

Decoding Victory - The Women of Operation Purple



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Women During the 40's - Pink Collar Jobs (Before War)

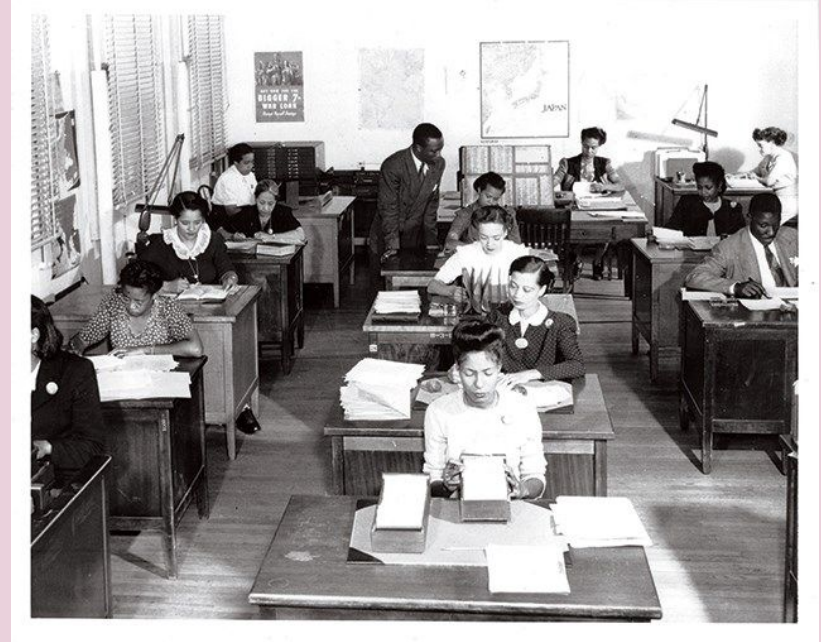
- ❑ Pink collar jobs of the 1940s included
 - ❑ Office machine workers (87% female)
 - ❑ Housekeepers (78% female)
 - ❑ Apparel manufacturers (78% female)
 - ❑ Teachers (75% female)
 - ❑ Tobacco manufacturers (72% female)
 - ❑ Social and welfare workers (62% female)
 - ❑ Waiters (56% female)



Women Doing Laundry

Recruiting

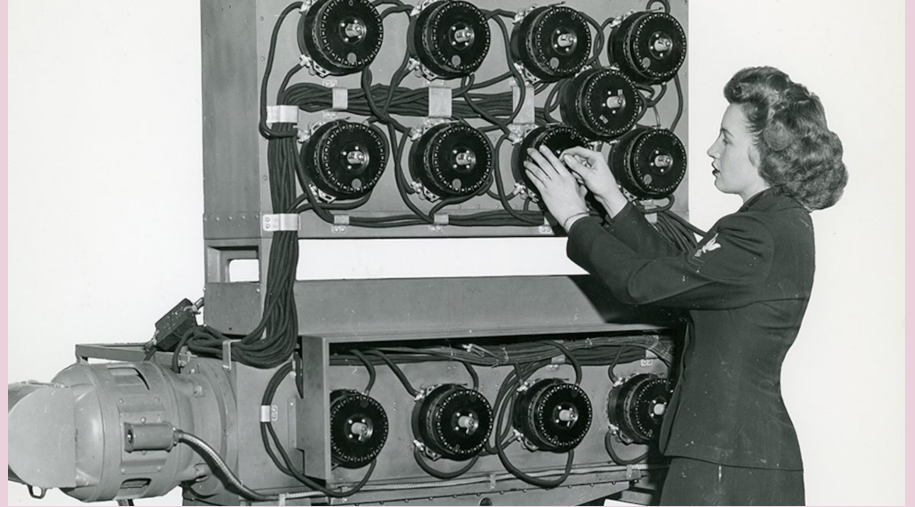
- ❑ The Navy and the Army went head to head to find the most educated girls in the US.
 - ❑ Roughly 600,000 females obtained Bachelor's degrees
- ❑ Secret Meeting, no one could know anything.
- ❑ They were asked two questions “Are you married and do you like puzzles?”



Recruited Women
(National Park Service)

