
User Interests in the Commercial Enigma

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08 February 2026

Introduction

This is a chronological overview of known interest from prospective users, both commercial and governmental, in the Enigma machines that were offered for commercial sale. From about 1932, all requests for offers for machines addressed to *Chiffriermaschinen A.G.* (ChiMaAG) and *Heimsoeth und Rinke* (H&R) were reported to the *Reichswehrministerium* (R.W.M.) and later the Wehrmacht for authorisation to proceed with an offer and possibly later sale. A [memorandum](#) composed by Mrs Elsbeth Rinke and Engineer Willi Korn of H&R in June 1932, explains the situation for foreign sales to the company's Board of Directors. In only a very few cases was such authorisation refused.

Year 1932

- **14 October 1932 — Commercial Sales.**

In a note from the negotiation between R.W.M. and H&R, the details and conditions for the sale of commercial Enigma machines to the Berliner Administration of the company N.V. Europeesche Verreschrijver Maatschappij (Compagnie Europeenne des Tickers) are set out. One condition is that the machines must not be transferred to any foreign authorities, and for every sale to this company, the Reichswehr Cipher Office (Chiffrierstelle) must be informed. [Facsimile copy](#)

Year 1933

- **25 August 1933 — Switzerland.**

On this date, Mrs Rinke and Willi Korn have a meeting with Captain Hans Oschmann concerning Switzerland. A Swiss engineer named Glorr, from a Swiss firm that delivers communication equipment to the Swiss Army, has stated that he thinks the Swiss Army would be interested in ChiMaAG's Enigma machines. Captain Oschmann says that we under no circumstances can be allowed to sell Enigma machines to Switzerland, because a particular country is too closely related to Switzerland. [Facsimile copy](#)

Year 1935

- **31 August 1935 — Ethiopia.**

Letter to H&R from the *Reichskriegsministerium* about sales of commercial cipher machines to Ethiopia:

Reference: Oberbefehlshaber der Wehrmacht / Az. E 5 a WA / Abw. II, Nr. 3089/35 g.

“I hereby inform you, in response to your oral inquiry, that the sale of cipher machines of the so-called commercial type (without plug board) to authorised representatives of the Abyssinian government does not conflict with the interests of the German Wehrmacht.” [Facsimile copy](#)

Year 1936

- **22 July 1936 — Belgium.**

H&R informs the *Reichskriegsministerium, Chiffrierstelle*, in a letter that they, by phone, have been contacted by the Belgian Military Attaché in Berlin W. 8, Jägerstrasse 55, with the following questions:

- Whether we were the manufacturers of the “ENIGMA” cipher machines and had an agent in Brussels.
- Whether the machines are freely available on the market and how much they cost.
- Whether we could send an offer with descriptions to the address given above very soon. We informed him that, as the manufacturers of the “ENIGMA” machines, we cannot provide the requested information since the key personnel responsible for such matters are unavailable until August. We kindly request that you inform us of the next steps to take in this matter. [Facsimile copy](#)

- **07 August 1936 — Yugoslavia.**

In a letter to H&R, the *Chiffrierstelle* informs them:

Reference: Chiffrierstelle / Az. E5 Nr. 3278/36

“Reference: Your letter dated July 13, 1936

Subject: Enigma K 27

We would kindly ask you to please note that it is not desirable to enter into negotiations with the company C. Lorenz A.G. regarding the delivery of the commercially available Enigma A 27 for the benefit of the Yugoslav Navy Ministry.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **18 August 1936 — Belgium.**

Willi Korn composes a note on a phone conversation with a Mr Jansen from the Belgian Embassy. The note reads:

“When Mr Jansen from the Belgian embassy called to ask if we could export machines to Belgium, I told Mr J. that I couldn’t say anything at the moment because our company was in the

process of being restructured. As soon as the restructure was complete — which should happen next year — we would get in touch. When asked whether we were the manufacturers of the Army Enigma, I gave an evasive answer. If we were not allowed to supply cipher machines to Belgium, the answer would be enough for him. I gave him an evasive answer.

Mrs R. [Rinke] listened in on the phone.

Korn, 18.8.36”

Note: The note has an addendum which reads: “According to information from Ober-regierungsrat Fenner on August 29, 1936, we are not allowed to deliver Enigma machines to Belgium under any circumstances.

