

Brad MILLER  
Morehead State University, USA

## THE GREAT EXPERIMENT – REMEMBERING OPERATION FRANTIC, World War II, 1944-1945

### ВЕЛИКИЙ ЕКСПЕРИМЕНТ – ПАМ'ЯТЬ ПРО ОПЕРАЦІЮ «ФРАНТИК» В ЧАСИ II СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ, 1944-1945

© Бред М., 2012

**Анотація:** З охолодженням взаємин між Радянським Союзом і Сполученими Штатами у зв'язку з наслідками II Світової війни важливість ролі Полтави у війні була неадекватно відбита в більшості загальнопоширених історичних праць. Парадоксальні успіхи операції Frantic ("скаженої операції") не підходили чітко до політично зараженої пам'яті, що вплинула як на американських, так і радянських учених періоду холодної війни. Хоча питання впливу операції на результат II Світової війни є дискусійним, дипломатичні і матеріально-технічні досягнення чоловіків та жінок, відповідальних за планування і реконструкцію спільної радянсько-американської авіабази під Полтавою заслуговують на більше, ніж просто згадку в історичних записках. Через інтенсивну співпрацю на урядовому й академічному рівнях історична пам'ять відіб'є значення особливості Полтави як спільної радянсько-американської штаб-квартири у II Світовій війні.

**Ключові слова:** авіація, аеропорти, літаки, II Світова Війна, Союзники.

**Annotation:** The article describes about the war cooperation between the USA Military forces and the Red Army of the USSR during the WWII near the Poltava city.

**Key words:** WWII, aviation, airports, aliants, Red Army, USSR, USA,

The Soviet-American alliance during World War II was a matter of necessity and lacked the requisite friendship that existed between the other Western allies. For the most part, the Allies fought two separate wars in the European Theatre, the British, French, and American on the Western and Southern fronts, and the Soviets on the Eastern front. Because of logistical and diplomatic difficulties, tactical cooperation with the Soviets was difficult at best and largely non-existent except for one major operation, Operation Frantic. Operation Frantic consisted of the establishment of three joint American-Soviet airbases in Eastern Ukraine for the purpose of shuttle-bombing raids. Several factors contributed to the relative neglect of the operation by historians and preservationists. However, the



accomplishments of Operation Frantic's planners and participants were important enough to deserve more recognition than they currently have received.

The operation was conceived by American military strategists and agreed to by the leaders attending the Teheran conference in 1943. The United States and Soviet Union were both eager to bomb targets hitherto unreachable by American bombers such as the marshaling yards and airfields in Hungary and Romania. The concept quickly gained traction with American leadership, including Roosevelt himself. Roosevelt viewed the operation as an opportunity to increase military cooperation with the Soviets and hoped to set a precedent for using bases on Soviet soil for the upcoming war against the Japanese. The operation was eventually approved by the Soviet general staff, despite several perceived delays by the slow moving Soviet bureaucracy.

The Soviets agreed to the use of three airbases by the Americans and also agreed to supply air defense, support, and logistical personnel for the operation. The Americans would be permitted to station B17 Flying Fortresses and P51 Mustang escort fighters on Ukrainian soil. Operation Frantic was headquartered in Poltava, Ukraine. Additional airbases were located in Mirgorod and Piryatin. Having recently been pushed from the area by the advancing Red Army in September of 1942, the German forces left the airfields and their corresponding cities in ruins. The bases had to be rebuilt from the ground up. The logistical problems of rebuilding the three bases were complex and massive. Complicating the process, the retreating Germans left mines and booby traps in the buildings around the Poltava Airfield.<sup>1</sup>

Tens of thousands of tons of supplies were needed to rebuild the base and were moved from the port of Murmansk in the north and through Iran in the south. Poltava lacked runways long enough to support American heavy bombers, running water, power for the headquarters, and housing for the men and women who were to be stationed there. Because the Soviet and American commanders could not agree on the initial base locations, it was not until late February of 1944 that construction was able to commence. With a combined effort of Soviet and American engineers, laborers, and crews, the airfields and their corresponding support facilities were constructed in only three short months.<sup>2</sup>

