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Enigma machines were important for all branches of the German military during WWII, but their use by the German Navy was extremely costly for the Allies (particularly for Britain). In this image, we see the location of an Enigma machine aboard a U-Boat (reportedly U-110).

With Royal Navy vessels surrounding her, U-110 was about to make history. So was David Balme. Here is how he recalls those moments as he descended into the bowels of the crippled U-boat:

...I, David Balme, was duty-bound to climb that conning tower and descend into what? Remains of the German crew to greet me? Or scuttling charges rigged to explode as I opened the hatch? My previous seven years of training could not dull the vividness of such mental images.

What did Balme find as he descended into U-110?

I am still haunted by my climb down that last vertical ladder, fifteen feet into the bowels of U-110, now with the revolver holstered. I felt there must be someone below trying to open the seacocks, or setting the detonating charges. But no one was there. There must have been complete panic in U-110, and she was left to us as the greatest prize of the war. But I still wake up at night fifty-six years later to find myself going down that ladder.

When Balme reached the inside of U-110, he and his boarding party found what no one had ever before found: A working Enigma machine AND a sealed envelope with the code for the month of June.

Meanwhile the telegraphist found the W/T office [radio compartment] in perfect condition: no one had so much as tried to destroy books or apparatus. Codebooks, signal logs, pay books and general correspondence were all intact.

A coding machine, too, was plugged in as though it had been in use when abandoned. It resembled a typewriter, hence the telegraphist pressed the keys, and reported to me that the results were peculiar. The machine was secured by four ordinary screws, soon unscrewed and sent up the hatch to the motorboat alongside.

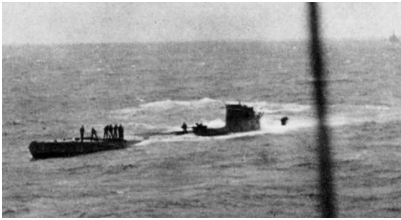
From there, it would be sent to Bletchley Park where Alan Turing, a mathematical genius, and his team were already working on a method to crack Hitler's uncrackable code.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/U-110-CAPTURED-Enigma-Machine-and-Its-U-boat-Codes>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/U-110-CAPTURED-Enigma-Machine-and-Its-U-boat-Codes>



Recovering the Enigma Machine

Image online, courtesy the [U-boat Archive](#) website.

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