

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A-12

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# '44 Windfall Aided Allies in Battling Nazis

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Late in 1944, when the Germans suddenly evacuated Luxembourg, they left intact a prize for the Allies: the powerful transmitter of Radio Luxembourg, soon to become Radio Annie. In 127 consecutive nights of broadcasting, according to newly released CIA documents, Annie "deceived and confused the enemy, set German against German... and breached the fortress Germany from within."

Project Annie, with an estimated half the German Wehrmacht as part of its nightly audience as the Allies advanced toward the Moselle and Rhine rivers, is described by the CIA as one of the two most important U.S. ventures in psychological warfare during World War II.

In the other, code-named "Skorpion West," the Office of Strategic Services intercepted a Nazi leaflet aimed at raising troop morale, turned its message around and air-dropped millions of the bogus leaflets over German lines. While Annie fueled resistance to the Nazis among the Germans, Skorpion West caused the Nazis to scrap the morale-raising effort.

The German leaflets touted the invincibility of the Nazi army and its leaders' superiority. At the top and bottom was the message: "If you want to know the truth, comrade, ask the Skorpion."

Once the Allies broke away from the beaches of Normandy in 1944, the Germans were forced to distribute "Skorpion" from the air. Copies of "Skorpion" blew into the hands of the Allies, who reproduced the leaflets down to the paper and ink but changed their slant. Since the Germans were distributing their leaflets by air, the Allies could deliver theirs to German troops the same way.

In the six weeks it took American and British troops to break through German lines after D-day, the Allies dropped three messages. The first questioned Nazi invincibility: "The enemy possesses great superiority and things look very bad for the German front-line soldier."

The second questioned German military leadership and even suggested that soldiers shoot their officers if they felt they were poor leaders. The

third leaflet explained what lay ahead: "It is to be expected that the English and Americans will try to force a decision before the winter starts. When the offensive does come, we must expect large stretches of German soil to be occupied before we can bring the enemy to a standstill."

The first counterfeit leaflet was hushed up by the heads of the Skorpion organization, but the second landed on the desk of Field Marshal Walter Model. "He became enraged when he discovered that it invited mutiny by the German soldiers and gave them an excuse to shoot their superior officers," the CIA account says, adding that Model ordered a halt to all further Skorpion efforts.

"It was in our estimation the crowning admission of defeat, since it was denouncing the whore from the pulpit and thus trebling her business," the history says.

Project Annie, however, had a more far-reaching impact and was described by the CIA as one of the OSS' most brilliant successes. The Germans left in such a hurry that the 1st Army captured Radio Luxembourg undamaged, with a transmitter "so powerful that its voice could reach half the Reich," the CIA history says.

The OSS created a "black transmitter," establishing a second frequency while keeping Radio Luxembourg on the air at its old frequency. Under the scheme, Luxembourg would go off the air as usual at midnight, and Annie would come on at 2 a.m. at the different frequency. The "black broadcast" stopped each day at 6:30 a.m., before Radio Luxembourg resumed its broadcast at 7.

Annie went on the air in December, 1944, for 127 nights, as the Allies moved toward the Moselle and Rhine rivers. For almost two months, Radio Annie broadcast, with complete objectivity,

military and civilian news of the war "in the unmistakable accents" of the Rhine region.

"There were Germans who thought it came from bunkers behind German lines because at times it was technically imperfect, and there were Germans who thought Annie was an underground station and who were eagerly awaiting its political climax," the CIA history recounts. "A few smart ones suspected Annie might be the enemy, but the accurate and sympathetic character of its news presentation" threw off even the smart ones.