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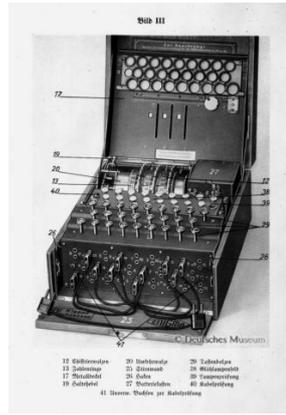
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The German Museum (Deutsches Museum) provides [this view of an Enigma machine](#), created by Arthur Scherbius. The machine gave Germany a huge advantage during the early years of WWII, especially as it was used by the German navy on their U-boats. Click on the image for a better view.

Onboard [Lemp's ship](#) (this German-language video depicts the famous officer and his boat) was a small, portable encryption device used by [U-boats](#) to communicate with the German high command.

Receiving coded messages on the location of enemy ships, prowling U-boats were constantly on the attack. British supply ships were especially hard hit. The loss of men and supplies was causing a massive strain on Britain's war efforts.

What was this encryption device? In 1923, Arthur Scherbius, a German engineer, introduced a [new product](#) designed to help businesses conduct secure overseas communication. His company was incorporated as Chiffriermaschinen Aktiengesellschaft.

Although the German military would have been a potential customer for [Scherbius](#), the military wasn't interested initially. By the time [Hitler and his party](#) were elected to lead Germany, however, Scherbius had a [buyer](#) for all the machines he could make.

Soon the encryption device - called [Enigma](#)- was no longer [commercially available](#) to anyone outside the German military.

Ideal for portable military use, Enigma was also simple to use. Its genius was the coupling of letters: they were [constantly changed](#) (this explanatory video demonstrates how) so the encrypted messages were never the same, making the code (with its billions of possible combinations) [nearly impossible to break](#).

(Follow this link to an on-line [Enigma simulator](#) where you can experience [how it works](#). Be sure to click on the lower keyboard first; then type in a message in the space provided; then click on trace diagram to view the electrical circuitry of your message.)

Hitler, and many of his commanders, believed Enigma was invincible. They were wrong.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-UNBREAKABLE-CODE-Enigma-Machine-and-Its-U-boat-Codes>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-UNBREAKABLE-CODE-Enigma-Machine-and-Its-U-boat-Codes>



Arthur Scherbius

Image online, courtesy the [Enigma](#) website.

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German Enigma Machine

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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THE UNBREAKABLE CODE

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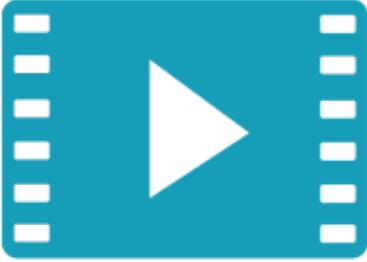


German Codes - How Enigma Works

From *The Code Book*, by Simon Singh, placed online through YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/German-Codes-How-Enigma-Works>



HMS Bulldog - Discovery of Enigma Codes

From a German-language, historical-footage documentary.

Clip placed online through the U-Boot and Marine Channel, at YouTube.

View this asset at:

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Battle of the Atlantic - U-Boats in Action

German-language, historical-footage newsreel with naval battle scenes and U-Boats.

Online, courtesy the Celeon999A Channel at YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Battle-of-the-Atlantic-U-Boats-in-Action>