varied depending on both the location of the posting and the particular communicative link's status in the army hierarchy.

What follows is an examination of the activities of liaison officers and interpreters in military areas on three different levels. At the highest level there are the senior liaison officers sent to all the German army corps—to Petsamo, Alakurtti and Kiestinki—who worked both as supervisors of the other liaison officers and interpreters in that particular front sector and as the closest Finnish colleagues to the army corps' commanders. On the middle level are the junior officers posted to the army corps and divisions whose activity reports give good reason to characterize them as translation machines for the German staffs. Finally, on the lowest level, there are the so-called operative links, who, besides working with office

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and translation tasks for the headquarters, participated in combat as communicative links between Finns and Germans for field guards and in patrol tasks and attacks.

Links at the Front Lines

Commencing immediately with the beginning of the war, joint military operations required the posting of communicative links to all of the front sectors, both at the strategic map tables in the army headquarters and on the front to support the execution of commands issued to regiments, divisions, battalions and companies. Those who served as communicative links were above all junior liaison officers (second lieutenants), NCOs and specialists who conveyed commands and information to the units engaged in combat as well as between the Finnish and German headquarters of the front divisions. Between battles, they also participated in joint patrols themselves and managed ongoing matters in the German units.

At the beginning of the Continuation War, one of the central operative bodies was the Separate Interpreter Detachment. As previously noted, the Finnish High Command established this group in the early summer of 1941 to support the Finnish Karelian Army in particular, later known as the Aunus Group, in its cooperation with the German 163rd Infantry Division (the so-called Engelbrecht Division) under its command. Technically, the interpreter detachment reported to the headquarters of the Karelian Army, but for all practical purposes to the German division. The detachment was commanded by Lieutenant S.J. Pentti, whose immediate supervisor, a senior officer who also commanded the interpreters, was posted to General Engelbrecht's headquarters as a liaison officer of the Finnish army. In the headquarters of the German division, these interpreters worked as one concrete linguistic link between the Finnish army and the German units, in particular by transmitting up-to-date status reports from one headquarters to the other. One of these links was Major Carl von Haartman.

The Finnish-language intelligence reports based on the information collected from POWs or deserters at the headquarters of the Aunus Group included deductions about the position and number of enemy

troops, their mood and how well-supplied they were, relayed through von Haartman to the 163rd Division. The status reports of the Finnish High Command regarding conditions in all the front areas at the Svir River and the Karelian Isthmus were also sent. In order for this information to be relayed for use by the German commanders, translation and interpretation work by von Haartman, or at least his subordinate officers, was required, in the same way that the *German-language* situational information and German-language POW interrogation protocols from the 163rd Division were relayed to the Aunus Group headquarters. There, reviews of the situations collected by *Verbindungsstab Nord*, the German liaison office, were also circulating in the Aunus Group headquarters, which were then sent by courier to the command of the German 163rd Division.[1]

At the same time, it is good to remember that intelligence information shared by one side of the brotherhood-in-arms with the other was mainly based on Russian-language and *translated* materials even before it was shared: interrogations, radio reconnaissance, spoils of war and materials collected from fallen or captured soldiers. For example, in November 1942, the mood of the Soviet army and the enemy home front was reflected in translated excerpts from the letters of a deceased soldier:

> Don't worry about me, I got 800 gr. of bread and for now I get a decent amount of food.
>
> If you don't get enough hay to feed your cow, exchange it for bread or slaughter it for your own needs. Your own lives are more valuable than the cow's, save yourselves, I'm especially worried about the children.[2]

Not many sources regarding the establishment and work of the interpreter detachment are to be found, but the letter registers of the Aunus Group, occasional documents and individual reports sent by Major von Haartman at least provide references to the size of the unit: At its height,

[1] The status reports of *Verbindungsstab Nord* can be found, for example, in the collection of the intelligence office of the headquarters of the Karelian Army/Aunus Group [T-2264/18, NA].

[2] Excerpts from briefings of the Aunus Group divisions no. 35/42 on 24 November 1942 [T-2212/7, NA]. An excellent picture of the themes of the interrogation materials and the scale of their translation into Finnish is provided by the interrogation materials of the Aunus Group headquarters [T-2264/22, NA].

the detachment included 30 interpreters, and, for example, according to the compilation sent by von Haartman at the beginning of May 1942, 24 soldiers had been posted to the interpreter detachment: 12 junior officers, 6 NCOs and 6 German-speaking privates or artillery soldiers.[3]

One of those posted to the detachment was Corporal Jyrki Kolkkala, whose diary entries from the war give a good picture of what everyday military cooperation in the unit at the grass-roots level was like for a communicative link. Kolkkala became an interpreter for the Engelbrecht Division almost immediately after it arrived in Finland, and this was where a term of service lasting for more than three years began. During that time, he managed to work under widely varying circumstances and in multiple German units, and thus he was able to experience at close range the phases of the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms.[4]

Errand Boy for the Dugout Headquarters

On 24 July 1941, Kolkkala found himself snuggled down in a hole in the ground, a few hundred metres from the enemy position. Preparations were underway for the German division's first offence towards the Svir River, and the German company commanders preparing for the operation kept the interpreter busy all night long.

> The commanders of the German companies explored the terrain in the buffer zone and the enemy positions with the morning attack in mind and I had to run from one place to another. One of the visits had a healthy dose of tension too, because we entered deep into the no-man's land for reconnaissance, in other words on the other side of the Finnish listening posts. The company's commander wanted a closer look with his own eyes at where the nearest Russkie bunker was. Dense fog foiled our attempt, however, although we proceeded towards our target, about 150–200 m away,

[3] Communication from von Haartman to the headquarters of the Aunus Group on 9 May 1942 [T-2270/1, NA].

[4] Kolkkala's daughter Elina Sana published her father's diary notes in her book *Isän sota* [*My Father's War*]. I would like to thank her warmly both for the opportunity to become acquainted with the original diaries and our conversations about what they contained. For more about Kolkkala's experiences, see Kujamäki 2022a.

> without being noticed by the enemy. We had our submachine guns along, except for me. After we spied the Russkie sentry, we came back.[5]

His baptism by fire occurred the next morning at the battle at Näätäoja in Suistamo. Because of the Red Army's forbidding resistance and the sharp-shooters ambushing from the trees, the battle turned into a gruelling experience for both the German troops and their interpreters. At first Kolkkala assisted the Finnish artillery officer who had come to the battalion's command post in keeping the fire commanders in contact with each other and mediating for them. However, the Finnish lieutenant knew such good German that the interpreter was not really needed. As the units advanced, the command post had to be moved closer to the fighting to facilitate maintaining contact with the leading fireteam of the unit. In dragging the message bag to the new command post, Kolkkala came under machine-gun fire and cannonade, but got to safety successfully. When the fighting ceased, 40 fallen soldiers from the German battalion were counted and around 100 wounded, and Kolkkala had time to consider his own appearance:

> I hardly dared to look at myself in the mirror that evening, because sweat, sand, dirt, soot and gunpowder had done their work. The reek of burning, the stink of the Russkies and the stench of bodies were constant companions. We had to get used to looking at corpses coldly; it was our job to take the tank and flare-gun shells from the bodies of any fallen Germans that we encountered.[6]

This first taste of fighting was expected and prepared for in the area behind the Finnish troops for over three weeks, and during that time, organization was carried out closer to the front lines and troops familiarized themselves both with the combat positions in front of them and with the Finnish units participating in the joint operations.

For the Finns, preparation also included scouting their own troops for German-speaking soldiers. Kolkkala had been posted from the Helsinki military district, first to the Hyrylä training centre, where he was to be

[5] Sana 2017: 42.

[6] Ibid.: 59.

trained as a section leader for a machine-gun unit. However, the sergeant major of the machine-gun company was also looking for German-speaking soldiers among the troops, and after Kolkkala reported he was invited to an examination at the 'linguist's office'. The examiner was an old acquaintance of Kolkkala's, Second Lieutenant Karjalainen, and the test consisted of translating excerpts from German newspapers into Finnish. However, he excused Kolkkala from taking the translation test, probably on the basis of the skills and experiences that the 32-year-old corporal had managed to accumulate by that time. After his university examination and his service as a conscript, he had studied at the School of Economics in Helsinki, and from there he moved abroad to work in 1932. He had worked as a correspondence clerk at the Schauman Plywood Factory sales office in Brussels and had also written articles about events in that city and elsewhere in Europe for *Helsingin Sanomat*. Later in the 1930s he had also worked at Finland's consular office in Szczecin (Stettin, Germany at the time). He continued to work in the area of foreign trade up until the war, at which time the cultural capital which he had collected from these experiences was needed for duties in the Finnish-German military cooperation.[7]

A train carried the soldiers with successful translation test results to the Finnish High Command in Mikkeli, where they joined the Separate Interpreter Detachment: 'Our visit ended with the formal announcement that we would be assigned interpreting duties in the Engelbrecht Division, which had just come to Finland. It was quartered somewhere in the vicinity of Joensuu.'[8]

Thus the members of the interpreter detachment found themselves in Joensuu, where they exchanged their civilian clothes for their army kit, and were sent from there to the headquarters of the German division in Kiihtelysvaara. There the interpreters were placed in different German units. Kolkkala was sent to the 310th Regiment II Battalion commanded by Major Albert Blumenfeldt in Kontiolahti. Once Kolkkala arrived, his interpreting tasks began immediately since the German officers were in a rush to clarify the conditions that awaited them and to resupply the

[7] Ibid.: 313–315.

[8] Ibid.: 20.

troops before they set off. Kolkkala's first job was to translate the symbols and legends on the Finnish map for the major, teach him the correct pronunciation of places along the route forward and explain the structure of Finnish troop formation. For the communications NCO of the battalion, he translated the Finnish communications reports of the Kontiolahti camp area into German and then delivered the headquarters' dirty laundry to the Finnish laundry train for washing.

On 10 July 1941, the transfer from Kiihtelysvaara through Värtsilä to Tolvajärvi began. There, Blumenfeldt's battalion was commanded to assist the Finnish troops at the Loimola front. In Loimola his mediation work began between the Finnish 56th Infantry Regiment and the German battalion:

> 22 July (Tuesday) In the morning at 710 hours the battalion was alerted to get ready to march. Shortly thereafter I received the order to leave in the major's car for Loimola […] where he had a meeting with Colonel Vihma (prev. Wichmann), the commander of the Finnish regiment cooperating with the German battalion. Serving as liaison officer was the quartermaster for the regiment, Captain Silanterä (Silander), one of his old school buddies from Turku.[9]

The German-language skills Colonel Vihma acquired in Jaeger training[10] were not at all sufficient for the negotiations, and when Captain Silanterä's German proved to be deficient as well, Kolkkala had 'to intervene' repeatedly 'so that the gentlemen could understand each other'. Soon the troops moved to their first attack positions near the Näätäoja station, where they began to take over the Russian bunkers together with the Finnish infantry regiment.

The following are excerpts from the war diary of the 56th Infantry on 25 July 1941[11]:

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[9] Ibid.: 39–40.

[10] For more information about the military career of Major General Einar August Vihma (Wichmann until 1936) see *Suomen jääkärien elämäkerrasto* [Life stories of the Finnish Jaegers] *1975: 711–712*; about the 56th Infantry Regiment commanded by Colonel Vihma see *Sotapolku.fi* (https://www.sotapolku.fi/sotapolut/jalkavkirykmentti-56/). Cited on 5 July 2021.

[11] War diary of the 56th Infantry Regiment on 25 July 1941. War Diary collection. War Diaries of the Continuation War and the Lapland War. War Diary 13075. Tiedosto [file] 23, NA. Cited on 15 September 2021.

> 12.30: 'Iita' under our control and the same for hill '182'. The Germans have made it to the Näätäoja position and the terrain is clear up to the rail.
> […]
> 16.20: Battle noise has almost entirely died down. Only the 'Osku' base seems to still be in enem. hands. One comp. from Miettinen's batt. is taking part there with the Germans to take over the base.
> 16.26: IR 56 to be placed by telephone announcement under command of the German 163rd Division until Suvilahti is taken. Kar. A command later on, by which the entire Sec. V is subordinated to the 163rd Div.

The place of command shifted as the takeover progressed, and Kolkkala was kept busy as the German commander wanted information about the Finnish positions or needed help in sorting difficulties in the joint operation. At the end of July 1941, he noted in his journal:

> In the new post, I immediately got to work on interpreter business, because as it turned out, the German and Finnish troops were getting no praise for their cooperation. It happened that the separate units were intermittently shooting at each other, and once I even had to plunge into the scene of a fierce battle right behind the Commander to clear up the situation. As unbelievable as it looked at the beginning, the Commander was actually able to put an end to the whole mess by giving an authoritative order. Blustering furiously, he commanded the Germans to stop shooting, I immediately mediated the command on the Finnish side, and they soon also stopped shooting and after a moment the enemy, too, got bored of shooting all by themselves.[12]

Kolkkala's recollections are a concrete depiction of the dangerous conditions and physical risks which by nature the interpreters were subjected to, just as the fighting soldiers were. However, these risks often remain in the margins when attention is focused on issues that relate to language, communication, translation and interpretation. At the same time, the alliance's communicative needs and the significance of the mediator as a link for the brothers-in-arms are highlighted precisely here. Insufficient

[12] Sana 2017: 60–61.

skills in the Finnish and German languages led to misunderstandings on both sides of the brotherhood, slowed down the coordination of joint operations and, in the worst case described above, led to situations in which Finns and Germans fighting side by side at the front began to shoot at each other.

The Separate Interpreter Detachment proved to be an important resource for the Germans, and the division headquarters kept a tight hold on their interpreters up to the very end, occasionally even at the expense of their holidays. Kolkkala did not have his first one until December 1941, after first repeatedly requesting time off and then, frustrated by rejections, asked to be relieved of his interpreting duties ('Reason: I wanted to continue to work in Finnish units. The actual reason, of course, was my failed request for holiday').[13] For example, his holiday request submitted in October 1941 came back from the regiment a few days later, denied: 'Given the new mission of the battalion, an interpreter is indispensable for the time being. He needs to stay in contact with his Fin. neighbour on the left.'[14]

Requests for leave were constantly coming into conflict with the deficient supply of interpreters, and Kolkkala continued his work at the front, where he accompanied the German commander to his meetings with the commander of the neighbouring Finnish battalion about the situation, participated in preparing for troop exchanges, and when the troops received the order to move in the direction of Salmi, Kolkkala had sweaty days as he helped organize train transports from morning to night as German soldiers, vehicles and horses were loaded into the cars, 'because the train drivers couldn't even speak a word of German.'[15] In September he went on patrol by motorcycle as a mobile interpreter for the highway patrol, filled in for a moment for the interpreter of the commander of the German regiment and maintained communication with the Finnish commanders during battles.

[13] According to the letter register of the Karelian Army's command office, the request for transfer that Kolkkala mentions had arrived at headquarters on 13 December 1941 [T-2247/3-6, NA].

[14] Sana 2017: 145.

[15] Ibid.: 105.

Above all, what determined how busy the interpreter was, of course, was the general circumstances of the front. Shifting positions and transfers of troops and their operations kept interpreters fully occupied, whereas during somewhat calmer intervals there was time to kill—sunbathing, hunting and fishing, taking saunas in the neighbouring dugout sauna built by the Finns, chess tournaments with the other soldiers at the command post or translating enemy propaganda targeting the Finnish soldiers into German. In August 1941 Kolkkala wrote the following:

> Combat action was limited to artillery fire and sporadic air activity. The Russkies were dropping leaflets. I translated them into German to amuse the boys. In them the Finns were urged to fight next to the Red Army against 'Hitler's bloodhounds'. The 'bloodhounds' themselves roared with laughter at this kind of humour.[16]

Kolkkala was not left completely idle during the breaks in fighting, because the needs of the unit, or the wishes of the officers at headquarters, kept the interpreter running both in nearby villages and on trips to Joensuu. Although basically self-sufficient, the German army made a procurement agent out of the interpreter, who ran around villages looking for cobblers, milk for the battalion headquarters from the farms or Finnish hard bread and game for the 'belly-worshipping' major. In more peaceful times during the war, there were parties and shopping, and both of these provided the interpreter with plenty to do. The German wine-drinking and marching songs or the sounds of the accordion from the Finns were part of the programme during breaks in the fighting, where the highlights were visits by the canteen Lottas to the German dugouts for coffee klatches, mediated by Kolkkala. The interpreter was also needed when Finnish hunting knives, cockades, leather gloves or boots as well as roubles taken from fallen enemies were exchanged for the bounties of German catering:

> The Finns in turn are salivating over not only spirits, of course, but also German bread and they're ready to eat the Germans' leftovers, praising

[16] Ibid.: 77.

> them as scrumptious. The noticeable difference there is that the Germans have their spices with them, whereas us guys have a field kitchen that doesn't recognize any other spice than salt.[17]

After his long Christmas leave, Kolkkala returned in early 1942 to the Svir River area, where the front lines seemed to have quieted down, as if waiting for spring, better road conditions and the new changes in strategic movements that they would bring. Warfare continued nonetheless, and Kolkkala was transferred in the established way together with his own battalion from his time off to the front lines and back, but also from one German unit to another.

There was still a much greater need for interpreters than it was possible to fill, which meant that the members of the Separate Interpreter Detachment were sent where the need was most acute. Kolkkala was tapped by commands to mediate for field battery commands, as interpreter for the German military police in Aunus, or to Uuksu to communicate between the Finnish and German transport units, usually at the last minute, so he had enough time to pack his knapsack, but not enough to say goodbye to his now erstwhile colleagues.

But of all the quick changes of place, the most remarkable one of all occurred in spring 1942 when General Dietl and Marshal Mannerheim agreed to a reorganization of the troops and responsibility for the fronts so that the German 163rd Infantry Division was moved north to become part of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps and handed over responsibility for the front sector south of Uhtua to the Finnish regiment, which had been posted there. The transfers commenced in May according to the command of the quartermaster of the Finnish High Command, Major General Airo:

> In addition to the groups that had already been transferred, 163 D is being moved in its entirety, bit by bit as they are released from the front lines, hurriedly along the railway, and are taken by train to the designated discharge station of AIK [sic] Lapland and put under the command of AOK Lapland. The transit plan set up by the Aun. Grp. in the first place to the

[17] Ibid.: 150–151.

> Op. Div. of the F. High Com. The Aun. Grp. will provide information about the progress of the transfers in its status reports.[18]

Corporal Kolkkala was there when the German units were being released from the front line:

> They started with the rum right away at the command post of the German company commander, we went to look at the positions at every detachment's post, to check for enemy positions without being seen. After that we drank heavily in the dugout of some German group commander. [19]

The decisions made at the Finnish High Command were converted into interpreter tasks when the seven-member group from the interpreter detachment received their orders to work as interpreters for the transfer of German positions to Finnish control. The 'orchestration' of the position changes kept Kolkkala busy for several days and nights, and after that the entire Separate Interpreter Detachment was disbanded and the transfer of the Finnish interpreters was begun, a development that sent them to new units. After waiting almost three weeks and guesswork about his final destination, Kolkkala left for Alakurtti, where he worked briefly as an interpreter for the Panzer Jaegers. Meanwhile the transfer of the interpreters who had arrived in the north to the command of FLSR under Willamo was being prepared, and in connection with this, on the last day of June 1942, 'the Finnish bigwigs who were bossing us interpreters around' sent Kolkkala to the 169th Division, completely unfamiliar to him. From there the division liaison officer—according to the FLSR posting list, Lieutenant Sauli Viikari—commanded him onwards on the very same day to the wilderness, to the patrol base situated right on the Finnish border, where the liaison officer of the base, Second Lieutenant Theodor Aue, was waiting for him.

On the day he was transferred, 30 June 1942, Kolkkala wrote the following:

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[18] Main quartermaster, Major General A.F. Airo on 12 May 1942; War Diary of the Finnish High Command (1941–1943). War Diary Collection, War Diaries from the Continuation War and the Lapland War. War Diary 20880. File 194, NA. Cited 15 September 2021.

[19] Sana 2017: 199.

> This place, called Pitkävaara, is located several kilometres north of the road and the railway, still on the Finnish side of the border. The base is surrounded by mine fields on all sides, ditto the road leading there. It's exposed to the enemy on all sides.
> In Pitkävaara, there's a Finnish corporal with four men posted in the midst of the German battalion, whose job it is to operate from the base on patrols as a guide or 'host' for the Germans.
> The Finnish communications officer (2nd Lt. Aue) who was leading the unit was about to be changed. The new officer had the command to arrive in about a week and during this time I received the command to work as the communicative link (or the 'liaison officer').[20]

Second Lieutenant Aue mentions the arrival of Kolkkala in his activity report of 4 July 1942:

> My activities:
> 28 June Rest day
> 29 June I received the order to transfer to the 163rd Division. I went to the headquarters of the 378th Regiment to ask for more detailed orders.
> 30 June The temporary communicative link, Corporal Kolkkala, arrived at Pitkä[län?]vaara. I explained his duties to him.
> 1 July I reported to General Tittel at the headquarters of the 169th Division. I went to the army corps to report to Major Parviainen.
> 2 July I reported to the acting commander of the 163rd Division, Colonel Wachsmuth.
> 3–4 July nothing special.[21]

Kolkkala's posting at Pitkävaara ended up lasting only a brief while, because the yellow fever that had hit the patrol base sent Kolkkala first to the military hospital and then on sick leave. He did not report to work at FLSR until the middle of August. The delayed return resulted in an entry on his military record and the order to report to the liaison officer for the 169th Division, Lieutenant Viikari, but the new command required him to report to Major Kaarlo Parviainen in Alakurtti, who at that time was acting as the senior Finnish liaison officer for the XXXVI Mountain

[20] Ibid.: 212.

[21] Communication from Aue to Willamo on 4 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

Army Corps. Parviainen sent a request to Rovaniemi asking to keep Kolkkala as the translator for his office, but in the return message Kolkkala was commanded to leave Alakurtti and report to Kemijärvi, where the interpreter at the German air field in Hanhikoski, Private Ainamaa, was already waiting to go on leave. Kolkkala's translation work in the office of Major Parviainen eventually began on 21 September, once he had returned from the leave he had been granted after his posting at the air field ended. His posting in the office of the army corps was apparently difficult, because at the beginning of October Kolkkala felt it was best to request a transfer:

> The effect of 2 weeks here in Alakurtti is that I've decided to ask to be transferred elsewhere sooner or later. Reasons: too many people giving commands (= officers) to one 'doer', work days that are too long (8:30 a.m.–7:00 p.m., 30 minute food break accounted for), arbitrary and harsh treatment by the officers.[22]

The reorganization of the front responsibilities that had taken place during the summer and the transfers of both troops and interpreters had brought Kolkkala to a different kind of reality—'a completely German world', in which the Finnish units were now subordinate to the German commanders and not the other way around. German local time was observed, the Finnish canteen Lottas had been replaced by German *Schwestern* and the local cultural offerings were also German. In Alakurtti, Kolkkala's agency was also located in different kinds of structures, for the command relationships determined by the German military hierarchies were now present in the joint work under the direction of Major Parviainen in a different way than previously in the dugouts of the Germans attempting to take the Svir River area. The large number of those issuing commands created a new discomfort factor as it ate into the limited amount of spare time the interpreter had: If just a few months before Kolkkala had still had time between his tasks to explore Aunus and its venues thoroughly, or to spend an evening dancing in the area, in

[22] Sana 2017: 218.

Parviainen's office there was no longer any time or opportunity for such pastimes.

Nowhere in his diary entries does Kolkkala ever talk about those tasks that either Finnish or German officers commanded him to do at the headquarters of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps, but it will be possible to return to them later in connection with the stories of other 'office liaison officers'. In any event, Kolkkala's office posting remained brief, for after several weeks already, he was posted to be the interpreter for the German horseshoe-making course taught by a master cobbler:

> For the interpreter, the task was difficult. I had to talk eight hours a day, and on top of that I had to prepare for the next day using the course textbooks—after all, I wasn't a professional. Even the Germans admitted that my job was difficult without backup. Despite these difficulties, I felt that I did the job satisfactorily. […]
>
> Most of the day is spent in the workshop. It's sooty there and the air unhealthy. The only good side is that it's warm, because the temperature was at times around 20 degrees below zero.[23]

The courses continued until the middle of November, and then it was time to transfer to the commandant's office in Salla before Kolkkala fell ill yet again, this time more seriously than before, and once again landed in the military hospital in Kemi for several months. After this the diary entries become sporadic and they mainly concern themselves with matters other than mediation activities.

In January 1944, Kolkkala was working as a Finnish communicative link for the German field post in Salla when partisans attacked the station. There was a skirmish in which Kolkkala too had to grab a weapon; he was also wounded.[24] The Germans awarded him the Iron Cross for his actions during the struggle, and after he received it, he was also sentenced, almost simultaneously, to 30 days of 'more severe' imprisonment for stealing a pair of footwear. After completing his sentence he returned

[23] Ibid.: 219–220.

[24] After the war, Kolkkala wrote a story about this clash at the field post station under a pen name, 'Jyrki Kareinen', which appeared in the magazine *Kansa Taisteli* [Our Nation Struggled]. It follows his diary entries quite closely. See Kareinen 1969.

again to Salla in June 1944, virtually at the same time as the Allies began their landing in Normandy and the Red Army's offensive began at the Karelian Isthmus. After Finland withdrew from the war, Kolkkala once again joined Finnish troops, who had the task of ensuring that the previous allies had left Lapland for Norway. In the chaos caused by the constant troop transfers, however, he was able to avoid fiercer battles until he was finally sent home in November 1944 (see Chap. 9, Snapshots from the Ruins of the Brotherhood-in-Arms).

Communicative Links for Patrols

When Kolkkala reported to the Pitkävaara patrol at the end of June 1942, the officer who met him, Second Lieutenant Theodor Aue, had had a heavy spring and early summer behind him in the Finnish-German military sector of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps in Alakurtti. The first year of the war had made the man a soldier to be used in rapid transfers on the gameboard of the brotherhood-in-arms and kept both him and Kolkkala constantly on the move from one unit and joint operation to another.

The activity report from the end of March and the beginning of April 1942 is a good illustration: At the same time as Second Lieutenant Teräs was following the German gendarmerie in Rovaniemi on various tasks involving the police and keeping order, Aue had spent two weeks 'off-road', which is why some of his activity reports were never delivered. Now he returned to the events of the past weeks. After a brief posting to headquarters, Aue had transferred first to the S battalion of the division[25] as temporary liaison officer and from there immediately, in the same post, to the pioneer company of the 139th Mountain Jaeger Regiment. It had been assigned mining operations in the sector of Light Company 3. However, there was enemy troop movement in the area to be mined, so a Finnish-German company was sent to corner them with Aue as their liaison officer and as a soldier participating in the struggle.

[25] What is meant here is a German 'bog battalion' (*Sumpf-Bataillon*), whose commander was Major von Ludowig.

> I move with the troops to the field patrol. On 28 March at 0400 hours, when the troops are moving from the field patrol into march formation, an attempted attack by the enemy occurs against the field patrol. At first general confusion reigns, but the enemy isn't able to use the opportunity to its benefit either and retreats. As for me, for example, I end up in close combat with 5 enemy soldiers, 1 German NCO with me, during which I knock down 1 enemy, the others flee.
>
> After the skirmish, once the enemy has retreated, I leave with the combined German-Finnish patrol (strength 1 + 20) to investigate what the enemy is doing. I am able to ascertain that the enemy has retreated to their quarters. I approach the area of their quarters up to their guard stations.[26]

More than 24 hours later, the Finnish Light Infantry No. 3 and the German unit launched an attack against the Russian unit with the purpose of clearing the area of enemy troops and performing the mining operation. As liaison officer for the German *Jagdkommando*, Aue once again accompanied them, and three German soldiers were killed, six wounded. They were able to conduct the mining operation on the next day, and Aue participated as liaison officer for the Finnish and German units that worked to protect the operation. On 1 April Aue was commanded by Lieutenant Boris Saarmaa to 'return without delay to the S battalion', of which one company had been commanded to move to Kilistunturi and take command of the field patrol station established by Light Inf. 3 on that fell. During the next two days, it was Aue's job to handle 'the processing of issues' caused by the changeover. After that, he turned over the liaison officer tasks to Lieutenant Sneitz.

Performing similar duties was Second Lieutenant Heinz Theodor Müntzel. In June he was still listed as one of the liaison officers for the headquarters of the XIX Mountain Army Corps headquarters in Petsamo, but was posted shortly thereafter to Alakurtti and became liaison officer and interpreter for Light Inf. 3. In July 1942, Müntzel reported to his commander:

[26] Communication from Aue to Willamo 4 April 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

> On 16 July 1942 I was commanded to report to Lieut. Saarmaa in Alakurtti, where I was assigned to be liaison officer and interpreter on the same day for Light Inf. 3. I reported to the aforementioned unit at 1630 hours.
>
> On 17 and 18 July 1942 I worked as a liaison officer and interpreter with the small German company on terrain reconnaissance in the Voitatunturi area. This reconnaissance pertained to placing a mine field in the aforementioned terrain.[27]

Aue and Müntzel are examples of communicative links in military operations who were responsible for ensuring smooth cooperation on the front line. They were shuttled from one unit to another with the primary task of maintaining contact between German units and their Finnish subordinates or their neighbouring Finnish units as well as to coordinate concrete military operations in such a way that both the general aims of the operation as well as the responsibilities of the participating units were known on both sides. The enemy was in range both visually and audibly, so the possibility of combat was always present, as were the violence of war and the threat of death or injury.

In the activity reports of communicative links such as Aue and Müntzel, one notices that the true nature of communication, linguistic mediation, has to be read between the lines. These reports seldom address in any detail what was meant by everyday communication 'with Germans in the area and neighbouring Germ. units',[28] 'commonplace communication'[29] or their activities as liaison officers and interpreters involved in terrain reconnaissance. The lion's share of the reports usually involves a blow-by-blow description of operations and the losses incurred, and so those readers interested in communication between Finnish and German troops will have to decide on the basis of other sources and contextual knowledge what kinds of concrete activities are hiding behind such expressions as 'assistance', 'maintaining contact' or 'clarification of issues' in the reports.

Aue's job was to *mediate* commands or intelligence issued by Finnish or German headquarters to support preparations for joint operations, to

[27] Communication from Müntzel to Willamo on 18 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[28] Communication from Kurri to Willamo on 20 June 1943 [T-5471/6, NA].

[29] Communication from Grandell to Wahren on 3 April 1943 [T-5471/6, NA].

mediate intelligence and other information from the Finnish front lines to the headquarters of the German regiments or battalions, to *mediate* any commands from the commanding officers issued both before and during operations, and to *mediate* the views of the Finnish and German soldiers in their conversations, for example, about matters regarding field patrol conditions. These activities, which required all of this mediation as well as Aue's presence, presented a language barrier which had to be surmounted in order to make it at all possible for soldiers speaking different languages to cooperate effectively. Of course it is a question of definition which of these mediation activities was 'actual' interpreting. Standing between two officers or servicemen, he was probably performing the kind of interpreter's role that we imagine today as a prototype (see Image 6.1). But *translatoriness* relates substantially to other mediation activities as well: Commands received from the officers at German headquarters were turned either immediately on the spot into Finnish-language notes or telephone messages, or later on, notes taken in German were mulled over into Finnish on a slushy skiing trip before they were sent on to the commander of the Finnish unit.

Quite often, the mediation tasks required for joint military activity remained even more implicit than this in the weekly reports. The liaison officers and interpreters posted to separate Finnish units were constantly in the midst of joint military operations, but in their weekly reports, they themselves and their agency often fade away almost entirely. When, for example, Lieutenant Åke Svensk says in his activity report that 'our own patrol determined the following field guards and lookouts on the Russkies' side 2–4 July […],'[30] it is practically impossible to determine with any certainty whether he is describing the scouting activities of the Border Battalion based on information received from headquarters, or whether he had acquired the information first-hand, the same way he had done one week before:

> I was in a patrol 20–26 June 1942 on the Tenniöjoki River in the Liinahattu area. With the help of Pvt. Lauri Kolehmainen, who had returned from being captured by the enemy, our purpose was to apprehend the patrol

[30] Communication from Svensk to Willamo on 4 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].



Image 6.1 Commander of Infantry Regiment 50 Major Aho confers with German officers in Suvilahti on 21 August 1941. The following was written in the regiment's war diary for that same day: 'At 1435 hours the reg. comm. made contact with the Germans by greeting the commander of the German Infantry Regiment 310, Colonel Wachsmuth, at a crossroads in Suvilahti' (War diary of Infantry Regiment 50 on 21 August 1941. Collection of War Diaries, War Diaries from the Continuation War and the Lapland War. War Diary 12952. File 17, NA. Cited 23 June 2023). The corporal standing on the left acted as the interpreter, but to this point he has remained unidentified [SA Image / 38634, Military Propaganda Photographer Specialist E. Manninen. CC BY 4.0.]

coming to meet him. Their goal was to get to the Tenniöjoki River, to the place where they had previously crossed, by 24 June as well as to wait in this place until 26 June 1942.

Our patrol comprised:

Germans 2 offcrs. + 42 men;

Finns 2 offcrs. (of which one a radio officer from the unit in Paatsalo) + 1 NCO + 3 men and Pvt. Kolehmainen.

> The task was accomplished by arranging an ambush and lookouts, Pvt. Kolehmainen moving along the shore of the river […][31]

Since Svensk does not mention his own actions in his description of the patrol and the fighting, information about his interpreting activities also remains for the reader to deduce by using the other clues in Svensk's activity report.

