

PRESS RELEASE

Pen & Sword Books Ltd

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The Story of Rena Stewart

Bletchley Park Girl, Translator of Hitler's Will, and BBC Pioneer

Author: Victoria Walsh

Highlights

- **Engaging, first-person account of a 100-year life that was seriously well-lived. Fascinating, entertaining and poignant; combining world history with personal memories.**
- **Complemented by the intrigue of the book's three 'mysteries', relating to Bletchley Park, Hitler's will and the BBC during the Cuban Missile Crisis.**
- **An unusual story of a career woman in her era: Rena never married nor had children, focused on progression and sailed through workplace sexism with a smile.**
- **Rena's hard work and dedication are balanced by her gentle humour and passion for the Arts: this fun-loving lassie from Fife taught Scottish dancing until she was 90!**
- **Rena's story is brought to life by a collection of photos and other artefacts. These range from a scribbled-on cigarette pack to a map showing the escape route taken by the messengers that spirited Hitler's wills away from his bunker.**

Soldier, journalist and centenarian: a triple badge of honour, especially for a woman. Introducing Rena Stewart (1923–2023), a remarkable, 100-year-old Bletchley Park Girl who translated Hitler's will and blazed a trail for women at the BBC. *The Story of Rena Stewart* narrates Rena's fascinating tale, in her own words, and is a testament to a life that was seriously well lived.

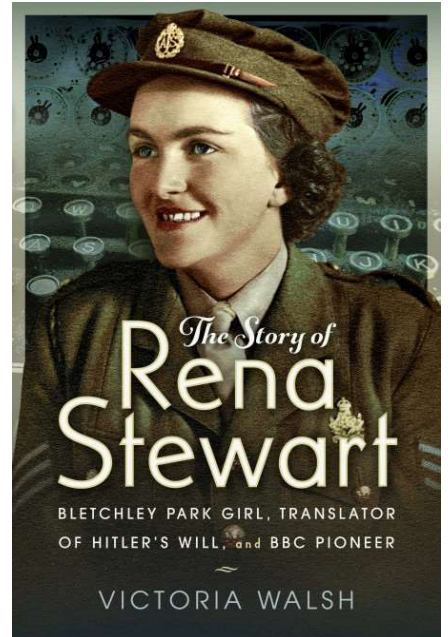
On graduating from St Andrews University in 1943, Scottish linguist Rena and her friend Agnes decided to 'do something about the war'. They signed up for the Auxiliary Territorial Service and were posted to Bletchley Park, where Rena processed secret German messages. At the end of the war, Rena and her Bletchley chums were sent to Germany, to translate the statements of captured Nazi officers. There, she and another friend, Margery, were also given a top-secret task: to translate Hitler's personal will.

Career woman Rena had, however, always wanted to work in the media. On her return to England, she managed to secure a lowly position as a clerk at the BBC World Service. She worked her way up from there, including spending ten years listening in to Russian Cold War broadcasts. Finally, she became the first female Senior Duty Editor in the World Service newsroom. 'My greatest achievement,' she declared with pride, 'has been getting people to recognise that a woman can be as good a journalist as a man'.

Alongside Rena's story, this book delves into the lives of her closest Bletchley friends and uncovers intriguing historical mysteries from her remarkable century of life.

About the Author

Victoria Walsh is a writer with a passion for people stories. A linguist and communications professional by background, Victoria has always enjoyed writing, and engaging with people from all walks of life. Victoria published her first book – the humorous countryside biography 'Unbelievable! A Working Country Life' – in 2023.



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