Ko. 29.8.36” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **30 October 1936 — Switzerland.**

Willi Korn composes a note about his phone call with Mr Kessler¹ of the C. Lorenz company and their request for prices for the commercial Enigma machines that they plan to deliver to Switzerland, together with the Lorenz radio stations they are building for them. [Transcript of the handwritten note](#) and [Facsimile copy](#)

- **04 November 1936 — Switzerland.**

H&R receives the letter from OKH / In 7 / V concerning the delivery of commercial cipher machines to the Swiss Federal Department of Defence. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. E 5 a AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 4711/36 geh.

“Reference: Consultation between Chief Ing. Korn and Chief Reg. Councilor Fenner on October 30, 1936.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the Swiss Federal Department of Defense.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines for radio stations, which the Lorenz company supplies to the Swiss Federal Military Department. However, it is requested that the R.K.M. / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercially available machines supplied abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **23 November 1936 — Greece.**

H&R sends a letter to Reichskriegsministerium / In 7/V requesting advice on sales to Greece. The letter reads:

“We have been asked for a quote on cipher machines by a company called Grote and Co. in Athens. It appears that an authority there is interested in our machines, and we are asked to

¹This is most likely Mr Walter Kessler, who was employed by C. Lorenz in Berlin for 33 years.

submit the requested quote with catalogues as quickly as possible. We would like to ask you to let us know as soon as possible whether we are permitted to sell commercially available cipher machines model A 27 or model Z 30 (number machine) to Greece.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **28 November 1936 — Greece.**

OKH / In 7 / V answers H&R on their request for advice on sales to Greece. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. E 5 a AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 4974/36 geh.

“Subject: Greece.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines of the Model A 27 or Model Z 30 to Greece. However, it is requested that the RKM / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wirings of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **15 December 1936 — HAPRO Company.**

H&R receives a letter from OKH / In 7 / V concerning sales to the German firm HAPRO, *Handelsgesellschaft für industrielle Produkte*.² The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. E 5 a AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 5279/36 geh.

“Subject: Hapro.

With reference to the letter from Hapro dated December 9th, we would like to inform you that there are no objections to the delivery of two commercial cipher machines to the company mentioned. However, please note that the reflector and cipher wheels do not match any of the wiring used so far. Please inform us of the wiring selected. The R.K.M. best carries out the cipher instruction. (In 7 V). We would ask you to instruct the company to contact In 7 V for this purpose.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **24 December 1936 — C. Illies & Co.**

H&R sends a letter to OKH / In 7 / V about an interest in their commercial Enigma from the German company C. Illies & Co. Their rather long letter reads:

“From the Berlin representative of the company C. Illies & Co., we received a letter, which is attached as a copy. We would like to ask whether we should enter into negotiations with the above-mentioned company in this matter. For your information, in 1931, we negotiated with the same company about introducing our commercial machines into Japan. According to a report from the company, discussions were held with personalities in the army and navy, government

²HAPRO was founded by the weapons dealer Hans Klein in January 1934. The German government used HAPRO to trade with China.

and commercial circles — especially large banks. All of these circles spoke out against the use of the Enigma, mainly for the following reasons:

1. The foreign origin fundamentally excludes the introduction of such secret devices into government offices.
2. The machine does not mean any savings because it does not reduce the text length.
3. Demand would be limited to a very small number and only for special purposes.
4. The Japanese army does not need machines of this kind; it uses Japanese cipher books with Japanese characters in all important cases. The ordinary soldier cannot use a foreign device with an alphabet.” [Facsimile copy](#)

Year 1937

- **07 January 1937 — C. Illies & Co.**

H&R receives the answer from OKH / In 7 / V about sales of commercial cipher machines to Japan through the German company Illies & Co. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. E 5 a AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 5418/36 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated December 24, 1936.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to Japan by C. Illies & Co.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines of the Model A 27 or Model Z 30 to Japan. However, it is requested that the RKM / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wirings of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **20 February 1937 — Bulgaria.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / V about the sale of 20 commercial cipher machines of the type Enigma K with serial numbers K 213 – K 232. The letter reads:

“Subject: C. Lorenz A.G. – Bulgaria.

