



0. DOLPHIN - UNBREAKABLE GERMAN NAVAL CODE - Story Preface

1. WHAT is ENIGMA?

2. HOW DOES ENIGMA WORK?

3. FIRST ENIGMA DECIPHERS

4. BLETCHLEY PARK and STATION X

5. DOLPHIN - UNBREAKABLE GERMAN NAVAL CODE

6. HUT 8 and ITS CODE BREAKERS

7. ALAN TURING TACKLES DOLPHIN - GERMANY'S NAVAL ENIGMA CODE

8. TURING and the BIGRAM TABLES from U-110

9. ENIGMA CODE BOOKS at STATION X

10. TURING'S BOMBE CALLED VICTORY

11. WAS THERE a SPY in HUT 8?

12. STATION X CODE BREAKERS SHORTEN the WAR

Lieutenant Commander Anton Otto Fischer, U.S.C.G.R. (U.S. Coast Guard Reserve), created this painting in February of 1943. It depicts a burning tanker in the North Atlantic. The image was depicted, among other places, in *LIFE* Magazine. The image has this description: "The burning tanker sends up a pyre of red flame as its crew pull away in lifeboats. The scarlet glare of the oil fire and the shimmering waves of unbearable heat will soon be replaced by bitter, numbing cold as boats leave the stricken ship behind." Image online via Wikimedia Commons. Click on it for a better view.

The work at Bletchley Park was far-more significant than people may have realized at the time.

By 1941, Britain seemed to be losing the war. Even though Station X decipher experts were successful in cracking the Luftwaffe code, they were getting nowhere with the Naval code.

The head of Germany's navy - Admiral Doenitz - realized that he could defeat Britain by preventing the country from getting urgent supplies by damaging Britain's sea-based lifeline.

If Doenitz and his navy could break the North-Atlantic route, nothing could reach Britain. Germany could win the war with U-Boats. And ... it nearly did.

After Germany created the "Atlantic Wall," by controlling the coast of France, Doenitz built gigantic, fortified U-boat pens along the French coast. These strategic locations gave the boats easy access to the Atlantic, where they could strike without warning.

The wolf packs of U-boats were able to sink the escort ships which accompanied the supply-carrying conveyers en route to Britain. During the Battle of the Atlantic, while naval Enigma remained unbroken, those U-Boats were able to strike at will.

As the slow-moving conveyers crossed the Atlantic, wolf packs of thirty U-Boats ... or more ... bided their time, striking at the most-opportune moments. Never knowing where the attacks would originate, convoys were at the mercy of the German submariners who attacked right, front and center.

Enigma encoding helped Doenitz to control his U-boats and plan his strategy of attacks against the Atlantic-crossing convoys. Breaking the naval Enigma was critical to winning the war. It was Bletchley Park's biggest challenge.

Fully aware of that major need, and what it would take to help Britain avoid disaster, Stewart Menzies gave the naval-code-breaking job to the people working in Hut 8. He put a brilliant mathematician named Alan Turing in charge.

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DOLPHIN-UNBREAKABLE-GERMAN-NAVAL-CODE-The-imitation-Game>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DOLPHIN-UNBREAKABLE-GERMAN-NAVAL-CODE-The-imitation-Game>

Questions 2 Ponder

Are 21st-Century People Less Able to Keep Secrets than 20th-Century People?

Are people more or less capable of keeping secrets today than they were during WWII? Explain your answer.

Does the existence of social media, where individuals are constantly sharing information about all kinds of issues, predispose 21st-century people to share things they should keep private? Explain your answer.

If your answer to the preceding question is "yes," what can we do to resist making public what should remain private?

How Do We Maintain Morale When Working on Difficult Tasks?

Trying to crack Germany's Enigma code, for WWII workers at Bletchley Park, was like trying to decipher a language which no one had ever heard before. How can we translate something that we don't understand?

Working on Enigma, for these highly skilled code breakers, seemed like looking for something in a dark room without knowing what they were trying to find. How would people, working under such conditions, avoid discouragement?

How would you cope if you were given an impossibly difficult task? What would you do to sustain your morale? Do you think you could solve the problems, assigned to you, if your morale was very low? Why, or why not?

Media Stream



Atlantic Wall - German Conquests in WWII

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Admiral Karl Doenitz

This image, from a vintage postcard, depicts Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz. It is online via Wikimedia Commons.

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