By April 23, the Soviets had unloaded 26,000 tons of equipment and supplies from ships at Murmansk. By May 1 the first trains began to offload in Poltava and by June 2, the first American bombers arrived. In the short period of one month, thousands of tons of pierced steel runway matting were pieced together by mostly women laborers in order to make the airfields usable by the American bombers. The steel runway matting, otherwise known as Marsden Matting, was crucial to the construction of the base. Utilizing the pierced steel planking, engineers along with Soviet Laborers quickly constructed the runways.

The only relatively intact building at the airfield was a large U-Shape building that the Soviet General Perminov decided would house the headquarters element. But because the large U shaped building at Poltava still lacked electricity and water, General Perminov gave the American commanders railroad cars to use as a temporary headquarters while the building was being repaired. Surprisingly to the Americans, the Soviets constructed a tent city and repaired the headquarters building in adequate time to begin bombing operations in early June.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark Conversino, *Fighting With the Soviets: The Failure of Operation Frantic* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997):9-12.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Conversino, *Fighting With the Soviets*, 46.

On a more human level, the cooperation between Soviet and American soldier worked well. Both sides were eager to share information. Intelligence sharing reached an all time high between the Soviet and Americans during Operation Frantic. For the first and possibly the last time, American and Soviet commanders trusted each other. The soldiers and airmen in Poltava developed a camaraderie stemming from the leaders' insistence that ground crews consist of both Soviets and Americans. They played volleyball and poker together and shared war stories and tactics. It would be safe to say that despite extreme ideological differences, the Soviets and Americans got along very well. Ukrainian civilians also contributed to the effort. They cooked meals, did laundry, and provided recreational opportunities for the soldiers and airmen stationed in Ukraine. American men mingled with Ukrainian women, some even deserting and remaining in Ukraine after the war. The local Ukrainians staged cultural shows for the Americans that usually ended in music and dancing. Soldiers who participated in the operation recalled that mixing with the local populace was encouraged rather than restricted. Soldiers from both militaries, as well as the locals, found that on many levels they were similar despite the ideological rhetoric of the times.

After the quick completion of the construction of the base and the first successful bombing mission, diplomatic relations warmed considerably between the Soviets and Americans. The Americans were given broad leeway in picking targets and relied heavily on Soviet intelligence. Yet a series of events that were inevitable caused the whole Operation to be viewed as a failure in the eyes of both militaries. The Germans succeeded in shadowing a flight of bombers as they entered Ukraine and landed in Poltava. The Germans quickly put together a mission to strike the airbase at Poltava. As the bombers approached Poltava, the Soviets failed to intercept, resulting in catastrophic losses of aircraft on the ground in Poltava despite only limited human casualties. Many Americans saw this as treachery on the part of the Soviets and distrust began to permeate relations. Although, the more likely explanation of the enemy attack's success was lack of communication and air defense incompetence, many continued to believe the Soviets were complicit in the attack. As tensions rose and diplomacy broke down between the Americans and Soviets, the Red Army continued to rapidly advance against the Germans. Stalin, recognizing that he no longer needed the help of the American bombers in Ukraine, finally cancelled the operation. Because of the preexisting mutual distrust, and the distrust generated from the German raid on Poltava, diplomatic relations between the Soviets and Americans never recovered.