With reference to the consultation with your Messrs Major Bötzel, Captain Bayer and Captain Kopp on April 22nd, 1936, we inform you that at the end of January 1937, we delivered 20 commercially available ENIGMA light bulb cipher machines with the numbers K 213 – K 232 to the firm C. Lorenz A.G. Berlin-Tempelhof for the Bulgarian authorities. All wheels had standard wiring, i.e. the reflectors were wired according to the drawing Ch 11 Tz 86 and the three cipher wheels I–III according to the drawing Ch 11 Tz 87 a–c.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **24 March 1937 — Argentina.**

H&R informs the R.K.M. Abwehr Office II b about an unannounced visit by the Argentinian Military Attaché in Berlin, Oberst (Colonel) Sanguinetti. The letter reads:

“As we had already informed Senior Government Councillor Fenner by telephone, the local Argentine military attaché Colonel Sanguinetti paid us an unannounced visit yesterday. He identified himself and introduced himself with a letter from the RKM attaché group with the signature, “v. Pappenheim”. The visit was made in response to a request from Colonel Carlos D. Marquez, President of the Foreign Acquisitions Commission, 16, Avenue Hoche (8e) Paris, to inquire about the latest model of our cipher machines introduced into the German Army. We naturally gave an evasive answer and informed him that our model A 27 (commercial version) was significantly improved over the model A 26 previously delivered to the Argentine War Ministry. We also pointed out that a correspondence between model A 26 and model A 27 is not possible. We gave him a catalogue that is known to the Commission. We want to take this opportunity to mention that in November 1936, we were unable to accept an order for six machines because the conditions for this state order, due to the control measures required in the workshops, etc., were not compatible with the regulations required by us in the interests of national defence. The visit of the gentleman mentioned above left us with the impression that he was merely there to inquire about the latest army cipher machines, but not to give us an order.”

Handwritten note:

“Messrs Bayer and Kopp from In 7/V were away.

Copy handed over to Captain Kopp on 6.4.36. Rinke.” [Facsimile copy](#)

• **09 April 1937 — China.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V about the delivery of commercial cipher machines to the Chinese Army. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 1528/37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated April 6, 1937 (C. Lorenz)

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines for the Chinese Army.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines model A 27 to the Chinese Army. However, it is requested that the RKM / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

• **05 May 1937 — Portugal.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V about the delivery of commercial cipher machines to the Portuguese Embassy. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 1892/37 geh.

“Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the Portuguese Embassy.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the firm A. J. Worina, Berlin-Charlottenburg, for the Portuguese Embassy. However, it is requested that the RKM / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **11 May 1937 — Yugoslavia.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / V about the upcoming visit of the Yugoslavian Military Attaché in Berlin. They request permission to receive the military attaché in their office and inquire about the possibility of offering commercial cipher machines to Yugoslavia. The letter is as follows:

“As the owner of the German Export House, Dr Erich Bässler, Leipzig C 1, Gottschedstrasse 1, informed us during his visit yesterday, Colonel Zarko Veric, military attaché at the Royal Yugoslavian Embassy, residing in Berlin W. 62, Budapesterstr. 3 III intends to visit us in the next few days. As far as Dr Basaler is informed, Colonel Veric wants to submit proposals to his authority in Belgrade to introduce our machines into the Yugoslav Army. We would appreciate it if you could inform us as soon as possible whether Colonel Veric can visit our office and whether we are permitted to export our commercial cipher machines, Model A 27 (26-point) and Model Z 30 (10-point), to Yugoslavia. We want to refer to the letters from the RKM cipher office, referenced as Az. E 5 no. 5279/36 of 7 August 1936 and from the Army High Command under reference Az. 78 g 12 AHA/In 7 V, no. 727/37 geh, of 22 February 1937.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **24 May 1937 — Yugoslavia.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their answer concerning the sale of commercial cipher machines to the Yugoslavian Army. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az, 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 2106/37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated May 11, 1937.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the Yugoslav Army.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines model A 27 (26-point) and model Z 30 (10-point) to the Yugoslav Army. However, it is requested that the RKM / in 7 V be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **04 June 1937 — Poland.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / V about the Polish company Edward Brygiewicz & Jan Wolff, Warsaw, that have contacted them about sales of their cipher machines to a Polish authority. The letter reads:

“The company Edward Brygiewicz & Jan Wolff, Warszawa, Ul. Widok 3, contacted us on

the recommendation of their business friend, Mr J. Turok, Berlin, regarding the sale of our equipment to a Polish authority. We would like to take this opportunity to note that in 1928, we delivered a commercially available machine to the Polish Embassy in Berlin, Trade Department, and four further commercial machines, these with special wiring, to the same place for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw. We would like to politely ask whether you would like us to enter into negotiations with the above-mentioned company in this matter.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **09 June 1937 – Poland.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their answer concerning the sale of commercial cipher machines to Poland. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 2502/37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated June 4, 1937.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to a Polish authority.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines to a Polish authority via the company Edward Brygiewicz & Jan Wolff, Warsaw. However, it is requested that the Reich War Ministry / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and the wiring of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **11 June 1937 – USA.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / V about a request from the Hamburg company Arnold Otto Meyer, Technical Office, who wants to deliver commercial Enigma machines to the United States. The letter reads:

“The company Arnold Otto Meyer, Technical Office, Hamburg 1, Alsterdamm 1-2 has contacted us regarding the sale of our equipment to the United States. We would like to politely ask whether it would be desirable to contact the company mentioned above in this matter.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **23 June 1937 – USA.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their answer to the request for sales to the United States. Their answer reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 2578/37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated June 11, 1937.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the United States.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines to the United States, but under one condition: the sub-recipient is notified to the RKM for each delivery. Please inform the Reich War Ministry / In 7 V of the numbers and wiring of the

commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **23 June 1937 – Turkey.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their answer to a request for the sale of commercial Enigma machines to Turkey via the firm C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 2579/37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated June 11, 1937.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to Turkey.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines to the company C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin-Tempelhof, Lorenzweg, for sale to Turkey. It is requested that the RKM / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **17 August 1937 – Iraq.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their answer to a request for the sale of commercial Enigma machines to Iraq via the firm C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 3451/37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated August 11, 1937.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the Kingdom of Iraq.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines model A 27 to the company C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin-Tempelhof, Lorenzweg, for sale to the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Iraq in Baghdad. However, it is requested that the RKM / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.”

[Facsimile copy](#)

- **15 November 1937 – Estland.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / V about a request from C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin, about the sale of commercial cipher machines to the signals department of the Estonian Ministry of War. The letter reads:

“Subject: Estonia, Ministry of War.

The company C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin-Tempelhof, has asked us for an offer of 5 to 10 commercial cipher machines for the communications department of the Estonian Ministry of War in Tallinn. We would like to politely ask whether we may sell commercial cipher machines to the location mentioned above.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **29 November 1937 — Estland.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their answer to a request for the sale of commercial Enigma machines to Estland. Their answer reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 4892 / 37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated November 15, 1937.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the Estonian War Ministry.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines to C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin-Tempelhof, for the communications department of the Estonian War Ministry in Tallinn. However, it is requested that the RKM / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **16 December 1937 — Afghanistan, Egypt and Iran.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their answer to requests for sale of commercial cipher machines to the military in Afghanistan, Egypt and Iran. The letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AWA / In 7 V, Nr. 4798 / 37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated November 19, 1937.

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to Afghanistan, Egypt, and Iran.

The Reich War Ministry has no objection to the delivery of commercial cipher machines to the company C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin-Tempelhof, for the military offices in Afghanistan, Egypt and Iran. However, it is requested that the RKM / In 7 V be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercial cipher machines delivered abroad.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **16 December 1937 — Turkey.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / V about a request for documents received from the Turkish Major Dr. Ing. Osman Nuri Incel. The letter reads:

“Subject: Turkey.

We are enclosing a letter dated the 2nd of this month from Major Dr Ing. Osman Nuri Incel. Please let us know if the gentleman above is assigned to a local Turkish authority, and if so, whether we can send him the requested descriptions. The Army High Command approved the sale of commercially available machines to the Turkish War Ministry in a letter dated June 23, 1937, reference Az 78 g 12 AHA In 7 V.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **22 December 1937 — Turkey.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their rejection of a request for documentation for the commercial Enigma received from the Turkish Major Dr Ing. Osman Nuri Incel. Their answer reads:

Reference: OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 5181 / 37 geh.

“Reference: Your letter dated December 16, 1937.

Subject: Turkey.

The submission of documents for the commercial cipher machine to Major Dr Ing. Osman Nuri Inceler cannot be approved.” [Facsimile copy](#)

Year 1938

- **27 January — Karl Devantier and Nordic Society.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / V with their answer concerning H&R’s request for authorisation for dealing with the company Karl Devantier for the sale of commercial Enigma to Spain, and for clarifying the possible sale of such machines to the *Nordische Gesellschaft* — Nordic Society.³ The OKH letter reads:

Reference: OKH / Ref. 89 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 246/38 geh.

“Subject:

- 1) Karl Devantier
- 2) Nordic Society

1. As you know, the delivery of cipher machines for national Spain is carried out by ROWAK under the strict control of the recipients. OKH is, therefore, unfortunately unable to permit you to establish business relations with Karl Devantier.
2. According to existing principles, commercial cipher machines may only be sold abroad after obtaining approval from OKH / In 7 if the recipient is known abroad. It seems appropriate to receive the representative of the Nordic Society to find out at this opportunity how the cooperation is intended. In doing so, it will be necessary to exercise the appropriate restraint and to point out that, in the interests of the Reich, the company shouldn’t become known abroad.

