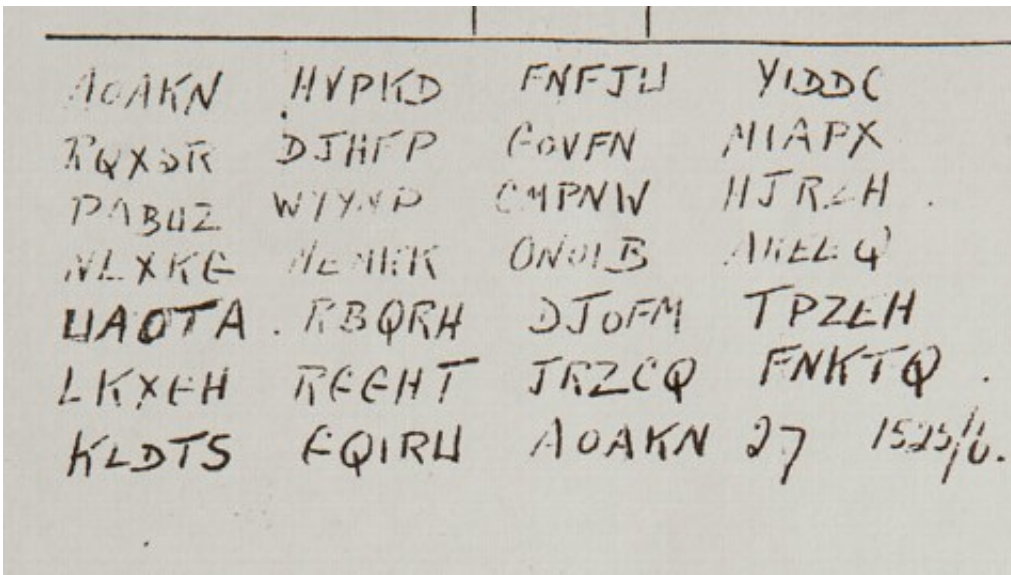


# UK codebreakers stumped by WWII pigeon message

November 23 2012

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British intelligence officials are baffled by a secret World War II message that was discovered on the leg of a dead pigeon, they admitted on Friday.

The message, [consisting of 27 hand-written blocks of five letters](#), was attached to a pigeon skeleton that was found by retired probation officer David Martin when he was renovating his house in Surrey, southeast England.

Martin handed the piece of paper to experts at [intelligence agency](#) GCHQ at the start of November, and they have been scratching their heads ever since.

Codebreakers said the message, which did not include a date, was impossible to crack without its codebook.

Written on a small sheet of paper headed "Pigeon Service", the code was found in a small red canister and listed the sender as "Sjt W Stot". The recipient is named as "X02".

A GCHQ spokesman said: "Although it is disappointing that we cannot yet read the message brought back by a brave carrier pigeon, it is a tribute to the skills of the wartime code-makers that, despite working under severe pressure, they devised a code that was indecipherable both then and now."

Britain used some 250,000 [pigeons](#) as military messengers during [World War II](#).

**More information:** The message in full reads:

AOAKN HVPKD FNFJW YIDDC  
RQXSR DJHFP GOVFN MIAPX  
PABUZ WYYNP CMPNW HJRZH  
NLXKG MEMKK ONOIB AKEEQ  
WAOTA RBQRH DJOFM TPZEH  
LKXGH RGGHT JRZCQ FNKTQ  
KLDTS FQIRW AOAKN 27 1525/6

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Citation: UK codebreakers stumped by WWII pigeon message (2012, November 23) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-11-uk-codebreakers-stumped-wwii-pigeon.html>

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