

Two folding chromolithograph plans, over coastal profiles, tables to verso, top edges perforated for filing.

TOP SECRET – BIGOT

Utah Beach-South (La Madeleine) [and] Utah Beach-North (Ravenoville).

Author
D-DAY LANDINGS

Publication date
April 21, 1944.

Publisher
Prepared by Commander Task Force 122,

Publication place

Physical description
Two folding chromolithograph plans, over coastal profiles, tables to verso, top edges perforated for filing.

Dimensions
440 by 560mm. (17.25 by 22 inches).

Notes
The maps and composite photographic “panoramic shoreline sketch[es]” were produced as part of the strategic planning for Operation Overlord, and the D-Day landings of June 6th 1944. They portray the coastline of a section of the Baie de la Seine, from Grand Hameau des Dunes in the north to just south of the hamlet of La Madeleine, code-named ‘Utah Beach’, in very great detail.

Particular attention is paid to high and ‘low low’ water marks, variance in water depths, and currents; all supported by tables and graphs on the verso.

Utah Beach was the westernmost beach of the five landing areas of the Norman Invasion of Operation ‘Overlord’. It extended over about 3 miles of coastline to the northwest of the Carentan estuary. German fortifications were relatively sparse as the land beyond the beach was very marshy, and the German army could control the area by flooding it, via a comprehensive system of locks, levees and ditches, all clearly marked on the maps.

Commander Task Force 122, or United States Twelfth Fleet, WWII, Commanded by Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk, who commanded D-Day’s Western Naval Task Force and the Utah and Omaha Beach landings, prepared the maps on April 21, 1944, from various cartographical sources and aerial photographs. Though the maps include up-to-the-minute information, for active use, they come with various caveats too: “NOTE to COXWAIN of NAVIGATOR: Building landmarks, especially near the beach, may be destroyed before any craft land. Terrain features, therefore, are much more reliable for visual navigation from panoramic shoreline sketch above”.

Each map is labeled in bold green ink “TOP SECRET – BIGOT until departure for combat operations—then this sheet becomes RESTRICTED”, identifying them as being only for the eyes of those with top security clearance. ‘Bigot’ was used to designate the highest level of military secrecy, and consequently, those personnel cleared to know details of Operation Overlord, known as the ‘Bigot list’, and the people on it, as ‘Bigots’.

Operation ‘Overlord’, was part of a large strategic plan designed to bring about the defeat of Germany by heavy assaults on German-occupied Europe from the United Kingdom, the Mediterranean and Russia. The outline of the Operation ‘Overlord’ plan was completed in July of 1943, and the particular assault on the Normandy beaches from the UK and the English Channel elaborated under the title of Operation ‘Neptune’ in February of 1944. ‘Neptune’ involved preparatory aerial and naval bombing of German coastal positions, before the historic landings of D-Day itself: the largest amphibious operation in history, and a pivotal moment in the course of WWII which eventually resulted in the liberation of western Europe from German occupation.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 16016

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