Some of the liaison officers and interpreters in the front units also spoke Russian, and thus it fell to them to interrogate the enemy prisoners, either immediately following capture at the command position of the companies or later on, a bit removed from the front in the dugouts at headquarters. Aue was one of these mediators. At the end of June 1942, he wrote about one such interrogation in his activity report:

> While I was in the 3/BorderB., 2 Russians who had strayed from the Salla POW camp came to the company's camp and after having been out on the terrain for 7 days they surrendered voluntarily again. I ended up interrogating them. One of them said he had attempted to escape to the Russian side, the other one wanted to get out of the POW camp because he wasn't given enough to eat and men were dying of hunger. He was allegedly trying to get to either a German or Finnish unit where he could work and get more and better food than in the POW camp.[32]

Another Russian speaker was Second Lieutenant Paul von Bagh, born in St. Petersburg. The following is an excerpt from his activity report from 30 November 1942:

> 13–15 November 1942
>
> As proficient in Russian I was commanded at the request of the XVIII Mountain Army Corps, together with Liaison Officer Pilot 1st Lieutenant Gestle of Luftflotte 5 of the XVIII Mountain Army Corps, to conduct further questioning of a Rus. prisoner being cared for in the hospital of POW camp I, Pilot Lieutenant Astakov.

[31] Communication from Svensk to Willamo on 27 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[32] Communication from Aue to Willamo on 27 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

> My general impression of the aforem. prisoner was that he was physically extremely weakened by his surgery as well as a long-term illness so that he quite often had problems following my questions.
>
> His belief in communism and the final victory of the Soviet Union was unshakable. He said for example that the Germans will be driven out of the Soviet Union in 1943 and then, with the aid of the Soviet Union, out of Finland as well.
>
> We had also brought along some aerial photographs from the XVIII Mountain Army Corps of the partisan camp in Russian Haikola and at the same time we also questioned a certain Russian named Bogdanov, a partisan POW from Eastern Karelia, who was able to tell relatively well what the buildings visible in the photos actually were.[33]

The main responsibility for the questioning of POWs that took place under German command on the front was held by the intelligence divisions (so-called Ic), but Finns, liaison officers proficient in Russian and interpreters were apparently an important supplementary resource, in particular since the German units suffered a constant lack of interpreters who could speak Russian.[34] Although there is no evidence visible at all in the sources about plans pertaining to this topic, Finnish communicative links who knew Russian clearly ended up in every German army corps. Von Bagh was counted on in the Kiestinki sector, Aue in Alakurtti, and in Petsamo, Specialist W. Boije assisted during German interrogations in the area where the XIX Mountain Army Corps operated, commanded by General Schörner. Boije, who was posted to the headquarters of the Mountain Army, reported on his activities regularly as a questioner of POWs, as an interpreter during such interrogations and as a translator of the transcripts made during them. This was also the case in March 1943:

> I was present during POW interrogations and maintained contact with Ic […] I drafted the transcript from the additional questioning and did the translations of the POW interrogation protocols.[35]

[33] Communication from von Bagh to Willamo on 30 November 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[34] For example, see communication from von Bagh to Willamo on 15 December 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[35] Communication from Boije to Wahren on 19 March 1943 [T-5471/6, NA].

There were many multilingual settings and these reflect both the particular features of the front sector and, as in Petsamo, the location of a border landscape between several countries. The tasks of Boije and other Finnish interpreters were always determined on a case-by-case basis. A prisoner taken by a German company ended up being questioned by the division or army corps intelligence officer. At such a questioning, there was an interpreter present who was either the Germans' own, or the interrogation was turned over in its entirety to someone like Boije in the presence of the German officer; the German-language transcripts were translated in any event for the information of the Finnish units and for Willamo as well.[36] A Red Army soldier who had defected to the Finnish field guard post was first questioned at the Finnish command post before he was transferred to Rovaniemi or for follow-up questioning by the Germans.[37] Finns were also present at interrogations of Norwegian civilians or spies of Finnish background recruited by the English—as interpreters, questioners or translators of the interrogation protocols into German.[38]

Much was expected of the questioners' work. Interrogations immediately behind the front line or later on in the dugouts of the division or the army corps provided information about the enemy troops, their weapons and other equipment, the prevailing mood of the troops or issues concerning enemy society. Through the information gleaned, future military action and propaganda targeting enemy troops could be planned.[39] The contributions of Finnish interpreters in this connection were apparently significant, as feedback written by Lieutenant Colonel Wahren attests:

[36] For example, the translation of Fyodor Michailowich Malin's POW interrogation transcript of 30 March 1943. The questioner was Lt. Meindl, the interpreter Spec. Paul, 'in witness of the translation' Spec. W. Boije [T-5471/6, NA].

[37] For example, the translation of the interrogation protocol of 'Red Army soldier Kostandin Sirod' from 28 February 1943. The questioner was Lieutenant E. Rautavesi, interpreter 1st Sergeant J. Maksimainen [T-5471/6, NA].

[38] For example, the translation of the interrogation protocol 'Norwegian wife Ele Persen from Hammernes' from 4 April 1943. The questioner was Seaman Braun, witness to the translation Specialists Grandell and Boije; interrogation protocol of POW Vieno Heikkinen of an interrogation by telephone and a regular interrogation on 4 May 1943. Present at the interrogation were Major Wolter; interpreter and questioner was Lieutenant Backman [T-5471/6, NA].

[39] For the importance of POWs and their use as a source of information, labour, hostages, shields, propaganda examples of a good fate for comrades still fighting or a tool to influence domestic policies after the war, see, for example, Ferguson 2003: 416–445, Kujala 2008: 151, Elfvengren, Kosonen & Laidinen 2010: 56–72 or Danielsbacka 2013: 35.

> The AK [army corps]'s head of command Col. Degen stated […] that he was particularly satisfied with the work of Spec. Boije as a questioner, citing his ability to find out about important matters that the German questioners were not able to ascertain.[40]

With respect to propaganda, the significance of POW interrogations was emphasized, for example, in Major Parviainen's reports on discussions he had with the commanders of the Alakurtti sector divisions and army corps together with their commanders at the end of June and beginning of July 1942. One of the German officers had presented particularly critical observations about cooperation between the most important intelligence offices and propaganda companies which Parviainen felt was advisable to present in order to make the Finns' own propaganda more effective as well. Only by making use of timely interrogation information could a valid message that would appropriately address the recipient be guaranteed. Parviainen gave Willamo a summary of the criticism he had heard:

> […] but most important of all is the interrogation of POWs and conversations with them. This is how we collect material and keep it up-to-date. In this way we can hit the latest speeches of politicians, moods, any current shortages and in general the most pressing questions of the day among our enemies. You have to blast these and in such a case a long-range speaker is a good thing. Consequently you also keep the flyers up-to-date and as appealing as possible under front conditions. He was complaining that the current flyers didn't achieve the desired effect. Thus 100,000 flyers isn't a 'potato' that is suitable for any soup; instead you always have to offer what will go home given the enemy's mentality.[41]

Second Lieutenant Aue, who was working for a brief period in August 1942 in the headquarters of the 163rd Infantry Division as a liaison officer and had taken on the task of evaluating the flyer and loudspeaker propaganda practised by the Germans, expressed the same observations. Aue was trying to understand why the number of turncoats at this stage

[40] Communication from Wahren to Willamo on 5 April 1943 [T-5471/6, NA].

[41] Communication from Parviainen to Willamo on 11 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

of trench warfare had decreased notably since the first months of the war. According to him, individual soldiers naturally had a more difficult time leaving their positions than before without being noticed by their superiors, but it was particularly critical to examine the cooperation and contents of the propaganda in those units responsible for front propaganda. According to Aue's observations, the basic problem with the propaganda was that those propaganda men trained for the task ended up working in the divisions at the front as subordinates to intelligence officers who 'of course had their own military qualifications and training, but who often lacked specific training in how to successfully manage propaganda'.[42] When opinions differed, the propaganda measures that the specialists presented were often overruled by the intelligence officers' views, resulting in the flyer text leaving much to be desired. In particular, Aue criticized the contents and language of the propaganda:

> In many cases their texts are not suitable for the way Russian kolkhozniks think nor for their direct manner of speaking, which they've been used to hearing from their politicians. The text is not limited to one or two simple words of truth, which even the simplest kolkhoznik can understand, but rather it's composed with the cultural level of a European man in mind.

The analysis made its way to Willamo's eyes in Major Parviainen's compilation of activity reports, to which Aue's observations were attached as an almost word-for-word copy. From there they were reproduced in the report that Willamo sent for the use of the Finnish High Command a couple of weeks later.[43] All things considered, the communicative links who knew Russian were the resource that made possible both the collection of information from the POWs and an evaluation of the propaganda directed at the enemy, and thus opened up one crucial perspective on the activities of the Germans in the front sectors.

[42] Communication from Aue to Parviainen on 8 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[43] Communication from Parviainen to Willamo on 8 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA]; communication from Willamo to Melander on 22 August 1942 [T-17215/2, NA].

Translation Machines in the Dugouts

By examining the interrogation of POWs and propaganda, we have already gained a perspective on the tasks that occupied men like Aue, Boije, von Bagh, Kolkkala and Müntzel—lower-ranking communicative links during the time they were working in an office. In addition to the interrogation transcripts and propaganda work, the headquarters of both the Germans and the neighbouring Finnish ones produced plenty of texts with which the armed forces directed the operations of their units and the coexistence of soldiers and civilians in the area of military operations, or through which the brothers-in-arms informed each other of ongoing operations or results of operations that had been completed. All of these communications generated a significant amount of material to be translated for the liaison officers and interpreters posted both to German staffs and to the headquarters of Finnish units subordinated to the German troops—when they were not moving about in the combat zone as links in Finnish-German joint operations.

In the headquarters of the front units, the daily translation tasks of the liaison officers on duty were often only acknowledged in the weekly reports with a perfunctory mention that the writer 'was continually working in the headquarters of Battle Group Puroma performing translations into German and Finnish' during the reporting week, 'translated communications for one side and another', or accomplished 'translation and interpreting tasks' or 'produced translation work'.[44] As part of the daily routine, the content of these tasks was apparently not considered important enough to specify it in any more detail for one's superior since the focus of the reports was on depicting local war events, the moods of the officer corps or opinions of the condition of the brotherhood-in-arms—factors that the leadership of FLSR and, through its mediation, the Finnish High Command wished to maintain continuously up-to-date.

An image of the contents of the 'special translation tasks' that occupied liaison officers comes into better focus, however, when we scrape together

[44] For example, see communications from Lieutenant Molander to Willamo on 7 March 1942; from Lieutenant Kalima to Willamo on 11 July 1942; from Lieutenant Herlin to Willamo on 25 July 1942; from Lieutenant Kurri to Willamo on 1 August 1942; and from Lieutenant Karinen on 20 August 1943 [T-5471/1-4, NA].

individual mentions of the contents that are somewhat more detailed and informative as well as context information about those assigning them rather than simple hunches. Occasionally there are also copies of translations in the archives, delivered along with the weekly reports for the information of FLSR. The range of topics is ultimately remarkable: the liaison officers translated for the use of their neighbouring Finnish units the orders of the day, letters, status reports, combat reports and intelligence information—in addition to POW interrogation protocols, for example, there is information about enemy casualties or loss of materials and the artillery situation or mining operations carried out by the Germans—sent by the commanding German officers, the Chiefs of Staff (Ia) or the Intelligence Division (Ic). The Russian-language German propaganda and the Red Army German-language propaganda were translated for the information of the Finnish commanders, and correspondingly the German colleagues received translations of Finnish-language enemy propaganda. These tasks also included the translation of various training texts or the compilation of glossaries, for example, for the use of the Finnish-German field posts.

Military cooperation required daily maintenance in the midst of the German and Finnish units in the area. In particular, during concrete operations, this could in practice mean, as Lieutenant Jernström reported from Kiestinki in spring 1944, 'on average 60 phone conversations per day, in addition to 15 typewritten pages of translations'.[45] Quarters, supplies, road construction and fortification work, traffic and communication as well as other issues pertaining to the maintenance of the German troops produced regulations, letters and invoices, and translating these into Finnish or German for the information of the brothers-in-arms occupied the liaison officers as well. Excerpts from the activity reports of Lieutenant Kurt Backman, liaison officer of the Sixth Mountain Army Corps, convey a picture of translation duties from October and December 1942:

> 24 October 1942 got the command to leave with our squad to the forest hut (Germ. field post No. 1). The Germans let us borrow some winter gear

[45] Communication from Jernström to Major Lagerlöf [T-5471/9, NA].

> until we could get some from our own unit. They'll send our skis later. The object is to use us as guides for scouting expeditions. I got the special task of getting in touch with the Finn. field post in Akkajärvi and make a German-Finnish glossary, as broad as possible but detailed, which can be used specifically at the field post.
>
> 14 December 1942 I went to present myself to the Luostari air field commander, Lieut. Col. von Aken. The lieut. col. didn't have any information about the document by the Labour Task Force of 18 August 1942 which concerns regulations governing the use by German armed forces in Finland of labour for their work. At his request I translated, together with his interpreter (Lotta M. Haglund), the agreement into German at the same time as several sections of Circular No. 3/42 in which the duties of liaison officers are discussed regarding holiday issues for Finnish workers. So that the labourers working there will get information about how their holidays and other matters will be organised, Lieut. Col. von Aken suggested that they also receive the parts of Circular No. 3/42 we translated for him for their information.[46]

Many directives and instructions from Finnish civilian authorities or the German army applied to the activities of German soldiers in the area who were in contact with the civilian population. Finnish translations of documents related to all measures were often delivered to the liaison officers and local commandants of both armies, and they were eventually delivered along with activity reports to Willamo's headquarters in Rovaniemi. This was another way in which Willamo received an image of local conditions of the brotherhood-in-arms. For example, the use of Finnish labour in service of the German troops was forbidden as was predatory fishing in rivers and lakes. This type of regulation was used to attempt to protect Finnish property and livelihoods or to ensure the functioning of Finnish society. As a way of 'maintaining and deepening friendly relations between the German armed forces and the Finnish civilian population', in the winter of 1943–1944, *Organisation Todt* organized free meals for Finnish schoolchildren whose fathers had fallen at the front or were still serving there. All of the units in the area were informed of these relief events.

[46] Activity reports by Backman to Willamo on 2 November and 18 December 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

Commands were issued to the units regarding the interception of partisans or, during the dry summer months, they were instructed in forest-fire prevention in the divisions' areas of responsibility.

When the state of the war permitted, trainings were organized on both sides of the collaboration. As already seen through the experiences of Auterinen and Kolkkala, Finns, for example, became familiar with the German style of using foodstuffs in the field kitchens and the customs of their farriers, and the Germans for their part felt in particular that training in Finnish forest combat tactics, partisan activities and skills for surviving in the wilderness in general (orienteering, tracking, skiing) was particularly useful. The Germans' deficient skills in wilderness survival and scouting became apparent rather quickly during the first months of the war, and subsequently several scouting and patrol leadership courses were organized, beginning in 1942, for the officers and NCOs of the Mountain Army. The final courses for familiarization with winter warfare were still being organized in February 1944, at approximately the same time as the Finnish government had begun its first peace negotiations with the Soviet Union.[47]

The courses kept the liaison officers busy, from planning through execution all the way to the final assessment: The course structure was designed together with the local commanding officer, and the liaison officers also assisted in the concrete arrangements, translated the course programmes and any course materials required into Finnish or German, and they even taught them or helped the instructor as interpreters. In addition to these duties, some of them taught the use of the Finnish marching compass in the dugouts during idle moments.[48] They also reported any observations and feedback collected during the courses back to headquarters in Rovaniemi in their activity reports.

One of these hard-working teachers and interpreters on the courses was Lieutenant Edmund Luther, the liaison officer for Finnish Light Infantry No. 3 in Alakurtti. He sent the following observations from the scouting course from November 1942 to Willamo:

[47] Communication from Aue to Willamo on 25 February 1944 [T-5471/5, NA].

[48] For more information about the courses and experiences in their activity reports, see, for example, Parviainen 8 August 1942, Saarmaa 13 February and 22 August 1942, Sneitz 21 February 1942 and Ruoho 3 October 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

> During the period 25–30 November [1942], I served as the teacher for a scouting course organised for the Germans. In the beginning it didn't seem as if the goal of the course—training capable patrol leaders and leaders of larger combat units as well—would be possible to accomplish during such a brief course. However, at the middle of the course, things began to move in a better direction, and during the closing ceremonies on 30 November, I could in good faith say that the majority of the students will be able to lead a patrol under local winter conditions.
>
> The greatest weaknesses at the beginning were a lack of initiative, an inability to move on skis, making a lot of noise while moving, and either crowding too close to each other or losing sight of the skier in front of them. But nevertheless these problems were resolved by the end of the course. The only significant weakness remaining amongst the students after the course was completed, however, was in orienteering because the terrain where we were practicing did not permit efficient training of a single man in this area.[49]

In December 1943, a skiing course was held with Veli Saarinen himself as teacher—winner of a gold medal in cross-country 50 km at the 1932 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. Three liaison officers were assigned to be his interpreters. Captain Boris Saarmaa sent Willamo an account of the course and at the same time evaluated the work of his younger liaison colleagues:

> Lieut. Luther was the only liaison officer who did any good during the course. Lieuts. Alanne and Tolsa did their best, of course, but their language abilities did not meet the high requirements set for the course (specialist terminology). Things being as they were, Lieut. Luther ended up performing almost all of the work for the three interpreters.[50]

In the rear area, the courses organized for the Germans was just one of the contexts in which liaison officers such as Luther were posted as interpreters when joint patrol-like operations did not require the presence of a 'communicative link'. Postings as interpreters for visitors to the front,

[49] Communication from Luther to Willamo on 8 December 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[50] Communication from Saarmaa to Willamo on 26 December 1943 [T-5471/4, NA].

foreign journalists and propaganda officers, German secret police and, in particular, commanding generals was a visible part of the job description of a liaison officer, and when these tasks are added to the interpreting work performed between Finnish and German officers in the German headquarters, the image the activity reports convey of 'translation machines in the dugouts' becomes particularly powerful. Lieutenant Leo Molander reported the following in March 1942:

> 9. On a daily basis during the reporting week, I've compiled German-language newspaper reviews. I performed the translation work delivered to me. Beginning on 7 February 1942 I acted as interpreter for a Finn.-Ger. commission which is performing an assessment of the condition and cost of the barracks and several other pieces of construction equipment being turned over by 6 D. The commission inspected all the structures in question on the site. [51]

Second Lieutenant Müntzel's activity reports from summer 1942 give a good idea of the amount of translation and interpreting work:

> 9.) I worked for example as an interpreter when Lieut. Col. Köhler (Ia 163rd Division) and Major Raatz (JR 310) visited the Finnish Light Infantry No. 3 on 19 July 1942. The topic of the meeting was the organisation of a combat exercise in the terrain of Killistunturi [sic] Mountain.
> Prisoner and deserter interrogation protocols and translation of German letters and orders.

> 9) Translation into Finnish of letters from the Germans, commands, POW interrogation protocols etc. I acted as a guide for ex. for the Ger. propag. specialist Ayer when he visited the Finnish Light Inf. No. 3 25–27 July 1942.

> 9) On 23 August 1942 two Finnish divers from the Pion. Bat. No. 234 arrived to search Hanhijärvi Lake for the motor of a German powerboat which had been lost during exercises. I worked for a couple of days as interpreter at the diving site. The search was fruitless.

[51] Communication from Molander on 7 March 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

> 26 August 1942 I was present with the commander of the Div. in organizing combat exercises for J.R. 310. […][52]

Lieutenant Puputti reported the following from Alakurtti in autumn 1942:

> 9) At the request of the veterinarian of the XXXVI Gen. Kdo. [*Generalkommando*, corps headquarters], I translated the 'Field Stable Guide' into German. The Germans had shown particular interest in the experiences of Finns in stabling horses over the winter, as well as other issues regarding caring for horses during this season. I've also promised to translate excerpts from 'Caring for Horses during the Winter'.
>
> 9) I was Senior Physician Jörs' interpreter during the trip made through Central Finland. The purpose: finding suitable rest homes for the troops serving under the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps. Its sign: 'Urlaub vom Walde' [a vacation away from the forest]. In line with this, the rest homes are to be situated in cities or in the vicinity of them. A rest period of about two weeks, full care for 20–25 officers and approximately 60 rank and file and NCOs at a time. A decision was made to locate the rest homes in three different places: Kuopio, Korpilahti and Aulanko. No contracts have been drafted yet and they will not be until the matter has been officially agreed through mediation of the Mountain Army Corps with Finnish authorities.[53]

And Lieutenant Viljo K. Ruoho, who worked in the headquarters of the XIX Mountain Army Corps in Petsamo in March 1943, reported the following:

> 13–14 March I was together with General Schörner on his tour of inspection in Kalastajasaarento and the Litsa sectors. Attached please find the trip report (Attachment 2).
>
> 15–17 March I interpreted in Kolosjoki at implementation of the big army corps skiing championship […].[54]

[52] From Müntzel's activity reports to Parviainen on 24 July, 31 July and 28 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[53] Communications from Puputti to Willamo on 31 August and 25 October 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[54] Communication from Ruoho to Lieut. Col. Wahren on 18 March 1943 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

The liaison officers dispatched by FLSR worked as interpreters in meetings dealing with military operations, on tours when the commanders of the Mountain Army or the division inspected their troops, during visits by German propaganda men to Finnish units, in joint exercises, at sports events of the brotherhood-in-arms, at surgeries on wounded Finnish soldiers at German field hospitals,[55] on trips in the provinces together with the army's chief physician and the supply or education officers, or at officer trainings. Under these circumstances, they most probably worked across the entire span of not only military activities but also civilian life—when interpreting as well as when working on translating written communications. In these cases, the language proficiency, general education or knowledge of specialist fields was on a higher level for some liaison officers and interpreters than for others. And because there were more often fewer workers than tasks to be performed, one's own work—and that of one's subordinates—was, at least occasionally, critically observed.

For example, Major Parviainen, the senior liaison officer in the Alakurtti front sector working for the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps and thus the supervisor of the front's Finnish communicative links, evaluated himself in summer 1942 as being able to get along 'in tactical matters', but that his deficient language skills made themselves known particularly in 'everyday interactions outside the service'.[56] To put it differently, Parviainen's language abilities were chiefly focused on so-called soldier-German, and he ran into difficulties with the broader terminology and vocabulary often needed for conversational topics that could arise during evenings in the officers' canteen, not touching on current events of the war, but, for example, issues pertaining to the countries' history, culture or politics. This was probably also what lay at the root of Jyrki Kolkkala's critical remarks about the Finnish officers' annoying silence during central consultations between the brothers-in-arms:

> While we were drinking our coffee, I noticed that the social skills (German skills!) of the Finnish officers did not match up to those of our major, nor those of the Germans in general. In conversation, there was mostly silence

[55] Communication from von Bagh to Lieut. Col. Voss on 10 June 1943 [T-5471/9, NA].

[56] Communication from Parviainen to Willamo on 27 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

> when the major wasn't speaking. In addition, they were lacking in consideration. They didn't offer a chair, didn't offer to light cigarettes, didn't help the elder major on with his coat.[57]

At the same time in another sector, in Kiestinki at the headquarters of the XVIII Mountain Army Corps, Lieutenant Tauno Kalima was working under the most senior liaison officer, and his tasks included plenty of ongoing issues, correspondence, maintaining contact with Finnish units and with the authorities of the military administration of Eastern Karelia as well as the translation tasks related to these duties. There were apparently plenty of them, because he was assisted in them by Sergeant K. Wikström, who had worked as an interpreter with the Separate Interpreter Detachment. In Kalima's opinion, however, the assistant's helpfulness was limited by 'his deficient abilities in Finnish and German which made the flow of his translation work "slow and very bad" '.[58] This may simply be a cranky outburst from Kalima caused by a temporary translation backlog, but it is also possible that Wikström, whose native language was Swedish, had been selected and posted for verbal mediation tasks in particular during Finnish and German joint operations, and so his written skills had never been properly tested. And it is very apparent that Wikström's skills were generally appreciated in these duties: At the same time as he was toiling under the translation tasks delegated by Kalima, Second Lieutenant Frank Jernström, the liaison officer of the German Seventh Mountain Division, was expressing a wish in his Swedish-language weekly report that Sergeant Wikström's posting would be brief so that he could return to the division as quickly as possible as their interpreter. Among other things Jernström badly missed Wikström's descriptions of the mood among the German troops—in other words, information which he would not really have access to simply by associating with the officers.[59]

Thus, in addition to weak performances, the activity reports also made note of good ones, at least in marginal comments as in the previous

[57] Sana 2017: 145.

[58] From an undated activity report by Kalima [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[59] Communication from Jernström to Willamo on 31 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

mention of the activities of Saarmaa's subordinate, Lieutenant Luther, as interpreter for the Finnish ski coach, or when the absence of an interpreter began to affect a liaison officer's own work. Even direct recommendations for promotions were given. For example, in the Petsamo sector, Lieutenant Aimo Outakoski, who was working in Ivalo as the local commandant, mentioned a promotion for his subordinate, Private Tapio Ajalin, to specialist, in one or two excerpts because 'while working as an interpreter, he is certainly able to manage more important issues as well.' He also mentioned other grounds for such a promotion: 'His knowledge of German is particularly beyond reproach. His education is sufficient. His military knowledge and comportment are good.'[60]

The Balancing Act of Providing Information

As has been demonstrated, one of the primary tasks of the communicative links sent out by FLSR was to monitor the operations of the German troops, the changes in staff and the prevailing vicissitudes of mood, for example, those pertaining to the global war. At the same time, they were expected to provide information about the German officers' attitudes about their Finnish brother-in-arms. With respect to this latter task, the liaison officers and interpreters were delegated a particular role as a cultural interpreter through whom the German co-belligerents received help in understanding and decoding Finland and the Finnish people in the correct manner. We will return to these matters later on (see Chap. 7, Interpreters of Cultures and Concepts). In this connection, it is essential to take note of how the translation work of the liaison officers and interpreters served this purpose as well.

The German staffs became aware of the benefit of the language proficiency of Finnish communicative links and took advantage of it, also for gathering information that did not have anything to do with the Germans' own operations directly or those that they executed jointly with the Finns, but rather which helped them to perceive what their brothers-in-arms or Finland's neighbouring countries felt about Germans as well as about

[60] Communication from Outakoski to Väänänen on 20 March 1943 [T-5471/6, NA].

conditions in general at the local northern front or in the global war in general. The newspapers were an important source of information in this respect.

Lieutenant Molander, liaison officer in the headquarters of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps, wrote the following in February 1942:

> During the reporting week, I translated newspaper reviews into German for the Ic, which summarized political news from *U.S.* [*Uusi Suomi* {New Finland}], *Hbl* [*Hufvudstadsbladet* {Capital News}] and *Stockholms tidning* [Stockholm News]. I have performed the translation jobs assigned by the various offices of the corps headquarters and acted as an interpreter to help those Finns who have visited here.[61]

Later, Corporal Karttunen worked in the same headquarters as well. In June 1942 he reported the following:

> I've prepared a newspaper review every day for the Ic of the corps headquarters, translating news and articles of interest to the Germans from Finnish and Swedish newspapers, which at the same time provide an image of the attitudes of Finland and Sweden as well as those of other countries. This review will be read during a briefing to the officers of the corps headquarters.[62]

Lieutenant Herlin, who was a liaison officer at Kiestinki in the headquarters of the XVIII Mountain Army Corps and the Seventh Mountain Army Division, also received a new task:

> Ic would like the liaison officers to make a summary from Finnish newspapers. Ic will provide us with the '*Mitteilungen der Presse-Abt. der deutschen Gesandschaft*' [sic] [Communications from the Press Office of the German legation] that arrive on a regular basis. We could make a summary of Finnish newspapers from them. This would of course have the benefit of letting us see what the Germans find interesting in our media.[63]

[61] Molander on 28 February 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].
[62] Karttunen on 13 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].
[63] Herlin on 26 October 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

In the activity reports sent from the different front sectors, it becomes apparent that the officers at various German headquarters, in particular the officers receiving intelligence and propaganda (Ic), were very interested in current newspapers, and this is why many liaison officers also found themselves compiling German-language reviews of news from newspapers among their daily tasks. The reviews were collected on the basis of either the materials sent by the German legation or directly from newspapers in Finnish or Swedish that the units subscribed to. For example, courier mail brought at least *Uusi Suomi, Hufvudstadsbladet, Stockholms-Tidningen* and *Svenska Dagbladet* [Swedish daily] to Alakurtti; in addition to this, excerpts from Finnish radio news were translated daily into news reviews in German.[64]

Although as he guessed in his report, Lieutenant Herlin saw that he had the opportunity to monitor the items that interested the Germans during his posting, and perhaps also got a sense in this way of prevailing moods and attitudes, there were risks involved in this task that could affect the integrity of the brotherhood-in-arms. For this reason, the liaison officers and interpreters who compiled the newspaper reviews had reason to be vigilant. Indeed, towards the end of January 1943, Major Parviainen, the senior liaison officer at Alakurtti, reported that one liaison officer had been asked by a German intelligence officer to translate articles and statements from Finnish newspapers that dealt with 'Germany and Germans as well as recent setbacks for its army'. In addition, there was interest in news discussing the relations between Finland and the United States as well as about 'England's undertakings'. Parviainen ended this section of his report by saying, 'I have enlightened the 2nd lieutenant involved about this matter and said that he must always present his translations to me before he turns them in.'[65]

Guiding the junior liaison officer and checking his translations before they were delivered to the German intelligence officer are signs of caution, but the reasons for it do not appear openly in the documents themselves. The most probable motivations for this caution are to be found in the general political situation caused by the military blows suffered by

[64] Communication from Puputti to Saarmaa on 25 September 1943 [T-5471/4, NA].

[65] Communication from Parviainen to Willamo on 24 January 1943 [T-5471/4, NA].

Germany culminating in Stalingrad. As a result of the events of the global war, the faith of both the Finnish government and its people in German military force and the possibility of victory were beginning to wane. Finnish political and military leadership was balancing on a tightrope, where on one end exhortations from the Allied forces for negotiations with the Soviet Union were calling and on the other, Germany's pressure to stay away from a separate agreement with their common enemy was creating difficulties. Making the situation even more problematic was criticism against the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms and articles about a separate peace circulating in the newspapers, which naturally aroused distrust and vexation all the way to Berlin.[66] As Rusi has pointed out, in winter 1943 the media became 'a kind of barometer for the state of the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms', and Finnish censorship, directed by the State Information Bureau, did its best to make sure that the newspapers would not shatter 'the illusion of the brotherhood-in-arms, made brittle by Germany's adversities'.[67] To be sure, the press had a responsibility to be loyal to the brotherhood; however, it was not able to toe the line entirely, even though mentions of a separate peace gradually began to disappear in summer 1943. Newspaper criticism of the events of the global war continued despite censorship rules and gave the Germans constant reason to request explanations and to pressure Finland for even stricter censorship measures.[68]

In all probability, Major Parviainen wanted to ensure that his subordinate junior liaison officers knew how to interpret the situation correctly. If the press was a barometer for Finnish-German relations, then it was the task of the liaison officers at the local front sector level to use their translation and review work to adjust the barometer so that the translated newspaper stories did not place unnecessary extra pressure on local Finnish-German relations and thus weaken the integrity of the brotherhood-in-arms. This precept was adhered to at least in the Alakurtti

[66] See Perkko 1971: 155–223 and Rusi 1982: 230–290 for the effect of the twists and turns of the global war on the political ambience in Finland, opinions of the time and Finnish-German relations as well as newspaper articles and censorship relating to these matters.

[67] Rusi 1982: 253 and 263.

[68] Ibid.: 251–268.

front sector.[69] Throughout the year 1943, political and military news from Finnish and Swedish newspapers deemed to be of interest to the German Ic and the commanding generals and the Chief of Staff was translated on a daily basis, but the attempt was made to make the boundaries of this commission clear from the Finnish perspective: 'Sensitive articles discussing Finland's political position are not translated for the Ic'.[70]

In this respect, the translation work performed by the liaison officers was determined by a certain political gatekeeping which was tightened into a translation prohibition in February–March 1944, when the Finnish government was considering its stance on the peace agreements delivered from Moscow. As a result of this situation, Finnish-German relations were put on ice, and the German leadership threatened to cut off its deliveries of grain and weapons if Finland were to begin negotiating a separate peace.[71] German attitudes were also cooled for their part by the public discussion surrounding this theme in the press, nor is there any reason to presume that the German generals at the northern front would have been in any kind of news blackout, as there was no blackout in the so-called rear area either.[72] Lieutenant Jernström, who worked as liaison officer in Kiestinki, reported in his activity report in March 1944 that the intelligence officer at headquarters had requested a translation of the peace conditions immediately after they were published as well as of news that dealt with 'the secret meeting of Parliament'.[73]

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[69] For example, Lieutenants Klaile, Luther and Puputti along with Captain Saarmaa reported having the task of translating the news from the papers on their daily schedules, or that their subordinates did [T-5471/4, NA].

[70] Communication from Puputti to Saarmaa on 25 September 1943 [T-5471/4, NA].

[71] Rusi 1982: 327; Markku Jokisipilä's study *Aseveljiä vai liittolaisia* (2004; 'Brothers-in-arms or allies') contains a detailed chronology of the military and foreign policy struggles between Finland and Germany which took place both in spring 1943 and late spring and summer 1944 in connection with peace talks.

[72] Lieutenant Luomi depicted the feelings prevailing in March 1944 in the German commandant office in Rovaniemi and referred to the questions of Seller, the military chaplain: 'Why is Finland negotiating at all? Conditions are once and for all crushing. It is impossible for Finland to survive without German support and the brotherhood-in-arms.' Communication from Luomi to Voss on 18 March 1944 [T-5471/13, NA].

