

## Lab report: The Mystery of the Enigma Case and Lock

### GOSFJ

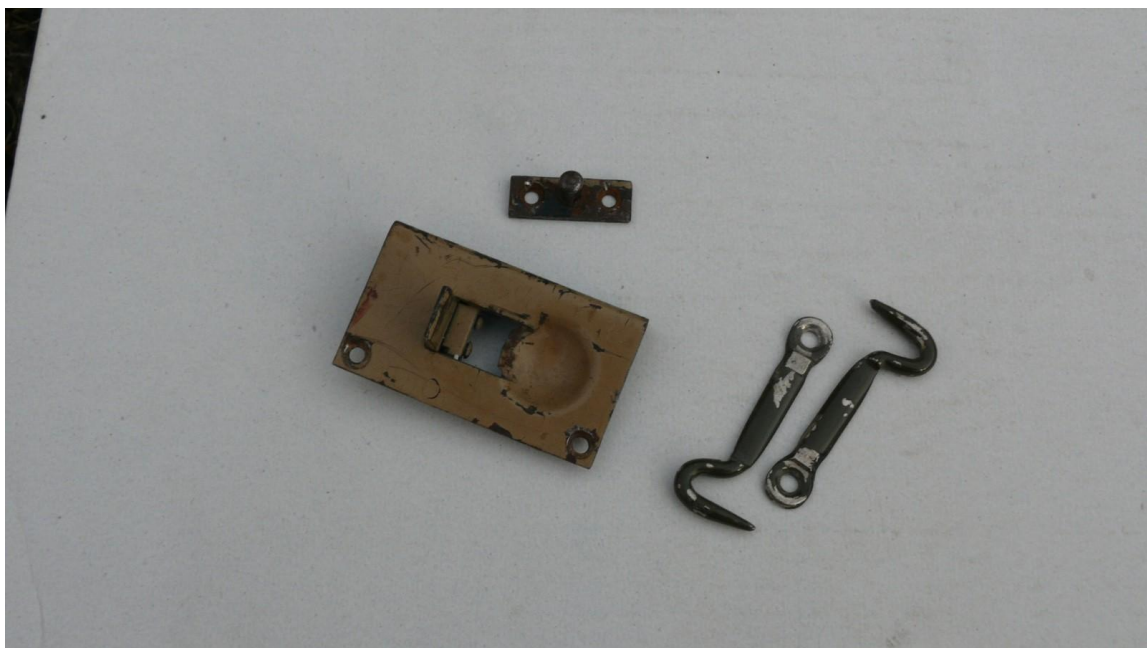
You will know that the “Enigma” was the most famous German code machine of World War 2, broken by Polish cryptanalysts whose work was inherited and put to good use by Bletchley Park.



<https://www.bletchleypark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Polish-Codebreaking-Festival-2000x1200.1.jpg>

So I bought this on ebay, because of a dim memory of what the Enigma case looked like. Occasionally these locks are dug up from old bunkers in Ukraine or Lithuania and sold for extortionate amounts. But this one was sold from the UK and just described as a lock from a WW2 German wooden box.

Note that the purchase included two hooks which by implication (only) came from the same box.



My purchase is “on its way” and I shan’t hold my breath! But that’s not the main story.

There’s been some confusion over the years about the rarity of these locks. In part this is due to the use of a similar one in the German FF3 field telephones:



And indeed the Soviet one (probably copied as war reparations):



But these locks have a large surrounding plate and they are mounted vertically.

To establish a base line, I went to the Bletchley Park website and downloaded images of their Enigma cases.

<https://www.bletchleypark.org.uk/our-story/enigmas-of-bletchley-park/>

Enigma D, A1214



Enigma K, K289.



Enigma M4, M5846.



Enigma G, G312.



As you can see, the panel with the finger hemisphere” insert is mounted on the lower front side with the finger “hemisphere” to the right in all cases.

In other cases held at BP the lower front side dropped down, and possibly that’s where the hooks in my purchase came from. There are small right-angle brackets mounted on the inside, (nut I can’t see the hooks on the side in the BP pictures).

Now, from the cryptomuseum website there are images of home-brew boxes to contain the electronic copy kit of the Enigma, called Enigma-E. And here is the example given of a lock:



<https://www.cryptomuseum.com/kits/enigma/support/cases/0006/index.htm>

Wooden case by Wolfgang Abratis, Germany (note also the carrying handle)

“As it's virtually impossible to find a suitable lock for the Enigma-E case that resembles the original, Wolfgang has created his own from a brass plate into which he drove a hemisphere and a slot for the latch.”

**\*\*\**But it’s mounted upside down* \*\***

To see if I could find another lock I searched the German-language ebay site, ebay.de, using keywords “Wehrmacht Kasten” and I found this:

**2. WK Wehrmacht Fahrgestell Werkzeugkiste Fahrzeug Auto Holzkasten WW2 | eBay.de**

<https://www.ebay.de/itm/398160610117>

As you can see, this is a made-up box, there are reinforced edges and it’s marked for vehicle tools. There’s that handle again. But there are two of these locks. One has the “hemisphere” on the Right, and the other is on the Left!



## **Conclusion**

For me, I think my purchased lock may well have been part of an Enigma case, possibly one where there was a drop-down lower side – but it may have come from a different case altogether! So take care when purchasing that battlefield relic!

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