Cryptanalysts

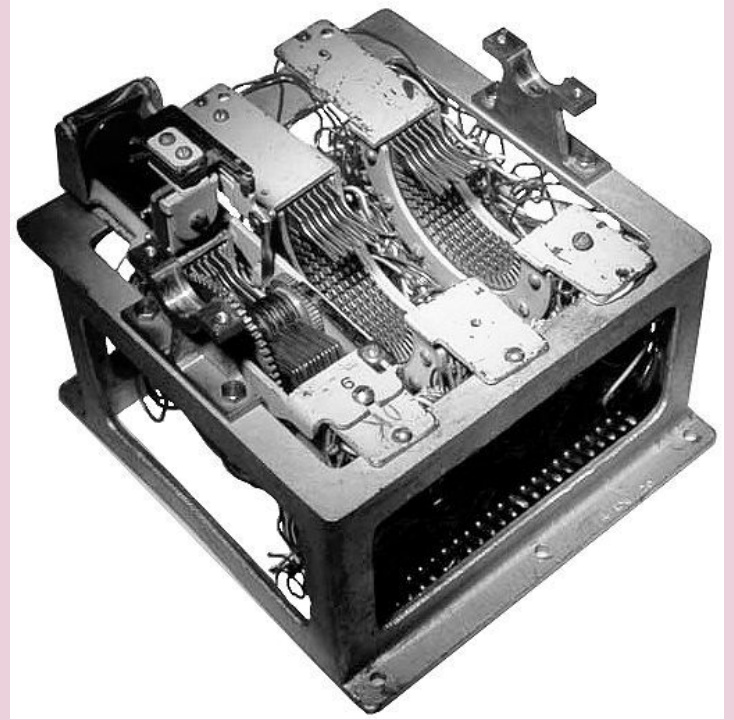
- ❑ The making and breaking of codes, is what this girls did.
- ❑ The US government contracted out girls to work on special projects.
- ❑ The main mission being the Japanese Code Purple.



Women Breaking Codes
National Archives

The Japanese Code Purple

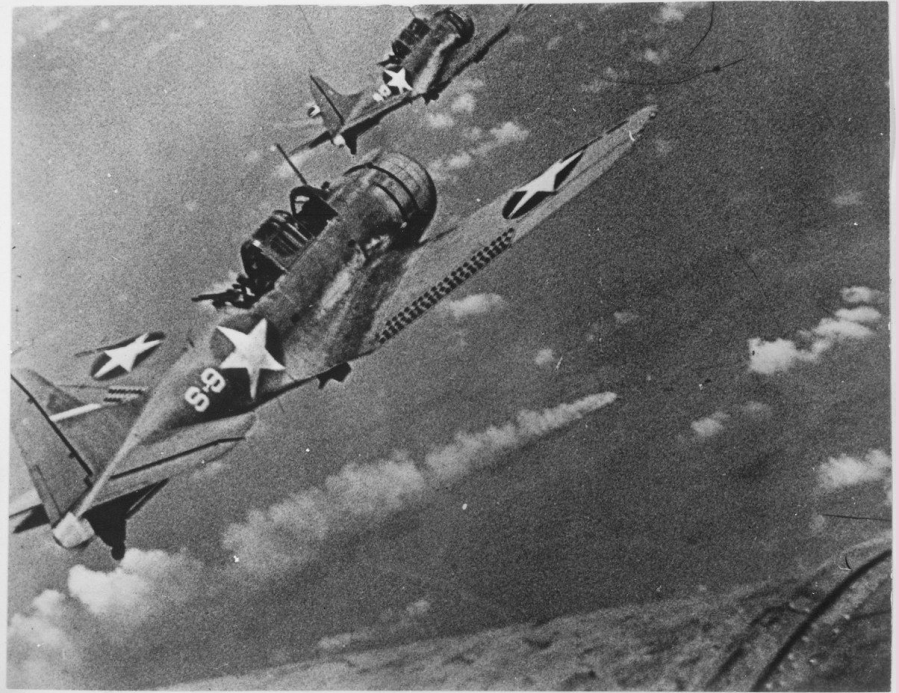
- ❑ “Purple” was the US name given to the Japanese diplomatic code machine.
- ❑ Held top secret information about where and when the Axis powers were going to attack



“Purple”
(Cipher Machine)

The Lead Up to Midway

- ❑ Breaking Purple allowed the US to know where the Japanese were planning to attack
- ❑ Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, as planning another attack called “AF”
- ❑ The US sent signals under cover to the Japanese Navy trying to locate ‘AF’
- ❑ It was then given to the Code Girls to locate the place of attack



Planes in the Battle of Midway
(California American Legion)

The Scheme

- ❑ Through submarine, the US sent a message to the base on Midway instructing personnel there to radio Pearl Harbor that the salt-water evaporators on the base had broken down.
- ❑ Two days later, a Japanese message was reported “AF” was running out of fresh drinking water.
- ❑ From there they located exactly where the surprise attack would be, Midway

The Battle

- By May, Navy code breakers had figured out more details about Yamamoto's plans, including almost the entire order of battle of the Imperial Navy
- Nimitz was able to plot a strategy that would take the Japanese by surprise, assembling three U.S. aircraft carriers at a spot some 300 miles north of Midway, which they called "Point Luck."
- Major victory for the Allied Powers



Battle of Midway
(The National WWII Museum)

Bibliography

Image 1 - Meredith Wood, How Pink Collar Jobs Have Changed Since 1940, 10/02/2020, in author's possession.

Image 2- Retrieved by National Park Service.

Image 3- Retrieved by National Archives

Image 4- Ralph Simpson, Cipher Machines, 2016, in author's possession.

Image 5- Retrieved by California American Legion

Image 6- Retrieved by The National WWII Museum

First Slide - Retrieved by Library of Congress