[73] Communication from Jernström to Captain Leon-Lindh on 12 March 1944 [T-5471/11, NA].

Although information about the political situation was quite clearly available without translations as well, some liaison officers felt it was better to take a break in performing newspaper translations until the situation became clearer. In May 1944, exactly one month after Prime Minister Edwin Linkomies had given the cabinet notification that the peace conditions had been rejected, Lieutenant Luther, the liaison officer for the 163rd Mountain Army Division, wrote in his activity report that the Germans were still asking him to translate news from Finnish papers. Luther reported that he 'had not been doing so during this political crisis', but later he had once again agreed to translate it along with his other liaison tasks.[74]

At the Generals' Right Side

The liaison officers and interpreters sent by FLSR to the German units were given a common general task to monitor and support, through all available means, both the operations of the German army in Finland and cooperation between Finnish and German troops at the northern front of the global war. In the introduction to the archive list for FLSR, the task of liaison officers is formulated rather simply as 'maintaining contact between the Finnish High Command and the German AOK, monitoring and supporting the Finnish troops under German command, and tending to various administrative matters'.[75] As has already been seen, this maintenance of contact found its concrete expression in very different mediation and communication tasks in both military operations in the wilderness and in dugout headquarters, which, much like administrative tasks, turned into translation and interpreting tasks. In turn, these activities were guided and monitored by the senior liaison officers[76] in

[74] Luther on 12 May 1944 [T-5471/4, NA].

[75] FLSR 1941–1944, Archive List.

[76] In the very north of Petsamo, Lieutenant Colonels Rainer Ahonius, Lauri Gulin, K.-E. Lindeman and C. G. Wahren along with Lieutenant Commander T. Fabritius, and possibly others, performed these duties. Serving as senior liaison officer in Alakurtti were above all Major Parviainen and Lieutenant Colonel Ilmari Rytkönen, later also Captain Boris Saarmaa. In Kiestinki, Major Valter Vieska, Lieutenant Colonels Carl von Haartman and Erik Voss and Lieutenant Kalima performed these duties.

each area of military operations together with the commander of FLSR, Colonel Willamo, and Chief of Staff Major Väänänen.

Although every junior liaison officer worked at his place of command as a representative of FLSR and thus indirectly also of the Finnish High Command, the senior liaison officers sent to each headquarters of the Mountain Army (*Armeekommando*) were actually representatives of the Finnish High Command and the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish army. A particular kind of agency pertained to this position. A posting that placed one in very close proximity to commanding generals and senior headquarters officers opened up a direct channel to the dugouts of key officers of the Mountain Army, which was used in both directions not only for following the activities, strategies and political views of the German commanders, but also for the presentation of Finnish perspectives to them. In general, A.O. Väänänen's description of his liaison officer duties tallies accurately with the job description of the senior liaison officer: In the midst of his daily activities he was to maintain trustworthy relations to the Germans while at the same time keeping the Finns up-to-date about matters pertaining to the operations of the Army Corps. Creation of cordial personal relationships was important, as were ongoing discussions about the state of the global war or successes in local operations, problems and losses. In particular, paying close attention to the perspectives of the officer corps was of high importance so that information about current trends in the brotherhood-in-arms was constantly kept current.

Uula Aapa (alias A.O. Väänänen) described the background of his unpublished manuscript, compiled after the end of the war, as follows[77]:

> So there was a lot of talking. Eloquent speeches were held at the celebrations that were organised, men talked about combat in the command dugouts at the front, about world politics in the sauna, about news from back home at simple dinners, about the great battles at the Eastern front on long automobile trips, about air raids in our home regions in the officers' apartments. There was always talking, and only about the war, the war in Europe, in Africa, in Asia and in Lapland.

[77] Aapa 1961: 1.

Thus there were plenty of opportunities for discussions, and these were also actively organized on both sides. Opinions about military matters and political issues of the day were exchanged, particularly at dinners or over coffee in the German officers' canteen, but the Finns too tried to arrange their own less formal occasions in their liaison offices—as Specialist Boije, working as an interpreter in Petsamo, expressed it to his commander—'this kind of gathering has always provided us with the most interesting information.'[78] The service in the Germans' officers' canteen was famously in a class of its own, but senior liaison officers nevertheless endeavoured to find at least something to offer at their representation events which could entice talkative German officers to continue conversations begun over dinner. Lieutenant Colonel K.-E. Lindeman, senior liaison officer in the Petsamo sector beginning in late winter 1944, described the matter in this way: 'In order to solidify close relations, I hold small evening gatherings in my apartment. I would be grateful if I could get some amount of alcohol from FLSR—the salmon I can buy here.'[79]

Conversations thus took place in the dugout of the commanding general, at the German officers' canteen or in the FLSR office, over the cognac glasses of the Germans or Finns. What all these conversations had in common in any event was that they produced material for the regular activity reports, which Willamo was able to use as a basis for reporting details from topics that the generals and headquarter officers were talking about to Mikkeli, as well as the mood that prevailed among them. As was seen before, the senior liaison officers, besides collecting their own notes, compiled their activity reports with excerpts from the reports of their subordinates, either included or as attachments. Together they complemented the picture of the latest war events from the area of combat, joint operations, activities of the enemy, information gathered from enemy intelligence or POWs and the mood of the German brother-in-arms.[80] At the same time, issues related to language, communication, translation

[78] Communication from Lieutenant Commander Fabritius to Willamo on 20 April 1943 [TA-5471/6, NA].

[79] Communication from Lindeman to Willamo on 20 June 1943 [TA-5471/6, NA].

[80] See, for example, communication from Wahren and Reinikainen to Willamo on 20 October 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

and interpreting are mixed in with more general ones, but do not dissolve into them completely.

In autumn 1942, Lieutenant Colonel Wahren reported on increased enemy patrol activity in the Petsamo sector and reflected on ways to protect the area:

> Recent events in which a German officer lost his life and the movements of enemy patrols in the immediate vicinity of the HQ of the Mountain Army have caused nervousness among top brass. The past few days we've started patrolling with no noticeable results. Yesterday the usefulness of former Finnish border Jaegers with local knowledge as guides was demonstrated to the German patrols. This point is very understandable, because it is precisely the border Jaegers who best know the passages and paths of the Russkies from peacetime, which the enemy patrols seem to be using in the area now as well. We've already started taking measures in response, and after I was in touch with Lieut. Col. Pennanen, he promised to send 10 border Jaegers and a tactical canine to help the Germans. There is also a plan to use appropriate junior liaison officers and interpreters in the patrols so that our joint operations aren't bogged down in language difficulties.[81]

Major Parviainen was serving in the Alakurtti sector as senior liaison officer when the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps was visited by Infantry General Waldemar Erfurth, the most senior representative of the German armed forces at the Finnish High Command. During his visit several discussions went on, and Parviainen referred to their contents in his activity report immediately following the visit:

> During General Ehrfurth's [sic] visit there was a question during one discussion about the organisation of Finland's army in which it was proposed that its basis was to conduct a war of defence in the homeland, and because of this, the mobility of the troops during a war of offence is small considering deep-reaching operations. This is how the Germans defended the abundance of vehicles they have here. Comparing the mobility of Finnish troops and the German Army Corps soldiers under front conditions in Lapland, the performance of the Finnish troops was deemed better than that of the

[81] Communication from Wahren to Willamo on 10 September 1942 [TA-5471/1-3, NA].

> Germans, most particularly in the winter. But at the same time it was said that the troops' organisation hadn't succeeded 100%. […]
>
> In one conversation, a certain German colonel criticized in the presence of General Ehrfurth [sic] and the German military attaché and his assistants in Finland, in sharp words and a demanding voice, the winter equipment of the Germans, even claiming it was non-existent, at the same time as he mentioned how well poor Finland has managed the winter equipment of its army, from shoes to vehicle coverings. He continued to ask if last winter hadn't taught them enough and that it would be a mark of shame for the entire Wehrmacht if the Finnish privates are laughing at the Germans warming their ears next winter when it's -40^{0}C, hopping in the cold in exhaustion, and not being able to do anything afterwards. He made the demand that a fur coat be assigned to every one of the army's men. After this the military attaché said that a certain English ship trying to get to Russia had gone to the bottom with 100,000 fur coats on board. There will probably be a fair amount of grieving about those coats on both sides of the no-man's land come next winter.[82]

Erfurth's visit continued in Petsamo on 13 July, and this time Lieutenant Colonel Wahren reported:

> In the evening Gen. Schörner had a dinner where I had to sit at the right side of Gen. E. During the meal he primarily discussed battle activities and events at the Finnish front, of which he was particularly interested in the actions of Gens. Pajari and Blick. The usual courtesy speeches were held at the table.[83]

As one can deduce from the wartime activity reports of the liaison officers and Aapa's stories collected after the war, ceremonial speeches were an essential part of the programme at the officers' canteen. They were held at dinners, during official visits or when medals and honours were awarded, and they brought performativity to Finnish-German interactions and content, which were important in executing the script at the foundation

[82] Communication from Parviainen to Willamo on 11 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA]. Parviainen's depiction appears almost verbatim in Aapa's post-war compilation; there, the critical Chief of Staff of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corp is identified as Colonel Hölter. Aapa 1961: 71.

[83] Communication from Wahren to Willamo on 17 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

of the brotherhood-in-arms. The senior liaison officers had an important part to play here.

In Petsamo, the dinner held in General Erfurth's honour continued over coffee. Wahren had the following to report from the coffee table:

> Over coffee, Gen. Schörner held a speech to the undersigned in which he praised the Finnish people and country, and finally proposed a toast to the beautiful land of a thousand lakes. I responded to his speech by saying, for example, what a feeling of security it has given the Finnish people to be fighting next to the world's first and most powerful army against a mutual mortal enemy, compared to the uncertainty caused by the constant demands and trouble-making coming from the Russkies after the Moscow Peace Treaty [of 1940]. I proposed a toast to the luck and success of the honourable German army.[84]

Matthias Kleinheisterkamp, the commander of the SS Division Nord, was awarded the Finnish Cross of Liberty in spring 1943. At the award ceremony, the senior liaison officer in the Kiestinki sector directed the following words to the division commander:

> Gruppenführer Kleinheisterkamp! The Finnish and German brothers-in-arms, fighting side by side against a common foe, Russian or Bolshevik, an enemy whose main goal throughout history has been to spread out, and oppress and destroy foreign peoples, and who have never been able to achieve anything beneficial on their own in their own country, with the possible exception of arming themselves for combat. We Finns have no doubt about the successful outcome of this struggle. Above all, it requires rigour and resilience, the abilities the SS Division under your command has also already demonstrated on several occasions here in the north. […] I believe that you, Gruppenführer Kleinheisterkamp, will wear our Cross of Liberty just as proudly as every single one of us wears the medals that our Marshal has honoured us with, and I present to you the congratulations of my commander, Colonel Willamo, as well as my personal congratulations and those of the liaison officers at our headquarters.[85]

[84] Ibid.

[85] Communication from Voss to Willamo on 15 June 1943 [T-5471/9, NA].

Whereas the daily schedules of the junior liaison officers and interpreters were determined by the concrete communicative needs of the brotherhood-in-arms, or the task of ensuring that operations were performed in the desired way and the official documents were understandable in spite of linguistic difficulties, the senior liaison officers on the other hand were responsible for maintaining the veneer of the brotherhood. Its dramaturgy required that credible signals were sent, from both sides of the table, indicating that the situational picture behind the performance still reflected consensus.

As previously mentioned, close personal relationships were very important at this level, and these were also pursued. However, the turnover among the liaison officers could be heavy and the assignments in individual units quite varied, which made it more difficult to create those trusted connections so vital for cooperation (see the following subchapter). On the other hand the long, continuous work throughout the war in the same sector provided the liaison officers with good conditions for creating tight connections with the generals commanding the corps. This becomes quite apparent in the experiences of Lieutenant Boris Saarmaa (Image 6.2).

In summer 1941, Saarmaa, a reserve officer, was working in Helsinki as commander of the education company of the Ikämiessuojeluskunta [elderly men's civil guard][86] when a request arrived at his student apartment to report to the commander of the Helsinki Civil Guard District, Jaeger Colonel P. O. Ekholm.

> When I reported for duty, I was asked whether I was Jaeger Colonel A. R. Saarmaa's son and if I could speak German. I answered both questions in the affirmative. I learnt German during the years 1923–1924 in Cöthen (now in the GDR), where my father was studying to be a radio and electrical engineer at the Cöthen Polytechnic College and where I went to elementary school.[87]

During their conversation, Saarmaa was asked about whether he wished to become a liaison officer in Northern Finland. After responding

[86] Roudasmaa 2007; for more information about Saarmaa's tasks as an educator, see Roudasmaa 2007: 100 and 104.

[87] Saarmaa 1987: 130–131.



Image 6.2 During instruction on tracking in the Uhtua sector, 21 July 1944. 'On these courses, every city-dweller learns in the space of a couple of weeks of practice how to follow the trail of an enemy patrol advancing across terrain, even while running,' asserts the leader of the courses, Captain Saarmaa [SA image / 158939, Military Propaganda Photographer Spec. Vilho Uomala. CC BY 4.0.]

positively, Saarmaa was ordered just one week later to report to Colonel Willamo at FLSR. From there Saarmaa was posted immediately to the Salla sector, where he was ordered to serve as a liaison officer under General Feige of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps. Performing these duties did not, however, begin smoothly, as the position had already been filled. Saarmaa was sent back to Rovaniemi. General Feige, on the other

hand, had not been satisfied with all of the Finnish officers with which he had been provided, and thus he asked Willamo to send a liaison officer from his headquarters who had experience at the front. The post was offered to Saarmaa, who had served during the Winter War as platoon leader and company commander in the Savo Jaeger Regiment. Saarmaa describes his first encounter with General Feige as follows:

> He turned out to be a short, brown-eyed and tight-lipped older gentleman. He reminded me most of Jaeger Colonel Blick, for whom I had once served in Käkisalmi as a conscript with the Savo Jaeger Regiment. We exchanged a few thoughts about the battles of the Winter War at the Karelian Isthmus before the general turned to face [his chief of staff] and pronounced the following phrase: 'Das ist unser Mann' [This is our man]. I understood that Feige had just approved me as liaison officer for his headquarters.[88]

After a brief interview, Saarmaa began his career in the headquarters of the Army Corps, first under the command of General Feige and later General Weisenberger—a career that lasted all the way to September 1944.

The activity reports that Saarmaa wrote as a liaison officer and the depictions of his experiences published after the war create a rather congruent picture of his agency for more than three wartime years. In all of these written sources, he appears as a self-described liaison officer, soldier, active participant in military operations, leader and observer. While on the one hand Saarmaa indeed describes his tasks as 'working as an interpreter, training German units to wage war in the wilderness and act as needed as a patrol leader for Finnish-German long-range patrols',[89] accounts of his first-mentioned duty lag behind his status reports, descriptions of the atmosphere of the staff officers and the training events organized for the Germans, both in the reports he sent from the front and in his published military stocktaking in the aftermath of the war.

The following are several excerpts from Saarmaa's reports from February 1942:

[88] Ibid.: 132.

[89] Saarmaa 1985a: 203.

[…] On 11 February 1942 our contact patrol was ambushed and we ended up in an exchange of fire with a strong Russkie platoon about the size of a detachment. Our patrol was able to come away without any losses.
12 February 1942 Quiet on both sides.
13 February 1942 A German-Finnish patrol ended up being ambushed at 0930 hours and exchanging fire with a Russkie patrol 1 km south of Lylyvaara train stn. Both Finns and 2 Germans were wounded. 1 Russkie sergeant fell. We found 4 maps on the dead Russkie. […]
3. About Finnish medals to the Germans.
The medal issue feels like it is developing in a more tense direction. Lieut. Viikari told the undersigned the following. […] The regiment's commanders in the 169th Div. are demonstratively not wearing their Cross of Liberty ribbons. The reason turned out to be that they can't wear them because others can't get them (lower officers and rank and file). […] They're very aware of how many Finnish medals the SS Div. has received and how many the 163rd Div. has received. […]
4. German criticism regarding patrol leader course in Border JP7.
I have made contact with the officers who were on the course to gather information about their opinions and thoughts about the matters covered in the course. The students who were on the course were without exception satisfied. In the paragraphs below I am only presenting thoughts and opinions in which the course was criticized.
a) Due to their German officer training, the German officers did not wish to be together with NCOs, not in formation or while working, because they have a clear hierarchy. Apparently being together has a bad effect on working, in particular when the teachers point out 'where the officer group is loitering about'. […]
d) The winter equipment of the Germans was criticized, for example ski bindings, tents, axes etc. Those participating on the course knew about it themselves, but they of course weren't to blame for the situation. One teacher's phrase became the course proverb: 'Das ist gut [that is good] (Finnish object) aber das ist schlecht [but that is bad] (Germ. object)'. The effect was a little adverse that what was of German origin was always criticized. (Language difficulties may explain this.)[90]

[90] Saarmaa on 13 February 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

The reports that Saarmaa sent to Willamo are mainly descriptions of events, written in the style of a war diary, summaries of discussions with the German officers and depictions of the thin-skinnedness of the Germans regarding Finnish military honours. In addition, Saarmaa provided Willamo with a very detailed image of the patrol leader courses that were held for the German officers and NCOs in his own area of operation—courses which he himself had conducted or from which he had gathered critical remarks by talking to German course participants or junior liaison officers. In the reports, differences between German and Finnish military training, the desire for comfort and convenience of the German soldiers, and the 'nearly childish trust in the ideas of the Finnish teachers' came to the fore.[91]

Linguistic issues pertaining to communication shrink to faint references in joint patrols or language difficulties observed in training events, or they are hidden behind verbs that provide general descriptions of communication ('put in contact', 'guide the patrol', 'relay information'). The reports give the impression that Saarmaa, under the command of the chiefs of staff and generals of the Army Corps, could have delegated his future translation work to more junior liaison officer colleagues as a result of his seniority. In this respect, the approach seems to be closer to the job description of more senior liaison officers, and Saarmaa had actually occupied this office as of spring 1943 after he was promoted to Captain.

The lesser importance of linguistic agency is repeated in Saarmaa's writings published after the war, although in these he does say that he was made leader of the skiing and patrol courses 'solely' on the basis of his language proficiency, about working 'several times as an interpreter' for General Dietl, or his translation work developing a 'Guide to Reading Tracks' for winter courses, for the use of the training centre of the German Mountain Jaegers.[92] Saarmaa also finds it worthwhile to mention one particular interpreting task during the very last days of the brotherhood-in-arms. At the beginning of September 1944, he was serving as the commander of the Finnish-German infantry unit when radio news reported Finland's withdrawal from the war:

[91] Communication from Saarmaa to Willamo on 22 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[92] Saarmaa 1985a: 203 and 1987: 147.

> That day I gathered my unit for a talk and I thanked them. The Mountain Jaegers brought out the fir wreath they had made to the centre of the square and set it on fire. Then I tossed my famous yellow bamboo cane, Klopfstock, while [Hans, commander of the German unit] Burger thanked us Finns. When I translated the speech, several of the border men left to cry in the nearby brush.[93]

These events remain, however, in the marginal comments to the larger story in which Saarmaa attempts to position himself as an observer and actor in the centre of the important events in terms of military history—one who had a close relation to prominent German commanders. Three main elements come to the fore in the texts written for the readers of *Kansa Taisteli* and the *Sotahistoriallinen Aikakauskirja* [Journal of Military History], coming from the experiences Saarmaa apparently found important from the time during which he worked as a liaison officer for FLSR: the events of the occupation of Salla in early autumn 1941, in particular the problems caused by the incompetence of SS Division Nord and the Finnish Sixth Division's significant role in the success of the operations in Salla and then Alakurtti[94]; the events at Pudasjärvi that led to the burning of Lapland; and the positive opinions of the German generals towards Finnish soldiers and Finland, which were also seen in their attitudes towards Finnish liaison officers.

As for the final group of collected memories, its core comprises General Weisenberger and the poet Heinrich Heine. Saarmaa relates how he would read a copy of Heine's poetry collection *Buch der Lieder* during breaks from German-Finnish patrol duty. One of the patrol's German soldiers had apparently written about the matter in one of his letters home, and this mention had ended up under the eyes of censors at the post office. What eventually resulted was the demand that the commanding general intervene. The book, which was forbidden in National-Socialist Germany because Heine was Jewish, was not appropriate to have in open view in an area of German military operations, not even in

[93] Saarmaa 1987: 149.

[94] Saarmaa 1985b.

the hands of a Finnish brother-in-arms. Saarmaa received an invitation to General Weisenberger's bunker. The general's reaction surprised Saarmaa:

> When Weisenberger invited me in to talk, he informed me, to my surprise, that his favourite poet was also—Heinrich Heine. I was astonished when Weisenberg took the *Buch der Lieder* from his desk drawer and began to read 'Lyrisches Intermezzo Nr 61' to me from it. […]
>
> Before I left the general's bunker, he announced: 'As long as I'm serving here as commanding general in my Army Corps, you may feel free to keep Heine's poems in your map case and read them whenever you like.'[95]

For the readers of *Kansa Taisteli*, the emotional connection between the general and the liaison officer was given yet another layer of sentimentality. Saarmaa describes how he thanked the general and left with tears in his eyes: 'The poem that General Weisenberger read was my favourite poem, too.'[96]

Observers or Spies?

Based on the activity reports and the recollections from after the war, German troops were generally positively disposed towards the liaison officers and interpreters. Because of their own deficient language resources and local knowledge, the Germans were well aware that the soldiers sent by FLSR played a large role in ensuring smooth cooperation. As Uula Aapa wrote, positive attitudes towards the liaison officers reigned in German headquarters also because 'it was only with the help of Finns that they could possibly familiarize themselves with conditions north of the Arctic Circle.'[97] According to Aapa, the German officers were 'particularly open-minded towards the Finns, and the most senior commanders more open-minded than those of lower rank', and conversations conducted under these circumstances naturally provided abundant material for the activity reports sent to Willamo's desk. But this openness on

[95] Saarmaa 1987: 145–146.

[96] Saarmaa 1985a: 205.

[97] Aapa 1961: 1.

the part of German officers had varying nuances, something that reflected the prevailing or local situation at the front, enemy propaganda, what appeared in Finnish or foreign newspapers and information coming from other sources about the Finns' position on Germany as a brother-in-arms.[98] It is probably also ultimately a question of how well the commanders of the Finnish and German troops, fighting side by side at the front, got on together.

At least in the Kiestinki sector, some degree of friction was present. Aapa described the clashes from winter 1941 to spring 1942 as some of the roughest collisions in the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms, between the Finnish III Army Corps and its commander General Hjalmar Siilasvuo and the German Mountain Army.[99] It is not possible here, nor is it necessary, to go into the substance of these conflicts, which pertained to operative issues. What is more important is the shock wave caused by the collision, which apparently affected opinions on military cooperation at the lower levels as well and thus was also seen in the attitudes towards the Finnish liaison officers in this sector. Examining the individual activity reports of liaison officers, we can conclude that relations between Finns and Germans there left much to be desired. The mood was chilly and the liaison officers were treated with suspicion. In particular, when it was discovered that these officers were reporting their observations, this caused confusion and distrust, as the Germans were not sure exactly what was contained in the reports. This uncertainty caused doubts about the true mission of the liaison officers and interpreters.

In November 1942, Lieutenant Kalima was sent to the Kiestinki area as senior liaison officer. In his first report, he combined the accumulated moods of his predecessors and his own observations:

> Based on the previous reports of Major Vieska, Major von Haartman and the undersigned, it is known to you, Sir, that relations between the Germans

[98] For information on the pessimistic mood of Mannerheim and other Finnish leaders and how these affected the relationship between the two powers, see Jonas 2011: 121–125; on the image of Germany in the media and views on the brotherhood-in-arms during the years 1941–1944, see Perko 1971; and on the media as a barometer of the brotherhood-in-arms, see Rusi 1982: 251–274 and 298–312.

[99] Aapa 1961: 112.

> and Finns here haven't developed in as trusting a direction as one would desire. Relations between the III (Finnish) Mountain Army Corps and the XVIII Mountain Army Corps are notoriously poor. Accordingly, liaison officers are from the very start regarded cautiously. On the basis of prolonged personal contact, improvement has occurred to the extent that they view us more positively on a personal basis, although the constant overturn of liaison officers has unfortunately caused some damage in this respect. One could characterise the attitude of the Germans to the liaison officers as a friendly reserve. With painful consistency, the Germans stay tight-lipped about even insignificant military events, let alone such confidential matters as troop strength and plans. Even our questions about everyday matters are seen as annoying, inappropriate curiosity and nosiness. This reserve is more apparent the higher the rank of the person in question. The impression I got as early as last summer, that the aforementioned Major Faulmüller, of the Army Corps Ia, is the embodiment of this rejecting attitude, has become even stronger with time. The attitude of several others, above all junior officers, towards us is more direct, however. Despite this state of affairs, there is an atmosphere of reserve and caution around us which makes us act with utmost prudence.[100]

We will return to Kalima's letter later. He began to write it because of the treatment Lieutenant P.G. Schütt received immediately upon his arrival in Kiestinki to SS Division Nord, under the command of the XVIII Army Corps. The young lieutenant, 22 years old, had already had experience with a liaison officer's tasks. Schütt had served in Rovaniemi in the main headquarters of the Mountain Army, for example, as a translator and interpreter in the Intelligence Division, also responsible for troop education (AOK 20/Ic),[101] later on briefly in September 1942 as liaison officer under General Tittel of the 169th Division in Alakurtti. It was from this post that he was sent to the SS division in Kiestinki towards the end of October.[102] As is clear from Schütt's first activity report, he had a tricky beginning in performing his tasks:

[100] Communication from Kalima to Willamo on 22 November 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[101] In Schütt's own words: 'My service was limited to translation tasks'. Communication from Schütt to Willamo on 25 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[102] Communication from Molander to Willamo on 25 October 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

> It was particularly difficult to gain information of military and political importance because the division had a very reserved attitude towards the undersigned because I had just arrived. In addition to this, there was no mess at the division or other gathering places where one could find out this aforementioned information through conversation.[103]

A bit more than two weeks later, Schütt's position had become so untenable that he was summoned to other tasks away from the SS division. Everything began with an insignificant issue concerning circumstances around quartering when the division adjutant had commanded Schütt to transfer from the officers' quarters to the NCO dugout. According to Schütt's report, the reason was that a certain Lieutenant von Lüders, who had just returned from leave and had positioned himself as the liaison officer, had priority for a place in the officers' quarters as he was of more senior rank. The information also reached Major von Haartman, who was serving in the Kiestinki sector as senior liaison officer at the time and thus Schütt's immediate superior as well. Von Haartman felt that the treatment his subordinate had suffered was inappropriate and he visited the chief of staff of the SS division to inform him that Schütt was the only one representing him and FLSR in the division, whereas von Lüders' position as a liaison officer was completely unofficial. Von Haartman warned that he would transfer Schütt to another unit if he was not treated as the official liaison officer assigned by FLSR in the future. Just one week later, von Haartman met with Schütt once again at the SS Division headquarters, who told his supervisor about how he was being treated with suspicion by the division officers and that he had been called a spy. In addition it was revealed that the division was aware that the liaison officer was composing activity reports.[104] Von Haartman felt it was justifiable to investigate the course of events and their background in more detail and invited Schütt to an official hearing.

During this hearing, Schütt reported that he had already noticed when he arrived at the division that the SS officers were wondering about his

[103] Communication from Schütt to Willamo on 28 October 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[104] Communication from Von Haartman to Willamo on 15 November 1942 and the hearing protocol from the questioning of Lieutenant Schütt on 14 November 1942 attached to the activity report [T-5471/1-3, NA].

posting there since there was already a Finnish liaison officer serving in the division. To this, Schütt had simply responded that von Lüders was in practice sent for use by the Finnish III Army Corps, whereas he himself was on site as sent by FLSR just as other liaison officers in Finnish units. (The pencil markings of Major Väänänen, commander of FLSR's command office, in the margins of the hearing protocol sent by von Haartman clarify von Lüders' position by stating that he had 'no responsibility to report' to the III Army Corps nor any claims to the position of liaison officer, and that his main duties were to accompany the division commander on hunting trips or the like and to procure 'various goods' for the generals and officers of the division headquarters.) The insinuations surrounding Schütt's assignment were expressed concretely a few days later, as the hearing protocol written by Major von Haartman shows:

> On 9 November a promotion party was organised for some officers there, where the division commander also participated. Later on that evening, *Sturmbannführer* (Major) Baier raised his glass to the person reporting [Schütt], upon which occasion he called him a 'spy'. The person reporting had immediately asked *Sturmbahnführer* Baier what reason there was for the form of address 'spy'. The matter caused a wild discussion which the general finally stopped, forbidding any more talk about the matter. It is to be noted that *Sturmbannführer* Baier had been rather inebriated.

This accusation of espionage was an obvious *incident*, a 'false note' shattering the 'expressive coherence' of the dramatized reality of the brotherhood-in-arms,[105] which either intentionally or inadvertently shook the prevailing situational picture of harmony. As a dissonance, it naturally attracted notice on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms, in particular since it occurred during a celebratory event among a unit's officers, thus centre-stage among the Germans and fully in public. Later that same evening, the chief of staff of the SS division had apologized for Baier's behaviour, and after Baier's own head had cleared, he too asked Schütt's forgiveness, 'explaining that he hadn't meant to say anything bad'. Nevertheless, this incident, along with Schütt's job description,

[105] See Goffman 1990: 92 and 141 for the effects of disruptive incidents.

once again became a topic of discussion on the very next day, and the SS officers mentioned to von Lüders that it was Schütt's task to forward on reports of things that happened in the division. On that same day, the dispatch officer brought Schütt the orders from General SS-*Obergruppenführer* Matthias Kleinheisterkamp to provide him with an explanation of the contents of the reports he sent from the division. 'The dispatch officer had mentioned that the general said that it was in his opinion very unpleasant that written material was being sent from his division.'

In his conversation with the SS general, Schütt admitted to writing reports about his own activities 'so that my superiors can monitor my work'.[106] He mentioned to the general that his reports contained five points that had to do with combat activities in the division's sector, the liaison officer working as an interpreter or liaison officer in operations, wishes expressed in the division regarding the activities of the liaison officer and Finnish awards given to Germans. In addition, Schütt had mentioned it was his job to make sure that the Germans were not making large purchases without permission.

Because of gaps in the archival sources, it is difficult to say to what extent the information provided by Schütt to the general reflected new reporting guidelines issued after spring 1942. However, because the activity reports were still written according to the old instructions at that time, it is most likely a reflection instead of the liaison officer's taking precautions in a situation that was already inflamed. For Schütt leaves precisely those points most interesting to Willamo—and through him the Finnish High Command—unmentioned: evaluation ('criticisms') on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms relating to combat activities, events at the posting worth mentioning, the Germans' attitude towards Finland and the Finns, questions regarding transfers of officers and, in general, discoveries made at the site of posting which were of interest to the defence establishment. In other words, in his debriefing, Schütt omitted precisely those activities which could be interpreted as spying, even in the vaguest sense of the word. In any event, the general was satisfied with Schütt's

[106] Communication from von Haartman to Willamo on 15 November 1942, with an attachment signed by P.G. Schütt [T-5471/1-3, NA].

report and stated that it was understandable that activity reports were required so that the supervisors 'could monitor the work of the liaison officers'.

Schütt had only served as the division liaison officer for a couple of weeks, and that is why, after all this, he was quite justified in wondering how the information, which in and of itself was true, could have gone through the officers all the way to the SS generals. And according to what he said during his hearing, he had enquired about the Finnish interpreter, Sergeant Theodor Hofmeister, who had worked for a long time in the division: Could information have gone through him to the officers? Hofmeister repudiated this, but later said that the reporting instructions for interpreters that had been sent to him in summer 1942 had apparently ended up in the division's intelligence branch (Ic) because of an incorrect address, and then the opened letter had been delivered to Hofmeister later.

And thus Hofmeister, too, ended up being questioned in order to gain more details about the course of events. In the questioning that Lieutenant Kalima undertook, it became apparent that the commander of the branch in question had brought the guidelines addressed to Hofmeister and asked him to translate them into German. Hofmeister had however pointed out that the letter was addressed to him personally, so the matter ended there. As Hofmeister understood it, there was nothing to indicate that the Germans had been able to determine the contents of the letter, and for this reason the incident was left unreported to the senior liaison officer of the Kiestinki sector at the time, Major Vieska. Willamo's pencil remark 'poorly' in the margins of the hearing protocol points to the fact that such a notification in all likelihood would have been required.

The following is an excerpt from the addition to the protocol written by Kalima on 15 November 1942:

> During questioning the party reporting said that he had written his activity report in the Ic *Geschäftszimmer* [orderly room] in the morning during a time that was normally calm, because then only the secretary was present, and that he never kept his activity report instructions out in the open. And

> he affirmed that he had never handled these instructions when Germans were present.[107]

Hofmeister also emphasized that the Germans were unavoidably aware of the creation of periodic reports since they happened to be written in their presence and also mailed by German courier post.

It is impossible to find out whether the distrustful attitude of the Germans towards the activities of the liaison officers and interpreters came from the instructions addressed to Sergeant Hofmeister landing temporarily in the wrong hands, which simply confirmed the prevailing mood in the SS division. In any event, it was clear to von Haartman that the officers at the division headquarters were already operating in an atmosphere of suspicion. As for Schütt, von Haartman ended the hearing protocol in the following manner:

> To be noted
> that by signing the draft of the protocol, the party questioned has affirmed that his story was recorded correctly in the protocol;
> that the commander of SS-Geb.Div. 'Nord' and a large proportion of its corps of officers have shown, if not direct hostility, at least a misunderstanding of the actions of the Finnish liaison officers.
> My unconditional appraisal of the Lieut. Schütt matter is that Lieut. Schütt's behaviour has been fully correct and that he has not in any way exceeded his charge, for example by snooping in matters that have occurred at SS-Geb.Div. 'Nord' that may have been of interest for activity reports.