There are three books, from three distinct time periods, that analyze Operation Frantic in great detail. The first book, *The Poltava Affair* published in 1973 by Glenn Infield, portrays Operation Frantic as a wonderful idea that was sabotaged by the treacherous Soviets at every possible opportunity.<sup>3</sup> As a History Book Club selection in 1973, *The Poltava Affair* was widely read and accepted as the definitive history on Operation Frantic. Not until the late eighties and beyond did scholars begin to



---

<sup>3</sup> Glenn Infield, *The Poltava Affair: A Russian Warning: An American Tragedy* (New York: Macmillan, 1973)

question the validity of Infield's thesis that the Soviets were responsible for the Poltava attack and the ultimate failure of Operation Frantic. Two subsequent works, *Reluctant Allies*<sup>4</sup> by Daniel Bolger and *Fighting With the Soviets*<sup>5</sup> by Mark Conversino have examined Operation Frantic with different conclusions than Infield's, the former concluding that the Americans bungled the operation, and the latter concluding that it was a combination of American and Soviet reasons for the failure of Operation Frantic. Operation Frantic provides an excellent backdrop for the examination of historians' treatment of Soviet subject matter because there are relatively few works that are spread out across a timeline spanning the cold-war to the present.

Born in 1921, Glenn Infield, the author of *The Poltava Affair*, was an American bomber pilot in World War II who later worked as a commercial pilot, at a steel mill, and finally as a professional writer. After examining *The Poltava Affair*, as well as Infield's body of work, his purpose was clearly to sell books and make money. Infield's obituary in the NY Times stated that he was the author of some three hundred articles and nine books.<sup>6</sup> As historians go, nine books are rather impressive but three hundred articles are almost unheard of. Astonishingly, a search through academic journal databases yielded zero results for articles authored by Glenn Infield. After much searching, it was determined that the three hundred articles were not published by academic journals, they were published by men's pulp magazines in the sixties and seventies. The fact that Infield published three hundred articles, for profit, in men's pulp magazines goes a long way to establish that he was writing to make money. If money was the object, then Infield needed to promote and sell his book. His efforts paid off with *The Poltava Affair*'s selection by the History Book Club in 1973.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it must be stated that Infield's purpose for writing the book was fulfilled, although it is not particularly useful to historians.

Infield's lack of footnotes or endnotes is somewhat suspect. In the acknowledgments of the book, he names many notables from the time period as sources for the material in the book. He acknowledges ambassadors to airmen and even enlisted the use of a German acquaintance to interview former Luftwaffe and translate German documents. Although he does not use footnotes, he provides an extensive bibliography. In his bibliography he includes memoirs of the major American figures in World War II Soviet-American relations including Harriman, Deane, and Kennan. Additionally, he includes narrative histories, some translated from German, with most of them published in the sixties at the height of the Cold War. He also cites several reports and archives obtained through the Air Force and a few German reports obtained from the Luftwaffe Archives pertaining to the Poltava incident. There are some significant gaps in the bibliography. For a book that is entirely based on the premise of Soviet-German collusion against the Americans in Poltava, Infield only interviews one German Luftwaffe member who participated in the raid of Poltava and does not provide any interviews of Soviet participants. While the lack of sources from the Soviet Union is understandable in 1973, the omission of footnotes or endnotes is not. Moreover, the lack of footnotes or endnotes is minor compared to the treatment of a report by General von Rohden, chief of war-history for the Luftwaffe. In this report, von Rohden implicitly states that the

---

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Bolger, *Reluctant Allies: The United States Air Forces and the Soviet Air Force, 1941-1945* (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1985)

<sup>5</sup> Mark Conversino, *Fighting With the Soviets: The Failure of Operation Frantic* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997)

<sup>6</sup> "Glenn Infield, 60, Author of Books About Aviation and Nazi Germany," *The New York Times*, Apr 18, 1981 (<http://www.nytimes.com/1981/04/18/obituaries/glenn-infield-60-author-of-books-about-aviation-and-nazi-germany.html>)

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Julian, "Operations at the Margin," *The Journal of Military History* 57 (1993) 648.