Please inform us of the outcome of the discussion. The letters given to OKH are enclosed and returned.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **02 February 1938 — Switzerland.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / V about the delivery of two commercial Enigma machines for Switzerland. The letter reads:

Reference: Az. E 5a AHA / In 7 V, Nr.4711/56 geh. — Letter dated 4.11.36

“In response to the above letter, we hereby inform you that we have delivered two commer-

³The *Nordische Gesellschaft* (“Nordic Society”) was an association founded in 1921 to strengthen German-Nordic cultural and political cooperation. See [Wikipedia](#)

cially available ENIGMA cipher machines with the numbers K 323 – K 324 to the company C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin-Tempelhof, Lorenzweg, for the Federal / Military Department. All rollers had commercial wirings, i.e. the reflectors were connected according to the drawing Ch 11 Tz 86 and the three cipher wheels I–III according to the drawing Ch 11 Tz 87 a–c.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **07 April 1938 — China.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / V about a letter from Mr Richard Schick about the sale of commercial cipher machines to the Chinese Army. The H&R letter reads:

“Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to China.

We are enclosing a copy of a letter from Mr Richard Schick dated April 2, 1938, for your information. By letter from OKH / Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, Nr. 1520/37 geh. dated April 9, 1937, we were authorised to supply commercial cipher machines to the Chinese Army. As far as Mr Schick is aware, the request also concerns machines for the Chinese Army. We would therefore kindly ask you to let us know whether the authorisation granted in the above letter is still valid, given the current situation.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **23 June 1938 — China.**

Willi Korn of H&R composes a note on his telephone conversation with Captain Kopp concerning the sale of commercial cipher machines to China. The note reads:

“Subject: China

In response to our letter of April 7, 1938, to the RKM, In 7 V, Captain (E) Kopp informed us by telephone today that we are not currently allowed to sell commercial cipher machines, as we cannot guarantee that the machines will not fall into the hands of the Soviets. Korn, June 23, 1938.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **12 November 1938 — I. G. Farben.**

H&R writes OKH / In 7 / IV to ask for permission to supply I. G. Farben and their subsidiaries with commercial cipher machines of the counter type, Enigma G (G31), with special wiring of the cipher wheels. The letter reads:

“Subject: Counter machines according to drawing no. Ch 15 for the Nitrogen Syndicate (I. G. Farben)

We hereby request permission to supply the Nitrogen Syndicate with the light bulb cipher machines with counters that you are familiar with, with special wiring for the three cipher wheels I–III and for the reflectors. For these wirings, which we are only permitted to produce for the group mentioned above and its subsidiaries, we would like to provide you with one copy of the wiring drawings for your information. Initially, there are supposed to be three machines, of

which one machine is intended for the Nitrogen Syndicate, Berlin, one machine for their representative, the company H. Ahrens & Co. and Successor, (owner Hermann Bosch) in Tokyo, and one machine for the German Nitrogen Trading Company Krauch & Co. in Shanghai. As Mr Lander of the Nitrogen Syndicate in Berlin informed us by telephone, the companies in Tokyo and Shanghai are German companies with German staff, and the local parent company would undertake to ensure that the machines there would not fall into foreign hands. There is a prospect that the I.G. Farben Group will soon order more such machines from us for similar positions. We kindly request a prompt response in this matter.” [Facsimile copy](#)

Year 1939

- **09 January 1939 — Spanish Morocco.**

H&R informs OKH / In 7 / IV about the delivery of three Enigma K machines to the *Batallón de Transmisiones de Marruecos* in Ceuta. The letter reads:

Reference: Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 V, No. 4178/38, letter dated 29 September 1938

“In response to the above letter, we hereby inform you that we have delivered 3 commercially available ENIGMA cipher machines with the numbers K 556 – K 558 to the company C. Lorenz A.G., Berlin-Tempelhof, Lorenzweg, for the Batallon de Transmisiones de Marruecos, Ceuta, Spanish Morocco. All wheels had commercial wirings, i.e. the three cipher wheels I–III were wired according to the drawing Ch 11 Tz 87 a–c and the reflectors according to the drawing Ch 11 Tz 86.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **11 January 1939 — I. G. Farben.**

H&R writes OKH / In 7 / IV to inform about the delivery of three Enigma G machines to the Nitrogen Syndicate (I.G. Farben Group). The letter reads:

Reference: Az. 78 g 12 AHA / In 7 IV, Referat 1, No. 5583/38 geh. Letter dated 23 November 1938