In von Haartman's estimation, the division commander and the chief of staff were attempting to understate both the offence and the problematic attitude of the headquarter officers towards the Finnish liaison officer. He did not find Lieutenant Schütt's behaviour to have been objectionable, unlike Willamo, who had noted in pencil in the margins of the hearing protocol several comments such as 'Given this kind of insult, he should have removed himself from the situation immediately' and 'Why not inform his commander immediately?' At the beginning of the document, Willamo had written his general evaluation of the entire controversy:

[107] Attachment to hearing protocol [T-5471/1-3, NA].

'Too bad, incompetently handled both on the part of S, but in particular H.' Hofmeister's hearing protocol included red-ink markings regarding the instructions for activity reports, that it would have been 'necessary to confirm that this kind of instructions is not in the lias.of.'s possession or to make absolutely sure that the Germans will not have access to them; in either case an interpreter should not have anything like this.'

Schütt's position in the SS division in any case had got to the point where Willamo and von Haartman felt it was best to transfer him to another unit.[108] On the same day, von Haartman also relinquished the duties of senior officer in the Kiestinki sector to Lieutenant Kalima. The latter's first job had been to deliver the activity reports from both von Haartman and other liaison officers in the area to FLSR along with their summaries and the protocol from Hofmeister's hearing. At the same time he announced that he was transferring Hofmeister away from SS Division Nord. Kalima felt the need to comment on the suitability of his subordinate for an interpreter's tasks in the following way:

> At the same time I would like to inform you, Sir, that on the request of Major Väänänen, I have summoned Sgt. Hofmeister away from Ss-Geb. Div. 'Nord' with the intention of posting him to the Eastern Karelian Mil. Admin. Suvanto region headquarters as a German interpreter, and to order the person now serving as interpreter there, Pvt. 1st Class. Jussila, to my own command in Kananainen. At the same time I would like to state my opinion of Sgt. Hofmeister, that I do not believe he is suitable as an interpreter and I ask you Sir to please consider transferring him to other tasks after the German interpreter of the Suvanto area headquarters has returned from his leave in about a month from now.[109]

Kalima's critical assessment of Hofmeister's suitability caused Willamo to remark 'In what way?' in the margin of the document. This question is not answered. At that point, Hofmeister was a rather seasoned front interpreter who had served as a support for the German troops from the

[108] Later, Schütt served at least in the Finnish Border Battalion 7 and at the Oulu local commandant as a liaison officer; see activity reports from the Alakurtti sector for 6 January–11 November 1943 [T-5471/4, NA].

[109] Communication from Kalima to Willamo on 16 November 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

beginning of the Continuation War, first as a member of the Separate Interpreter Detachment at the Svir River in General Engelbrecht's division and then after the shift in front responsibilities, in Kiestinki, precisely in SS Division 'Nord'. Additionally, it is easy to see by comparing the staff lists and the activity reports that there was constant turnover among liaison officers throughout the entire Army Corps, and particularly in the SS division, during the time that Hofmeister was serving as an interpreter for the SS officers. It remains an open question whether Kalima interpreted the incident in the division as a direct result of Hofmeister's papers ending up in German hands and thus the interpreter as the culprit in the entire dispute that Schütt experienced, or was there something else wrong with the way Hofmeister acted, which made Kalima feel it necessary to completely sideline an experienced interpreter, one who also had a good feel for the operational culture of the SS division.

In Kalima's opinion, it was not only necessary to wait for the SS division's own request for a liaison officer, but also to clarify the issues regarding the openness of the activity of liaison officers before it made any sense to send a new liaison officer in place of the one that had left. What had happened to Schütt, to Kalima's mind, was an indication that there were no conditions for a full-time position until both it and the tasks of the liaison officers were explained openly to the Germans and thus were also acknowledged by the brother-in-arms. Kalima emphasized, much in the way Hofmeister had done, that it was in practice impossible to keep what was written in the activity reports a secret, particularly because they were written on German typewriters and were sent on by means of German couriers. According to Kalima, the Germans also had plenty of their own liaison officer activity in Finnish units as a point of comparison to be able to guess what the Finnish liaison officers were doing.

> It is my estimation that it is not to our advantage to attempt to keep absolutely secret something so obviously a fact as our tasks as observers and the fact that we write activity reports. If we do, we'll end up in an unfavourable light and our activities will be labelled stealthy to an even greater extent than is actually justifiable.
>
> Insofar as I am able to judge the situation, the resulting lack of restraint and confidence on the part of the Germans makes successful and proper

> activity extremely difficult and perforce threatens to guide our activities in the wrong direction.
>
> As I see it, our main task is to manage the smooth running of practical matters and in addition to conduct a particular kind of quiet propaganda, precisely the making of military observations on the basis of both mediating in conversations as well as on the basis of our own personal discoveries. A requirement for doing so, however, is trustful cooperation with the Germans.[110]

In order to correct the 'wrong direction', Kalima recommended a trustful opening up of the liaison officers' activities: According to need and circumstances, the Germans would be informed of their duty to write explanations of combat activities as well as other activities 'that they could safely agree on'. These innocuous things, in Kalima's opinion, were for the most part precisely the kind of things that their junior officer colleague Schütt had revealed in his interview with the SS division commander: besides combat activities, his own activities, matters regarding military awards and wishes regarding the reporter's activities, perhaps also matters relating to particular events and the transfer of officers. Not included in the openness for which Kalima was advocating were criticisms presented by either side of the brotherhood-in-arms about military activities, nor the Germans' attitudes towards their northern brother.

Kalima's suggestions did trickle down into the attempt to correct both the activities of the liaison officers and the disturbance gnawing on the performance of the brotherhood-in-arms. The aim was to find a kind of balance in openness about the liaison officers' tasks so that the goals placed on the activities would be attainable without new, unnecessary 'incidents' that could disrupt the interaction between the brothers-in-arms: thus sufficiently open so that the Germans would also be more open than before when working with the liaison officers, but not so open that the knowledge of the true contents of the reports would make them even more careful in their speech. Telling a partial truth would make the operations of the liaison officers once again look as they were meant to be, in other words the liaison officers were on site to support the German

[110] Communication from Kalima to Willamo on 22 November 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

Mountain Army in its war efforts and as mediators between Finnish and German troops, loyal to both parties. The fact that this loyalty was, in reality, greater towards one's own side was not to harm the integrity of the performance of the brotherhood-in-arms.

The archives do not reveal how Willamo and FLSR reacted to Kalima's suggestions. There are, however, some references to the fact that the reporting duty of the liaison officers remained a somewhat open secret and a thorn in the side of at least the SS officers. One year later, in October 1943, Lieutenant Kalima himself was now posted to SS Division 'Nord' as the liaison officer, and there he was able to determine that the problem still existed. In the middle of a celebratory dinner, one SS officer had stated directly: 'Why aren't you drinking? Of course, you have to have a clear head so that you can remember and write down what happened tonight and what was said.'[111]

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[111] Communication from Kalima to Voss on 29 October 1943 [T-5471/10, NA].

7

Interpreters of Cultures and Concepts

The arrival of the German troops to Finland, and in particular to Northern Finland, was a shocking experience not only for the local population, but for the German soldiers as well. Around 200,000 troops, members of paramilitary organizations and other support personnel came to the country, and in all likelihood there were only a few of them—if any—who had the slightest idea who the Finns were or what Finland was, this country that had happened to become a brother-in-arms to the Third Reich in their struggle against a common foe. They had come to an utterly unknown place where everything seemed to be completely different from back home: nature was harsh, the landscape bleak and lacking in signs of human activity, the roads few and, like the entire infrastructure, at a rudimentary stage. The people were poor, quiet and reserved, and their way of life foreign. Even Finnish military culture, and most particularly its military discipline, felt as though it reflected another kind of reality than what soldiers trained in Prussian military traditions were accustomed to.

Marianne Junila has depicted both the first impressions and feelings of these German soldiers as well as the knowledge they were relying on

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when they came north to Finland.[1] Based on what they had learned in school, the Germans knew almost nothing about Finland, perhaps at the most that in the midst of the waters and forests of the north, there lived an athletic people who had fought valiantly during the Winter War. The materials Junila used in her research in this respect were, in addition to memoirs published after the war, interviews and recollections from writings collected from German veterans, but observations on the impressions of the German soldier in the northern wilderness and encounters with Finnish soldiers are also found in the wartime activity reports of Finnish liaison officers and interpreters. According to their assignment, the communicative links reporting to FLSR were constantly in conversation with the German commanding officers and documenting the conversations as Colonel Willamo required in his reporting guidelines: assessments of Finnish combat activities but also opinions the Germans expressed about Finland and the Finns. Because of their reports, the liaison officers and interpreters were important barometers of the brotherhood-in-arms for Willamo, who forwarded their 'measurements' all the way up to the Finnish High Command. Thus Finnish military leadership also received information about the impressions the German brother-in-arms had of Finland and its people, which in turn gave an impetus to correct them. It was not desirable to allow insufficient knowledge about, or incorrect attitudes towards Finland, its people or its culture to punch holes in the solid surface of the brotherhood-in-arms.

Basic tools in this kind of correction work are propaganda and enlightenment activities, and both sides depended on different instruments of propaganda when performing the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms. Printed matter, radio broadcasts, motion pictures and other cultural offerings were used to help Finns and the Germans who had moved into their cities, villages and forests to get to know each other better, and, specifically, in the correct light. One very visible instrument used towards these goals was the programming of the 'House of Comradeship' (*Haus der Kameradschaft*) that the Germans erected in Rovaniemi. In addition to providing cultural offerings to German soldiers, it also held events of interest to Finnish civilians, not to mention Christmas parties for the

[1] Junila 2000: 96-107; Junila 2009.

town children. The communicative links of FLSR strove for the same goal using different methods and reported from the front about Finnish-German skiing competitions, brother-in-arms evenings in the mess halls of the divisions and Air Fleets, or evening gatherings organized in the quarters of the liaison officers, which were a good way to reinforce the already 'prevailing positive relations between Germans and Finns'.[2]

Nevertheless, the range of methods and resources was limited. The Finnish liaison officers and interpreters were often the first and only resort for the Germans to dismantle their own astonishment, ignorance and even irritation over prevailing conditions. These guides could also handle the Germans' questions about the situation in the country and all of the reasons for and consequences of the war, and they thus ended up interpreting for the German brothers not only their own country and culture, but the entire brotherhood-in-arms. In practice, this meant balancing between those goals that Governor Hillilä had already staked as the Finnish cornerstones of the brotherhood: On the one hand, the job was to ensure smooth operation of both sides of their cooperation, but on the other to simultaneously ensure that the German presence did not take on the appearance of an occupation. The degree of difficulty was also increased by the idea nurtured by the Finns of a 'separate war'; the Germans occasionally had to be reminded of the formidable position, seen in retrospect as contradictory, that the brothers-in-arms were indeed that, and were fighting together, although they were also waging their own separate war.

Each liaison officer and interpreter developed the required multidimensional cultural and political mediation activities in his or her own way, using a formula appropriate to the situation. Some of them attempted to manage their work using their own knowledge and ability to negotiate, whereas others sent requests from the front for support of their work in one way or another. In this chapter, we will focus on those measures through which FLSR and the Finnish High Command (in particular the latter's Propaganda Division) reacted to messages coming from the field.[3]

[2] Communication from Auterinen to Willamo on 7 March 1942 [TA-5471/1-3, NA].

[3] For more specific information about this in German, see Kujamäki 2021 and 2022b.

Between Two Norms

The liaison officers and interpreters ended up working in a cultural hybrid, in the space between two norms, in which Finnish and German military cultures encountered each other, and the experiences of 'customary' or 'normal' conditions collided with local reality. Information and experiences gathered during transit or at the front accumulated into generalizations in which Finland and the Finns were mirrored in the Germans' own cultural norms. In forming his impressions at that time, the German soldier may have acted in the same way as any tourists do today in a culture that is new and foreign to them. Those things that deviate from what one is used to, from the known and the accustomed, stick out and provide fuel for wonderment or critical questioning. Processing and dismantling these often becomes the task of those who are the only local experts on site—in this case, the liaison officers and interpreters.

Private Ainamaa, who served at the Hanhikoski air field as an interpreter, reported the following in summer 1942:

> The Germans have already asked me many times when the war will end, and my answer has been that I don't know. They say that the summer here is short and cold, and they don't like Northern Finland.
>
> From what I've heard, the soldiers are happy about the change in Commander and that a number of them will be able to get away from this backwoods. I've heard that they've bitched about the Finnish summer because it's so short. They've asked how people can live up here in the north where they can't see any crops because of the harsh land and the short summer.
>
> Because so many new Germans have come directly from Germany with the new Commander, they've been astonished in particular about how people can live here in the north in such a simple and frugal way. The new Commander asked why none of the Finns greet the Germans. The German

soldiers are sorry that they'll once again have to spend a winter here in the north.[4]

Local conditions, of course, were what was most striking. The winter of 1941–1942 had taught the Germans such a hard lesson about the severity of nature in the north that the prospect of another winter in Northern Finland, after what in the Germans' opinion was a summer that felt non-existent, did not feel very appealing. What also caused astonishment was how the local residents were able to deal at all with prevailing conditions, which were exceptionally austere. In his account appearing shortly after the war ended, A. O. Väänänen described how the transfer to the Northern Finnish front was a shock for many German soldiers, used to quite different conditions, so that they not only had to contend with the actual enemy, but 'the severe winter of Lapland, the dark autumn, and the mosquitoes, blackflies and midges in the summer' as well. What also depressed them was 'the primitive and cold lodgings at the front line'.[5] Pentti Heikkinen, who served in Salla and Petsamo as a liaison officer, recalled years later a similar attitude, that the majority of the German soldiers were on Finnish soil for the first time, which meant that their conception of Finland was shaped on the basis of conditions in Petsamo, Salla or Alakurtti: 'This conception was in many ways remarkable. It was a wrong interpretation of the wrong country.'[6]

The Germans' attitudes towards Finland and the Finns featured their own variations, of course, which reflected not only the situation of the global war but also local conditions at the front. In addition, the personal attitudes of the particular German officer could shift the mood unexpectedly from warmth closer to the freezing point. As observed by the liaison officers, the years of service and experience at the front as well as the ideals they embraced were reflected in the attitudes. In summer 1942, Second Lieutenant Ilmoni divided the German officers into two categories based on this split. The first group included younger front officers and more senior officers who had already had experience from World

[4] Communication from Ainamaa to Willamo in his weekly reports on 27 July and 1 and 9 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[5] Väänänen 1947: 63.

[6] Heikkinen 1971: 218.

War I. In Ilmoni's opinion, their attitudes towards Finland and its people were without exception polite, whether they were talking about Finnish soldiers or civilians. They often contrasted Finland with Japan, since the former had accomplished an enormous amount despite its small population. Into the second group, Ilmoni lumped together the staff officers of the rear area, whose attitudes left much to be desired:

> In calm conversations, they too seem very understanding and respectful towards Finland and the Finns, but in their work or elsewhere when encountering small difficulties, they quickly complain about conditions here and compare the speed of mail delivery, the punctuality of the railroads, the ability to organise etc. with corresponding conditions in Germany and note how much weaker they are here. In general, these officers often have a very strict and unconditional world view based on National Socialism and for this reason they have a hard time understanding conditions that in some ways differ from prevailing circumstances in Germany. For example, in questions of quartering etc. they feel there is cause to take stricter measures than the ones that are possible for us under current circumstances. For one reason or another these officers easily get upset despite their comfortable conditions.[7]

Nervousness seems to have been caused by the frame of reference of cooperation, in which the Finnish military or civilian authorities also had something to say about local measures. The Germans had to get used to new, more difficult ways of doing things: The previous straightforward patterns they had used in occupied areas were no longer appropriate in a politically sovereign land in which it was important to honour the economic realities in the host country as well as the livelihoods and property of its people. Both the top generals of the Mountain Army and the commanding officers of FLSR had to remind the German troops about this state of affairs. When Lieutenant Tauno Mäki, for example, sent a message in June 1942 to Willamo about how the new German local commandant in Salla failed to raise the flag for Marshal Mannerheim's birthday and otherwise 'had an attitude towards the Finns that was colder than that of any other German authority or unit I've met in the last 11

[7] Communication from Ilmoni to Willamo on 27 June 1942 [Letter No. 83/42, T-5471/1-3, NA].

months', Willamo noted in the margin of the report a command to Lieutenant Colonel Rothe to make the matter 'clear to Gen. Heunert in an appropriate manner'.[8]

As we have already seen in previous chapters, it took time to learn new patterns of action, and meanwhile FLSR and its communicative links had to resort to a variety of methods to solve the issues that the high-handed behaviour of the German troops and individual soldiers caused for local residents. Blunt criticisms targeting the nature of the German presence could at times cause a cooling of relations: In his wartime diaries, Jyrki Kolkkala tells of how the commandant at the German air field in Hanhikoski wanted him to replace Private First Class Ainamaa to be the commandant interpreter after the latter got on bad terms with the commandant 'after in his own words making it clear that there was a difference between how you treat the population in occupied Norway and how you do it in free Finland'.[9]

As the war progressed and the situation started to become clearer, this was also seen in the reports of the liaison officers and interpreters. At least at some posts, the ways of obnoxious world conquerors seemed to be vanishing on the road to good relations. Second Lieutenant Boris Juntson reported the following from the commandant office in Lieksa in August 1942:

> The Germans' attitude towards the Finns, in my opinion, has always been the very best, and their perception is also similar. I have not noticed anything displeasing about them during the 7 months I've been here.[10]

Specialist Göran M. von Essen, the interpreter at the Pontsalenjoki air field, compared his observations of the mood at his new post with those from the early months of the war with the Engelbrecht troops:

> With respect to the attitudes of our brothers-in-arms towards the Finns, I have to admit that they're particularly positive here. In particular they admire our fighter pilots. In this 'gang' I haven't yet met anything but

[8] Communication from Mäki to Willamo on 6 June 1942 [No. 4, T-5471/1-3, NA].

[9] Sana 2017: 218.

[10] Communication from Juntson to Willamo on 22 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

> boundless politeness, hospitality, friendliness and understanding towards the Finns. I haven't seen the least trace of 'world-conqueror manners', which I often noticed when I worked as an interpreter in the 163rd J.D. (I/307 and Panzerjägerabteilung 234).[11]

In the reports Willamo received, there are descriptions of opinions in which local conditions are mirrored against what they were in Norway. The views of the German officers arriving in Northern Finland from Norway reflected in their own way the positions of these two countries in Hitler's power politics—one an occupied country where an active resistance was underway, and the other a military ally to the Third Reich. For this reason it was easier to trust the Finns, whether soldiers, labourers or civilian administration, and thus other attitudes towards the country and its people were also positive.[12] Lieutenant Nils Herlin reported the following from the headquarters of the XVIII Mountain Army in September 1942[13]:

> I've often heard it said that the Germans consider Finland their best ally. Finland has always been forthright, and the Finn is a better soldier than other allied peoples. Dealing with Finns is also much easier than with other nations.

German military culture, in particular its strict discipline and hierarchy, was naturally one of the central frames of reference against which German officers had an easy time making observations about Finnish soldiers and how they operated. Deviations from the norms of their own military behaviour and operations were striking, but both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms commented on these differences just as subtly. Both fictional and historical accounts include stereotypes from both sides of the alliance, such as how the Finnish soldiers depicted the Germans as perfumed, loving comfort and scared of the wilderness, and the German idea of the Finnish private as a warrior whose combat skills were just as

[11] Communication from von Essen to Willamo on 29 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[12] Communication from Schaterin to Willamo on 14 March 1942, communication from Mäkinen to Wilamo on 25 April 1942 [No. 8/42, T-5471/1-3, NA].

[13] Communication from Herlin to Willamo on 10 September 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

famous as his ragged uniform and his lack of discipline. When one added the northern conditions, alcohol and women, the result ended up being quite a colourful situational picture.

Second Lieutenant Leonid Schaterin described the views of the officers in the German air field administration as follows:

> The German officers, inspectors etc. with whom I ended up working are almost without exception sympathetic towards Finland. Even so, a longing to get away from here, even to Norway, is characteristic of many. Dissatisfaction with the cold and with the currently prevailing condition of discipline is always a subject of conversation if the occasion presents itself. I'm sure they belittle the Finnish soldier for his behaviour in the rear area and because of how he dresses, but as a fighter I haven't heard any criticism about him. He is mentioned as being brave, but often I've heard them talk about the brutality of the Finnish soldier. In their opinion, the Finnish labourer is industrious and productive, which is why they generally prefer to hire Finnish workers. They don't think that Finnish men care about women, but if a German courts Finnish ladies, the men immediately grab their knives. Everybody says that the Finnish language is difficult except for the one who is utterly enthusiastic about learning it and can already get along when speaking it.[14]

Stereotypes are always simplifications, but they need small grains of truth from observations and experiences to originate in the first place and grow into generalized conclusions. There are also signs of stereotypes in the activity reports sent to Willamo in which the liaison officers jotted down both the opinions presented during conversations and their own observations about differences between soldiers and military cultures as well as their effects on joint operations. The love of the German soldier for comfort became apparent in the packs they carried, so full of items unnecessary for patrol operations that it slowed down their progress and caused an unacceptably high level of noise. They counted on their own food service so much that their reduced provisions limited the length of the patrol trips and added to troop exhaustion.

[14] Communication from Schaterin to Willamo on 26 April 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

As Second Lieutenant Aue reported on his observations on patrol expeditions in a Finnish-German company, the Finnish soldier was in the habit of boiling something warm to drink and eating a snack when he had a break, and these kept him going for several days without a warm meal. 'By contrast, the German soldier doesn't cook any food himself but waits for the food service. If this doesn't work, he goes without, and he tries to do his job without eating.'[15] The Mountain Army soldier also preferred walking on roads to across the terrain. As commander of the patrol, the German officer followed the instructions provided in detail and, in the case of surprises, would rather wait for new commands than evaluate the situation himself to determine any required measures.[16]

In addition to these kinds of critical remarks from liaison officers and interpreters, plenty of credit was given when they discovered the German troops developing ways of acting that were more suitable to conditions. Thus, for example, Second Lieutenant Müntzel commented on the activities of the 163rd Infantry Division in the beginning of autumn 1942, thus more than a year after the war had begun: 'The Finnish forest terrain isn't as strange to them as it was when the war began.'[17] Honest reporting was also done by those liaison officers who brought up incidents in which drunken Finnish soldiers and liaison officer colleagues did their best to confirm the image of them prevailing among the German troops, or reported on the aggressiveness targeted at the Germans when it was released by the booze in their blood.[18] At Midsummer, in June 1942, Second Lieutenant Luther felt it necessary to report on an occurrence in which a heavily intoxicated Finnish officer had repeatedly rampaged with his weapon in the area of Light Infantry 3 in Alakurtti. Second Lieutenant Luther may have been correct in his assessment that such 'drunkenness often continuing during the day, quarrels with German authorities, speeding while drunk and the like were never suited to elevating the reputation of Finnish officers in the eyes of the Germans.'[19]

[15] Communication from Aue to Willamo on 4 April 1942, from Luomi to Willamo on 25 October 1942, and from von Bagh to Willamo on 31 October 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[16] Communication from Saarmaa to Willamo on 22 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[17] Communication from Müntzel to Willamo on 28 August 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[18] Communication from Reinikainen to Willamo on 14 March 1942 [TA-5471/1-3, NA].

[19] Communication from Luther to Willamo on 20 June 1942 [TA-5471/1-3, NA].

A particular kind of event that disturbed the brotherhood-in-arms seems to have been committed by a liaison officer also serving in Alakurtti, Second Lieutenant Edgar Sneitz, in the midst of local celebrations for Hitler's birthday: As all the other officers were listening to the festive concert on the radio and the speech by Goebbels, Sneitz began to play dance music on the gramophone and left the room in a clear protest when Hitler himself began to speak. After the speech was over, however, Sneitz had asked about what it contained and then, according to his junior liaison officer colleague Puputti, he blurted out:

> But he didn't mention anything about the end of the war. About how many different areas he actually wanted to conquer. We Finns got what we needed and we'll soon stop the whole war. You can go fight on your own then.

According to Puputti, this kind of talk from the mouth of a Finnish liaison officer had roused 'unpleasant remarks and indignation' on the part of the German officers.[20] This opinion, expressed under the influence of alcohol, did not remain without its consequences: After an interrogation by the military police, Colonel Willamo punished his subordinate with custody at headquarters for 30 days, after which he was transferred to training activities.[21]

In any event, it is clear from the weekly reports that at least some of the liaison officers and interpreters were trying to conduct their own independent education work and to meet the challenges thrown at them by the Germans. For example, in late autumn 1942, Lieutenant Mikko Jaakkola reported that, in general, one could not find fault with the attitude of the Germans to Finland and the Finns. The Germans considered the Winter War a miracle, and Finland's position among the other European nations was even so special that those talking to Jaakkola said that after the war was over, Finland would be 'in a significant position among the Nordic countries'. It was just that Finnish bluntness, unfortunately, was often interpreted as rudeness innate to Finns. However, when

[20] Communication from Puputti to Willamo on 19 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[21] Post diary of FLSR [T-5872/1-4, NA]; Willamo's order of the day 8/42 on 22 July 1942 [T-5872/39, NA].

an explanation was provided to the person in question as to 'where this bluntness comes from and thus also that apparent impoliteness, the matter [was] usually settled'.[22] It is regrettable that Jaakkola does not say more about this matter, and so his interpretation of the reasons for Finnish bluntness must remain unknown. Lieutenant Herlin also said that he occasionally found reason to do his own enlightening of an interlocutor when dissatisfaction with local conditions made the German officers at Kiestinki upset at how the matter in question would be unthinkable at home, or how Finns would be punished for certain kinds of behaviour:

> For example: The trains are slow and often late, the roads are poor, our work days are too short and we have too many days off, our soldiers are sloppy and lack discipline, etc. In responding to these kinds of allegations, I usually say that you shouldn't look at Finnish conditions through German 'glasses'. First of all, our country is large but poor. We have a small population and little possibility of building the kinds of roads that they have in Germany. And although our work days are a bit shorter, and we have a few more holidays than in Germany, and although our soldiers are a bit sloppy, we have, however, done our part in this war. And secondly, we are not as strictly organised in Finland as in Germany; we can do more with less. […] At this point, the conversation is usually over.[23]

Herlin's articulate responses, which reflect the realities of both the war and of Finnish society, were slightly sarcastic, but they nevertheless received Willamo's approval after they arrived at his desk: He underlined in pencil the part in the weekly report where Herlin wrote about the Finns' own contribution to the common struggle.

[22] Communication from Jaakkola to Willamo on 25 November 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].
[23] Communication from Herlin to Willamo on 25 July 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

How Little the Brother-in-Arms Knew About Finland

All things considered, the reports sent by the liaison officers and interpreters from their postings were read very carefully at FLSR and resulted in liaison officers' training sessions, disciplinary measures or courses in which the German officers and NCOs were familiarized with the practices of warfare necessary under northern conditions, such as skiing, tracking, orienteering and patrolling.

There was apparently also much thought given to how to patch the considerable gaps in knowledge that the Germans had about Finland, where Hitler's Operation Barbarossa had sent them. As A.O. Väänänen has described in his history, the liaison officers were often asked about Finland's history, its economy, its level of science and art, or about the nature in its more southerly provinces:

> Their ignorance of conditions in our country was completely understandable, because what reason would the German people have had for learning about Finland's history, nature, education and the like in more detail? They only knew that Finland was a small and poor country somewhere to the far north of Europe, one that has no significant role to play in an international context. The athletic successes of Hannes Kolehmainen and Paavo Nurmi were generally known, of course, and among the more educated, the fact that both Jean Sibelius and Eliel Saarinen were Finns. The trip to the front sectors in northern Finland was also done under such circumstances (by coach and usually in the dark) that there was no possibility along the way (from the harbour in the Gulf of Bothnia or from the western border) to get to know the people and nature of this country any better.[24]

Scanty knowledge also caused false expectations and impressions, which the liaison officers had to try to repair by providing their own information. The German soldiers also asked themselves why they were fighting at all in the wilderness of Northern Finland, far away from their

[24] Väänänen 1947: 69-70.

own country.[25] For its part, the Germans' own propaganda and information work attempted to justify why it was necessary to fight on the Finnish front,[26] but the task of enlightenment also fell to liaison officers and interpreters. But how could they explain and interpret Finland and the Finns for their German brothers-in-arms? How were they to approach the reasons why they had ended up in this corner of northern Europe? The liaison officers searched for concrete help in answering these questions and asked their commanding officers for tools such as books and printed materials to help them in this educational work.

Herlin had sent a message to Rovaniemi a month previously explaining that the work of liaison officers would be much assisted if there were 'propaganda materials they could distribute or at least allow the Germans to borrow'. As an example he mentioned the work *Waffenbruder Finnland* (*Brother-in-Arms Finland*), published by Captain Arthur Ruppert, who was also head of the news agency *Uutistoimisto Finlandia* and the German propaganda company. Herlin explained that the work 'would give more articulate answers to those many questions that the Germans have'.[27]

The book Herlin was requesting was a broad-ranging, 300-page opus offering its readers a peculiar mixture of propagandistic non-fiction and excerpts from literary works that were related in one way or another. It is divided into six main chapters which describe Finland's history, its mission during the war raging at the time and the various ways in which Finland has attempted to shape its own destiny, primarily through the eyes of Finnish writers. But it also gives information about the special features of the country's topography, its economy and its culture. A third of the book is devoted to issues of history, and even the titles of individual texts contained here shine in their grandiloquent narrative of a people oppressed by the 'East' who fought for freedom with the help of the Germans, and who at that time were at the front with this same brother-in-arms in the fight against bolshevism.[28] In this respect, the anthology is

[25] ibid., 1947: 70; Aapa 1961: 113.

[26] Junila 2000: 128.

[27] Communication from Herlin to Willamo on 27 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[28] For example, Torsten G. Aminoff: '*700 Jahre Kampf gegen Osten*' (A 700-year fight against the East); Herman Gummerus: '*Finnland erkämpft seine Freiheit*' (Finland fights for its freedom); Vilho Helanen: '*Finnland kennt seine Pflicht*' (Finland knows its duty); Heinz Hünger: '*Die grosse*

a direct reflection of Finland's military and nationalistic perception of history prevalent among its conservative thinkers when the book was published.[29] At the same time, the feelings and goals of the Finnish writers are seamlessly connected to both the cornerstone of National-Socialist thought, i.e. an anti-communist and anti-Soviet ideology, along with the *Lebensraum* thinking that determined Eastern policy, and to National-Socialist propaganda targeting the Nordic countries, which was implemented under the direction of Alfred Rosenberg shortly after the Nazis came to power.[30] Minister of State Rosenberg, one of Hitler's foreign policy advisors and a main ideologist of the NSDAP, also wrote the preface to the work.

As Junila has fittingly stated, many of the phenomena of Finnish society remain outside the work, in particular those that emphasized the differences between democratic and National-Socialist systems. An important goal was to solidify 'the feeling of cohesion between the brothers-in-arms', not to focus on such differences as freedom of the press.[31] As already shown, the Germans were able to pick up on such things themselves as needed.

In the same way the liaison officers did, Governor Kaarlo Hillilä also noticed how little the Germans knew about Finland and the Finns, having opportunities to do so since his position meant he was in constant contact with the leadership of the Mountain Army. In autumn 1942 he had visited the headquarters of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps in Alakurtti and spoken with the commanding generals of General Weisenberger's divisions. The senior liaison officer at Alakurtti, Major Parviainen, reported on Hillilä's impressions after a discussion of the host country's matters:

> During his visit on 21 September, Governor Hillilä had been invited to the commanding general for dinner. Present were the commanders of both

Kameradschaft. Finnlands Anteil am Kampfe gegen den Bolschewismus 1941' (The great friendship. Finland's share in the fight against Bolshevism 1941); and Arvi Jännes: '*Finnlands Ostfrage*' (Finland's issues with the East).

[29] Luostarinen 1986: 176-180.

[30] Hiedanniemi 1980: 29-45.

[31] Junila 2000: 135.

> divisions. Conversation was about broad matters having to do with Finland. While I was talking to the governor after dinner, he mentioned the great unfamiliarity and ignorance displayed by the Germans about our country, even amongst the generals. This calls for some attention and propaganda, and books that provide information about the matter would certainly be appreciated by readers in the dugouts.[32]

Similar messages were coming from all of the front sectors, and after a few months, in November 1942, Willamo stressed in his letter to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command that they must react to the situation with the right kinds of literature and educational materials. In Willamo's opinion, the fragmented information that Germans had about Finland was not at all surprising because up to that point, the German soldiers had only become acquainted with the northern part and the border areas of the country. Interest in Finland and its people, according to Willamo, was nevertheless great, but since there was no appropriate material, there was no way to respond to this interest. Producing the educational materials, however, should be done quickly, because it was anticipated that 'many Germans here now will soon be taking care of relations between Germany and Finland and in other ways spreading information about us and our circumstances.' Given this background it was important to ensure that they would bring back with them the best and fullest picture possible of Finland and its people. Willamo also pointed out that the Germans quite generously shared literature and other materials of their own, so that in the name of reciprocity, FLSR needed not only literature and films but also art and crafts from 'our domestic sources'.[33]

Willamo also attached to his letter to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command a list of suitable 'books about Finland that have already appeared in German'. In addition to picture books about Finnish cities, travel memoirs and guides as well as works about Finland's economy, the list included an abundance of texts about Finland's history, of which the greater part was written and published precisely 'for

[32] Communication from Parviainen to Willamo, undated [T-5471/1-3, NA].