Luftwaffe trailed a formation of B-17's to Poltava in order to establish the location of the base.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, Infield puts his own spin on this report by extracting sentences and fragments from different sections of the report and using them to make sentences without the use of ellipses to notify the reader of the redaction. In his version, Infield twists von Rohden's account to make it seem to the reader that the Germans already knew where the American bombers were stationed.<sup>9</sup> This is important because it is the main piece of evidence that supports Infield's thesis of Soviet German collusion against the American forces of Operation Frantic. Why would Infield go to such lengths to portray the Soviets in a negative light?

The answer is because the author must have harbored a deep anticommunist bias against the Soviets. Infield throws objectivity out the window in his treatment of Stalin. He argues from the beginning, without proof, that Stalin saw an attack on defenseless Americans at a Soviet airbase as a means to force their withdrawal from Soviet soil. He devotes an entire chapter, entitled "The Indictment", to proving his assertions that the Soviets tipped off the Germans to the location of the base at Poltava.<sup>10</sup> Infield totally neglects the fact that Goering, the Chief of the Luftwaffe, stated in 1946 that a German Heinkel had shadowed a formation of B17s enroute to Poltava. Furthermore, there is the problem with Infield's revision of von Rhoden's report of the attack which omits the sentence that a German plane had shadowed the formation into Soviet territory. The only acknowledgment of any positive contribution from Soviet forces comes from Infield's treatment of the Soviet enlisted and low-level officers. He repeatedly stresses the fact that they did everything in their power to fully cooperate and help the American forces but there remained a disconnect between the attitudes of the unit-level Soviet military and the Soviet General Staff.

Although this work is seriously biased, it is useful in some regards as an easy to read basis for research. When published, this was the first work that dealt extensively with Operation Frantic and remains widely cited by subsequent works although it has been largely discredited. For historians, as with any work, *The Poltava Affair* must be read with a keen eye for bias and spin. It is difficult to deny that it is well written and a compelling read and ultimately fulfills the author's purpose of selling more books.

If Infield's book can be labeled as a "pulp" non-fiction anti-communist narrative history of the destruction at Poltava then Daniel Bolger's *Reluctant Allies* is the exact opposite. Published in 1986, *Reluctant Allies* is an exhaustive, two volume dissertation, written while Bolger studied Russian History at the University of Chicago. Daniel Bolger is a career military officer currently serving as a Lieutenant General in the Army. He has published several books, non-fiction and fiction. It is notable that his works of fiction deal with the Russian military.

Bolger's purpose for writing *Reluctant Allies* is evident from the very beginning, to correct the "Russophobic" histories produced during the height of the Cold War, particularly *The Poltava Affair*. Bolger argues that the majority of works that deal with Frantic do not treat it fairly by either focusing solely on the Poltava incident or by focusing only on the negotiations and build-up to the actual beginning of operations. Additionally, Bolger intended to conduct an exhaustive documentary analysis of Frantic that was lacking before. Therefore, through extensive archival research and documentary analysis, Bolger sought to disprove the pervasive notion that the Soviets intended to sabotage Operation Frantic.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Julian, "Operations at the Margin," *The Journal of Military History* 57 (1993) 648.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Julian, "Operations at the Margin," *The Journal of Military History* 57 (1993), 649.

<sup>10</sup> Glenn Infield, *The Poltava Affair*, 226.

<sup>11</sup> Bolger, *Reluctant Allies*, 1-8.

For this work, Bolger conducted an extremely thorough examination of military and political documents. He reportedly examined tens of thousands of documents at several archival locations. He uses routine and combat information, unit and sub unit reports, proposals and initiatives, message traffic, minutes of conferences, individual correspondence, private accounts, inspection reports and policy letters. Additionally, he uses photographic surveys and bomb damage assessments in order to determine the effectiveness of the bombing missions. His career as an Army officer most likely enabled him easier access to many of the Air Force's historical documents. Additionally, because Bolger understood the arcane system of military recordkeeping, his research was much more effective than previous historians. Although Bolger had specialized in Russian history, it is important to note that he did not have access to Soviet archives except for the published official Soviet history.<sup>12</sup> In the 1980's it would have been impossible for an American military officer to gain access to the historical archives of the Red Army. Perhaps, if Bolger would have had access to those archives he would not have placed most of the blame for the failure of the operation on the Americans.