“In response to the above letter, we hereby inform you that we have delivered three light bulb cipher machines with counters, numbered G 222 – G 224, to the Nitrogen Syndicate (I.G. Farben Group). The three cipher wheels were wired according to the drawing Ch 15 Tz 121 a–c, and the reflector according to the drawing Ch 15 Tz 122, of which we are providing you with a white copy of each in the attachment.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **21 February 1939 — Deutsche Kalisyndikat.**

H&R writes OKH / In 7 / IV to ask for permission to supply two Enigma G machines to the Deutsche Kalisyndikat G.m.b.H. The letter reads:

“We hereby request permission to supply the German Potash Syndicate G.m.b.H. with 2 of the light bulb cipher machines with counters that you are familiar with. As the Japan department of the German Potash Syndicate G.m.b.H. has informed us, the machines are intended for telegram traffic between Berlin and the German head of the Japanese branch, and one is to be installed in Berlin and the other in Tokyo. We kindly request your prompt response on this matter.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **1 March 1939 — Deutsche Kalisyndikat.**

Letter from OKH / In 7 / IV with their answer concerning H&R’s request for authorisation to supply two Enigma G machines to the Deutsche Kalisyndikat G.m.b.H. The OKH letter reads:

Reference: Az. 78 g 12 AHA/In 7 IV, Nr. 1065/38 geh. Letter dated 1 March 1939”

“Reference: Letter dated February 21, 1939.

Subject: Delivery of cipher machines for the German Potash Syndicate GmbH.

The Army High Command has no objection to the delivery of two light bulb cipher machines with counters and special wiring to the German Potash Syndicate GmbH. However, it is requested that the OKH/In 7 IV be informed of the number and wiring of the machines delivered to this company.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **27 March 1939 — Argentina.**

H&R writes OKH / In 7 / IV to ask for permission to supply an offer together with documentation for their pawl and ratchet driven commercial machines to the Argentinian Navy. The letter reads:

“Mr. Frigate Captain (ret.) Eduardo A. Ceballos of the Argentine Naval Commission in Europe, Berlin-Schöneberg, Bregenzerstr. 5, telephone 92 23 24, visited our office on March 16, 1939, after obtaining prior authorisation from the relevant departments. He had been commissioned by the Argentine Naval Commission, whose headquarters are in London, to inquire about cipher machines. He asked us for a quote and descriptions, which he would then forward to London. Mr. Ceballos was unaware that we had previously supplied the Argentine Army with commercially available cipher machines of an older design. We had to decline the last order from the Argentine Army because the contract included, among other things, inspection of the factory. We hereby politely request your permission to deliver this offer with descriptions of commercially available ratchet-driven light bulb cipher machines. Heil Hitler!” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **13 October 1939 — Yugoslavia.**

Letter from OKH / Gen St d H / Chef HNW IV with their answer concerning the sale of commercial cipher machines to the Yugoslavian Air Force. The letter reads:

Reference: Az. 78 g 12, Nr. Nr. 878/39 geh. Letter dated 13 October 1939

“Reference: Your letter dated October 11, 1939,

Subject: Delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the Yugoslav Air Force.

OKH / Chief HNW has no objections to the delivery of commercially available cipher machines to the Yugoslav Air Force. However, it is requested that OKH / Chief HNW IV be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercially available cipher machines delivered abroad.”

[Facsimile copy](#)

- **23 October 1939 — Romania.**

Letter from Virgil Prassa, Technical Representatives, Str. Pitar Mos 27, Bucharest inquiring about cipher machines. The letter reads:

“Subject: Mechanical and electrical printing cipher machines.

After learning that you manufacture mechanical and electrical cipher machines, and I have a very significant demand for such machines, I request that you please send me your brochures with the necessary documentation and your offer for the various types of your products. After receiving your reply, I will return to the matter immediately.

Sincerely,
V. Prassa”

Note: The letter carries a handwritten note made by H&R reading:

“Copy sent to OKH Chief of Communication IV. 3.11.39

See letter from H. Qu. OKH dated 10.9.39, Field post No. 03309.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **19 December 1939 — Romania.**

Letter from Virgil Prassa, Technical Representatives, Str. Pitar Mos 27, Bucharest with further details about his firm and his interest in representing H&R in Romania. The letter reads:

“I have, thank you, received your letter of the 12th of this month and inform you that I have received several inquiries from the state authorities regarding such special cipher machines, which can keep written correspondence secret. These machines can be placed with the following authorities:

- 1) Ministry of the Interior, for the Security Service, and for the country’s police administrations.
- 2) Ministry of National Defense, for the General Staff and its affiliated departments.
- 3) Ministry of Aviation and the Navy.

