[World War II -- The Italian Campaign] The Battle For Rome

Stock#: 68200
Map Maker: Philip & Son / McKerrow / ABCA Map Review

Date: 1944
Place: n.p.
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 38 x 28 inches

Price: SOLD

Description:

This Map Is Not For The Orderly Room. It Is To Be Displayed Where The Largest Number of People in the Unit Can Study it.

This is a fine large map of the area around Rome, published in February 1944 by the British Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA). The map depicts about a hundred miles of coastline southeast of Rome and Ostia, showing the westernmost portion of the Hitler Line and the fascist capital it defended. The map was designed for soldiers as a morale-booster at a time when progress was slow, but the Allies were on the verge of important victories.

By February of 1944 Allied progress up the Italian peninsula had been halted at the so-called Winter Line. Stretching from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian, the line passed through the high Apennines and proved difficult to penetrate, a task made more difficult by the harsh winter conditions. The line had several variants, including fall back positions, but its general location on the map it would have been from the cost straight through Cassino and the marked Abbe di Monte Cassino, which would give its name to the assault that followed.

Monte Cassino was a fourteenth-century abbey that was built on a yet earlier site where Saint Benedict had first founded his namesake order in the sixth-century. The building housed innumerable Italian treasures, though these had been evacuated to the Vatican by Nazi troops prior to the campaign. The US army decided that the fortifications offered too strong a vantage point and decided to shell the structure, though the German troops had decided not to occupy it (contrary to detailed reports in US and English newspapers). While they attempted to warn the Italian civilians who had fled there, two hundred were killed. The abbey and the notes dropped for civilians are photographed on the verso of the map.

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The shelling of the structure allowed German troops to occupy the building, and the half-destroyed remnants proved to provide stronger defensive positions than the intact abbey would have. The bombing occurred on February fifteenth, and the subsequent battle (the second breakthrough attempt so far) narrowly failed to break the line. It would several additional battles and three more months to finally take Cassino and the abbey it overlooked. From here, advance to Rome was rapid, with troops first arriving via the Valle Latina to the west of Cassino.

The verso of the map serves as a morale booster, pointing out various lines of success from throughout the war's many fronts. The central focus of the text is on the Prime Minister's survey of the war, delivered on February 22nd, and photos are included to support Churchill's claims. A major focus is on the amount of German military equipment destroyed over the war, showcasing the slow push of the Allies for military domination. Several other quotes and text focus on the alliance with communist countries, with an early recognition that the resistance in Yugoslavia was now in the hands of Tito, with Mihailovich having become all but a collaborator. Churchill also discusses the future of Poland, with a report that he "with great pleasure, . . . heard that Marshal Stalin, too, was resolved upon the creation and maintenance of a strong, integral, independent Poland as one of the leading powers in Europe."

Two additional maps on the verso show recent major events in the European and Pacific theatres. In all, this is a great map and work designed as a morale-booster for battle-weary troops.

Detailed Condition: