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John Jackson, *Code Wars: How Ultra and Magic led to Allied victory*, Pen & Sword, 2011. 224 pages. £19.99

The title of this short book is a little misleading. Only about 13 pages are devoted to Magic, Purple and the Pacific War. The book is really about Ultra, Enigma and Bletchley Park. Thus, 37 years after the Ultra Secret was revealed, do we really need another book on the subject? What more is there left to say that the great many books on the subject - including recent ones by Sebag Montefiore¹, Smith² and McKay³ – have not said already?

If you have been following the subject of codebreaking in World War Two since the publication of Winterbotham's ground-breaking though inaccurate book in 1974 and have kept abreast of subsequent revelations and publications, you will not need to rush out and buy this book. However, if you are one of the uninitiated or one of those with only a limited knowledge (perhaps derived from the novel or the film *Enigma* by Robert Harris) and are looking for an introduction to the subject, then look no further. Jackson is well placed to provide an introduction to Ultra, Enigma and Bletchley Park. He is a volunteer guide at Bletchley Park, the author of *The Secret War of Hut 3* and *Ultra's Arctic War*, and the editor of *Official History of British Sigint 1914-1945* and *Naval Enigma: The History of Hut 8 1939-1943*.

It provides snapshots, referring the reader elsewhere for fuller understanding. These snapshots consist of short chapters devoted to the well-covered subjects of the Poles, the U-boats, Crete, Rommel, PQ17, the V weapons, the *Tirpitz*, the *Scharnhorst*, Barbarossa, Coventry, D-Day, the Y Service etc. It rightly devotes a chapter to Tunny, John Tiltman, Bill Tutte, Tommy Flowers and Colossus, which were missing from or overshadowed in the early literature, though they have been fully covered in later books.

In his foreword, Jackson repeats the oft-heard but rarely analyzed claim that Ultra shortened the war by two years. This claim has always struck me as doubtful – forewarned is not the same as forearmed and why would the Russians have waited till May 1947 to take Berlin or the Americans two years to drop the bomb? Jackson amply demonstrates that Ultra, Colossus and Bletchley Park were phenomenal intellectual, technological and organizational achievements of which Britain may be justly proud. During the Second World War British Intelligence was second to none. But wars are not won by Intelligence alone.

The book has 30 photographs, which are excellent. But there are no maps and the endnotes and bibliography are inadequate. There are only 67 of the former while many classic texts (Welchman, Calvocoressi, Kahn and Lewin to name but four) are missing from the latter. The book is well-produced. It has been proof-read and indexed to a high standard. It is therefore without the blemishes that have sadly disfigured some of Pen & Sword's recent efforts.

Code Wars is an accurate, clear, concise and up to date introduction to the subject for the layman, for whom it is undoubtedly intended. As such, it is to be warmly recommended. Those familiar with the subject and the literature will learn little that is new from this book though it would serve them well as an aide memoire.

John Peaty

1 Hugh Sebag-Montefiore *Enigma, the Battle for the Code*, Phoenix 2001

2 Michael Smith *Station X the Codebreakers of Bletchley Park* Pan, 2004 Edn

3 Sinclair McKay *The Secret Life of Bletchley Park* Aurum Edn 2011