[33] Communication from Willamo to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 6 November 1942 [T-5872/63, NA].

consumption by Germans'.[34] The ideological framework for the books is apparent in their titles, which refer to Finland's issues with respect to the 'East', *Lebensraum*, the racial background of the Finns, the liberation of its people from Russian chains and Germany's role in Finland's emergence as an independent nation. Willamo highlighted the following works in particular:

— V.A. Koskenniemi, *Finnland, Schild des Nordens* (Finland, Shield of the North, 1941).
— Jalmari Jaakkola, *Die Ostfrage Finnlands* (Finland's Issue with the East, 1942).
— Väinö Auer, Eino Jutikkala and Kustaa Vilkuna, *Finnlands Lebensraum* (Finland's *Lebensraum*, 1941).
— U.T. Sirelius, *Die Herkunft der Finnen* (The Origins of the Finns, 1924).
— Johannes W. Öhquist, *Finnland. Land und Volk–Geschichte–Kultur* (Finland. The Country and Its People–History–Culture, 1928).
— Heinz Hälter, *Finnlands Jugend bricht Russlands Ketten. Die Geschichte des Preußischen Jäger-Bataillons 27* (The Youth of Finland Break Russia's Chains. The History of the Prussian Jaeger Battalion *27*, 1938).
— Herman Gummerus, *Deutschland und die Befreiung Finnlands* (Germany and the Liberation of Finland, 1938).

Among the authors of these works, a renowned group of German-friendly scholars from that time make an appearance, and a significant portion were involved in starting up an academic project, initiated by President Risto Ryti, the purpose of which was to demonstrate that there was a scholarly justification for claiming that Eastern Karelia was a natural part of Finland's '*Lebensraum*'. This project, supported by Väinö Auer, Jalmari Jaakkola, Eino Jutikkala and Kustaa Vilkuna among others, was also clearly seen in the texts identified by Willamo.[35] Thus the selection of texts can be interpreted as an indication that the goal was not simply to inform the Germans about Finland and its people. It was also intended to signal, in much the same way as the anthology *Waffenbruder Finnland*

[34] Luostarinen 1986: 180.
[35] Jokisipilä & Könönen 2013: 316-320.

did, that there was still an ideological connection, and one related to destiny, between the Finns and the Germans framed by anti-Russian thought and the legacy of 1918.[36] That connection had become clouded for a moment when Hitler and Stalin signed their pact of mutual non-aggression, but it was still alive and was now being strengthened thanks to the historic bond of the brotherhood-in-arms.

In terms of literary works, Willamo approved of Juhani Aho (*The Railroad, Panu*), Aleksis Kivi (*Seven Brothers*), Johannes Linnankoski (*The Song of the Blood-Red Flower*), F.E. Sillanpää (*The Maid Silja*), Maila Talvio (*The Cranes*) and Zacharias Topelius (*The Barber-Surgeon's Stories)* for his list. It reflects the classical canon of the time but also, to some extent, simply what was available in German translation.

Nevertheless, interest in implementing the measures presented by Willamo remained rather lukewarm, and the liaison officers as well as the Germans interested in Finland had to content themselves with the materials freely available otherwise, either in Finnish book shops or in the German's own book shops at the front (*Frontbuchhandlung*). For example, at Christmas in 1942 in the Kiestinki sector, WSOY's picture book *Das ist Suomi. Finland in Bild und Wort* (This Is Suomi. Finland in Pictures and Words), which had just come off the press, was distributed to the staff officers of the Kiestinki sector, and the rank and file also received their own copies of books about Finland.[37] Books were also given as gifts: for his 50th birthday, General Schörner received Kivi's novel *Seven Brothers* from the liaison officers of the Petsamo sector, and a 'Finnish-friendly' staff officer at the Pori air field received a copy of Johan Ludvig Runeberg's *Tales of Ensign Stål* as a parting gift.[38] All things considered, however, the availability of such books did not seem to match demand and need: Willamo brought up the issue several times in the reports he sent to General Heinrichs at the Finnish High Command,

[36] This refers to the Finnish Civil War, framed as a war of 'liberation' in which German troops helped the 'Whites' to disarm the remaining Russian troops in Finland and, above all, to defeat the 'Reds'.

[37] Communication from Willamo to Heinrichs on 10 January 1943 [T-17216/1, NA].

[38] Communication from Mäkinen to Willamo on 20 June 1942, No. 18/1942; communication from Herlin to Willamo on 27 June 1942 [T-5471/1-3, NA].

emphasizing that German readers would be very receptive to such materials if they were available more systematically.[39]

All in all, it seems that the Finnish military leadership started up these kinds of propagandizing measures with the troops of the Third Reich in a rather flat-footed way. Much attention was paid to the content of propaganda aimed at the Finnish people, the soldiers and abroad and to the distribution of tasks between different institutions, both before the Continuation War and during it, and Major Kalle Lehmus from the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command, the officer who led the propaganda work, even visited Germany in spring 1941 to familiarize himself with how this work was being carried out by the National Socialists.[40] The significance and necessity of propaganda targeting the German troops in Finland, however, did not begin to dawn on the Finnish side until autumn 1942, around 15 months after the Continuation War began.

In this connection, an interesting point of comparison is the work that was done on the other side of the alliance and in which both FLSR and the Finnish High Command were well aware of the Germans' activities, thanks to the reports of Major G. Waselius, who was serving as the Finnish liaison officer in the German propaganda company (PK 680).[41] Under the command of Captain Arthur Ruppert, a polished propaganda machine arrived in Finland, one that was able to start immediately with both active propaganda targeting the enemy and ideological indoctrination among the Germans' own troops; the latter included fostering the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms. In practice, an entire range of procedures and materials were used, beginning with recreational tours, moving pictures and entertainment programmes on front radio stations along with educational presentations all the way to newspapers and other

[39] Communications from Willamo to Heinrichs on 15 January, 19 January and 20 April 1942 [T-17216/1, NA].

[40] Luostarinen 1986: 14; for information about Lehmus' study trip to Germany see Lehmus & Lehtinen 2021: 84-89.

[41] See Major Waselius' reports to the Finnish High Command 20 July-14 December 1941 [T-8359/23, NA].

printed materials.[42] As will be seen later, in planning and executing their own propaganda measures, for the most part the Finns ended up turning to precisely these structures of the German brother-in-arms.

The Wrong Picture of the Country and Its People

The first conversations about how the Finns would shape their own propaganda activities began in December 1942, between representatives of FLSR and the Finnish High Command as well as the State Information Bureau (VTL). As a basis for discussion, the VTL prepared a memorandum in which the available as well as the still-needed resources for Finland propaganda directed at the German troops were discussed along with the tasks of individual actors.[43] Regarding the delegation of responsibilities, the VTL had consulted both the head of the political department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asko Ivalo, and the head of the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command, Lehmus: It was determined that propaganda activities were to be among the responsibilities of the Propaganda Division, but as a result of personnel resources, Lehmus felt it best that the VTL take over at least part of the propaganda, however always maintaining close cooperation with the High Command. This also affected the financing of operations. Distribution of materials fell under the duties of FLSR together with Governor Hillilä, who had repeatedly emphasized the importance of Finland propaganda to the VTL.

The memorandum also outlined detailed ways to streamline operations. In the opinion of the VTL, the first thing that needed to be done was to bolster the *Lappland Kurier's* section on Finland: On the VTL's shelves, there were hundreds of appropriate articles already translated, waiting to be used, but before that, Lehmus felt that the paper had to have a new Finnish liaison officer, someone who would stay in close contact with both the VTL and the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High

[42] For more information about education on Finland undertaken by the Germans, see Junila 2000: 105-107 and 122-135.

[43] VTL memorandum from 9 December 1942 [T-8359/24, NA].

Command. Lehmus believed that the *Nordlicht* paper also needed new blood for its editorial work. The publication was owned by *Propaganda-Aseveljet ry* [Propaganda Brothers-in-Arms Association], established by Reino Palmroth and Pekka Tiilikainen for 'spiritual national defence work', and together with the association, plans were made to make the paper 'more interesting to military persons'. If this succeeded, the Finnish High Command could offer the paper to the German troops to order in large editions so that 'significantly efficient and full-bodied propaganda could be created without it costing anything'. Literature about Finland translated into German was certainly considered effective propaganda, but at the same time so expensive that it was not deemed possible for the time being. However, the VTL did have shorter brochures on offer whose contents came rather close to Willamo's catalogue of works coloured by the ideology of the brother-in-arms.[44]

Other propaganda operations mentioned in the memorandum were lecturers whom the VTL could send to the north within a few months, preferably under the purview of the Finnish-German association, so that 'the propagandic intent would not be as obvious'. There were also many German-language presentations ready that could be provided at any time for use by Finnish propaganda and liaison officers. The plan also included production of Finnish short-subject films with 'German-language subtitles', whereas the production of the Finnish 'military reviews' and news review films in the German language was not deemed necessary since their quality was far behind their German counterparts.

Regardless of which methods were eventually decided, there was certainly no doubt about the objectives. The Finnish education officer at FLSR, Lieutenant Erkki Mela, had specified them to the VTL as follows:

> (1) To acquaint the German troops with Finland—troops whose only knowledge of Finland is mainly limited to their trip through some coastal city and Rovaniemi to the wilderness forests of Northern Finland. (2) To

[44] What was available was, for example, *Finnland, Vorposten Europas im Norden* (Finland, Europe's Vanguard in the North) produced by the VTL, Lieutenant Colonel Peitsara's *Der finnisch-russische Krieg 1939-1940* (The Finnish-Russian War 1939–1940), Einar W. Juva's *Die kulturelle Entwicklung des finnischen Volkes* (The Cultural Development of the Finnish People) and a German translation of President Risto Ryti's Independence Day speech.

> make Finland known in Germany through the mediation of the troops who are here. (3) To stimulate interaction between the Finnish and German troops, in the first place the officers, and creation of more permanent relationships.[45]

Thus at the fore, there was no longer simply concern about deficient knowledge of Finland, but also a fear that the German soldier would get the wrong picture of Finland and its people by living in remote northern villages and in the wilderness, and would then take this picture all the way home.[46] The correction of this distorted picture became a trope, repeated in the reports about the propaganda operations of FLSR into the home stretch of the war in September 1944.

The matter is presented thoroughly and without sugar-coating in a communication sent by Willamo to the Command Division of the Finnish High Command in June 1943.[47] Willamo was clearly frustrated by the fact that he had not received any response whatsoever to the letter he had sent to the Division requesting action, 'unless the memorandum regarding this matter that the State Information Bureau sent on 10 December 1942 is to be considered a response'. For this reason, the matter had to be addressed yet again, and Willamo listed a total of seven reasons why delivering propaganda about Finland to the Germans should be taken seriously. Willamo will be permitted to repeat all seven here:

1. The majority of the German armed forces in Finland are posted to remote areas or in wilderness regions, or at the very most in settlements whose nature, population and culture deviate greatly from what in most parts of Finland, specifically its cultural regions, is the case. When even at best, acquaintance with the rest of Finland is generally limited to

[45] VTL memorandum from 9 December 1942 [T-8359/24, NA].

[46] In his compilation done after the war, Uula Aapa (1961: 113) recorded a statement by one particular German officer from January 1942 which is a good depiction of FLSR's growing concern: 'It's quite deplorable that the Germans do not have the opportunity to get to know another part of Finland besides this cold Lapland. In several Finnish photographic and other works, Lapland in particular is advertised, which in the final analysis is just monotonous wilderness. There are indeed fells in Lapland, but for those from southern Germany and others used to mountains and the Alps, for example, even the most marvelous landscapes here aren't anything special to look at.'

[47] Communication from Willamo to the Command Division of the Finnish High Command on 8 June 1943 [T-5872/63, NA].

observations made on rushed transit journeys, it is obvious that the Germans will easily generalize the impressions they receive from the place of their posting to the entire country, and thus will take with them from Finland an image that deviates in a negative direction from the real picture.

2. The people in remote regions with whom the Germans happen to come into contact do not give a true picture of Finnish culture and because of the war, the Germans perceive characteristics that do not represent the best sides of the nature of the Finnish people. Plenty of bad elements have gathered in settlements, and they give a very poor impression indeed. It is also significant that the Finnish soldier in his behaviour does not give the German observer a particularly positive image of Finnish military spirit and skill, and thanks to this kind of impression, he is easily underestimated. This issue has become particularly incendiary now that the Finnish troops have been transferred away from joint responsibility at the front with the Germans, and thus their combat abilities are easily forgotten. All of the aforementioned can mean that our country and our people can fail to receive the acknowledgement they deserve and are easily equated with occupied territories.
3. The attitude of the population towards the Germans is nowhere near irreproachable, nor does it display understanding of the demands of the brotherhood-in-arms. Suspicion and even animosity are not rare, which naturally stem from the Germans' own, often ruthless, behaviour.
4. Among the German soldiers, in particular the junior and petty officers, there are reservist representatives of cultural life and in fact all areas of life, whose view of Finland and the Finns can last for the rest of their lives based on the impressions they receive here. Among them may be people who may, in the future, end up in the areas of finance or politics, and in their work they may be able to influence decisions that have significance for our country. In addition, one should bear in mind the influence of the 'visitor to Finland' on general opinion in issues affecting Finland as well as forthcoming publications through which impressions received about Finland can become quite broadly known.
5. The democratic societal structure of Finland arouses suspicion among certain 'orthodox' German circles.

6. With the exception of the upper echelon of officers and propaganda staff, a majority of the German armed forces seems to lack the opportunity to receive correct information about Finland and its conditions, no matter how eager they are to become acquainted with these issues. This is easily noticed in conversations. For example, the younger generation generally has a rather vague conception of such things as Finland's fight for independence, the Jaeger movement and even our Winter War.
7. Achieving the ultimate goals of the Finnish struggle requires not only our unflinching desire for victory but also making the national-political objectives of our struggle known to the Germans and proclaiming and emphasizing all of those things that can raise the value of our own people and to optimize its independent position in a new Europe.

Willamo's ongoing concerns were in other words both the remote areas and their populations, and the 'bad elements' that had been drawn to the area by the tumult of war. When the suspicious attitudes of the locals towards the Germans were added to the mix, Willamo was afraid that the German troops would get a picture of Finland and the Finns that was completely distorted. Because the troops in all probability included people who would have key positions in the future in determining Finland's position as well in a so-called new Europe, the Finns needed to take care that there was enough material at their disposal to display not only the main events of Finland's history but also its societal structures.[48] The material that FLSR had been using up to this point was not sufficient, and according to Willamo, of utmost importance was a new kind of investment in different printed matter and newspaper articles (the German propaganda company's *Lappland Kurier*, the Finnish Propaganda-Brothers-in-Arms' *Nordlicht*), in films and also in lectures in all areas of

[48] In this respect, Willamo's thoughts reflect an optimism still prevailing in right-wing media, at least as late as 1942, that Finland, thanks to its significant war effort, would be assuming a significant political role in Europe's new phase. For more information about this topic, see Luostarinen 1986: 282.

cultural and economic life, which would preferably be delivered by prominent speakers from the Finnish cultural elite. In general, the list of FLSR's commander repeated both his own previous requests and suggestions from the memorandum presented by the VTL.

The correspondence between the Finnish High Command and Willamo as well as other archival materials related to the issue gives the impression that the parties had a rather consistent situational picture about the need for measures, and that they were rather urgent, so that Finland's potential position as 'New Europe's' executor would not be endangered by false experiences and ideas. FLSR had volunteered and been appointed to be the distributor of the propaganda materials together with Governor Hillilä, and the VTL had provided those printed and other materials that it had produced, or had been able to produce, with its own resources. But matters had not progressed far enough to generate financing of these measures nor the personnel resources necessary to coordinate them. The paucity of the resources available on the Finnish side is alluded to in the note that ends the previously mentioned VTL memorandum, that the costs would be borne by the propaganda targets themselves, in other words the German *Wehrmacht* and its soldiers: 'Naturally the requirement here is that we would be able to offer the Germans "food for the soul" of such richness that it would not only be of an interesting character to them anyway, but also have significance as a propaganda tool.' For better or worse, Willamo's letter had thrown the ball back in the court of the Finnish High Command.

Propaganda Officer Börje Sandberg Takes the Reins

Willamo's communication began to produce results in the middle of July 1943, when the joint war had been waged for over two years. An order issued by Kalle Lehmus transferred Specialist Börje Sandberg from the Defence Forces Entertainment Office to the Propaganda Office for

'special duties' at the disposal of the commander of FLSR.[49] Because of his work and publishing experience, Sandberg seems to have been tailor-made for the position: Before the war, Sandberg, who had a master of philosophy degree, had already cut his teeth on several travel organizations in Finland and the other Nordic countries, established the Finnish hotel and restaurant school and started as managing director of Suomen Matkat ry (Finnish Journeys Assoc.). He was also an industrious producer of picture books, and his bibliography includes not only works on Jean Sibelius and the former President Kyösti Kallio, but also several books about Finnish cities, edited for the Otava Publishing House either by Sandberg alone or in collaboration with H.J. Viherjuuri.[50] During the war years, Sandberg also produced works that served the need for propaganda at the time.

Sandberg immediately took a firm hold on his special duties, because the first 'promemoria' was already prepared at the end of July (Image 7.1). This document presented a plan for 'conducting Finnish propaganda, education and entertainment operations among German troops in Northern Finland' to the Propaganda Division.[51]

Sandberg's plan was divided into three main chapters, of which the first one enumerated in detail the necessary propaganda material, the second determined the facets of their production and acquisition, and the third drafted the channels and persons needed to coordinate the distribution of these materials to the Germans. In terms of the material, Sandberg relied for the most part on the previous plans (e.g. those written by the VTL, mentioned above), but in addition he emphasized the importance of literature in the entire propaganda programme. We will return to these reflections later.

The contents of the other two chapters of the memorandum outline a broad network of Finnish-German actors in which the tasks related to the production and distribution of propaganda materials were delegated to

[49] Communication from Lehmus to the Entertainment Office of the Defence Forces on 27 July 1943 [T-8359/24, NA].

[50] See 'Börje Sandberg' in the Internet search service finna.fi; Laati et al. 1961: 'Sandberg, Börje, matkailumies [tourist]'.

[51] Communication from Willamo and Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 29 July 1943 [T-5872/63, NA].



Image 7.1 Specialist Propaganda Officer Börje Sandberg in his office at Ounasvaara on 26 March 1944 [SA image / 147,780, Military Propaganda Photographer Specialist Hedenström. CC BY 4.0.]

both governmental and military instances as well as to commercial establishments. As can be seen from the summary in Image 7.2, Sandberg's plan assigns procurement tasks not only to the VTL but also to Finnish media and publishers, as well as to propaganda units under the Finnish Defence Forces. However, the distribution of the material was entrusted to FLSR's liaison officers and the propaganda machine of the German army. 'Practical oversight' was placed in the hands of FLSR's propaganda officer, Sandberg himself; he in turn reported to both Willamo and Lehmus. It was also the Propaganda Division's task to influence the Finnish actors named in the memorandum in such a way that the materials used for propaganda would be appropriate and have 'the right spirit'.

Sandberg went in person to present his plan to Lehmus, and after receiving the latter's blessing, he immediately began to implement it. During August, Sandberg met with practically all of the production and

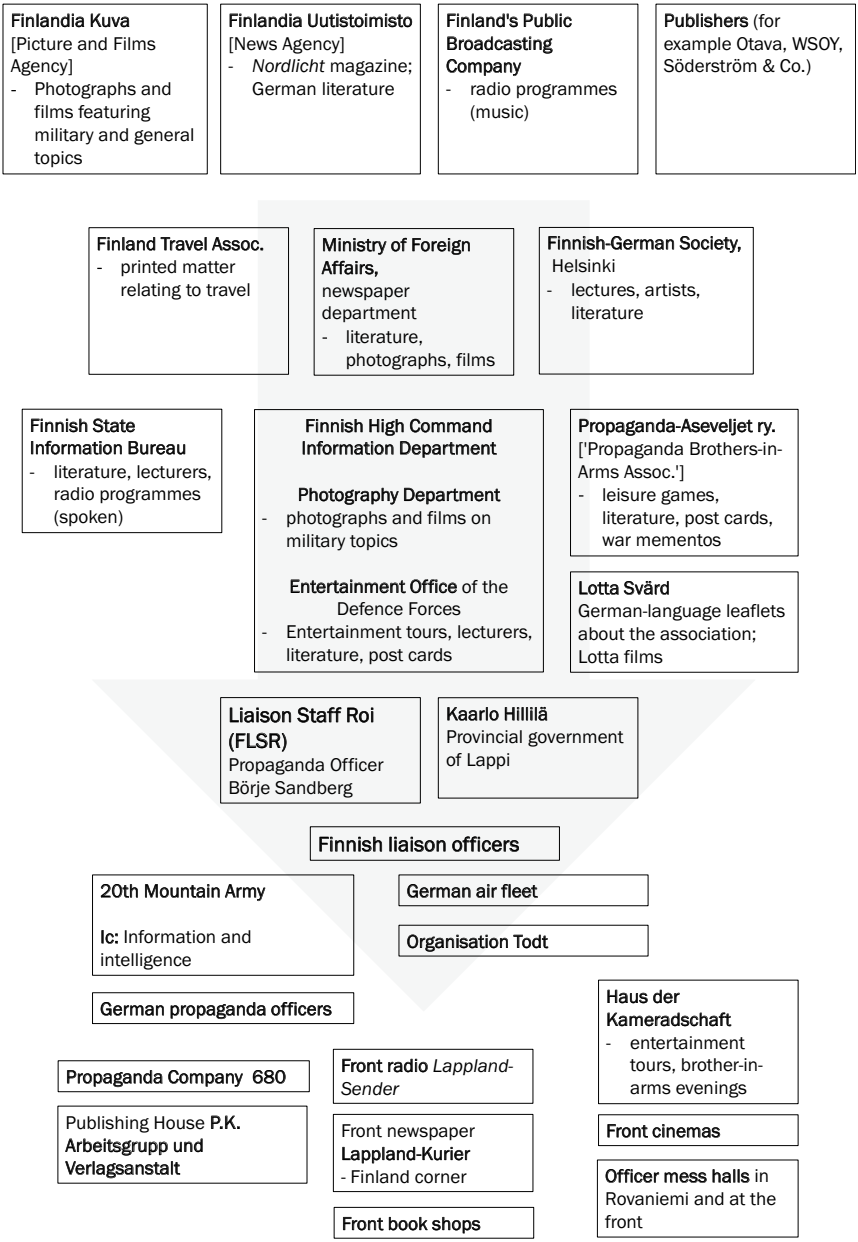


Image 7.2 Summary of producers and distributors in Börje Sandberg's propaganda plan

distribution networks depicted in the plan, thanks to which the materials already available to Finns, the new materials ready to be produced, and the seed capital for the propaganda work were all identified. Besides the kinds of materials that had been requested previously, new ideas emerged: for example, the production of a film presenting the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms (to be commissioned from the Photography Division of the Defence Forces), the production of 'gramophone records' containing Finnish music for the German radio stations *Soldatensender Lappland* and *Sender Finnmark* (as task of the Entertainment Office of the Defence Forces), a film about the Lottas equipped with a 'German-language sound track' (in collaboration with the Lotta Svärd association), and broader cooperation between Finland's Public Broadcasting Company and the German front radio. However, as noted by Sandberg, it was important that the radio stations as well as the front paper *Lappland Kurier* be delegated their own liaison officer, one well-versed in radio operations. In this way all of the potential that lay within this propaganda work could be put to full use.

On the basis of Sandberg's activity report from the beginning of September, the Germans were interested in receiving Finnish materials to support their own educational work associated with the brotherhood-in-arms, and thus they were also prepared to make room for Finnish content, both on their own radio frequencies and in their newspaper columns as well as in their officer canteens, rank and file dugouts, front cinemas and on the programme of the *Haus der Kameradschaft*. A seed capital of 100,000 Finnish marks for the Finns' own operations was negotiated from Propaganda-Aseveljet. In Sandberg's opinion, it was naturally only start-up capital, and for continuing operations a significant amount of additional funding was required. This would help to mitigate previous neglect and to ensure the continuity of new measures. But all things considered, the propaganda officer's summary of how things were developing was quite optimistic:

> The soil for this work is unusually fertile and receptive. At the same time, under current conditions, the costs it will incur will remain relatively minor. Here we should also remember that the effects of this propaganda will not only appear among the German soldiers, but will probably be felt

> to a far greater degree on the German home front, both among the intelligentsia and the general population itself, because German soldiers will transport a large portion of our propaganda material home to Germany. So our country once again has an opportunity to produce propaganda with which a rather small amount of money can result in great things.[52]

Thus Finnish propaganda got the wind in its sails in autumn 1943. Interesting to note in this connection is that the Germans' feelings about it were apparently marked by ambivalence. Or in other words, the big picture mediated by the activity reports seems to fluctuate somewhat depending on who their recipient was. For one, in the reports delivered monthly to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command, it was emphasized all the way to the end of the war how the demand for materials about Finland was constantly on the rise as the war went on, in particular since the Germans' own propaganda and the ideological enlightenment work (*wehrgeistige Führung*) conducted among the rank and file was always looking for new, current material. But on the other hand, the reports that Sandberg sent to Willamo also highlight the sceptical attitude of the brother-in-arms towards the Finns' new activity, and the rumours that had spread to the north in Spring 1943 about Finland's plans for peace only served to strengthen these doubts: What was making the Finns start this activity now of all times, when in any event it seemed obvious that the Finns were distancing themselves from the Germans and moving politically closer to the Allies, in particular the United States?

The German propaganda officers were also curiously awaiting the new Finland propaganda, because previous measures had not really convinced them. According to the feedback Sandberg had heard, Finnish propaganda work did not adhere to a clear plan, nor had it otherwise seemed very systematic to the Germans.[53] But despite everything, the predominant tone of Sandberg's observations is positive, and it can be seen in the reports how the propaganda tasks kept him busy on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms all the way to late summer of 1944: As Sandberg himself states in one of his reviews of the situation, in the absence of his

[52] Communication from Willamo, Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 1 September 1943 [T-8359/24, NA].

[53] Communication by Sandberg to Willamo on 1 September 1943 [T-5872/63, NA].

own propaganda machine, he had to use the other channels available and make the most of them. This meant particularly strong dependency on the extant German machine and their financial resources.[54]

Finnish Reading Materials for German Soldiers

Already in his first action plan, Sandberg had emphasized how important Finnish literature was in all propaganda and education activities, and described how a real 'hunger' for literature about Finland and Finnish literature translated into German existed among the German troops. In order to meet this demand, the German propaganda company had already managed to establish a local office in Helsinki (*PK Arbeitstrupp und Verlagsanstalt*, propaganda company work squad and publishing house) with the special task of producing and publishing Finnish literature in particular. The first results of this work had recently been released.

Here as well as later in his activity reports, Sandberg repeatedly refers to lists in which the contents of the work-in-progress 'cultural library' (*Kulturbuchreihe*) becomes apparent as well as the schedules and the production authorizations received from the ministry of propaganda. Judging by these archived lists, the library started to be prepared no later than autumn 1942: The German Ministry of Propaganda approved the first works in December 1942 and January 1943, and in August 1943, the Lühe Verlag published *Suomi—Humor und Herz* (Suomi—Humour and Heart, an abridged version of Ensio Rislakki and Kaarlo Marjanen's *Hymyjen kirja* [Book of smiles]) and Harald Hornborg's *Herrn Illbergs Jugendtorheiten* ('The Youthful Follies of Master Illberg, a German translation of the Swedish-language novel of the same name, 1931).[55] The plan eventually included almost 40 works, of which about half were approved for production by the middle of 1943.[56]

[54] Sandberg on 24 January 1944 [T-5872/63, NA].

[55] Three documents under the heading 'Status of the *Kulturbuchreihe*', undated, 15 June 1943, and April 1944 [T-5872/63, NA].

[56] A list of the publications included in the *Kulturbuchreihe* is available on the author's ResearchGate profile.

The initiatives by the Germans were of course happily received on the Finnish side, in particular because, as already noted, their own operational resources were exceedingly limited. Since the distribution was already taken care of as well through the front book shops, Sandberg could say in September 1943 that this meant 'we're getting a significant amount of Finnish literature spread among the Germans in an efficient manner at no cost.'[57] Nevertheless, Sandberg was concerned that the Finns had not been able to influence the contents of the German production, and thus the selection naturally paid very little attention to books that represented 'our own interests'. In this respect Sandberg referred to the goals Willamo had already presented, and he specified ways of using literature to achieve them. The Finnish national epic *Kalevala* now appeared side by side with anthologies of proverbs and other 'folksy writings' to keep up the Finnish spirit, as well as literature about war.

So that the Germans would be able to familiarize themselves with classic Finnish literature, Sandberg felt that the *Kalevala* had to be available in a '*Volksausgabe*', or popular edition. As a basis for this, Professor Väinö Salminen's abridged setting, *Kalevala sankarirunoelmana* (The Kalevala as a Heroic Poem) could be used. The character of the Finnish people would also be splendidly illuminated by a selection of marvellous Finnish proverbs from the regions of Häme, Southern Ostrobothnia, Satakunta, Karelia and the like that had been published in recent anthologies. And since one of the goals of German propaganda was to maintain a constant hatred of bolshevism, excellent evidence of Finnish attitudes towards it were the 'world-class columns' written by 'Olli' in *Uusi Suomi* (New Finland). A German selection of these, based on his anthology *'Vot, Iivana'* (Oh Dear Ivana) would be received in German quarters with pleasure.

The objective was thus to steer the German soldiers towards Finnish national poetry and the Finnish national character, but at the same time, the task of the published literature was also to keep the framework of the brotherhood-in-arms in proper order—in other words, to ensure that Willamo's fear that those officers who believed unshakably in National

[57] Communication from Willamo, Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 1 September 1943 [T-8359/24, NA].

Socialism would interpret Finnish democracy in the wrong way would not come to pass. Against this backdrop, Sandberg also found presentations of military history, anecdotes from the front or, for example, a novel set during the Great Wrath,[58] Kyösti Vilkuna's *Tapani Löfvingin seikkailut* (The Adventures of Tapani Löfving) valuable materials, for they could reveal the true nature of the Finnish soldier and his attitudes about the Eastern foe to the Germans. The desire to convey the correct or true picture of Finland and to correct a distorted one shines through all of the plans connected with book production, nor did Lapland comprise an exception to this kind of need for enlightenment. In Sandberg's opinion, Lapland, and life there, was undoubtedly of great interest to both German soldiers and their relatives, but special attention had to be paid to this topic so that 'literature that presented it in the proper manner' was made available. In the spirit of strengthening the brotherhood-in-arms, Sandberg also created the idea of a writing competition among the Germans on the topic 'Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms in Lapland'. He believed this could result in an interesting commemorative book that might end up in the backpack of every German soldier.

Nevertheless, Sandberg's plans were slow to gain momentum. Of the start-up funds granted by Propaganda-Aseveljet, less than one-third was earmarked for the acquisition of literature—to be divided either as gifts to officers and rank and file or to the German military hospitals and canteens. The work began to accelerate in autumn 1943 when FLSR began to plan a so-called Finland library to support the German education officers' work. On his own propaganda trips, Sandberg wrote observations in several entries about 'how little the German *Betreuungsoffiziere* (education officers) know our country, our people, our way of life and our way of thinking.' He believed that the reason for this was that the education officers had not had access to appropriate literature about Finland. Thus the idea of a small library collection, initially 15 books, in wooden boxes stamped with the label *Suomi-Bücher* was born. The Propaganda Division

[58] The Great Wrath (*Isoviha*) took place during the Nordic War (1700-1721). It refers to the years (1713-1721) when Finland, which at the time was part of the Swedish Empire, was occupied by Russians. This period was characterized by massacre, rape, torture and pillaging. The Great Wrath was thus a natural era to highlight, as it provided a historic example of Russia's repeated maltreatment of Finland.

of the Finnish High Command approved funding for a total of 100 small library collections which were later distributed to not only the German education officers but also for use by the German propaganda units, the military hospitals, canteens and front radio stations. In the plan from October 1943, the recommended contents of the Suomi-library included the following works:

— T. Peitsara's *Der finnisch-russische Krieg 1939-1940* (The Fenno-Russian War) dealing with the Winter War
— *Waffenbruder Finnland* (Brother-in-Arms Finland), previously already published by the Propaganda Company
— The yearbook *Finnland-Jahrbuch 1943*
— The travel guide *Finnland-Reiseführer*
— V.A. Koskenniemi's *Finnland. Schild des Nordens* (Finland. Shield of the North)
— Rakel Lyytinen's *Die finnischen Frauenorganisationen*, presenting Finnish women's organizations
— Aleksis Kivi's *Seven Brothers*
— J.L. Runeberg's *Tales of Ensign Stål*
— *Suomi—Humor und Herz* published by PK 680
— E.N. Manninen's novel *Tunturi droht* (Finnish title *Tunturi uhkaa*, The Fells Are Threatening, 1938)
— Onni Okkonen's *Die finnische Kunst*, about the history of Finnish art
— *Das ist Suomi* (This Is Suomi), a picture book, 'or something else'
— *114 Waffenbrüderlieder*, a collection of brother-in-arms songs

The list was later expanded to include the following:

— Jalmari Jaakkola's *Die Ostfrage Finnlands*, which dealt with Finland's relations with the East
— Ilmari Hustich and the Finnish Travel Association's *Lappland. Das Märchenland des Nordens* (Lapland. The Fairy-Tale Land of the North)

— Samuli Paulaharju's novel *Nachtschatten des Tunturis* (Night Shadows of the Fells, Finnish original published in 1934)[59]

Eighty years later, the image of the classics of Finnish literature conveyed by the contents of the book box, along with that of Finland and Finnishness, can also be examined critically. One could even ask to what extent what ended up on the list—the literary texts set in Northern Finland or Kivi's stubborn Jukola brothers, who fled civilization into the wild forests of Häme—was the right choice to correct the 'distorted' image Willamo was afraid the Germans had received, posted as they were to the bleak wilderness conditions of the north of the country and living among its people. August Ahlqvist, a Finnish literary critic, had already trashed the image of Finland presented in Kivi's *Seven Brothers* as incorrect and inappropriate immediately following publication of the work, and for Ahlqvist the brothers were indeed of a different class than 'that quiet, steady people which has cleared and continues to clear the backwoods of our country for agriculture'.[60]

In any event, throughout the Finland library, an ideology-tinged model of interpretation of the Finns can be detected, one that is strongly tied to nature and the Finns' own land—an image that complements the red thread running through the entire material: a dutiful people acting as a shield to protect the fatherland from the menace of the East and the Bolshevik threat it presents. Given this background, the book box is a straightforward implementation of the goals outlined for Willamo's propaganda, but it is also consistent with its political frame of reference 'shrouded in culture', which was maintained by not only the VTL but also the German-minded Finnish intelligentsia, whose foremost members included V.A. Koskenniemi, Jalmari Jaakkola and Maila Talvio as well as Johannes and Rita Öhquist.[61]

[59] Communication from Willamo and Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 5 October 1943 [T-8359/24, NA].