Because Bolger's stated objective was to debunk the myth of Soviet sabotage and intrigue, his analysis suffers from its own bias. Bolger goes out of his way to find fault with the Americans at every step of the operation. He portrays the Soviets as ready, willing, and able to help the Americans establish their airbases, defend them, and coordinate command and control. He does not harbor the traditional view that Stalin only reluctantly acquiesced to Western pressure in order to ensure that Lend-Lease continued to provide the materials to persecute the war against the Germans on the Eastern front. Instead, he implies that the reluctance was a byproduct of the Soviet decision-making model. The most blatant bias is displayed in his treatment of the Poltava incident. Bolger places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Americans. He maintains that the Russians had warned the Americans that Poltava was a known base to the Germans and that consequently; the Russians had been operating from small grass strips in order to protect their location from German Luftwaffe reconnaissance. He explains the lack of air defenses as a standard operating procedure for the Russian VVS. The VVS maintained a less is more attitude and did not want to build large batteries that were easily spotted by the Luftwaffe. Finally, Bolger faults the Americans for inadequate base preparations at Poltava.<sup>13</sup> It is interesting that an American Army officer who served during the end of the Cold War would write a dissertation about Operation Frantic and find the Americans totally at fault for its failure.

Although it suffered from a clear bias, *Reluctant Allies* makes another significant contribution to Operation Frantic historiography. First, the breadth and scope of Bolger's research is enormous and commendable. Till this point, no other work had incorporated so much research. *Poltava Affair* was based on mostly memoirs and interviews and only lightly scraped the surface of the Air Force's historical archive. Second, Bolger does a good job in countering the "Russophobic" bias of *The Poltava Affair*. *Reluctant Allies* is the first work to treat Frantic in a different, non-cold-war context. His bias notwithstanding, Bolger's analysis of America's faults and inadequacies in dealing with the Soviets provides refreshing insight that is lacking from other works. Lastly, *Reluctant Allies* thoroughly covers the entire duration of Operation Frantic from its conception to its demise. *The Poltava Affair* only briefly examines the conception and planning stages of Frantic and barely mentions the end of the operation. Altogether, Bolger's contribution

---

<sup>12</sup> Bolger, *Reluctant Allies*, 16-21.

<sup>13</sup> Bolger, *Reluctant Allies*, 117.

to the historiography of Frantic is valuable to historians as a counter to *The Poltava Affair* and as a truly evidence based history.

*Reluctant Allies* was only lacking in its Soviet source material. Bolger managed to uncover some new Soviet sources but he did not make any earth shattering discoveries. The reason for this is simple, Soviet sources were nearly impossible to acquire in 1985. However, it must be noted that had he truly found some good Soviet sources his assertion that the Americans were to blame for Frantic's failure would have probably been much harder to prove.

The most recent work to deal with Frantic is *Fighting with the Soviets* by Mark Conversino published in 1997. Dr. Mark Conversion is a retired Air Force officer and alum of Eastern Kentucky University and Indiana University. He currently teaches at the Air War College located on Maxwell Air Force base in Alabama. His specialties include World War II history and Soviet and Eastern Bloc military and political history. Although *Fighting with the Soviets* was published in 1997, Conversino began work on the project in 1992, one year after the fall of the Soviet Union.