I have excellent connections with all of these authorities, as I served for two years as Chief of Staff at the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Public Works, and subsequently as Director

of the Bucharest company “Ferrominiera.” I currently have my own office for German technical representation.

For references in Germany, please contact the factories for which I have received significant orders:

- 1) Mr. Jos. Henzler, “FAUN”-Werke, Nuremberg, an order worth approximately RM 250,000.-
- 2) Mr. Hans Schäfer “M.A.N.”, Nuremberg, an order worth approximately RM 1,000,000.- that I received for representing the company here.
- 3) Arn. Jung, Locomotive Factory, Jungenthal near Kirchen, an order for special locomotives worth RM 32,000.-
- 4) Adolf Linnemann, Berlin NW 40, Scharnhorststr. 52, a promptly submitted and already delivered order for approximately RM 2,000.
- 5) Fritz Fuchs, Dortmund, an order for pile drivers for approximately RM 8,000. etc. etc.

Furthermore, negotiations regarding very large contracts are underway with the large corporation “Ferrostaal” in Essen, through its local representative, “Soc. Intertechnica.”

For references in Romania, please contact:

- 1) Mr. Mihai Manoilescu, former Minister and Governor of the National Bank, Professor of Engineering at the Polytechnic University, friend of His Excellency Fabritius, German Ambassador to Bucharest.
- 2) Mr. Hans Mussmacher, Dipl. Ing., authorised representative of the Cologne-based corporation “Klöckner Humboldt Deutz-Motor A.G.”, Director of the “Ferrominiera” company, whose Bucharest address is Bulevardul Buzdugan 51.

I can name several other people who know me, and if you need them, I can provide further references. However, all these references will be useful if the machines you manufacture are known here and can be placed there.

For this reason, and in order not to waste any time until you obtain the requested information, I request that you send me the relevant documentation and brochures so that I can study them and submit them to the above-mentioned authorities.

I have instructed my technical assistant, Mr. Ing. Tinta, to visit you in Berlin. I await your prompt reply via the daily airmail service between Berlin and Bucharest.

Sincerely,
V. Prassa”

Note: The letter carries a handwritten note made by H&R reading:
“Approved, see OKH letter dated 9.2.1940.” [Facsimile copy](#)

Year 1940

- **17 January 1940 — Austria.**

Letter from OKH / Gen St d H / Chef HNW IV with their answer concerning the sale of commercial cipher machines to Radio-Austria A.G. The letter reads:

Reference: Az. 78 g 12, Nr. Nr. 274/40 geh. Letter dated 17 January 1940

“Subject: Radio-Austria A.G.

There are no objections to the delivery of commercially available cipher machines to Radio-Austria A.G. It should only be noted that these machines do not correspond to the standard machines you generally supply in terms of their wiring, but rather that they are equipped with a special wiring. In the event of delivery, please send a copy of the wiring to OKH / General St d H / Chief HNW IV.”

Note: The letter carries a handwritten note made by H&R reading:

“See our letter to Radio Austria dated 23.1.40.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **11 March 1940 — C. Illies & Co.**

Letter from OKH / Gen St d H / Chef HNW IV with their answer concerning the sales of commercial cipher machines to the German company Illies & Co. The letter reads:

Reference: Az. 78 g 12, Nr. Nr. 1249/40 geh. Letter dated 11 March 1940

“Subject: Delivery of cipher machines to Firma C. Illies & Co.

OKH / General St. d. H. / Chief HNW IV has no objection to the delivery of two Model A 27 cipher machines to the above-mentioned company for its own purposes, i.e., for use in its offices in Berlin and Tokyo. However, it is requested that the OKH / General St. d. H. / Chief HNW IV be informed of the numbers and wiring of the commercially available cipher machines delivered to the above-mentioned company.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **9 May 1940 — The Netherlands.**

H&R informs OKH / Gen St d H / Chef HNW IV about the delivery of six commercial Enigma G31 machines with extra ciphering wheels to the Dutch Department of Defence. The letter reads:

“As a supplementary order, we delivered six light bulb ciphering machines, model G 31, and 18 reserve ciphering wheels I – III, numbers G 298 – G 303, to the Departement van Defensie IVde Afdeling A, The Hague. All wheels had standard wiring, i.e., the reversing wheels were wired according to drawing Ch 11 Tz 86, and the 18 ciphering wheels I – III were wired according to drawing Ch 11 Tz 87 a – c.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **18 May 1940 — Portugal.**

Letter from OKH / Gen St d H / Chef HNW IV with their answer concerning the sales of commercial cipher machines to the Portuguese company Sociedade Equipamento de Escritorio, Lda., Lisbon. The letter reads:

Reference: Az. 78 g 12, Nr. Nr. 2529/40 geh. Letter dated 18 May 1940

“Subject: Portugal / Your letter dated May 9, 1940.

