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NSA Daily ⚙️⚙️   *Defending Our Nation. Securing The Future.*

(U) HISTORY TODAY - 12 September 2014

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(U) We hear a lot about the SIGINT successes of the Allies in World War II, but less about the achievements of the Axis -- which were, fortunately, few in number.

(U) During the war, plans were made for U.S. or UK forces to be based in the Soviet Union: some of them, including the setup of a UK SIGINT intercept (Y) site at Polyarnoe known as "Wye Cottage," came to fruition.

(U) Another site was in Poltava, USSR (now Poltava, Ukraine), where the U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) built a base. The idea was to shuttle bombers: planes flying from elsewhere would hit their targets, land at Poltava, refuel and rearm, and then attack other targets on the way back to their homebase. The whole plan was called OPERATION FRANTIC.

(U) OPERATION FRANTIC, like other attempts to base U.S./UK forces in the USSR, was dogged by Soviet intransigence from the start, and after a major German airstrike on June 21, 1944, the project dwindled in size and ended in September 1944.

(U) The German airstrike was the result of work by the Luftwaffe's cryptanalytic bureau, the Chiffrierstelle, Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe (Chi-Stelle-OBdL). The Chi-Stelle-OBdL learned of a USAAF overflight going to Russia, and was able to determine the day it would occur, but not the final landing site in Russia. This turned out to be enough, as a Luftwaffe force was alerted, followed the overflight to Russia, and attacked the USAAF bombers after they landed.

(U) During interrogation after the war by TICOM (Target Intelligence Committee), Hermann Goering described this as the only example he could remember of Chi-Stelle-OBdL having a success against high-level traffic.

(U) The TICOM program was a joint British-U.S. effort at the end of the war to capture German cryptologic personnel, records, and equipment. Read an article about TICOM in a *History Today* from April 14, 2014.

(U) The photograph shows the FRANTIC airfield, with both U.S. and Soviet aircraft.

(U) Discuss historical topics with interesting folks. Visit the Center for Cryptologic History's blog, *History Rocks* ("go history rocks")

(U) Larger view of graphic.

(U) Have a question or comment on *History Today*? Contact us at DL cch or cch@nsa.ic.gov.

(U) FRANTIC airfield, with both U.S. and Soviet aircraft.

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