*Fighting with the Soviets* is a well written and easy to follow narrative history of Operation Frantic. Conversino's purpose for writing the book is to "provide the casual observer as well as the serious student of World War II with political, diplomatic, and operational details surrounding Frantic."<sup>14</sup> He purposefully strays from the in-depth documentary analysis of Bolger and relies heavily on the experiences of American military members in order to illuminate the human side of war.<sup>15</sup>

True to his intent, Conversino focuses his source material on interviews and memoirs of members of the 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group which was the group assigned to Poltava. He utilizes first-hand accounts of soldiers and airmen spanning all ranks and weaves them into a compelling narrative. Unlike Bolger, Conversino relies more heavily on these firsthand accounts than archival documents and reports. Although he acknowledges extensive use of Air Force archives, they are mostly used to back-up the personal accounts of the various interviewees. Even though he does not exhaustively use archival Air Force documents, when he does choose to use them he uses them in such a way to provide a different perspectives of the same situation thereby debunking some of the myths perpetuated in *The Poltava Affair* and *Fighting with the Soviets*. Unlike *The Poltava Affair*, *Fighting with the Soviets* is meticulously end-noted with citations and thorough explanations of important points. Although this book was published after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is still lacking any significant Soviet archives or firsthand accounts of Russian soldiers and airmen.

*Fighting with the Soviets* is unique in regards to *The Poltava Affair* and *Reluctant Allies*. Conversino gives an objective examination of the facts and experiences of the participants and does not draw any desultory conclusions based on those facts. This is perhaps because of the timeframe that the work was completed and published. By the mid to late nineties the Cold War era bias was disappearing from new histories of the USSR and the Red Army. Conversino treats the Soviets



---

<sup>14</sup> Mark Conversino, *Fighting With The Soviets*, vii.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Conversino, *Fighting With The Soviets*, vii.

and Americans on equal grounds and notes that many of the American participants fostered strong friendships with their Soviet counterparts. Conversino does not, however, relieve the Soviets of any responsibility in the failure of the operation as does Bolger. He makes a convincing argument that there were forces on both sides that contributed to the failure of the operation.

*Fighting with the Soviets* is a valuable contribution to the limited histories of Soviet-American cooperation in World War II. Prior to 1997, *The Poltava Affair*, published in 1973 was the only mass marketed history of the joint Soviet-American operation. It suffered from a clear bias that caused it to be discredited by most historians. This aside, it was the only widely available source that was easily referenced pertaining to Operation Frantic. Daniel Bolger wrote his dissertation on Operation Frantic but it remains unpublished. Therefore, *Fighting with the Soviets* is important as an objective account of the operation that is widely available and easily readable. Additionally, Conversino's account of Frantic provides an analysis of the attempt to parachute supplies into Warsaw that was lacking from either Bolger's or Infield's accounts.<sup>16</sup> The attempted resupply of Warsaw by Frantic pilots, although a failure, is worthy of examination because it illuminates the growing hostilities between the Soviet Union and America that foreshadow the cold war. *Fighting with the Soviets* also emphasizes the small group of Americans left in Ukraine during the winter of 1944-45 known as the "Forgotten Bastards of the Ukraine."<sup>17</sup> These soldiers are significant because they symbolize the last firsthand impression that the Soviets would have of the American military until after the cold-war. Perhaps the most important contribution of *Fighting with the Soviets* is an unraveling of communist stereotypes that many Americans harbor. The personal accounts of the American servicemen stationed at Poltava dispel the myth of the "zombie-like" Soviets. "The Soviets staged several concerts and the men attended dances at which they were bemused by the sight of Soviet male soldiers dancing together," furthermore, Conversino states, "Soviet soldiers and their officers greeted the airmen in an open and friendly manner, and did whatever they could to take care of the crew member's needs."<sup>18</sup> The experiences of the soldiers on the ground serve as a reminder of what could have been.

It is unfortunate that Conversino did not or was not able to access any significant Soviet archival material or interview any Soviet participants of Operation Frantic. This is the only area which *Fighting with the Soviets* is lacking.