[60] See Perttula 2016 about Ahlqvist's criticism of Kivi and its underlying commitment to race theories reaching all the way back in the 1800s.

[61] Compare Hiedanniemi 1980 and Jokisipilä & Könönen 2013; about the Öhquists' activities in publishing and translating cultural-political materials see Kujamäki 2007 and 2010.

Just one month later, Willamo and Sandberg turned over the first book boxes to the German *Propagandakompanie PK 680* and to the editorial offices of the radio stations at the front. Delivery to the propaganda officers serving there was also planned, and Sandberg dared to predict that Finland propaganda would then also 'increase notably in all probability'.[62] But judging by all evidence, the book boxes sent by FLSR did not truly increase the availability of Finnish literature to the German troops. Sandberg returned to this topic time and again in his reports and proposed that more attention than ever before be paid to translating Finnish literature into German and publishing it so that there would be more available in the German front book shops as well. Towards the end of 1943, Sandberg reported on the one hand that new literature was available more than previously, a development that felt as though it reflected a general rebound of interest 'in propaganda, education and entertainment activities surrounding the Finland material', but on the other hand, he also emphasized that the advantageous situation needed to be utilized even more energetically.[63] It is also probable that the increased availability of the literature that Sandberg observed was above all thanks to the Germans' own publishing activities, which were naturally first seen precisely in the inventory of the front book shops. A part of the production of PK 680's publishing unit also ended up in the book boxes sent by the Finns.[64]

The image Sandberg presents of dissatisfaction with the availability of literature is also confirmed from sources outside the propaganda machine. The senior liaison officer at Kiestinki, Lieutenant Colonel Voss, had already reported in January 1943 that many of the sector's German officers wanted to read Finnish literature to get to the bottom of 'the Finnish people, its national character and conditions in the country'. For this

[62] Communication from Willamo and Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 9 December 1943 [T-8359/24, NA].

[63] Communication from Sandberg to Willamo on 29 November 1943 [T-5471/12, NA].

[64] In his unpublished history of FLSR, Väänänen writes with reference to the education work about Finland that 'the most valuable Finnish literature was translated into the German language as soon as they could get it done (for example Aleksis Kivi's *Seven Brothers*) and was sold to the Germans at a reasonable price'; see Väänänen 1947: 75. One must give credit to the industriousness of PK 680 in particular for the activity behind this exaggerated image; the Finns' own projects in terms of literary translation remained to some extent at the planning stage.

reason, Voss wanted not only translated literature for his own propaganda purposes but also domestic films.[65] Lieutenant Teräs, at the time already serving in his position as the liaison officer for the High Command of the German Mountain Army in Rovaniemi, reported from his end in November 1943 that no Finnish literature translated into German was available anywhere in Rovaniemi book shops despite the demand. The only thing for sale was Runeberg's *Tales of Ensign Stål*; Teräs claimed there was nothing else available to the brothers-in-arms interested in reading literature. He was quite well informed about both extant translations and the market situation:

> When on the one hand we have learned that the availability of books in Germany as a consequence of total mobilisation will be significantly reduced, and when on the other hand the Germans read quite a bit in general, it would now be more advantageous than ever to get new editions of Finnish literature translated into German, and preferably not just for sale in Helsinki, but here as well. For example translations of *Seven Brothers*, which have been produced by two different translators, have been sold out for almost 2 years now, and the same goes for the *Kalevala*, to mention a work that has become famous even among the Germans.[66]

At the time of Teräs' report, German translations by three translators of *Seven Brothers* were available, because in addition to the prior translations of Gustav Schmidt (1921) and Haidi Hahm-Blåfield (1935), one year before his report, an additional German translation came on the market, this one by Rita Öhquist (1942). During the war years, two additional editions of Hahm-Blåfield's German translation were published (in 1943 and 1944), of which the latter was aimed specifically at the German soldiers of Northern Finland (*Wehrmachtausgabe*, *Wehrmacht* edition). However, all of the editions were printed in such small numbers that by the time they reached the book shops in Rovaniemi, not many copies were available.[67] In Teräs' view, however, it was important to get high-quality translations to market and in the hands of the German troops, in

[65] Communication from Voss to Willamo on 30 January 1943 [T-5471/9, NA].

[66] Communication from Teräs to Willamo, undated [T-5471/12, NA].

[67] Kunze 1982: 66-68, Kujamäki 1998: 90-95, 162.

particular since 'they themselves are clearly ready and eager to buy them'. If the publication rights would permit it, he had works by Lauri Haarla and Maila Talvio in mind, for example, for in reading these the Germans would develop a perception of not only the phases of Finland's history but also of the Finns' perception of it.[68]

FLSR kept the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command constantly aware of the issue, emphasizing the power of literature as an effective instrument for propaganda. In the accounting Sandberg sent to Mikkeli at the beginning of January 1944, he reported how they were still waiting 'impatiently for the landmark works of our literature' in German translation in Northern Finland,[69] and three weeks later he once again stressed how not only Finnish military literature, belles-lettres and poetry but also works of non-fiction and picture books that dealt with Finland, 'our country, our way of life and our circumstances' were well-suited propaganda, and that this would promise significant results among the Germans.[70]

At the beginning of February 1944, Sandberg hoped the opinions of Colonel General Dietl would speed matters up. The general's visit to the Rovaniemi front book shop had spotlighted the fact that more Finnish fiction and non-fiction in German translation needed to be placed on its shelves than what was there at that time. Subsequently both the German High Command and the army's Propaganda Company began new discussions about books, in particular classical works of Finnish literature

[68] Teräs is probably referring to Lauri Haarla's two-part *Kurkien taru* (The Tale of the Cranes, 1938–1939), which appeared in Rita Öhquist's German translation *Die Kurki-Saga* in 1940. Öhquist was also Maila Talvio's trusted German translator. During the Continuation War, Talvio's works appeared in her translations—either before the wars as new editions of published translations or during the war as revised ones—at least *Kurjet* (Cranes, 1919; in German, *Die Kraniche*, 1925), *Kirkonkellot* (Church Bells, 1922; in German, *Die Glocke*, 1927), the *Itämeren tytär* trilogy (Daughter of the Baltic Sea, 1929-1936; in German *Tochter der Ostsee*, 1939); *Yölintu*. (Night Bird, 1913; in German as *Yölintu*. *Ein Herrenhofroman aus dem alten Finnland* [...A manor novel from Old Finland], 1941), *Kihlasormus* (The Engagement Ring, 1921; in German as *Der Verlobungsring*, 1942) and *Pimeänpirtin hävitys* (The Downfall of Pimeänpirtti, 1901; in German as *Der Untergang von Pimeänpirtti*, 1943, together with Hanns Martin). For more details about publication, see Kunze 1982.

[69] Communication from Willamo and Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 3 January 1944 [T-8359/24, NA].

[70] Communication from Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 24 January 1944 [T-5872/63, NA].

and the best entertainment reading, that PK 680 could start publishing as quickly as possible. According to the propaganda officer, the background was also the observation that among the books that the Germans had published, there were those whose publication 'would not have been advisable under current conditions'.[71] Sandberg does not, however, enumerate those works which could have been left unpublished in detail, and so one can only guess at the publications or authors deemed less suitable. Because all of the books mentioned in connection with PK 680's *Kulturbuchreihe* programme had gone through inspection by the Ministry of Propaganda of the Third Reich, and many of them had also been produced by a publisher with close ties to the Ministry (Lühe Verlag), it can be assumed that the critical opinions were above all homespun: Perhaps some texts that provided the wrong kind of image of Finland had snuck into the group of published works. Outside the *Kulturbuchreihe* series, Sandberg had found at least one picture book published by the headquarters of the German Fifth Air Fleet (*Bilder aus Geschichte und Kultur Norwegens und Finnlands*, Pictures from the History and Culture of Norway and Finland) that contained a regrettably small amount of information about Finland, and what was there contained several errors, 'several of them quite distasteful'.

Sandberg's reference to 'current conditions' can instead refer to the political situation in which a potential withdrawal from the war was already in the preparation stage: In the third year of the Continuation War, when the backstage was buzzing with talk about negotiations for a separate peace with the Soviet Union, there was a more general attempt to put the brakes on all of the most acrid of anti-Soviet writing.[72] In any event, the German *Kulturbuchreihe* contained a group of texts—for example, Santeri Ivalo's *Juho Vesainen*, Örnulf Tigerstedt's *Vastavakoilu iskee* (Counterintelligence Strikes) or Mika Waltari's *Neuvostovakoilun varjossa* (In the Shadow of Soviet Espionage)—which had to be removed

[71] Communication from Willamo and Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 1 February 1944 [T-8359/24, NA].

[72] See, for example, Rusi 1982: 248, Luostarinen 1986: 423-425 and Kujansuu 1999: 128.

from the inventories of Finnish book shops immediately after the war, precisely because of their anti-Soviet content.[73]

Mass Communication at the Front and Finland Propaganda

As seen previously, the propaganda the Finnish High Command and FLSR aimed at the Germans leaned heavily on the structure of the Germans' own. To the extent possible, the Finns attempted to influence the German propaganda channels, both the work of the propaganda officers serving at the front and the programming of the German front newspapers and radio stations. The newspaper *Lappland Kurier* and the front radio stations *Soldatensender Lappland* and *Sender Finnmark* were particular objects of attention. Other publications of the German propaganda machine were given less notice in the propaganda considerations of the Finns, such as the weekly *Wacht im Norden* and *Wehrmacht-Frontzeitung für Norwegen und Nordfinnland*, with its editorial staff in Oslo, the picture magazine *Signal* that appeared all over the *Wehrmacht's* Europe in different languages, and the weekly publication of *Organisation Todt, Der Frontarbeiter OT. Illustrierte Zeitung für die Frontarbeiter der Organisation Todt.*

The High Command had commanded Lieutenant Viljo Jaatinen to be liaison officer for the editorial staff of *Lappland Kurier* in Helsinki, but the results of his work were apparently unsatisfactory, according to the previously mentioned memorandum of the VTL, at least in the Propaganda Division commanded by Lehmus. The reason given was weak communication with the VTL, for which reason assistance of the editorial staff of the front paper was left to the head of the VTL's newspaper department, Ilmari Lahti. However, because Lahti was handling this assignment in addition to his other duties, the 'hundreds of already translated articles, suitable for the purpose' in the VTL archive were never fully utilized.[74]

[73] Turunen 2003: 217-228, 421-429.

[74] VTL memorandum on 9 December 1942 [T-8359/24, NA].

The dissatisfaction of Lehmus, the VTL and FLSR must be treated with some reservations, however, because according to Junila's research, Finland propaganda was quite present in *Lappland Kurier*, beginning with its first number.[75] In contrast to what Sandberg's reports seem to imply, the paper did not simply contain a so-called Finland corner in which 'our matters and events of current importance'[76] were covered. Rather, it dedicated three columns to Finland and the Finns. According to Junila, the paper also contained several special articles dealing with Finland, and these topics ranged from timely news about war operations as well as Finland's economy and business life as well as Finnish culture, art and science.[77] Because the articles were written by both German and Finnish journalists, Jaatinen's work can hardly be considered entirely fruitless.

Or did the critical opinions perhaps issue from the fact that the articles in this front newspaper were not always able to ignore the racial failings of the otherwise completely ideal Finnish brother-in-arms, something that was interpreted as the result of some oversight on the part of the liaison officer? After all, the German soldiers had ended up in Northern Finland, where according to the paper, Eastern Baltic characteristics were predominant besides the people's Germanic attributes. Although the *Lappland Kurier* had a rather flexible approach to these deviations from the 'ideal' Nordic race and instead highlighted the old traditions of Finnish-German cooperation as well as the intelligence and reliability which were part of Finnish nature, in any event this was a theme that Finnish historians and ethnologists were attempting to interpret differently, also through the VTL.[78]

Another factor here is that neither the offices of the VTL nor Lehmus fully understood the entire job description of the liaison officer: After

[75] Junila 2000: 106.

[76] Communication from Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 24 January 1944 [T-5872/63, NA].

[77] Junila 2000: 128-135.

[78] ibid., 131-133; about the attempts by Einar W. Juva, Väinö Auer and Eino Jutikkala to associate Finns racially with Germanic peoples as well, see, for example, Luostarinen 1986: 180-181. The backdrop here is President Ryti's research project which attempted to find scientific evidence for occupying Eastern Karelia as part of Finland's '*Lebensraum*'; Jokisipilä & Könönen 2013: 316-326.

Jaatinen fell ill in winter 1943, the editorial board of the paper ended up finding a German-speaking Finnish soldier on its own, Sergeant Sven Räsänen, so that the newspaper was able to continue its work together with Finnish authorities and collaborative partners. However, in December 1943, Räsänen was posted to other tasks, and the editorial staff was referred to Willamo through the mediation of PK 680 so that an interpreter that had been approved and deemed reliable could continue to assist the paper. Willamo sent the request on to Lehmus at the Finnish High Command, but he referred to an agreement made previously with the director of the VTL, Kustaa Vilkuna, that Ilmari Lahti could provide material from that point forward and assist in editing the paper in Helsinki. Sandberg kept insisting on the matter after this as well, but the Finnish High Command did not feel it was able to release an officer from the army for this task.[79] It seems that the Finnish High Command did not understand that this was ultimately not an issue of the availability and acquisition of Finland material. Both Jaatinen and Räsänen had in all probability been occupied above all with ongoing matters associated with editorial work for which the Germans' own linguistic resources and local knowledge were not sufficient, and for this reason, attempts were made to keep Räsänen up to the very last as well.

The German radio stations in both Rovaniemi (*Soldatensender Lappland*) and in Norwegian Vadsø in the Petsamo sector (*Sender Finnmark*) were far-reaching messaging mouthpieces, and Sandberg attempted his utmost to gain influence over them.[80] In his reports in autumn 1943, Sandberg requested his own liaison officer with a background in radio operation for this work as well, but ended up taking care of ensuring the production of sufficient Finnish material for the radio stations to use himself. During that time, the propaganda officer coordinated the delivery of books and other printed materials with a Finnish focus for use by the radio stations, small news stories from the Finlandia Uutistoimisto and programme drafts produced by the VTL; in addition,

[79] Communication from Willamo to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 21 December 1943; Communication from Lehmus to Willamo on 5 January 1944; and Lehmus, message to the commander of 5701 [of FLSR] on 22 January 1944 [T-8359/24, NA].

[80] For information about the front radio stations' technology and programming, see Vihonen 2011: 255-257.

he arranged for Finnish music, both sheet music and records. The entertainment office of the Finnish Defence Forces sent Finnish singers and musicians, and their performances were easily added to the Germans' own direct broadcasts of orchestra concerts.[81] Although the radio broadcasting stations at the front had plenty of other resources at their disposal,[82] the material offered by the Finns was apparently eagerly used as well.

In the report for December 1943, Willamo and Sandberg were able to claim that 'Thanks to the propaganda measures of FLSR, *Soldatensender Lappland* is now regularly and noticeably often broadcasting material about Finland, both in its talk shows and music programming.'[83] Judging by the reports that Sandberg sent, the enhancement of Finland propaganda desired by FLSR looks to have been implemented particularly well precisely through the radio stations. The materials Sandberg arranged to have sent to *Sender Finnmark* also increased the amount of programming with Finnish topics, and visits by Finnish artists seemed to be particularly popular programmes.

In terms of music, the central piece of the Finnish measures seemed to be Finnish music of the classical and folk genres. The talk shows of the front radio stations varied between current, local events at the front or topics that dealt with the stages of the global war, propagandistic history or current programming, news dealing with Finnish culture and economy, and stories presenting Finnish popular culture. One example is from the daily series on *Soldatensender Lappland* called *Aus Zeit und Welt* (loosely translated, *Our World in These Times*) from March to mid-August 1944, thus up until the time the brotherhood-in-arms was dissolved. During the late winter, German front radio waves dealt with the pressure the United States was placing on Finland and reasons why Finland had rejected the offer of peace from the Soviet Union. A few months later, the main topics were the offensive launched by the Red Army at the Karelian Isthmus and the weapons assistance delivered by the Germans, and finally

[81] For Sandberg's correspondence with Finlandia Uutistoimisto, Finlandia Kuva and other producers of propaganda materials, see T-5872/63, NA.

[82] Vihonen 2011: 256.

[83] Communication from Willamo and Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 9 December 1943 [T-8359/24, NA].

Mannerheim's ascendance to the presidency. The programmes also looked back at the unfair conditions negotiated during the interim after the Winter War and the rebirth of the spirit of that war on the front, the fates of Viborg and the Karelian refugees, and Karelia's significance as a shield against the East as well as 'sisu' as the Finns' secret weapon. Regarding Finnish culture and economic issues, the German listeners could learn in separate programmes about both Finnish theatre and literature as well as the green gold of Finland's forests. Finnish work parties, the women's collective gathering of firewood in Helsinki and the significance of berry picking in Finland, for example, provided more everyday material. It is interesting to note that in addition to 'Sauna' and 'Sisu', the loan words 'Talkoo-Arbeit' (work party) and 'Holzmotti' (a measure of wood) had taken root in the language of the German programming. As late as August 1944, a series of programmes were planned called *Hier spricht Suomi* (Suomi speaking here), the purpose of which was to better acquaint German soldiers with Finland. A radio play about Finnish-German comradeship called 'Waffenbrüder' (Brothers-in-arms) was also in production.[84]

The Finnish Flag Is White and Blue. The German Colours Are Black, White and Red

In Sandberg's very first propaganda plan, he included the idea of beginning courses in the Finnish language which could be sent in short blasts over the waves of *Soldatensender Lappland*. Beginning Finnish language had already been taught in the very first summer of the war when *Lappland Kurier* published a few essential expressions on its pages for engaging in business and social encounters between civilians and soldiers,[85] but this time the goal was an actual course which would familiarize the students with not only important vocabulary but also grammar and Finnish culture. The texts in the curriculum were simultaneously

[84] *Soldatensender Lappland*, Section Word: Current Events 25 August 1944 (copy of list of programmes dealing with Finland) [T-5872/63, NA].

[85] Junila 2000: 132.

formulated so that a dose of propaganda to reinforce the brotherhood-in-arms' mutual context was also added.

The course sessions, each lasting around 15 min, were planned by Lieutenant Tauno Väisänen, who also functioned as the radio course's teacher. The first programmes were prepared towards the end of November 1943, and the entire course was completed for the first time in January 1944. Sandberg said that this course was popular, and there were plans to start up a new run as soon as the course textbook was printed. This took place in late spring 1944, and the language course *Wir lernen Finnisch—1000 Worte für den Anfänger* (We Learn Finnish—1000 Words for the Beginner) returned to the schedule of *Soldatensender Lappland* in half-hour sessions broadcast twice a week (Image 7.3).

As its subtitle indicates, Väisänen's textbook *Wir lernen Finnisch. 23 Stunden für den Anfänger* (*We Learn Finnish. 23 Hours for the Beginner*, published by Otava) is divided into 23 chapters. They are meant to guide the German brother-in-arms through the basics of the Finnish language in a way that is easy to understand.[86]

For this purpose, the chapters contain brief everyday conversations which provide basic language skills for the most common situations, for example, in shops, on train journeys, in hotels or in restaurants. At the same time, information about the nature of Lapland, Finnish sauna customs or eating habits is inserted into the texts. The dialogues in each chapter feature the specific characteristics of Finnish grammar such as pronunciation, the formation of questions and negative sentences, possessive suffixes, personal endings, verb conjugations in different persons and tenses, and the use of cases. At the end of each chapter, Väisänen also compiled a vocabulary list and several exercises in translating Finnish sentences into German.

Most of the dialogues in the textbook form a frame story. By using this format, Väisänen was able to interlace his text not only with information about Finland, but also with dramaturgical threads confirming the steadfastness of the brotherhood-in-arms, so that the entire book was tied into the Finnish propaganda effort. The story begins in Chap. 2 when the

[86] Väisänen 1944: Introduction; see also Junila 2000: 352 and Vihonen 2011: 256 for a brief overview of the material.

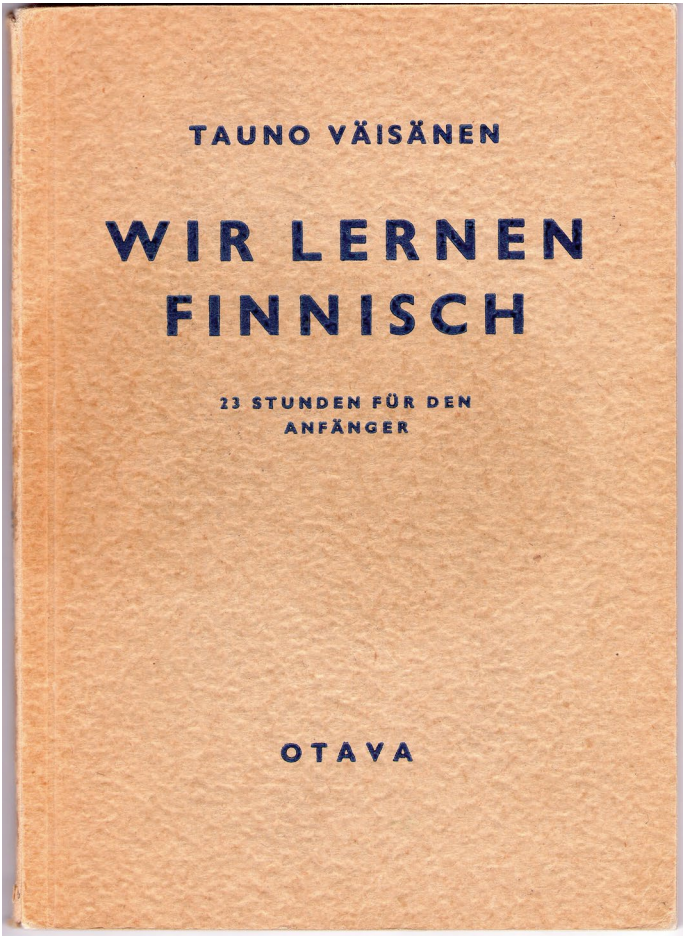


Image 7.3 Cover of the textbook *Wir lernen Finnisch*

book guides the reader first in Finnish phonetics. Private First Class Günther Müller, working in the office of a German headquarters, is studying the Finnish language with Mr Järvinen, and the teacher begins straight away by having Müller recite the words he already knows. The time of year is autumn, so they ponder the shortness of the days and look forward to Christmas, after which Müller has been promised a long-awaited leave in Germany.

As the story moves along, the Finn Erkki enters the picture, Müller's other Finnish acquaintance and the boyfriend of Mr Järvinen's daughter Elsa. Erkki and Müller plan a skiing trip to Salla, go to the theatre and out to eat, and speak of the generally high standard of living of the Finns, although because of the war, everything is rationed, of course: 'But when peace returns, we'll all eat ham, eggs, fruit and pastries again, and we'll drink real coffee and real beer.' Once in a while they also visit a men's clothing store: another man vying for Elsa's favour, the university student Ylönen ('that scheming lady's man') has attracted her attention because of the stylish way he dresses. Erkki has seen enough of it to send him to the tailor and on an expedition to shop for clothes. This rival causes even more harm when Erkki and Müller catch him in the bomb shelter together with Elsa, which makes the jealous Erkki break off their relationship entirely. To Elsa's surprise, Müller plays cupid and promises to bring them both to the cinema, assuring her that after they see the movie *I Love You More Than Anyone*, 'reconciliation is sweet.' In no time at all, a coffee party to announce their engagement is celebrated at the Järvinen house.[87]

While the dramatic love story is taking place, Järvinen continues to teach, and during that time the student learns how to describe the Finnish and German flags in Finnish, to prepare for a trip to Turku and Stockholm and to get to know the members of the Järvinen family. Müller can also talk about his everyday military routines. Järvinen's helpfulness makes the soldier say, 'You are the most friendly teacher I know.' Järvinen's reply is even more in the spirit of the brotherhood-in-arms: 'And you are my dearest pupil.' As the lessons progress, Järvinen praises Müller for learning such good Finnish, despite his initial difficulties, that he can now begin to read Finnish novels, and he loans his pupil 'a book written by Aleksis Kivi, Finland's greatest author'. Müller leaves the class with *Seven Brothers* tucked under his arm: 'I have heard of that excellent book. I would love to read it.'[88]

In one of their last meetings, Müller asks his teacher to give an introduction to Finland's history. Järvinen says that the ancestors of the Finns had arrived approximately 2000 years before to their current area of

[87] Väisänen 1944: 28, 38 and 56.

[88] ibid., 53 and 59.

habitation from the shores of the Volga River. Much later they fell under Swedish rule until in 1362 Finland became an equal part of the so-called Swedish-Finnish Empire ending in 1809, when Russia 'took over' in Finland. When Järvinen tells about Finnish independence in 1917, this begins a discussion into which Väisänen is able to inject central factors in the Finland propaganda directed at the brothers-in-arms—the Finns' firm hatred of Russians and the heritage and shared destiny of the Finnish-German brotherhood:

- 'So your country was under Russian rule for more than one hundred years.'
- 'Yes, although as an autonomous state, but we don't want to return to that time ever! Until our country became free, we had to wage a heavy war of independence against Russia. Our German brothers-in-arms gave us excellent help.'[89]
- 'So even back then, Germany and Finland were fighting as brothers-in-arms against the East.'
- 'And we are still fighting. The same common danger is threatening us again. This is already our twelfth war with Russia, but we would rather fight to the last man than surrender to the Russians. The Finnish people know what Russian rule means. It would destroy us.'
- 'And Germany as well. But the victory will certainly be ours!'
- 'Yes, we will surely win. After all, we are fighting for our freedom!'[90]

In the last act of the frame narrative, Müller comes to say goodbye to Järvinen before he leaves for Germany and the officer training school. This farewell takes the shape of a conversation in which Väisänen has once again summarized the dramaturgy of the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms, but at the same time written into the script the hope through which the entire Finnish propaganda effort with the German troops attains its crucial forward thrust—that after the war, the German soldier will not forget little Finland in his great home country:

[89] See footnote 471.
[90] ibid., 64-65.

'[…] But we are not at all happy that you are leaving. We have learned to like you. And through you, we have got to know German youth, its energy and its love of country.'

'I must also say that on the one hand I am sad that I have to leave my good Finnish friends. And Finland, which after Germany is like a second homeland! But I will not leave forever. I want to come back to Finland once peace returns.' […].

'Goodbye, dear Günther! Do not forget little Finland over there in big Germany! And do not forget the Finnish language! Be well, and welcome back to Finland!'[91]

Taking Stock of the Finland Propaganda Effort

The textbook created by Väisänen was published in spring 1944, at approximately the same time as Finland had begun its peace negotiations with the Soviet Union. If the dialogue fabrications of the textbook presented above are examined in this light, there remains no doubt that the propaganda measures of the FLSR coordinated by Sandberg were progressing on one track, but the real-political efforts of the Finnish state leadership were moving along another. The realities of the global war forced the Finnish government to search for a way out of military involvement. However, the propaganda targeting the Germans attempted to keep hold of the dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms along with the impression of a common struggle against a common foe, hoping that it would ensure the continuation of military cooperation as long as it was at all possible, or necessary.

On both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms it was obvious, of course, that this was theatre. As was made clear previously (see Chap. 6, subchapter 'The Balancing Act of Providing Information'), the Germans were monitoring the Finnish media and the news from Finland's particular political climate very closely at every turn. Sandberg knew this full well; already in the first weeks of September 1943, he reported to Willamo how carefully the German propaganda officers were following what was

[91] ibid., 68.

written in the Finnish newspapers about current politics.[92] Accordingly, real-political news about Finnish peace efforts came rather quickly to the ears of their German colleagues as well. According to Sandberg, this caused a subtle cooling of their mutual relations until the point at which they were broken off entirely and the liaison officers had to leave the German units.[93] Sandberg went to take leave of his own German contacts towards the end of August, just a couple of weeks before the separate peace agreement was signed on 19 September 1944—which also ended the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms. Although it was generally regretted during goodbye visits 'that our mutual cultural interaction is also now coming to an end', Sandberg's final accounting was nevertheless positive: Based on the feedback he heard, he felt that the educational work they were able to achieve during the second half of the brotherhood-in-arms had helped the Germans to get to know Finland and its people with results that would be seen even after the war in precisely the way the Finns would have hoped:

> They believed that this road had given Finland a permanent place in their hearts. At the same time they presumed that this had made the Germans consider the Finns' abandonment of the brotherhood-in-arms less bitterly than if the state of affairs had been different. In general, it was seen that the Finland propaganda also left indelible traces on many of the German soldiers and made them true friends of Finland, who at some point in the future would be prepared to work on our behalf.[94]

The magnitude of the Finland propaganda programme set up by FLSR and the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command appears unequivocally in the sources that have been compiled from Sandberg's propaganda officer duties and saved in the archives, although a part of the operations planned during such a short span of time obviously did not achieve its targeted volume. Regarding the aforementioned analysis of the programme's effects, however, what Sandberg is probably referring to is

[92] Communication from Sandberg to Willamo on 1 September 1943 [T-5872/63, NA].

[93] Sandberg 25 July 1944 [T-5872/63, NA].

[94] Communication from Willamo and Sandberg to the Propaganda Division of the Finnish High Command on 6 September 1944 [T-8359/24, NA].

more likely the hopes that were expressed by his commanders rather than provable, concrete impact. When one bears in mind the context when analysing the activity reports—for example, if one asks who was reporting, where, to whom and for what purpose—the documents can no longer simply be read as a summary of an officer's own activities. They also appear as particular tools of self-aggrandizement in which the results of an officer's own special duties were presented in a positive light and preferably so that the presentation corresponded as flawlessly as possible to the expectations placed on it by one's superior. In this respect both Sandberg and other liaison officers were putting on the same kind of communicative performances for Willamo as the brothers-in-arms did in general: Although in celebratory speeches, Sandberg was thanked for how the educational work carried out both with the brothers and with the people had deepened the brotherhood-in-arms particularly deeply[95] or how it had opened up a place in German hearts for Finland and the Finns, one may still ask what else could one expect the erstwhile brothers-in-arms to say to each other at a joint dinner besides face-saving compliments?

In any event, Major A.O. Väänänen believed that the education work had been worthwhile: In his unofficial history of FLSR, he remembered that the German soldiers who had fought in Northern Finland had left for their homeland 'significantly more enlightened about Finland' than when they had arrived. He also believed that the soldiers had already made 'Finland known to a broader international circle in Germany and Austria', which he assessed as important 'in international life in the future'. This history, which Väänänen presented to Willamo for his 60th birthday, thus showed that the time and efforts the commander of FLSR spent 'on this area of operation as well' had not been spent in vain.[96]

[95] Ruoho [T-5471/12, NA].

[96] Väänänen 1947: 80, 257.

