

NEWS ITEM
September 9, 2020



Computer Museum of America Unveils Rare, WWII-Era Cipher Machine, The Enigma

Computer Museum of America (CMoA) is unveiling a fully restored, operational Enigma machine, beginning on September 18th. CMoA houses one of the world's largest, most comprehensive collections of artifacts from the digital revolution, and recently reopened in Roswell, GA. Our Enigma machine is believed to be one of the only known Enigma machines in the Southeast with pedigreed papers from 1936 Germany.

With safety measures in place, the museum reopened in June on Fridays and Saturdays, just prior to its one-year anniversary. Newly installed CMoA exhibits, in addition to the Enigma, include the STEAM Timeline, the Speed Wall and Silicon Gallery, and they are ready to be explored. The STEAM Timeline, covers over 2,000 pivotal events and images in computer history, and is the focus of the September theme for the Family Fun Field Trips series, offering a different theme each month for fun and educational family outings.

“We are excited to introduce our Enigma machine and launch our newest exhibit,” said Lonnie Mimms, Computer Museum of America’s founder and chairman of the board. “Not only is our machine fully restored, we know exactly where it came from because we have the paperwork showing the purchase order written in Berlin 84 years ago. This makes our Enigma an incredibly valuable piece of history and we are delighted to share our enthusiasm about this artifact with Atlanta and the country.”

The Enigma machine at CMoA was purchased on March 7, 1936 by the German army according to the original papers from the company which produced the Enigma, Heimsoeth and Rinke, an encoding machine company in Berlin. Mimms acquired the machine in 2019. About 40,000 Enigma machines were produced in total and less than 300 are believed to remain today in various working conditions.

Early during World War I, the Allies broke coded messages with increasing regularity, so it was paramount to the Germans to drastically improve their encryption capabilities. As World War I was concluding, German engineer Arthur Scherbius invented the Enigma, the world's first electromechanical encryption device. It was used to encode and decode secret messages for commercial and governmental bodies of several nations, including Germany's Nazi party during World War II. It was believed to be unbreakable at the time, until Turing and his team at Bletchley Park cracked the code. Some experts believe this incredible feat shortened World War II by as much as two years. This year, 2020, marks the 75th anniversary of the end of that conflict.

About Computer Museum of America

Computer Museum of America (CMoA), located in Roswell, Georgia is a nonprofit organization that houses one of the world's largest, most comprehensive collections of artifacts from the digital revolution. CMoA is committed to the preservation of computing devices, documents, and technology in order to exhibit, educate, and encourage future innovation. CMoA has worked with educational institutions,

museums, and film companies with technology related exhibits and artifacts including NASA, Georgia Institute of Technology and the Smithsonian Institution.

The museum opened in 2019 with four exhibits: A Tribute to Apollo 11, Supercomputing: Vanquishing the Impossible, Timeline of Computer History, and The Byte Magazine Collection.

###

