



(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

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blr@raremaps.com

Utah Beach... Top Secret Bigot

Offered here is a remarkable photographic composite map assembled from aerial photographs of the landing beach and the surrounding countryside. These were made by a reconnaissance aircraft on January 5, 1944, when the Allies already had substantial air superiority over Luftwaffe.

The map depicts some six miles of beach along the east side of the Cotentin Peninsula and at one point extends perhaps four miles inland. The resolution is sufficient to delineate roads and tracks, hedgerows and individual structures. To deter invasion, the Germans had flooded miles of farmland behind the beach, and I believe that these areas appear darker in the image. Notations indicate roads running inland from the beach, which would have provided key lines of advance for the 4th Division on June 6.

In the end, strong currents swept the first wave of the 4th Division's landing craft some 2000 yards south of the planned landing zone, and they came ashore in the vicinity of La Grande Dune, not shown on the map (A comparison of the planned and actual landing sites can be viewed [here](#).) The Division's second-in-command, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., determined that this spot was in fact better than the planned location up the beach, and the successive waves of troops were directed to come ashore there.

Though it did not achieve all of its objectives for Day One, the landing at Utah was overall a great success: The 4th suffered relatively few casualties during the landing, gained control of the beach within just a few hours, and by the end of the day had penetrated several miles inland.

The BIGOT classification

The map originally appeared in a copy of the *Neptune Monograph*, a secret briefing book issued in late April 1944 and summarizing Allied intelligence related to the Normandy landings, with particular emphasis on the American sector including Omaha and Utah Beaches. Containing information of the highest sensitivity, the *Monograph* bore the distinctive "BIGOT" stamp, the highest level of military security classification, and it was printed and distributed in small numbers. Likewise, this map bears the label "TOP SECRET BIGOT".

Introduced during the Second World War, some sources suggest the BIGOT designation was an acronym for "British Invasion of German Occupied Territory;" others, that it was a "backronym" for "To Gib," the code stamped on the papers of officers headed to Gibraltar in advance of the 1942 North Africa invasion.

Whatever the origins of the term, extraordinary efforts were made to protect BIGOT-level material. When for example a practice landing ("Operation Tiger") on the Devon coast was ambushed by U-Boats, Eisenhower himself ordered the recovery of the bodies of the ten known victims with BIGOT clearance. This was necessary to prove that they had not been captured alive, as their capture would have compromised the invasion plans and necessitated its cancellation.



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In all, a rare artifact from the run-up to one of the most significant, dramatic and terrifying events in American military history.

Detailed Condition:

Half-tone print of a photo-mosaic map. Vertical fold and two punched holes at left, as issued.