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8

Much Ado About a Translation

Finnish media caused the German brothers-in-arms plenty of heartburn during the entire war. As previously shown in at least one or two excerpts, the Germans followed what was published in Finland very carefully: Finnish and Nordic newspapers were read closely both at the front and in the headquarters of the rear area, in translations from Mountain Army intelligence and by Finnish liaison officers and interpreters. Compilations from the papers were sent to the front and to Rovaniemi by the German Embassy in Helsinki, where the subordinates of Ambassador Wipert von Blücher monitored Finnish news and regularly reported any views presented in the newspapers all the way to Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin, to Ribbentrop in the office of the Reich's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

At the same time, the embassy attempted to influence what was written about Germany, the Germans and the military activities conducted by the German *Wehrmacht*. The political leadership of Finland, the Finnish High Command and the censorship authorities repeatedly received complaints about national or local newspapers with respect to their negative slant or about individual articles that were detrimental to German-Finnish relations, although they simultaneously tried to direct the press to write positively about the brothers-in-arms of their own

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volition as well: It was not suitable to criticize the alliance or the ally in a way that would endanger the integrity of the joint performance and thus not only joint military operations but also the military and food supplies from Germany that were of critical importance to Finland. Maintaining the state of the brotherhood-in-arms as normal as possible was an essential goal, although given the vagaries of the global war, for example, in Stalingrad, it was certainly tempting to call other opinions onto the stage.[1]

In any event, antennae were constantly extended, and even at the level of the everyday brotherhood-in-arms at the various German headquarters, liaison officers ended up being the target of more or less irritated questions about the position of the press and were asked to interpret both the position of the brotherhood-in-arms and the prevailing attitudes of the Finns towards the Germans. At the end of November 1942, Willamo reported to the Finnish High Command that what had repeatedly come to the ears of FLSR and the liaison officers was

> criticisms of how free the attitude of the Finnish press was towards the military news it sends about the positions of the allies and the Swedes. More specifically, 'Rovaniemi' and 'Lapin Kansa' were mentioned. The opinion of the leadership of Org. Todt is that spreading these to the rank and file has the same effect as 'water on parched land'.[2]

According to Willamo, this thirst for information among the rank and file was particularly easy to understand when one considered the Germans' own tight censorship. Similarly, in the post-war notes of Uula Aapa, it is apparent how this monitoring targeted just as much what was written in the newspapers and went unnoticed by the censors as what was left unreported. One example of this occurred in May 1943 when, in a conversation that took place at the embassy in Helsinki, 'author Borgman' unloaded his feelings about how ineffective Finnish censorship was in stopping the publication of news materials based on Swedish sources and

[1] For more details about the trends in reporting on Germany in the press and the Germans' dissatisfaction regarding them, the diplomatic incidents caused by reporting and the operations of the Finnish censorship authorities, see Perko 1971; Rusi 1982; Luostarinen 1986: 292, 339–359; Junila 2000: 122–127 and Jokisipilä 2004: passim. Kuikka 2009 is an interesting thesis on the operations of the censorship authorities in the political crossfire of the years 1943 and 1944.

[2] Communication from Willamo to Heinrichs on 29 November 1942 [T-17215/2, NA].

subsequently presented a different kind of example of the negative attitude of the Finnish press to Germany and the Germans. The example describes how pedantically Finnish journalism was followed quite well:

> The reporting in Helsinki newspapers last year in late winter in Rovaniemi and on Finnish-German skiing competitions was very minimal. However, at the same time, the *Lappland Kurier* published almost two pages about them, with plenty of pictures, which strongly emphasized the Finns' participation and accomplishments in the games. Instead, the Helsinki papers hardly said a word about participation by the Germans. In like manner, the articles sent from the front by Finnish correspondents no longer include a mention, even by mistake, of the lives of the German brothers-in-arms and their successes in battle.[3]

In reality, Finnish-German coexistence was more positively visible across the board than what appears in the view cited here. As Junila has stated, news topics were selected so that a smooth and sympathetic image of homefront coexistence was constructed.[4] Well-functioning cooperation between Finnish and German authorities received column space as did German charity campaigns, joint sports and cultural events and participation by the brothers-in-arms in celebrations of national holidays important to the Finns. Rebukes aimed at Germans for thefts or causing damage, on the other hand, seldom found their way into the newspapers, although the local press in all probability followed what the soldiers of the Mountain Army were doing at least as closely as the Germans were following what was printed about them in the press.

One matter that the Germans wished would appear less often than it did in reality had to do with relations between Finnish women and German soldiers. 'Female enthusiasm for the brother-in-arms' had become a topic of conversation as soon as the German troops set foot in

[3] Aapa 1961: 173–174: 'Author Borgman' in all probability seems to be Friedrich Wilhelm Borgmann, presenting himself in Finland as a businessman and journalist, who was already active during the 1930s as the spokesman for the NSDAP propaganda on the superiority of the Nordic race (cf. 'Nordischer Gedanke' in Finland, see Hiedanniemi 1980: passim; at the very end of the war, he was also interrogated for suspicion of acting on behalf of the German intelligence service, compare Westerlund 2011: 278).

[4] Junila 2000: 126.

Finland, and thus the editorials of the newspapers, the opinion columns and the letters to the editor contained disapproval of the way in which 'certain' women were weakening the moral backbone of the home front: They were running too willingly after chocolate, silk stockings, tailored uniforms and aftershave, and too easily forgetting the men fighting at the front and the rationing economy that prevailed—matters that demanded fortitude from all citizens of a Finland at war.[5]

Those expressing their opinions were not only local people, those men and women on the streets and in the cafés at home, but also soldiers at the front, who were contemplating the effect these unpleasant rumours arriving from their home regions was having on their own desire to fight and the spirit of the brotherhood-in-arms. Censorship began to prohibit the newspapers from handling this matter in November 1941, but in no way could this entirely silence the quarrelling about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Discussion of the issue in the newspapers irritated the leadership of the Mountain Army in Northern Finland, and it was made particularly nervous by those events in which the spotlight was trained on the behaviour of German soldiers instead of on the shaming of local women.[6]

Lapin Kansa felt this at particularly close range when it joined the discussion about women's moral conduct at the beginning of December 1942, raising the specific issue of inappropriate conduct by German soldiers towards the women of Rovaniemi. The reaction of the German military authorities started a chain of events that ended up targeting not only the newspaper itself but also the women who had been the victims of the incidents portrayed in the paper, and which ended up in an apology from the Finnish government for the inappropriate article. Translation, or rather a carefully implemented manipulation of the text, played a significant role in this course of events.[7]

[5] ibid.: 146–165.

[6] For a more detailed view, see Junila 2000, in particular the chapter on female enthusiasm for the brother-in-arms as a topic of discussion.

[7] This chapter is an expanded version of a previous article in English; see Kujamäki 2017.

This and That

The entire sequence of events was sparked by 'Niila', the pseudonym of Erkki Tervo, in his series of humorous opinion pieces 'This and That'. *Lapin Kansa* published the piece in question on 1 December 1942. The columnist was commenting on incidents that occurred in Rovaniemi in which German soldiers had attempted by force, and also by violence, to accompany women walking on the street. 'Niila' wrote the following:

> We'd like to ask those in authority – be they Finns or foreigners – about a certain matter.
>
> You see, we remember a time when we read that around seven hundred years ago, Birger Jarl established certain laws in this country too, the so-called safety laws. Safety for the church, safety for the home, safety for the court and safety for women. They have been in force ever since, and our people have endeavoured to keep them sacred. Violations are looked on very badly.
>
> And now we ask ourselves whether the last of these four, safety for women, has been overturned in Rovaniemi. You see, it certainly appears as if this is the case. As proof that we aren't talking on our own account, we shall present a few examples. We could choose any number of them, but we shall limit ourselves to three. Allow them to speak for themselves.
>
> First of all: a female, soon inclining to middle age, is walking home. A person bearing a man's name is soon at her heels, and in a foreign language he makes the most indecent suggestions to her. The lady does not answer; instead she speeds up her steps and ends up at a half-run. But the assailant does not ease up; he keeps following and his mouth is churning like a bean stew. Finally the 'cavalier' considers the matter 'settled' and crowds up right next to her. Fortunately the lady was already at her own door, and thus escaped.
>
> The second example: another female, also not terribly young, goes for a walk in broad daylight. Before long, she has a 'squire' as well. This one, however, assumes that the lady doesn't understand his flirtation, and so he relies on sign language. He makes the most lascivious gestures in order to make his 'intent' clear. But the lady is able to escape to the home of a friend.
>
> The third example, and perhaps the most egregious, which by the way occurred last Sunday afternoon: a young maiden is walking from her home

on her way to the town along the main street. When she has almost reached the busiest intersection, no more and no fewer than five – I say, five – 'cavaliers' begin to follow her. Of course they force her to join their fascinating company. The young lady informs them in no uncertain terms that she does not want any company. But that doesn't help, either. The trespassers then simply buzz around her like a swarm of flies. At which the party in question voices her strict objection. Then they believe her, but 'the injured heart' apparently demands its due. And thus one of these 'men' hits the woman with his fist so that she falls to the street. At this point her companions – women – help her up and to her home as the 'group of suitors' walk behind them, making 'lovely' comments as they go.

What can we say about this? We would like to say a great deal about it, but we would rather not for the time being. But let this be said, in any event: Discipline is for everyone, also for those who talk about getting used to it. And according to how we think about discipline, it means something else besides simply 'standing at attention' before one's commander. An essential part of it is decent behaviour and proper conduct in general, even at those times when you can't see the whites of your commander's eyes. It is clear that our authorities, above all the police, will promptly stop such incidents if they happen to see them. However, they obviously cannot be at hand at all times that such things happen. Thus those concerned should give themselves the commands and regulations about how to be and how to behave when they walk around in herds on the streets of our town or visit its restaurants. If this does not happen, the inhabitants may react, fairly soon and harshly – and who wants that? We don't believe anyone does.

It is true that among the women, there are one kind and another, and the behaviour of some of them may give the impression that rather 'free' conduct is welcome. But thank God, not all women, not even half of them, are of that ilk, and this is a state of affairs that we believe the trespassers, too, should be able to comprehend. And one would assume that 'the profferer of company' must notice, always and everywhere, at the first glance where he is welcome and where he is not, and should 'navigate' accordingly. And under no circumstances can one, or should one, adopt an attitude that our women have any kind of 'duty' towards trespassers. Such thinking would rather soon cost them dearly.

It may be said that in this story, we have used tones that are a bit too harsh. This may be, but *we have a point*. And we would wish, quite candidly, that 'the consuls might monitor' this issue on both one side and the

> other, and that the newspapers henceforth no longer have to intervene in such concerns. Settling these things is no fun, and current times provide those of us in this profession as well with ample work; we do not have enough time to teach people the ABC's of basic behaviour. Which in any event ought to be obvious.[8]

'Niila's' article caught the eye of the Intelligence Division of the headquarters of the Mountain Army (AOK 20 / Ic) as part of the daily screening of Finnish and Nordic newspapers. The text was translated and distributed just a few days later to the units in the rear area and the headquarters of the German Air Fleet. A cover note by General Dietl was attached to the translation. In this note, attention was drawn to the 'justified accusations' (*berechtigte Vorwürfe*) against the soldiers who were mentioned in the translation. These men had not yet understood how important it was to behave appropriately towards the Finns. The accusations were to be taken seriously in training the soldiers, in supervision and in maintaining discipline so that such incidents could be avoided in the future. At the end of his cover note, Dietl emphasized that the hostile handling of the matter in public and the threat contained in the text (*wegen der darin enthaltenen Drohung*) demanded that his headquarters be in contact with the Finnish authorities for the implementation of necessary measures.[9]

And indeed, Colonel Willamo was invited shortly thereafter to discuss the measures that the matter required. The meeting was held on 12 December, based on a memorandum prepared in the offices of the Mountain Army and signed by Lieutenant Colonel Liebig. In practice, this document repeated the opinions already expressed by General Dietl, however stressing that these kinds of incidents could not be avoided unless 'both young men and young women were put behind bars'.[10] In addition, a very strong objection was appended to the memorandum to the fact that an article was allowed to appear in a local newspaper which

[8] *Lapin Kansa* 1 December 1942.

[9] Communication from 'der Oberbefehlshaber an Korück' [the commander-in-chief of the rear area] on 6 December 1942 [T-312/1022, OMF].

[10] 'Notizen für Besprechung Oberstlt. i.G. Liebig mit Oberst Willamo' [Notes for meeting between Lieut. Col. i.G. Liebig and Colonel Willamo] on 12 December 1942 [T-312/1022, OMF].

so sensationally targeted interactions between Finnish civilians and German troops which, up to that point, had been running so smoothly, and that such a smear campaign simply increased tensions and discord. Any reasonable individual under such circumstances had the responsibility to make the German headquarters aware of such incidents, either through the police, the provincial government or FLSR. So that the Germans could avoid any cooperation with the writer in the future, they requested that Willamo reveal the identity of the journalist behind the pseudonym. In addition, Willamo was to coordinate measures with the Finnish authorities which would guarantee that similar events no longer be treated in the newspapers, but rather be reported directly to the Mountain Army.

However, Willamo had already begun to take measures before the Mountain Army presented its demands officially by gathering information, both from the local civilian authorities and from his own subordinates posted in German units. Soon both Governor Hillilä and the leadership of the Finnish military were informed of the tumult caused by the article. The Chief of the General Staff in Mikkeli was sent a copy of the article in *Lapin Kansa* that had caused

> Chief of Staff Major General Jodl of the AOK General Headquarters to present a request for information including an explanation of who wrote the article mentioned, what kind of punitive measures have been implemented or will be implemented against the writer, and what guarantees can be made that articles of this nature that deteriorate relations between the German army and the local population do not appear in the future.

Willamo also reported on decisions that increased discipline and toughened penalties, the results of reactions to 'Niila's' article within the Germans' own units. 'I have begun measures to implement a full investigation into what was written in the newspaper and the events mentioned therein.'[11] In practice, this meant that both 'Niila', in other words Erkki Tervo, and the women who had ended up in the midst of the events were brought in for questioning by the police several times, where the sequence

[11] Communication from Willamo to the Chief of Staff of the Finnish High Command on 13 December 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

of what had happened was established. By December 1942, the police chief of the town of Rovaniemi had sent the protocol from the interviews to the provincial government of Lapland. What the women said about the incidents portrayed in 'Niila's' article was recorded in this protocol.

In the police chief's interviews, Eeva Linna, a journalist at *Lapin Kansa*, reported the following:

> As soon as they had reached the corner [at the bank], the aforementioned soldiers had come abreast of them so that the reporting party and her cousin had ended up in the middle of the group of soldiers. At the same time, the soldiers had said something in German, so neither the party nor her cousin had said anything in reply. After they had walked in this manner for several metres, the German walking next to the party had grabbed her, at which point the party had pushed him away and walked ahead, but the soldiers had followed right at her heels. Now the party began to scold the soldiers in their own language, about how inappropriate such intrusions were, but at this point the soldier, without saying anything, had hit the party with his fist, first in the midriff and then in the chest. As a result of the blows the party had lost consciousness and fallen to the ground.[12]

The protocols were sent on to Willamo's headquarters. In the cover letter, Governor Hillilä and the provincial Police Superintendent Armas Alhava felt that as far as the provincial administration was concerned, 'there was no reason for any other measures than to inform the editor concerned that events of this kind are not to be reported on in the newspaper.'[13]

As far as the military authorities were concerned, the incident ended in January 1943 when the Finnish High Command issued an apology to the Mountain Army for the matter. The message of apology was brought to the Germans by Colonel Willamo at the request of the Chief of the General Staff, General Erik Heinrichs, who also sent Willamo a reply letter prepared at the Prime Minister's Office and signed by Prime Minister

[12] Communications from Kosola/police chief for the town of Rovaniemi to the provincial government of Lapland on 12, 17 and 19 December 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].

[13] Communication from Hillilä and Alhava of the provincial government of Lapland to FLSR on 7 January 1943 [T-5857/8, NA].

J.W. Rangell to forward on as an apology for the incident to Major General Ferdinand Jodl. The enquiry presented by Jodl had come to the attention of the prime minister, which is why the Prime Minister's Office had become involved in the matter. In this letter, the concerns raised by the Germans were once again presented and then the measures taken by Finnish local authorities in the weeks leading up to Christmas were described. It is interesting to note how the focus of the letter is now the failure of local censors: Because the publication inspector of *Lapin Kansa* had not observed the VTL's specific ban on portraying 'relationships between Germany's soldiers and Finland's women and other matters pertaining thereunto which could offend the honour of the German *Wehrmacht*', the VTL had dismissed him from his duties, effective January 1943. However, the Prime Minister's Office did not believe it was possible, or fair, to punish the author. At the end of the letter, it was further remarked that the German military authorities themselves had also taken the initiative to reduce friction between the German soldiers and the local population.

> As for its part, the Prime Minister's Office is convinced that the same honest efforts to maintain good relations and to develop them further is also the driving force among all of Finland's authorities and believes that, in the future, any occurrences that possibly have disturbed these relations will be removed by dint of measures desired by both sides and applied jointly.[14]

Inevitably, the same impression remains uppermost in Rangell's letter, as in all of the actions of the authorities: that more important than protecting Finnish women from unpleasant incidents was protecting the brotherhood-in-arms from hostile journalism that targeted it. It is also interesting to note that the bureaucrats at lower levels continued their investigation at the same time as apologies were already being issued on the upper levels. On 11 January 1943, Alhava informed FLSR that he had interviewed Miss Linna again and heard more information about the matter concerning 'Niila's' article. In particular, Alhava had investigated

[14] Communication from the Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister J.W. Rangell to the Chief of the General Staff on 9 January 1943; communication from Heinrichs to Willamo on 11 January 1943 [T-5857/8, NA].

> whether [the party] may have called the Germans 'German pigs' during the incident. During my investigation she explained that the German had grabbed her arm and she had grown quite angry and she had rebuked him in German before the soldiers in his company. What words Miss Linna used, she did not say she remembered, but she said that she could guarantee that she had not called anyone 'German pigs'. Additionally Miss Linna noted that the soldiers' conduct in grabbing her arm was so inappropriate and insulting to women that, as a civilized person, she could not see any other attitude to take besides stating her matter-of-fact criticism of it.[15]

Why did Alhava believe he had to conduct further inquiries? 'Niila's' written account of the event does not seem to be related in any way to the additional questions presented to Miss Linna. How did 'German pigs' become a part of these events?

A Liaison Officer Critiques a Translation

Once 'Niila's' article had reached the Germans and Colonel Willamo had received an invitation to meetings with the Mountain Army, Lieutenant Olavi Voionmaa, for one, received a command from FLSR to monitor the feelings provoked by the article among the German troops in the Rovaniemi area. Voionmaa, who at the time was serving in the headquarters of the German Air Fleet (*Luftgaustab Finnland*) responded to the command by relaying his observations of the officers and specialists at the headquarters at dinner a couple of days previously.[16]

As they were eating, the Commander of the Air Fleet, General Julius Schulz, read the German translation of the article that had arrived from Dietl (Image 8.1).

> The general handled the matter satirically but in utter strictness. He gave the order that if any of his subordinate officers, specialists or NCOs were proven guilty in this regard, he would not only be subjected to punishment

[15] Communication from the provincial government of Lapland, Police Superintendent Armas Alhava to FLSR on 11 January 1943 [T-5857/8, NA].

[16] Communication from Voionmaa to Willamo on 12 December 1942 [T-5857/8, NA].



Image 8.1 Commander of the German Air Fleet General Julius Schulz in Rovaniemi on 29 March 1944 [SA-image /147821, Military Propaganda Photographer Osvald Hedenström. CC BY 4.0.]

> by the field court, but he would be demoted to private and transferred back to Germany. The general regretted that this kind of matter had been dealt with in a public newspaper and not by official means through the Finnish authorities to him or to Dietl.

As Voionmaa describes it, these kinds of publications were delectable fare for enemy propaganda, and he said that he had already heard the

complaint that the story was making the rounds in Swedish newspapers. He also had an opinion on the translation read at the dinner:

> Once I got the aforementioned number of *Lapin Kansa* into my hands, I discovered that the German translation Dietl had sent to Schutz [sic] was exaggerated and slanted in a negative direction. Subsequently I translated the aforementioned story into German today and will give it to Generals Schutz and Dietl so they can compare it to the publicly translated one. I am hoping that this will take the worst edge off the matter.

As Voionmaa was requesting that Willamo make the writer responsible for what was published—something that had clearly weakened Finnish-German relations—he promised to do what he could so that the translator in the '"Heer" was made responsible for his irresponsible translation into German in which he had used such words as "German pigs" and "intruders" that had not appeared in the original text'.

References could not be found among the archival sources to suggest that Schulz or Dietl at headquarters had taken note in any way of the Finnish liaison officer's re-translation or even his critique of the translation. In any event, there does not seem to be any obvious consequence of Voionmaa's intervention other than Miss Linna having to tell Alhava about the events once again. And yet, something was hidden in the content and tone of the translation that made a new one necessary, one that Voionmaa hoped would 'take the edge' off the matter. There is good reason to take a closer look at the translation produced in the offices of the Mountain Army.

Dies und Das

The irresponsible German translation that Lieut. Voionmaa mentions, '*Dies und das*' (This and that), is found among the attachments to the war diary of the headquarters of the Mountain Army.[17] It is signed by 'Oblt. [*Oberleutnant*, senior lieutenant] Dr Bauer'. Bauer had joined the

[17] 'Dies und das', 12 December 1942 [T-312/1022, OMF].

Mountain Army officer corps in Rovaniemi at the beginning of 1942 when he assumed the post of interpreter (*Dolmetscher*) in the Intelligence Division (Ic) of the Mountain Army.[18] The range of tasks under the purview of the Ic was extensive. It included not only military intelligence, monitoring the air waves, counterespionage and interrogation of POWs but also censorship of the mail, enemy propaganda and education of an ideological and political nature directed at the Germans' own troops. Materials interpreted or translated from POW interrogations, military spoils and other intelligence were funnelled into a secret news bulletin (*geheimes Nachrichtenblatt*) which was sent on a weekly basis to both the Commanders and to other German troops.

In addition to these functions, the Ic also monitored the Finnish and German press as well as radio stations broadcasting in English, Swedish, Russian and Finnish for its regular press reviews; these were distributed internally within the Mountain Army and elsewhere.[19] What it was looking for in the Finnish and Swedish newspapers was not only news dealing with the events of the war; of interest were also the political trends in both countries. In this way, intelligence was gathered about opinions presented in public in Finland and Sweden about domestic and foreign policies, official points of view on the political questions of the day and the state of the war, statements about Germany and information about supply conditions in enemy countries, in particular 'Soviet Russia'.[20] As the local paper of Rovaniemi, *Lapin Kansa* was one of the sources the Ic regularly monitored, so that 'Niila's' article was probably translated into German by Bauer's office quite rapidly.

When the German translation is read side by side with the Finnish original, two strategies become apparent in the translation which change the general tendency of the text in a harsher direction than the original. The first is the more subtle of the two: Through small alterations, the questions that are posed about the course of events and the issues they

[18] 'Kriegsrangliste sämtlicher Offiziere und Beamten im Offizierrang des Armeeoberkommando Lappland, Stand: 1 März 1942' [Military ranking of all officers and officials with officer's rank in the Army High Command as of 1 March 1942] [NA-OMF, Roll T-312/1009).

[19] Kujamäki 2016b: 59–62.

[20] See, for example, the activity report for the Intelligence Division Ic for the first half of the year 1943 [T-312/1038, OMF].

raise in 'Niila's' accounting have been given additional sharpness. For example, where his text questions whether the centuries-old safety laws laid down by Birger Jarl, in particular those regarding the safety of women, have now been 'overturned', the question in the German-language version is more colourful regarding whether this aspect of the laws has been 'trampled underfoot':

> And now we ask ourselves whether the last of these four, the safety of women, has been *overturned* in Rovaniemi. (*'This and That'*)

> Und jetzt fragen wir, ist der Letzte von diesen 4 Punkten, die Unantastbarkeit der Frau, nicht hier in Rovaniemi *mit Füssen getreten* worden? (*'Dies und Das'*)

> [And now we ask ourselves whether the last of these four points, the inviolability of women, has not *been trampled underfoot* here in Rovaniemi.]

Several times in 'Niila's' article, the Germans figuring prominently in the events are called either 'assailants', 'trespassers' or 'intruders'. In the German translation, the term used is initially simply *Aufdringliche* ('the pushy one'), but at one point in the text, the translator has decided to append a second possibility in parentheses (*Eindringling*, 'intruder, invader') as if they were synonymous or an interpretive equivalent:

> But thank God, not all women, not even half of them, are of that ilk, and this is a state of affairs that we believe the *trespassers*, too, should be able to comprehend. ('*This and That*')

> Aber, Gottseidank, nicht alle unsere Frauen sind so beschaffen, lange nicht einmal die

> Hälfte; das ist ein Umstand, den unserer Meinung nach auch die *Aufdringlichen (oder Eindringlinge)* begreifen müssten. ('*Dies und Das*')

> [But thank God, not all of our women are so constituted, not even half of them; this is a circumstance that we believe that even the *intruders* (*or invaders*) should be able to comprehend.]

The difference between these two equivalents is very subtle, but the depiction of the German soldiers who assailed the women as *invaders* gives the German-language text a new nuance of meaning. In any event, it made Voionmaa read the translation to mean that the Northern Finnish writer of the original text was also commenting on the presence of the Germans in his region as hostile occupiers (see the 'invaders' mentioned by Voionmaa), no longer only the inappropriate conduct of German soldiers on the streets of the town. A brief search of the electronic corpus of the German language supports Voionmaa's interpretation: During the war, the word *Eindringling* appears particularly often in expository and newspaper texts precisely in the military sense of an 'invader', which characterizes a state or its army against which another state or its leadership attempts to defend itself by using all means possible.[21]

The second translation strategy has to do with additions the translator has made, in order to comment on either the text itself or on the events behind it. When the original writer demands that 'those concerned' should be giving 'themselves' sufficiently clear commands about proper behaviour, the translator has added a clarification in parentheses to the effect that 'the Germans are meant here' (*gemeint sind die Deutschen*). 'Niila' himself never once uses such an unambiguous expression, but simply the word 'foreigners' or 'guests', naturally knowing that both the readers of the text and the 'guests' themselves will understand what is meant. The second of the translator's added remarks comments on the language used by one of the women appearing in the text:

> The trespassers then simply buzz around her like a swarm of flies. At which the party in question voices her *strict objection*. ('*This and That*')

> Die Aufdringlichen umringen sie daraufhin wie ein Fliegenschwarm. Daraufhin sagt die Betreffende ganz *schroff ihre Weigerung*. (Nach der Angabe von Finnen hat das Mädchen den Deutschen, angeblich ein Uffz., mit "deutsches Schwein" angeredet. Anm. des Ubers.) ('*Dies und Das*')

[21] DWDS-Kernkorpus (1900–1999); searching expository and newspaper texts for occurrences of the word *Eindringling* for the years 1935–1945. My thanks go to Leena Kolehmainen for mentioning this corpus to me.

[The trespassers then surround her like a swarm of flies. At which the party involved *voices her refusal quite strictly.* (According to what Finns said, the girl had called the German, allegedly an NCO, a 'German pig'. Translator's note.)]

The final comment is presented as if it were the afterword to the translation:

Der Vorfall, dass ein deutscher Uffz. ein finnisches Mädchen auf der Strasse *geschlagen haben soll*, hat unter finn. Bevölkerung in Rovaniemi grösstes Aufsehen erregt. Man spricht dort davon, dass den deutschen Soldaten abends Ausgangsverbot erteilt werden müsste. Denn man könne sich nicht mehr auf die Strasse begeben, ohne ernste Gefahren befürchten zu mussen.

[The case in which a German NCO is *alleged to have struck* a Finnish girl on the street has caused the greatest concern. Because of it, people are saying that the German soldiers should be given a curfew in the evenings. Because it is no longer possible to walk down the street without having to fear serious harm.]

Because of this last translator's remark, the German version is no longer 'simply a translation', but rather a kind of cross between a translation and an intelligence report into which the translator has felt it necessary to inject information gathered from the streets of the town, information deemed necessary for the Generals' decisions on further steps. Attention should also be paid to the wording of the commentary appended to the end of the translation, which casts doubts on the authenticity of the events described, almost as if in passing: The modal verb 'sollen', used in the expression 'geschlagen haben soll' (is alleged to have struck), distances the commentator from the events as if saying that the experiences depicted by the journalist, Miss Linna, cannot be vouched for. It is interesting that the qualification based on second-hand information added to the 'strict objection' presented by Miss Linna, on the other hand, is allowed to pass as it is with no seeds of doubt sown in it.

A Lot of Noise About a Translation?

To quote 'Niila', or Erkki Tervo: 'What can we say about this?' At any rate, it can be said that the German military authorities were nervous about the newspaper text, in which rather sensitive content for the time, cloaked in the garb of an opinion piece, was tweaked even further in its German translation. In other words, in their own special way, the translators of the Mountain Army contributed to the creation of a bump in the harmonious performance of the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms—and smoothing it out caused plenty of work all the way up to the highest levels of the government. This was probably the purpose of the entire campaign, as well.

In all probability, 'Niila's' opinion piece did not contain anything of which the Finnish and German authorities, or the public watching the performance—the local people—were not otherwise aware. The source of annoyance was, as the German reactions described above show, above all that the text appeared in the first place, and in Rovaniemi of all places, the town that hosted the headquarters of the Mountain Army and many other smaller units, and which was the central stage of Finnish-German coexistence. And to add insult to injury, neither the writer nor the publisher of the text had cared much about observing the specific censorship stipulations of refraining from depicting relations between Finnish women and German soldiers. To the Germans, 'Niila's' text was—using Goffman's terminology—an 'intentionally created scene', an expression of the local population removing themselves from their pre-determined role as an audience and 'no longer playing the game of polite interaction'. A 'false note' was introduced into the performance of the brotherhood-in-arms, a kind of rift in the 'expressive coherence' of the dramatized reality, which was also proof to the Germans of how inadequate the attempts of the Finnish censorship authorities actually were in protecting the integrity of the performance.[22] A new play emerged, one that temporarily split the brothers-in-arms into two camps. The leadership of the Mountain Army was now the director of the dramaturgy, and its goal was

[22] Goffmann 1959: 92, 141, 205.

to demand that the Finnish brothers implement all necessary measures to put the original performance back on track.

The translation done in Lieutenant Bauer's office served to do precisely this. The German-language version can be read as a political translation strategy[23] employed in an attempt to keep the events proceeding under their control as long as necessary. Because of the information added, the German-language text was not only a German translation of 'Niila's' opinion piece, but also a reaction to it in which the entire piece was set in a larger context than the events depicted. The effect of the subtle shift in meaning ends up the same. Where 'Niila' saw the safety of Rovaniemi's women in danger, Dietl and his staff read a danger threatening not only the presence of the Germans but also the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms. The German version was no longer simply a translation of the opinion piece, but rather displaced the Finnish-language text in the Germans' own campaign and guided the discussion far beyond the actual issue. The German translation became a powerful corrective tool used to show that the beginning and root of the incident and disagreement lay with the Finns and not with the Germans. The message sent from the Prime Minister's Office to the leadership of the Mountain Army, and the repeated questioning of the women who had been the victims of the harassment well after the apologies had been sent by the Finnish High Command, bear witness to the success of this operation. The best defence is a good offence.

It is interesting to note how little the translation criticism Lieut. Voionmaa presented to his superior affected the course of events, regardless of the fact that he quite clearly attempted to show how far the 'irresponsible translator' had gone to stir up heartburn within the brotherhood-in-arms. But when one looks at the brief timeline of the chain of events, one gets the impression that the Finnish authorities did not have very much time to review the situation right after Voionmaa's message. As Finnish liaison officer for the Air Fleet, Voionmaa was probably also too small a player next to German generals, and thus his critical observations would have had little effect once events had already been set

[23] For more about this concept see Baumgarten 2012: 64.

in motion. For better or worse, the Finnish authorities permitted the Germans to take the lead in order to move the matter off the agenda, and the framework of the brotherhood-in-arms back into alignment.

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9

Snapshots from the Ruins of the Brotherhood-in-Arms

In summer 1944, the time came at which the war's imminent end seemed in one way or another to be unavoidable, and even imperative. Information about the advance of the Red Army and the Western Allies, and of the German and Axis losses on all fronts told of the breakdown of the German army, considered invincible only a few years before. The massive attack by the Soviet Union at the Karelian Isthmus was underway. The political leadership of Finland made their own decisions based on reports coming from the front and sought negotiations with Stalin concerning withdrawal from the war. At the beginning of September 1944, these attempts became a reality in a radio speech by Prime Minister Hackzell, which is how the Finnish people learned of the beginning of peace negotiations and the end of the brotherhood-in-arms:

> According to this decision by Parliament [made in a closed session], the Finnish government will now present the request to the government of the German Reich that it transfer its troops away from Finland, and that it no longer use the territory of the Republic of Finland in order to achieve its military goals. It seems it would also be to Germany's own advantage to agree to this request by the Finnish government, if for no other reason than

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> that Germany would remain in the grateful memory of the Finnish people as the brother-in-arms nation that understood what was best for us. (Speech by Prime Minister Antti Hackzell, 2 September 1944[1])

The Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms had come to an end (Image 9.1). Finland withdrew from the war and simultaneously cut off diplomatic relations with Germany. One of the conditions of the armistice agreement required Finland to rid the country of all of the weapons of the German Air Force, Army and Navy by the middle of September 1944. The withdrawal of the German troops began almost immediately—first according to the Germans' own plans for retreat, and then based on the plan that the Finnish military leadership and the leadership of Germany's 20th Mountain Army negotiated for peaceful withdrawal of the German troops—negotiations outside of the control of the Allied Commission.

The liaison officers and interpreters that FLSR sent to the German units, along with the civilian interpreters in the employ of the Germans, were observers and actors during this transitional phase. In the following sub-chapter, I present a few snapshots of the ruins of the brotherhood-in-arms, as they were written down either as notes or activity reports during the war as well as in memoirs composed after the war.

Also Will Finnland "Lopu" Machen

The news of Prime Minister Hackzell's speech and Finland's decision to begin peace negotiations with the Soviet Union went out to all of the units through the command hierarchy and telephone conversations, and to the village of Saija northwest of Salla. Corporal Kolkkala had been posted there as a liaison NCO for the German base camp. Radio reports of the journey of the Finnish negotiations delegation to Moscow darkened the mood of the Germans at the camp, and Kolkkala heard comments about Finland's decision to end the war (*'Also will Finnland "lopu" machen'*) and to place itself at the mercy of the Soviet Union. On the Finnish side, there was suspense around how the Mountain Army would

[1] Pajunen 2010.



