Today’s Attack and Defense

It has long been recognized that the Allies’ ability to read the encrypted transmission codes of Germany during World War II was a decisive key to victory. Yet this does not mean that the Allies could simply listen in and hear the conversations taking place, much like listening to a voice conversation over a telephone. The encryption keys used for encoding the messages were changed daily, so that each day, codebreakers had to work to determine the new key for that day

before reading any messages. The transmissions were not voice communications but Morse code (dots and dashes). So, the Allies’ attempts to read encrypted transmissions was a daily endeavor that continued throughout the war, not always successfully.

An often-overlooked aid in breaking the encoded messages was the complexity of sending the messages themselves.