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Plan De La Baie De Narraganset Dans La Nouvelle Angleterre avec toutes les Illes qu'elle renferme armi lesquelles se trouvent Rhode-Island et Ile de Connonicut Leve par Charles Blaskowits . . . 1777 Dresse au Depot Generale des Cartes, Plants et Journaux de la Marine . . . 1780

Stock#: 39954
Map Maker: Depot de la Marine
Date: 1780
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 23 x 16 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Exceptionally detailed Revolutionary War Plan of Narraganset Bay, prepared by the French Depot De La Marine, specifically for use by French vessels, during the time of their alliance with America during the American Revolution.

This fine plan of Narraganset Bay was one of a group of maps and sea charts immediately sent "to the Marquis de Chabert at Brest, in January, 1781, shortly prior to his departure with Admiral de Grasse, for the North American campaign. Their voyages would end in the victorious battle at Yorktown in Chesapeake Bay. The [charts were] also being used for strategic planning in Paris. . . the Depot de la



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Marine also provided it to at least one American. . . Benjamin Franklin . . ." (Pedley, *The Commerce of Cartography*..., p 152).

The map is based upon Charles Blaskowitz's *Topographical Chart of the Bay of Narraganset in the Province of New England, first published in 1777*, the most important eighteenth-century chart of Narraganset Bay. Nebenzahl notes that "it is certain that the British, after occupying Newport at the end of 1776, used this map for their operations in this pivotal area. The detail shown is remarkable, including even the names of farmers on their land locations."

Blaskowitz arrived in America in the early 1760s, where he began surveying work in upstate New York and along the St. Lawrence River. In March 1764, he was commissioned as part of Samuel Holland's North American Survey team and would eventually become Holland's Deputy Surveyor by 1775. Blaskowitz's first assignment was to survey Aquidneck Island and Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island, in order to determine whether Newport would be a suitable location for a naval base. Blaskowitz completed this survey in 1764. Blaskowitz re-surveyed the region as part of Holland's larger surveys of the coast in 1774, for the Board on Trade and Plantations.

The colonies were already on the brink of Revolution and Newport was a hotbed of insurrection. In 1772, British naval ships laid siege to Narragansett Bay, in order to enforce customs duties on incoming vessels. After months of antagonizing the city's merchants, the much-hated British captain of the *HMS Gaspee*, was murdered and the ship burned. The region instantly became a point of great interest in Great Britain, with the King offering a reward for the capture of the insurrectionists. In May 1776, Rhode Island became the first Colony to declare its independence and the British would occupy Newport from November of 1776, until the end of August 1778.

The map itself is unusual in that it is a combination of a nautical chart and topographical map (and hence the title, "A Topographical Chart..."). The Bay is clearly shown with its many islands and intricate inlets, with numerous soundings which give accurate readings of the treacherous waters. On the shore, impressive detail is depicted, with individual farms named and elegant hachuring showing elevations. Eight batteries are shown via lettered references, with a key at the top right corner which details the numbers and types of canons. Along the right side of the map are the names of the principal land owners of the region, along with a brief description of the area. A large and well-designed dedication by Faden, to Lord Percy, appears just below.



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Blaskowitz's surveys would be used for two printed charts, by Des Barres and Faden, respectively. The Faden chart was a much more accomplished production, on a larger sheet and more elaborately engraved (and according to Pedley, costing two and a half times as much at the time of publication). The map was sold separately, as this sectioned case map copy, or within some copies of Faden's North American Atlas. The present example is Sartine's copy of the Blaskowitz map, prepared for use by the French Navy, during the Revolution.

Detailed Condition:

Minor marginal tears, expertly repaired on verso.