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National History Day  
May 13, 2013

To determine our topic, we remembered reading about German Enigmas in World War II in history class last year. Intrigued by the nexus of math, technology, intelligence operations and politics, we chose the cryptanalysis of the Enigma machine for our NHD project.

To begin our research we looked for the names of several Bletchley Park workers, and then sought out interviews with them in addition to books they had written and speeches they had given. We found several primary documents by using articles’ sources and looking on a variety of sites. Next, we took the step of contacting and setting up interviews with knowledgeable historians such as the legendary Dr. David Kahn. After seeing the value of primary documents that were declassified as recently as 2010, we contacted representatives in order to pursue the possibility of accessing documents that were classified over forty years ago. As our website progressed, we canvassed video archives for footage of enigma machines, both in use and in museums. We had a slight problem when a GCHQ historian was unable to help us as much as we would have liked due to security restraints. Nonetheless, we conducted that interview and also sought out a former CIA analyst, now professor at Liberty University. He invited us to a luncheon held for former intelligence officers in DC, which the majority of our group was able to attend. It was particularly relevant to our topic, with one of the speeches on the subject of the history of intelligence. We used the opportunity to talk to many of the former agents and set up additional interviews.

To select our presentation medium, we evaluated our collective skills. We decided it would be most efficient for our large group to work simultaneously on a website and our talents would be best utilized by developing a web application.

In our research thus far, we have learned that during World War II, the increased need for foreign intelligence led to Britain’s decryption effort focused primarily on the decoding of the German Enigma Machines. The breaking of the Enigma codes was a turning point in the war effort that resulted in direct military information that enabled the Allies to take strategic measures on the Atlantic, Eastern and North African fronts, which aided in victories across the board. The deciphered messages also gave the Allies information on German plans for advancement and confirmed that double agents were free of suspicion. Simultaneously, the opportunities provided by the decryption of the code demonstrated the immense potential of military intelligence, revolutionizing Britain’s strategy for the war and marking a decisive change in the focus of the Allied governments on information technology. This led to significant growth in the British signals intelligence agency, or GCHQ. The work done at Bletchley revolutionized encryption techniques and led to further research, along with a strengthened international alliance that continues to this day. Allied nations’ success with Ultra forever changed how intelligence was viewed.