Describe the organisation and work of the people at bletchley park essay sample

During World War II the German armed forces top secret codes were broken at Bletchley Park. Bletchley Park provided the allies with vital information towards their war effort. Bletchley Park was a small town Situated 50 miles North-West of London. Sir Leon, a London stock broker saw this location as an ideal place for an M16 evacuation base and government code and cipher school, which had been set up towards the later stages of the First World War. During the First World War code breaking had become important for the first time, messages were sent by wireless and Morse code so the government knew that it would have to be prepared with the second world war looming, they wanted to be able decode all enemy signals. After the government had chosen Bletchley Park an appropriate location it was given new roads, telephone lines, living quarters, water mains and everything that a self contained community would need because the key to Bletchley was it was to be secret. In this essay I will be describing the organisation of people at Bletchley Park.

The need for Bletchley Park was clear. The academics were used to cracking codes by using the pencil paper method. They would simply study messages and look for similarities to try to builds up an idea of how the code was constructed. But by 1939 these methods were out of date, the Germans had been using ' enigma', a coding machine that did not use random symbols, the letters bore no relationship whatsoever to the words of the text of the message for example," SOPJS MIJKK", two ' K's did not mean a double letter and the ' J's did not all relate to the same letter. The British government believed that the system was unbreakable, therefore no effort had been put

into cracking it, but now that the war seemed inevitable, something just had to be done.

The Germans were sending messages to its navy, army and air force. These messages that were to be decoded at Bletchley Park were picked up at Y service stations. At first there were only a few Y stations the most important one was found in Chatham, after 1941 more and more stations were set up. Although the real success of Bletchley Park depended on the operators at these Y stations being able to pick up these messages effectively, especially the beginning of the messages as this was often the clue to cracking it. As the war progressed, the Y service officers became more and more skilled at finding the correct frequencies at the right times of day.

Bletchley Park had to be a place of complete secrecy. It was known as station X and had a secretive location. Many of the first arrivals at Bletchley Park in 1939 did not have a clue what they were supposed to be doing, " I should think there were more than a hundred people in what we were called the first wave. None of us knew quite what would happen next. War had not been declared and most people thought and hoped that nothing would happen and we would all go back to London" . Bletchley ark was also, " very, very departmentalised" this meant that, " nobody had a clue what we were doing, except the real high-ups" . This high level of secrecy was essential at Bletchley park because if the Germans new that we had broken or were trying to break Enigma the Germans were tighten up their procedures even more so. This first wave of arrivals fell into two categories; the code breakers, these were mostly middle-aged academics from oxford and Cambridge universities and had often studied classics; the other category

was administrative staff, mostly young girls between eighteen and twenty-two. The academics were used to cracking codes by using the pen and paper method.

They would study messages and look for similarities to try to build up an idea of how the code was constructed. But by 1939 these methods were out of date, the Germans were using the Enigma coding machine, the British believed that this system was unbreakable. The academics were son joined by mathematicians; the mathematicians did not get on very well wit the more experienced code breakers because they were a lot younger therefore worked in completely different ways. The mathematicians were the ones who made the real breakthroughs on Enigma in the first years of the war as Enigma was a mathematical machine breaking it partly depended on being able to predict the random letters appearing within the sequence.

As the population of Bletchley park grew they needed more code breakers, but in 1939 nobody knew who would be likely to make a good code breaker so time teats were devised to help define a potential recruit that would be a successful code breaker. At one point the government had a competition amongst recruits to see who could solve the telegraph crossword puzzle, this was because it was an important quality to be able to put your self into the way of thinking of a completely unknown person and expect the unexpected and that is what was needed for both crosswords and code breaking.

The initial occupation of Bletchley Park in Autumn 1938 had shown that much more accommodation space would be needed for the new comers. This led to the first wooden huts being built in the grounds around the House

starting in early 1939, this also helped with the secrecy of Bletchley as the different huts could not communicate. At first the work was centred upon two huts hut 6 that de but at other huts messages were typed up and sorted.

Hut 6 was were you would find the code breakers, you would find a selection the academics which were mostly middle aged from oxford and Cambridge and the mathematicians which were younger and had different fresh ways of code braking, "…anything when it was before your eyes because you were so gnarled up. But then of course, the magic moment comes when it really works". The role of hut 6 was to receive signals and messages from Y stations and try to decode them. The results ranged from a complete text to a few words or even letters. The code breakers were not interested in what the message said, their task was to break the enemies concealment, a description of work in hut 6-" we didn't often know the results of our activities, which messages were important ". When the decoding was finished it was sent next door to hut 3 by a wooden tunnel and the messages were pushed along with a wooden box with a broom handle.

These messages that arrived at hut 3 often made no sense. The code breakers job was to break the code so it was text, but this text was in a foreign language. It was the Intelligence officers job to make sense of the decode messages which were often just scraps of German, and later Italian and Japanese. Most of the staff, were linguists, they had to identify possible German words from a few letters and then fit them into a final message. Most of the linguists were young females aged between eighteen and twenty-two. Secrecy again played a big role in hut 3, " we were very, very departmentalised" organisation was also extremely important, " one the

great strengths of hut 3 was the index." When this message was complete it was passed onto MI6, " urgent messages were sent to commanders in chief. All messages went to the service ministries."

The messages wee divided into 4 piles of importance. pile one contained messages that were very urgent theses were sent directly by teleprinter to MI6 and then straight to Churchill. Pile 2 was still regarded as important and was often sent to MI6 later during that day. Pile 3 was less important and went by daily van and pile 4 was not important and was not sent at all. This was why hut 3, built a card index of all the messages so that they could be checked. This was a big task as by 1942 Bletchley park otherwise known as station x was decoding up to 8000 messages per day.

I think that the work of the people and the organisation of Bletchley Park helped immensely in bringing the war to an early end. The fact that secrecy was so important contributed hugely as if the germens were to find out that we had broken Enigma then their regulations would be tighter. Bletchley organisation also helped as having a card index meant that messages could be checked if need be. Also the separation of code breakers and linguists was also a good idea so they could not communicate. The code breakers brought an early end to the war as they broke the enigma, but without the linguists translating the messages and the people at the " y" Station picking up the messages then there would be no end result. The Point of Bletchley Park was that you had to work as a team to get results; you also had to abide by the rules of secrecy.