These three manuscripts illustrate an important evolution in the historiography of the Soviet military from the American perspective. Depending on when they were written, each history of Operation Frantic describes the same events with different conclusions. Also, the individual author's background reveals much about why they write with separate perspectives. All three of the authors are former or current military members. However, they each have separate objectives. Infield was writing mass market non-fiction geared toward selling books and Bolger was writing for his dissertation. Conversino, on the other hand, was writing in order to provide an objective, mainstream account, of Operation Frantic.

Whatever the reason for writing, the fact that different conclusions are drawn from the same source material is inescapable. In order for these texts to be useful in research scholars must know and separate the weakly constructed conclusions from the facts as related to the motives, biases, and interpretations of the authors. Whereas a text without a conclusion would probably be unreadable, much less unwritable, the conclusions are probably the least important part of these

---

<sup>16</sup> Mark Conversino, *Fighting With The Soviets*, 136-160.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Conversino, *Fighting With The Soviets*, 175.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Conversino, *Fighting With The Soviets*, 103, 188.



entire texts. In fact, the conclusions tell more about the authors than they do about the subject material. The historiography of Operation Frantic serves as a good example of biased authors, revisionism, and an attempt to correct the record.

Operation Frantic has provided America and Ukraine with a unique opportunity for the preservation of a shared, historically significant, event. In 1994 the process of historical preservation made a huge stride for Operation Frantic. In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Operation, the United States Air Force landed three large aircraft at Poltava for a celebration attended by Ukrainian and American veterans of the Operation. A B1 bomber, B52 Bomber and a KC 10 refueling tanker were on display for attendees as well as many exhibits of artifacts, photos, and documents. Currently there are various exhibits in the museums of Poltava that feature Operation Frantic and one memorial to the veterans of the Operation, yet they are not widely publicized and are overshadowed by the 1709 battlefields.

With the current economy, as money and grants become scarcer, revenue generated by tourism can provide much needed funding for historical preservation. Understandably, many historical preservationists cringe at the thought of throngs of tourists and the potential that exists for damaging historical relics. However, in the United States and around the world, many tourists and veterans travel to visit important historical military sites generating the large amounts of money needed to effectively preserve a site. In the case of Operation Frantic, there is relatively little publicity about Poltava and the Operation itself. Many Americans and Ukrainians, aside from some scholars and veterans, are unaware that the Operation ever existed. At the Great Patriotic War Museum in Kyiv, there are no exhibits that referenced Operation Frantic and Poltava. I Three different guides were not aware of the Operation and Poltava's role in World War II and none of them were aware that Americans were ever based in Ukraine. This is due partly to Cold War Era censorship and partly due to a lack of current publicity.

There are several ways that Ukraine and America could partner to promote interest in the Operation and the city of Poltava. The first is through marketing. By utilizing relatively low cost methods of marketing, such as building a webpage catering to historical World War II tourism and the city of Poltava, potential visitors would have a central location for finding information on visiting Poltava. Additionally, by educating the travel coordinators and tourist guides in Kiev, awareness of the Operation could be raised immensely. Also, museums and memorials in America, as well as worldwide, could generate interest in visiting Ukraine and Poltava through rotating exhibits and multimedia presentations.

Finally, there are also grants available from the US Department of State that could be used for establishing cultural and historical exhibits in Poltava. The preservation of the operation, Poltava, and the legacy of cooperation between Ukrainians and Americans during World War II is important to building stronger relationships in the future.

#### **Bibliography:**

1. *Bolger, Daniel. Reluctant Allies: The United States Air Forces and the Soviet Air Force, 1941-1945 (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1985)*
2. *Conversino, Mark. Fighting With the Soviets: The Failure of Operation Frantic (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997)*
3. "Glenn Infield, 60, Author of Books About Aviation and Nazi Germany." *New York Times*, April 18, 1981.
4. *Infield, Glenn. The Poltava Affair: A Russian Warning: An American Tragedy (New York: Macmillan, 1973)*
5. *Julian, Thomas. "Operations at the Margin," The Journal of Military History 57 (1993) 648.*