The OKH / Chief HNW IV has no objection to the transfer of commercially available cipher machines to the company Sociedade Equipamento de Escritorio, Lda., Lisbon. Please inform OKH / Chief HNW IV of the numbers and wiring of the commercially available cipher machines delivered to the aforementioned company.” [Facsimile copy](#)

- **17 August 1940 — Italy.**

Letter from OKH / Gen St d H / Chef HNW IV with their answer concerning the delivery of twelve Enigma K cipher machines to the Italian military. The letter reads:

Reference: Az. 78 g 12, Nr. Nr. 4455/40 geh. Letter dated 17 August 1940

“Reference: Your letter dated 30.7.40 to OKH/In 7

Subject: Cipher machines D for Italy

The OKH/Chief of the HNW has no objections to the delivery of 12 Model K cipher machines with wiring D to Italy.

The machines currently delivered were equipped with:

U-wheel according to Ch 11 Tz 86

Chi-wheels I – III according to Ch 11 Tz 173 a–c.

If the order is placed, please notify us so that the circuit diagram can be sent to you.” [Facsimile copy](#)

Discussions

From time to time, the old story that the sale of commercial Enigma machines was stopped and prohibited after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933 appears in publications and the media when Enigma is discussed. The presentation here shows that this is not the case, but that commercial sales continued throughout the 1930s and even during the war. However, as we can see, the sales were strictly controlled. As we have learned, the director of *Chiffriermaschinenengesellschaft Heimsoeth und Rinke* (H&R), Mrs Elsbeth Rinke, and the chief engineer, Willi Korn, were trusted entirely by the German authorities, here represented by the Cipher Office (*Chiffrierstelle*) of the Ministry of the Reichswehr. They completely respected and abided by this trust, and they never seemed to have neglected their duty

of informing the authorities about any sale or contact with people, organisations or foreign countries that showed an interest in H&R and their products. Even a call, in July 1937, from *Untersturmführer* Höhne from the Gestapo's communication department with a request for prices for their commercial Enigma machines was immediately reported to Captain Bayer of the Cipher Office, who then contacted Höhne to tell him to send his request through the official channels of the Reich War Ministry. *Chiffriermaschinen Aktiengesellschaft* (ChiMaAG) had, of course, commercial customers and commercial interest from the very start of the company, but in those days, the interest was relatively low, and there were no requirements to report sales or interest to the authorities. The restrictions, or rather rules, on commercial sale came first after ChiMaAG received its first contracts with the German Navy (*Marineleitung*) and the Army (*Reichswehr*). Because the machines delivered to the German military had special wiring and other security adaptations, such as the plugboard for the Heeres Enigma, Enigma I (One), the authorities imposed certain restrictions on how the ChiMaAG company should operate and do business, especially towards foreign clients. However, as we have seen, the rules and regulations on commercial sales were first put down on paper in October 1932, even if these questions had been raised in meetings already in 1927–28. From the available data, we see that most of the commercial interest occurred in 1936–37. The Enigma company, now known as H&R, continued to struggle at the beginning of the 1930s, which may have contributed to the low commercial interest. Another factor is possibly the documents in reference [/\[1/\]](#), which are far from complete and therefore are likely to give a distorted picture. We know very little about the background of this archive collection. We only know that the documents in the four TICOM files T 1715, T1716, T1717, and T1718 were collected at the offices of H&R on 17 November 1945. At a previous TICOM visit on 17 September 1945, it was only reported that the offices contained a large number of files relating to the commercial sale of Enigma machines and current production correspondence, see Chapter V: Appendix C and D of [\[2\]](#).

References

1. TICOM. 1945. Documents from the ENIGMA firm Heimsoeth & Rinke. Bestand Rückgabe TICOM, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts. Berlin. Archive Signature: T 1715, T1716, T1717, and T1718.
2. Hammarborg, A. 1954. “[Catalog of Enigma Cipher Machine Wirings.](#)” Technical Information Division, Bibliographic Research Branch, June 1954. Top Secret FROTH. Released under FOIA, National Security Agency. Washington. [Chapter V: Appendices](#)