

Ryerson University  
Department of History

**HST 540: *Espionage - A 20<sup>th</sup> Century History***

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**Code Breaking Exercise #1**

Attached you will find a coded message. Your mission, should you decided to accept it, is to crack the code and message. The message is fictitious, but it is based on similar messages used during World War I. The system used here for coding dates back to ancient Greeks nearly 500 years before the birth of Christ. By the standards of code-breakers during the war, this exercise would be fairly easy, so keep in mind that most messages were much more complicated and difficult to crack - especially considering that most were in languages foreign to the code-breaker. In this exercise, the message is in English.

*Clues*

- Most messages in this era used an alpha numeric sequencing.
- Take a close look at the pattern of the message. Note any patterns and look for their repetition.
- Focus on devising a system that may be applicable. Setting up a grid to use for your practise is advisable.
- All messages name senders and receivers. Most messages use abbreviations for some words. Most messages do not many use conjunctions and articles. Punctuation is never used.
- Note any problems or anomalies you discover. No system is infallible.

*Your Mission*

- 1) Break the code and transcribe the message.
- 2) Read and analyse the message.
- 3) Note any difficulties or anomalies in the code or message, and try to explain why they might exist in the message.
- 4) Report on a potential meaning for the message, and advise on possible strategy.

*Your Reward*

- 1) Satisfaction.
- 2) Greater appreciation for the work of code-breakers.

**TOP SECRET - Eyes Only - Not for distribution**

Message received 02:20 hours. 14 July 1917, HMS Charlotte, Skaggerak- 57.6 N, 6.4 E, Ensign R. Brown/Corporal E. West relay.

44 45 43 15 44 34 15 43 44 15 13 45 24 35 34 c14 11 34 45 53 15 43 41  
45 35 13 35 33 33 22 43 33 51 41 ba 51bc

13 35 34 45 11 13 45 34 15 53 54 35 43 31 43 15 41 35 43 45 13 35 34 52 35 54  
14 15 41 11 43 43 11 51 22 b21 35 43 32 24 52 15 43 41 35 35 32  
13 11 34 11 14 24 11 34 21 43 24 22 11 45 15 23 11 33 24 32 45 35 34 13 11 43 43  
24 15 44 12 43 35 53 34 51 31 24 34 45 14 41 31 15 54 14 15 13 35 14 15 44 35 51  
43 13 11 12 32 15  
45 35 41 41 43 24 35 43 24 45 54 24 34 45 15 43 13 15 41 45 ef de 11 51 22 d  
15 55 41 15 13 45 24 43 43 15 22 41 11 45 45 15 33 34 41 43 35 45 15 13 45 23 11  
33 24 32 45 35 44 23 15 11 52 54 22 51 11 43 14 24 34 13 32 51 44 14 15 44 45  
43 35 54 15 43 15 44 13 35 43 45 34 21 32 14  
43 15 32 11 54 11 13 13 15 41 45 13 35 14 15 aba 13 35 34 21 24 43 33 41 44 35  
44 24 45 24 35 34  
44 45 43 15 44 34 15 43 44 15 13 45 24 35 34 c14 21 35 43 11 14 33 31 43 51 22  
15 43 31 35 33 33 12 11 32 45 24 13 21 32 15 15 45