Image 9.1 The ruins of the theatre building of the *Haus der Kameradschaft* in Rovaniemi on 20 October 1944. The military propaganda photographer, Specialist Vilho Uomala, added the following caption to his picture: 'All that was left intact was the signpost to show the retreating Germans the direction and distance to the next settlements to destroy' [SA Image / 165,847. CC BY 4.0.]

react to the news until the rumours of the timing of the departure of the Germans at Rovaniemi and Kemijärvi shifted into concrete retreat preparations in the Saija base camp as well. The evacuation of civilians had already begun, and Kolkkala himself also prepared to leave. 'The separation from our former brothers-in-arms was simple. From both sides, wishes were expressed for a quick end to the war and a successful return

home.' The leave-taking also involved the hope that the Germans and Finns would not begin to shoot at each other after the end of their three-year brotherhood.[2]

In Southern Finland, the departure of the German units and detachments took place rather quickly.[3] As Raili Åkerfelt recalled in the interview, working in the German hospital in Nummela in Vihti as an interpreter, one September morning the Germans were simply gone:

> And then, but we weren't even told what the stages were going to be – it was already the final one, when I went to work that morning, there wasn't anyone there, all the rooms were vacated, cleaned and the patients gone. They had suddenly left by train to Hanko and from there back home. That agreement had just been signed, that peace agreement. Yes, it was so astonishing how it looked there, they had even cleaned up after themselves so there were no other people who were as clean as the Germans back then.

In the north, the troop transfers proceeded more slowly towards Norway. It is not necessary to go into the reasons for this given the confines of this study, but the agreement reached about the speed of the German troop withdrawal and the Finns' advancement was not kept, which eventually resulted in accelerated hostilities between the units of the Mountain Army and the Finnish troops under the command of Lieutenant General Hjalmar Siilasvuo.[4] The Lapland War had begun.

The local population was evacuated from the combat areas at the same time as the German detachments were retreating with their equipment and supplies towards Northern Norway. During the period of Rovaniemi's evacuation, Leila Salmi, the interpreter for the local building authority of the Mountain Army, was still in the town and watched as women and children were being helped onto trains heading south. Her tasks as a business correspondent, translator and interpreter had ended as the office lightened the load of its archives in preparation for departure:

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[2] Sana 2018: 281–284.

[3] Westerlund 2011: 257.

[4] For comments and interpretations of these events based on their own experiences, see Väänänen 1947 and Saarmaa 1987; from the military-historical perspective for example Ahto 1980.

> Well when it became clear that peace had arrived, then I remember that an enormous amount of paper was brought out into the yard from the office, to the backyard, and they were burnt. There was a big fire, burning there all the time, constantly, I was also bringing out papers and other things there. I don't know what papers they were, but I just thought it was strange that they were having all of this burnt.

Soon thereafter, Salmi was on her way back to her home town of Vaasa where, four years earlier, she had been amazed at the arrival of the Mountain Army in Finland.

From Norway to Hanko

Katja Ikonen, the correspondent and interpreter at the Hyrynsalmi army rations camp, began her journey into the unknown in the middle of September 1944 when the German unit responsible for the camp left for the north. Their trip proceeded slowly, and the various phases of the journey provided plenty of work for all those travelling with the troops. Ikonen had to continue to work as an interpreter and typist as soon as they got to Rovaniemi, where she assisted in the offices and switchboards of the German headquarters there, burned 'big piles of unnecessary papers in the field' and packed the important ones in boxes.

> We stayed in Rovaniemi for three weeks, and while we were there we ate like crazy, because we were afraid that we wouldn't get to take all of our delicacies with us. I can mention just a few examples: the daily meat ration was 500 gr. of pork a day towards the end, and we got 100 gr. of butter and 50 gr. of candy. There were at least a couple of chocolate bars in each distribution, portions of wine and spirits twice as large as they usually were, but I never saw anyone drunk, because there was strict discipline and they knew how to drink, whereas the Finns unfortunately did not have that skill. I am not trying to criticize the Finns.[5]

[5] The story is based here on her unpublished 'Travel memories' from September 1944 to September 1945 .

In Rovaniemi, Ikonen experienced quite tangibly that the brotherhood-in-arms had ended once and for all, because the Finns had begun to bombard the German units, and Ikonen herself was under curfew so that the Finns in the town would not discover and capture her. She was only allowed to move between the canteen barracks, her quarters and the office. Once, however, Ikonen succeeded in making contact with a certain Finnish liaison officer, and through his mediation she was able to get a message to her parents that she was fine and that she was on her way to Germany: 'Later on I found out that it was it was a good thing I wrote home at that time, because there had been rumours flying around in Kajaani that I had been found shot in Taivalkoski.'

The trip continued at the beginning of October, but through Ivalo to Norway; from there, Ikonen was not able to get to Germany as she had planned and wanted. After colourful and to some extent unfortunate adventures, she ended up in the German equipment warehouse (*Armeebekleidungsamt*, ABA 517) at Sætermoen, where she first worked in maintaining the inventory lists until, because of her language abilities, she was appointed leader of the foreign women's group and interpreter and as such a mediator in solving the conflicting needs of the women in the camp and German interests. Her work was difficult and post-war self-assessment was harsh; too much sympathy for the Germans was harmful to the camp 'girls':

> I didn't handle myself too well, although I was thanked by my supervisor for what I had done. I was too pro-German. I'm not ashamed to admit my mistakes. Maybe this aforementioned characteristic was the biggest reason I was made leader. I ended up working between the girls and the unit as an interpreter and as a representative for their interests, but did I do my best? I wonder. I always tried to keep the interests of the Germans in mind, and the girls didn't like me – of course I noticed that.

After the suicide of Hitler in spring 1945 and the unconditional surrender of the German army, the American troops who arrived in Norway placed Ikonen along with other Finnish women in Norwegian internment camps. They were transferred from there a few weeks later via Sweden to Finland for interrogation by the State Police at the camp in

Hanko.[6] The train station in Tornio, the first Finnish stage on the return home, was 'full of folks' who had flocked to the place when they heard rumours from Sweden of the return of the women who had left with the Germans. Those arriving could see curious Tornio residents with cobblestones in their hands behind a chain of police guards:

> It made me shudder when I thought about how it would feel to end up in the hands of those brutes. Had we caused them any harm personally? Were they themselves so without fault that throwing rocks at others was justified? At any rate, the civilian authority who got on the train ordered it to stop a few kilometres farther away from the station.

When day dawned in Hanko after her trip, Ikonen noticed that she was in an area enclosed with barbed wire. For the three weeks the interrogations and quarantine lasted, the women were accommodated in barracks built by the Germans. They were fed water gruel, macaroni and food sent from home, nervously awaiting their own questioning:

> I was questioned for six hours, asked if I had participated in any armed activities against our people, had I sometimes visited the Finnish side from Norway and the like, endlessly. I explained my travels and activities there according to my notebook and that guy seemed satisfied. Otherwise the guy from the State Police was quite all right for someone working for them. From what I'd heard, I figured they'd be pretty scary.

After the end of her quarantine and interrogations, Ikonen finally was allowed to return to Ranua. Her parents were happy to have her back, and when the local police chief also asked her to be his office assistant, life began to settle down. One day, Ikonen happened to find a letter sent to her boss by the State Police. In it, the police chief was requested to keep an eye on Ikonen because of her political opinions. In Ikonen's own words: 'I then realized what that police chief had done in hiring a

[6] Anu Heiskanen's doctoral dissertation provides a detailed picture of the experiences of the Finnish women who left with the German troops after the collapse of the Third Reich, the measures implemented around their return home and their repatriation, and the attempts of the State Police to screen politically suspicious elements; Heiskanen 2018, in particular Chap. 5, 'The period of German occupation and the return home'.

"suspicious person" to work for him.' When he was asked about it, the police chief admitted that he had hired her for precisely this reason, and that was that—it didn't bother Ikonen any longer: 'He had handled things well and I had a job.'

Speaking in Tongues Again

September 1944 and the end of the alliance brought many kinds of changes for those soldiers working as liaison officers and interpreters for the brothers-in-arms. Officers, NCOs and rank and file who had Russian skills were transferred to the new tasks required for local cease-fire agreements or troop transfers,[7] while those interpreters and liaison officers who knew German were made ombudsmen for issues relating to the evacuation of Northern Finland. It is also known that some officers of the Mountain Army had resistance plans (never implemented) and attempted to recruit liaison officers proficient in languages into their units, tempting them with the high wages and significant promotions they would receive in the German army.[8]

For some liaison officers and interpreters, the end of the brotherhood-in-arms meant a transfer to Finnish units in Northern Finland, also to such units whose responsibility it was to ensure the removal of German troops from Finland. Jyrki Kolkkala, who had worked as an interpreter and a liaison NCO in German units for the whole duration of the brotherhood-in-arms, was among them. After his mediation duties ceased, Kolkkala joined as a member of the Finnish troops in the Salla area (Special Detachment Sau) who were transferring, with hopes of demobilization, first through Kemijärvi, Rovaniemi and Oulu to Liinakhamari, until the direction of their journey suddenly changed back northwards to follow the retreating Germans. The units were in constant motion and ended up in skirmishes as well with their former brother-in-arms, and rumours and news coming from the headquarters of pending

[7] Cables relating to the enumeration of the officers and specialists who had Russian-language skills can be found in the correspondence of FLSR's command office [for example T-5872/57, NA].

[8] Regarding these enlistment attempts, see for example Auterinen 1991: 35, Westerlund 2011: 262–263.

demobilization were lively. For Kolkkala, this finally took place at the end of November 1944.[9]

By order of the Finnish High Command, FLSR's activities as a liaison office were suspended in the middle of September 1944, and from that point on it continued on as a sub-unit of the Northern Finland Evacuation Headquarters Rovaniemi. Its central activities were conducting a post-mortem of FLSR's operations and supporting the military and civilian authorities during the period of evacuation of Northern Finland and withdrawal of the German troops. In practice, the first of these tasks meant the transfer of movable property and archives to Ylivieska; the second turned Colonel Willamo and the liaison officers under his command into *military experts*, who worked for the provincial governments of Oulu and Lapland and the county districts of Northern Finland. Their duties included helping the local police chiefs with matters of public order and safety, working as interpreters for meetings between the chiefs and Germans, and helping the chiefs to attempt to prevent the destruction of civilian targets. These military experts assisted the evacuation authorities in the moving of citizens and reporting on the progress of the retreat of the Mountain Army.[10]

One of those working under the title of military expert was liaison officer Lieutenant Pentti S. Heikkinen. He was sent to help the Finnish authorities in Suomussalmi where he maintained constant contact with the German troops preparing to withdraw, and he worked on negotiating the evacuation schedule for the local civilian population. At the same time, he did what he could ('speaking in tongues again') to make sure that civilian property was not damaged during the German troop withdrawal, but nevertheless ended up following the destruction left in their wake:

> Something was achieved nevertheless [through negotiations, author's comment]. The flames were put out in Suomussalmi, and in Puolanka they never flared up. At this point though, Hyrynsalmi was probably already smoke in the sky.[11]

[9] Sana 2017: 281–303.

[10] Väänänen 1947: 244–253.

[11] Heikkinen 1971: 265.

For Lieutenant Olli Auterinen, the end of the brotherhood-in-arms meant following along with the German evacuation transport from the Pontsalenjoki air field in Kiestinki to Kuusamo in the middle of the chaos of Finnish-German evacuation:

> Kuusamo was full of evacuees. On the Finnish side of the border, there were crowds of people leaving their homes with their wagons, possessions and livestock. The situation was very unclear. How could the Germans be gone from Finland by the middle of September as the armistice required? Would Lapland become a battlefield again, or would the Russians stop at the old border?[12]

Once in Kuusamo, Auterinen received the command to join the detachment whose job it was to receive the Russians pursuing the Germans at the border, and wave the Finnish flag, 'to bid them welcome but also to notify them that according to the armistice agreement, they did not have the right to cross the Finnish border'. It remained unclear whether it would be possible to deliver this message to the advancing units in the midst of combat, and the Finnish High Command's order was cancelled a few days later—to the relief of Auterinen and many other similar liaison officers who had received the flag-waving command.[13] He returned to Kuusamo, and from there he was posted to Pudasjärvi to act as an interpreter for meetings between the local civilian authorities and the German troops and, as the instructions for the previously mentioned tasks of the military experts required, to supervise the withdrawal of the Germans and support civilian evacuation.[14]

Pudasjärvi is also where Captain Boris Saarmaa felt, in his own words, 'like a referee'. His task was to ensure that the Finnish troops were observing the agreement made between the Finnish High Command and the Mountain Army about how the withdrawal would proceed. Despite preparations, however, this did not occur. Trust had been broken and as the situation became more tense, the message-carrying military experts shuttling back and forth between the front lines, like Saarmaa, were

[12] Auterinen 1991: 35.

[13] ibid.: 36; Saarmaa 1987: 150–151.

[14] Auterinen 1991: 36.

labelled traitors or came under fire: Cavalry Captain Cecil Ahlqvist, a military expert sent to Kemi, had been settling disagreements regarding the withdrawal plan at the beginning of October 1944 when a Finnish sentry opened fire at his car. Ahlqvist was wounded in the incident and died of his wounds.[15]

As Uula Aapa wrote, the clash eventually meant that the Germans began to not only take civilians hostage but also military experts. Because of this, the Finnish High Command ordered them to leave their posts for Rovaniemi at the beginning of October. There, after several meetings with the Germans, they were moved as a single detachment under Major Väänänen to Ylivieska. After they arrived, their duties as liaison officers, or military experts, ended: A number of them were ordered back to the front units and some were sent home.[16]

The Desecration of Hitler

The 7th of September, the fifth day after Prime Minister Hackzell's radio speech, was a frenetic one in many ways for all those in the Alakurtti area of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps. The German troops were still continuing to fight against the Red Army troops advancing towards Finland at the same time as they were preparing to leave Finland for Norway. Finnish military operations had ended in the cease fire a couple of days previously, and the units were on their way out of Alakurtti. At the same time, the liaison officers and interpreters of FLSR were preparing to depart the common army corps area together with the evacuating Finnish civilians and the Lottas. The departure from Alakurtti ended up taking place more quickly than planned, on that same day.

In the afternoon, Lieutenant Mies Telas, the liaison officer, had left by command of the senior liaison officer, Major Lauri Hanén, to monitor the dismantling of the Finnish canteens and the flow of evacuation

[15] Väänänen 1947: 252; about Ahlqvist's death, Westerlund (2011: 263) writes, 'injured under unclear circumstances'.

[16] Väänänen 1947: 252–255, Aapa 1961: 189.

traffic.[17] He had brought Private 1st Class Erkki Summanen along with him, the liaison officers' clerk and interpreter, as well as Private 1st Class Kalle Mikkanen, chauffeur for the officers. To that point the day had progressed at a rather leisurely pace. In the morning, Telas had gone to take leave of the Finnish pioneer company that was leaving the front and spent some time there with the officers over a glass or two of cognac. Summanen, in turn, as he 'didn't have anything particular to do', had been killing time drinking the cognac that the Germans had also given to the Finns to make their stores lighter. The alcohol, three 10-centilitre pours, had clearly 'gone to his head', but Summanen did not believe he was tipsy when Lieut. Telas ordered him to accompany him back to the inspection round—'such a small amount' that he could not possibly 'have become drunk'. The tour began in Alanko, the canteen, where Summanen and the canteen Lottas had almost immediately begun a heated argument about the realities of war and politics when Summanen noticed that Marshal Mannerheim's photograph was missing from the wall of the canteen. Now a picture of Adolf Hitler was the only one displayed. Previous observations, experiences and feelings about the different relationship of the canteen Lottas towards Germans and Finns quickly rose to the surface, and Summanen voiced out loud that, based on the experience he'd garnered in the SS units, he knew quite well that there was hardly any reason to favour a German soldier over a Finnish one. The exchange of words grew more intense.

The following is an excerpt from Summanen's interrogation protocol:

> About this matter, both of the canteen Lottas said that the Finnish government and the Marshal were in this way expressing gratitude towards the Germans, that they were directly betraying Germany. The reporting party responded to this by saying that ultimately no nation can help another one. The quarrel had intensified on both sides after this and Lieut. Telas had cautioned the canteen Lottas about speaking disparagingly of the government and the Marshal.

[17] The incident that occurred in Alakurtti on 7 September 1944 is described here from information collected by the Military Police Office of FLSR and the administrative office (Office X) based on material relayed from interrogations to the Germans for their information [T-5857/8, NA]. A brief summary of the events is also found in Kolkkala's diaries; see Sana 2018: 284–285.

Thereafter Summanen had remarked to the Lottas that if they did not approve of the measures of the Finnish government and the president, as Finnish women they had no need to worship Hitler either, and after saying this he had yanked the *Führer*'s picture off the wall and tossed it on the floor, and the glass in the frame had shattered. In the same tumult Summanen had torn a propaganda poster quoting '*Waffen-Hände-Herzen*' [weapons-hands-hearts] from Goebbels' 'Total War' speech from the wall and ripped it in two. The interrogation protocol continued:

> By doing these things, the party in his upset state had targeted the Lottas, not wanting to do anything against the German people or its opinions. And he added that he would never do anything like that against Hitler personally, because he had once sworn an oath to him, he had simply done it in front of the canteen Lottas.

Finally, Telas, Summanen and Mikkanen, who had remained standing by during the events, left to go to the next canteen, with the angry shouting of the Lottas behind them, to which, according to Telas, they had become so accustomed recently 'that we couldn't be bothered to pay attention to them'. In the second canteen as well, Kino, the Finnish government that had signed the armistice was criticized for the Germans' disappointment, but this time the discussion remained calmer, and the movable property in the canteen remained undamaged.

It did not take long for the Germans to react to the events that took place in the canteen. Shortly after Telas' group returned to the dugout where the liaison officers and interpreters were quartered, the adjutant of the commander of the XXXVI Mountain Army Corps arrived and notified those present that earlier that day, a picture of the German leader had been damaged. For this reason, all of the Finnish communicative links in the dugout were to be temporarily detained. They were forced to surrender their weapons and remain in the dugout—armed guards stood at the door. After the adjutant left, Telas and Summanen were asked to explain the course of events to their senior officer, and then the reasons for their confinement to the dugout was revealed to those outside the involved parties themselves.

A few hours later, the Chief of Staff of the army corps, Colonel Schmidt, brought notification of the commanding general's decision, which ordered all of the Finnish liaison officers, interpreters and other employees of FLSR in the area to leave Alakurtti, if possible that same evening by 10:00 p.m.

Under the prevailing circumstances, the event was quite embarrassing, but the polite dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms was maintained to the last moment. When Major Hanén reported to Colonel Willamo a day later, he remarked how Schmidt had said that relations with the liaison officers in the Mountain Army headquarters had been 'trustful and good' up to that point. For this reason, they were trying to arrange matters as painlessly as possible, but in a way that would prevent such incidents from happening again and 'arousing bitterness among them'. The request for the FLSR staff to leave was thus necessary although the event 'in no way worsens our personal friendship'. Hanén had expressed his concern for the evacuation of both the canteen Lottas and for the locally stored supplies. The commanding general, however, had already taken care of evacuating the Lottas, and when he also promised help with the supplies, Hanén felt it best to proceed without delay:

> […] I noticed that they were trying to remove us as tactfully as possible, because our presence, in the very sensitive situation in which military representatives of a country that had broken off diplomatic relations with them were present in their highest headquarters as a critical operative situation was underway, seemed painful to both sides although during the whole time, the general invited me to take a seat at his desk.

The bus that took FLSR staff departed in the middle of the night when the other liaison officers from the area had left their divisions. The unfortunate journey was interrupted after a few hours by an accident in Salla, and the bus was damaged beyond repair. During the time that alternate transportation was being arranged, the four canteen Lottas also arrived in Salla; seven others had decided to stay in Alakurtti to follow the German troops to Germany.

Most of the liaison officers continued their journey by rail to Rovaniemi later on, but Hanén received the order by phone to present himself

without delay, along with Telas, Summanen and Mikkanen, at FLSR. After the night of travel, a long Friday dawned on which interrogations about 'the desecration of the leader of the Third Reich' were held in the office of the military police at FLSR. One day later, the four Lottas evacuated from Alakurtti were also interrogated.

The final statement of the criminal investigation officer conducting the interrogations, Lieutenant M.O. Kantanen, found Private 1st Class Summanen guilty 'of both intoxication with strong drink and of inappropriate conduct'. The inappropriate conduct was of such a nature, according to Kantanen, that 'under certain circumstances it is to be considered an act against the head of a foreign nation'. Considering these circumstances, Kantanen seemed to understand the reasons for Summanen becoming upset and also emphasized that the destruction of Hitler's picture had not taken place before the eyes of any Germans, 'so that the act is to be considered solely an event taking place between subjects of Finland'. For better or worse, Summanen landed in field court answering for his unmilitary behaviour, and this also came to be known by the Mountain Army, already on its way out of the country. The Germans were sent translations of all reports clarifying the entire course of events and of the interrogation protocols. Taking care of the translation work was the administrative office's translation powerhouse, Specialist V. I. Lehtiranta.

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10

Eighty Years Later: War and the Brotherhood-in-Arms in the Eyes of a Translation Historian

War moves people. It moves soldiers across state borders into the territory of another nation, whether as an unwelcome occupier or a welcome ally, as a scout or as a POW. War drives civilians from their homes and their homelands into safety in more peaceful areas—into more remote regions of their own country or into neighbouring ones, or even farther away. But at the same time, war moves people into occupations as well, into tasks that society, forced into the new realities of war, has deemed to be essential. War triggers a 'mobilization' that reaches beyond the soldiers sent far away to the front and to all of those places where resources necessary for feeding the war machine can be found. The Continuation War, 1941–1944, is no exception in this respect: In addition to men of service age, citizens were mobilized throughout society to perform tasks for which they were deemed suitable, either based on their appropriate expertise or work experience. Penmen such as Mika Waltari became producers of propaganda, linguists and mathematicians were given jobs as decoders in the Intelligence Division of the Finnish High Command, historians were tasked with creating credible justifications for the occupation of Eastern Karelia as part of Greater Finland, students who had just graduated were sent to be teachers in occupied areas, and quick-witted

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journalists, singers and actors ended up on the front radio stations of the Finnish Defence Forces or in entertainment troupes to raise soldier morale at the front. Civilians and soldiers who were proficient in language had their own important role in this mobilization.

The Continuation War and the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms brought over 200,000 soldiers and other employees of the *Wehrmacht* to Finland. As a result, Eastern and Northern Finland in particular became the site of dense, intercultural contact zones. In this study, they have been examined specifically as translation spaces in which translation, interpreting and other mediation activities took many different forms: In the military cooperation required for the Finnish-German alliance, or in the cooperation between military and civilian authorities, and in the encounters between soldiers and civilians, a group of people proficient in two or more languages functioned to ensure that the parties understood each other. Their language abilities became a resource that the military on both sides of the brotherhood-in-arms attempted to mine, both from among those soldiers serving actively or in the reserves as well as from among civilians across the social spectrum, and in terms of age from school children to pensioners.

The German army's own interpreters (left primarily unexamined in this presentation) were a very small group, and although the Finnish High Command posted many of its own liaison officers as well as interpreters to the German corps and divisions, these kinds of *official* language resources of the brotherhood-in-arms, when considering both the number of soldiers and German units, were insufficient to meet the need. Consequently, many German-speaking civilians, above all women, ended up working for the Mountain Army, the Air Fleet, paramilitary work organizations and military hospitals during the war. Their tasks were to support the Germans as they conducted business with local residents and authorities or with Finnish suppliers and employees. There were many different paths to these jobs, for example through Lotta assignments, tips from friends or pure chance. Everyday communication situations gave rise to varying degrees of *unofficial* mediation activity, and a random interpreting or translation task in the villages at the home front, in the shops or restaurants could soon lead to a high-paying job within the official structures of the Mountain Army.

All in all, the group image of the *interpreters of the brotherhood-in-arms* is quite diverse, considering the different individuals who ended up a part of it: their cultural, social and professional backgrounds, or the titles they held during the war. Those who were *doing* the translation and interpretation required by the brotherhood-in-arms for three years were above all actors whose job titles during peacetime or during the war did not even remotely reflect this agency. Individuals from many peacetime professions found themselves as interpreters in wartime under a broad range of titles. Those who acted as interpreters or translators included liaison officers, the NCOs, specialists and rank and file of the Separate Interpreter Detachment established by the Finnish High Command, Lottas primarily assigned to be nurses, accountants or office secretaries; before the war, they had been career officers, university students, business correspondents, shop assistants, journalists or school pupils. The common denominator uniting them and qualifying them as interpreters was language proficiency, on one basis or another considered sufficient. In other words, the war 'made' these individuals with some language ability performers of the requisite mediation tasks, although most of them had never had any experience interpreting before, nor did they continue in that field after the war was over. With rare exceptions, interpreting and translation remained a temporary activity and disappeared along with the brotherhood-in-arms.

The Finnish liaison officers and interpreters who were sent to the German units at the beginning of the Continuation War and later organized under FLSR were a significant investment in the smooth operation of the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms. They have also been accorded the main focus in this work. Whereas research has to this point emphasized their activities above all as soldiers and monitors of German operations, this book's most important task has been to highlight the role of the military and civilian employees of FLSR as the communicative glue of the brotherhood-in-arms—as soldiers, but above all as translators, interpreters and errand boys for the brothers-in-arms.

Based on the activity reports of the liaison officers and interpreters, one can deduce that an enormous number of texts were being *translated*—either into Finnish or German—not only in the offices of FLSR but also in the workrooms of the local commandants or the dugout headquarters

of the Mountain Army or the division commander. These texts coordinated joint military operations or cooperation between the German military authorities and the Finnish civilian administration, regulated the mutual boundaries of interactions or negotiated compensation for damage caused by one side or the other. The activities of coordination, regulating boundaries and negotiation naturally involved abundant *interpreting* work, but the *tasks of the interpreter* also included assisting for example in the joint Finnish-German patrols, and working at the innumerable construction sites of *Organisation Todt* or the German Air Fleet as well as in the officers' canteens. In addition to all of this, countless other matters were delegated to the liaison officers and interpreters, both by German soldiers and Finnish civilians, which kept them busy *running errands*. For the Germans, a liaison officer or interpreter was a local expert, familiar with local conditions and customs, assigned to them by the Finnish High Command who could be relied on to take care of procurement or leasing matters on behalf of the Germans and, where possible, to their advantage as well. At the same time, for the Finns, the communicative link wearing the uniform of the Finnish army was their own representative who was expected to look after matters in the interests of the Finns in particular and according to their wishes or perspectives.

This kind of grassroots-level cross-draught was an essential determiner of an operational middle ground in which interpreters and liaison officers had to constantly position themselves between the expectations and interests of the locals and the Germans. Whose advantage the situation ended up favouring was the sum of many factors: On the one hand, the instructions provided as well as the spoken and unspoken agreements made by the brotherhood-in-arms weighed heavy in deliberations, but besides these, the person's own relationship to the ongoing war, the goals of this war, the presence of the German troops, and a possible personal affinity for Germany as a result of family and heritage or emotional bonds also figured in their decisions.

Moreover, the basic tasks delegated to FLSR by the Finnish High Command contributed to the cross-draught that the interpreters and liaison officers experienced in the middle ground, since their tasks had a clear dual function. It was the job of the communicative links to support the presence of the German army and the war effort through all possible

methods, but in addition, the Finnish High Command expected a constant supply of up-to-date information from them about the operations of the German troops, the mood prevailing at the headquarters and in the dugouts, and opinions expressed about Finland and the Finns. This was a matter of liaison officers' standard routine, something the German commanding officers must have been aware of, but nonetheless, the curiosity, and in particular the reporting, of the Finnish liaison officers and interpreters could arouse resentment and distrust about the true role and loyalty of the communicative link. At its worst, this distrust could crystallize into suspicions of espionage, under which circumstances the liaison officer was denied access to the Germans' meetings and events. As far as the Germans were concerned, loyalty to them and to the alliance was the primary operative norm for the Finnish communicative links, and doubts about this called into question the position of liaison officers and interpreters, making it difficult for them to perform their duties.

The responsibility to report stipulated by the Finnish High Command meant also, in practice, that the liaison officers and interpreters not only *interpreted* between the brothers-in-arms, but also *made their own interpretation of* the brotherhood-in-arms in their activity reports, which were forwarded on to Mikkeli from FLSR. The reporting duty and the instructions for this reporting gave them the official task of constructing the brotherhood through the phenomena they observed and deemed worthy of reporting. In this connection it is important to note that the impressions that ended up in the activity reports are often precisely *translated* impressions: The German-language discussions and speeches that took place in the headquarters of the dugouts and in the officers' canteens were not reported as they were spoken, but rather as translated summaries. And since the decision about what to report was always made by the person reporting, it can be claimed that the information and impressions that were conveyed to the Finnish High Command from the front and rear areas through the commander of FLSR, and the situational picture that was created as a result, were an aggregate of multiple processes of choice and interpretation.

The translation and interpreting activities that were required to support the functioning of the German troops have been summarized previously. The offices and staff of FLSR, the liaison officers and interpreters,

were an indispensable communicative node in the social networks in the brotherhood-in-arms. As translation bureaus for the brotherhood, as communicative links at the front, as translation machines in the dugouts or as representatives of the Finnish High Command in the cabinets of the commanding generals, they maintained communications in operational order between Finns and Germans and thus did their part in the task that the dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms assigned to them: They furthered the military efforts of the German army and supported the resolution of disputes before small flames could grow into huge wildfires that could scorch the public image of the brotherhood and the stability of the dramaturgy itself. But Governor Hillilä's demand that besides their support functions, they were to constantly ensure that the presence of the Germans not assume the characteristics of an occupation was also part of the script. Given this task, the translation work required by the cooperation between the German military and the Finnish civilian authorities fulfilled a symbolic function as well: The official communication mediated by the translations of the 'post office', or FLSR, was a tangible reminder that the German military authorities and the Finnish civilian government were two separate administrative categories.

In any event, the translation work required attentiveness and political sensitivity. In performing it, the liaison officers and the officers employed at FLSR functioned as gatekeepers who, at the final moment, decided what would be translated and how. If there were the least possibility that the contents of a text (for example reports about Finnish peace overtures appearing in the media) or its acrimonious tone would harm rather than promote cooperation in that particular situation, superfluous heat or even the entire text would be left untranslated as a result.

The dramaturgy of the brotherhood-in-arms—'together against a common enemy'—was the target of many kinds of threats, not least of all because the brothers were very different from each other despite the common enemy, whether in terms of military culture or ideological framework, or, more generally, in terms of factors pertaining to either the lifestyle they had acquired or the kind of environment to which they were accustomed. There was enough foreignness and difference to puzzle both sides of the alliance, and when this puzzlement at differences turned into critical vexation—if not before—liaison officers and interpreters found

themselves faced with a new task. As *interpreters of the brothers- and brotherhood-in-arms*, they needed to explain local customs and Finnish culture and society to the Germans on a regular basis, or they had to answer questions about the Finns' views on the separate war and the actual state of the alliance. In other words, wherever they were posted, they not only construed the state of the brotherhood-in-arms for the Finnish military leadership, but also Finland for the German officers—a task that was eventually also directed from the top down. In the view of FLSR, the impression that the Germans had received of the Finns and Finland had been so badly twisted under northern conditions that it jeopardized Finland's position in the coming division of power after Germany emerged victorious from the war. This is why a broad propaganda programme was designed to support the communicative links in their own education efforts. The contribution of translated material was particularly significant in FLSR's propaganda project.

All things considered, a clear picture of multidimensional translatory agency emerges from the documents of FLSR, in particular the activity reports of the liaison officers and interpreters. Mediation agency was put under pressure from both sides of the alliance by not only the general geopolitical objectives of the brotherhood-in-arms and operative or administrative needs on the local level, but also the ideological frames of reference. Expectations placed on the mediation naturally changed by dint of the geographic conditions of the posting as well as the conditions and state of combat; at the same time, military hierarchies played their part in deciding who had the opportunity for more independent agency and who was to simply follow orders. Mobility from one posting to another, and the instability of social structures that resulted, were a part of the job description, as well as the distrust that targeted the activities of the liaison officers and interpreters and the constant presence of violence and death. These kinds of cross-pressures that the translators and interpreters experienced, the expectations and risks, are intrinsically well known from past or present conflicts as well, but the actual content, along with the reasons for it and the consequences that ensue, differ depending on the characteristics of the geopolitical and ideological context.

The stages of the Finnish-German brotherhood-in-arms and the narratives that determined the respective dramaturgy of each side of the alliance were tangibly present wherever the Finnish liaison officers and interpreters were performing their grass-roots mediation work according to their particular commission. Because of their official position, the entire brotherhood-in-arms and the fundamental pillars of its dramaturgy were condensed in their activities at the local level. For this reason, the image of the translation and interpreting required by the brotherhood-in-arms that can be constructed from the activity reports provides one additional historiographical perspective on the phases of the three-year alliance and how the brothers-in-arms linked to each other. The liaison officers and interpreters embodied a space where their mediation was crucial for the functionality of military cooperation, but where they were also challenged by the German side to explain the Finnish attitudes towards the entire brotherhood-of-arms. As such, the space manifested the dichotomous attitude of the political and military leadership in Finland. Linguistic support for the presence of the German army and its operations also contributed to the Finnish war effort, but all this support was also continuously framed by the narrative of politically sovereign Finland's separate war against the same foe—a story that Finland insisted on trying to maintain on the international front as well all the way to the end of the war, and even afterwards. The way in which individual interpreters and liaison officers as well as others in the service of the German units experienced the years immediately after the armistice bears witness to the fact that having performed linguistic service for the brotherhood-in-arms had shifted into a stigma, an issue best left undiscussed for the years to follow.

Translators and interpreters, just as translating interpreters and liaison officers, are observers and actors in history: In their task-defined position, they place their own emphasis on how peoples and cultures encounter each other under conditions of both peace and war. And when the vicissitudes of history create shock waves, they experience them on the front line.

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