

TOP-SECRET

Copy No. _____

Paul Middleton

COMMANDER ASSAULT FORCE 'O'

WESTER

NAVAL TASK FORCE

**TOP
SECRET**

OPERATION PLAN

NEPTUNE

**Operation Plan
Neptune**

Part One

The story of

Short Title:

ONWEST/O

SS Empire Anvil

TOP SECRET - OPERATION PLAN NEPTUNE

PART ONE

**Published by
Paul Middleton**

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FACTS ABOUT THIS BOOK

**This Part One contains facsimiles of 53 pages
of Operation Plan Neptune:
Billeting of US army troops
Signals**

**Task Organization Operation Order No. BB-44 20 May 1944
Annex A Intelligence Plan
Annex B Minesweeping Plan**

The copy of Operation Plan Neptune contains 247 pages of typewritten text. The fore-edge is punched at the top and bottom and fits on to two thick metal prongs which are fixed to a thick black, coated cardboard cover. The back cover is missing.

All the pages are brittle and faded with age.

The Plan was in the possession of Marcus Jefferson Geerts, 1st Mate on the *SS Empire Anvil* and passed into the Geerts' Family Archives. For details of his career and *SS Empire Anvil*, see the end of the book.

FOREWORD

OPERATION NEPTUNE was the naval Channel crossing phase of Operation Overlord, the code-name given to the Allied invasion of France. An armada of 4,000 vessels transported the Allied invasion forces to Normandy Beach on D-day, June 6, 1944, and the *SS Empire Anvil* was part of that armada.

Admiral Bertram Ramsay, the Allied naval commander in chief, signed the orders for Operation Neptune, calling it *“probably the largest and most complicated operation ever undertaken”*. Ramsay also wrote that *“the object of Operation Neptune is to carry out an operation from the United Kingdom to secure a lodgement on the continent from which further offensive operations can be developed”*.

Admiral Ramsey’s plan assumed the huge aerial power of the Allies would nullify any German attack from the air. His armada therefore would be headed by 287 mine sweepers to clear the way for the 138 warships to follow. These would bombard the German beach defences. The convoy of 4,000 troop carriers would then sail from southern English ports protected by frigates and corvettes.

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Billeting of US army troops on *SS Empire Anvil*

Signals

Task Organization Operation Order No. BB-44 20 May 1944

Annex A: Intelligence Plan

- i Weather, Sea and Surf
- ii Tides, Currents and Astronomical data
- iii Hydrography
- iv Description of terrain in Omaha beach area
 - v Omaha Sectors
 - vi Omaha Beaches
 - vii Enemy Defenses
- viii Estimated enemy Naval and Air strength, Disposition, Capabilities, Tactics and Chemical Warfare Capabilities
- ix Order of Assault, Naval Gunfire Support and Aerial Bombardment
 - x Military Plan

Annex B: Minesweeping Plan

Appendix 1: Table of Courses and Distances,
Latitude and Longitude of Points,
Approximate time of passing

OPERATION NEPTUNE ORDER No. BB-44

WESTERN NAVAL TASK FORCE

ASSAULT FORCE "O" (TASK FORCE ONE TWO FOUR)

U.S.S. ANCON, FLAGSHIP PORTLAND DORSET

20 May 1944 1200

Chapter 1

Billeting of US army troops, Signals and Task Organization

HEADQUARTERS THIRD BATTALION CT
Aboard S.S. EMPIRE ANVIL.

3rd. June 1944.

SUBJECT:- BILLETING OF U.S. ARMY TROOPS.

TO:- Captain R.B. LEE, S.S. EMPIRE ANVIL.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE BILLETING REPORT OF U.S. ARMY
TROOPS ABOARD SHIP.

<u>Date arrived aboard.</u>	<u>Place.</u>	<u>Officers.</u>	<u>Enlisted Men.</u>
20th. May 1944	Gourock	2	6
30th. May 1944	Portland	3	18
1st. June 1944	Portland	92	1,155
	<u>Totals</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>1,179</u>

BILLETING PLAN.

<u>OFFICERS.</u>		<u>ENLISTED MEN.</u>			
		<u>Compartment.</u>	<u>Bunks.</u>	<u>Cots.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
M.3	6 (Bunks.)				
M.5	6 "				
M.7	6 "	A.1	30	13	43
M.11	2 (1 Bank, 1 Cot.)	A.2	16	14	30
M.19	4 (Bunks.)				
M.21	5 "	B.1	124	14	138
Sgt. Lg.	7 (Cots.)				
Trd. Off.	1 (Couch.)	B.2	348	10	358
4th. "	1 "	B.3	389	-	389
Ch. Elect.	1 "				
2nd. "	1 "	A.4	210	11	221
SNOC	1 "				
A.1	51 (Bunks.)				
B.1	4 (Cots.)				
Ad. Fleet.	7				
	<u>97 TOTAL.</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>1,117</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>1,179</u>

TOTAL OFFICERS	97	
TOTAL ENLISTED MEN	1,179	
	<u>1,276</u>	<u>GRAND TOTAL U.S. ARMY.</u>

3 June 1944 Total of US Army troops aboard SS Empire Anvil.

SIGNALS AS FOLLOWS TO BE STANDARDISED THROUGHOUT.

***A* ACTION STATIONS:-**

(Includes:- "GUN STATIONS" and "FIRE STATIONS" and in Transports "TAKE COVER"

SIGNAL:- A SERIES OF SHORT RINGS ON ALL ELECTRIC ALARM SYSTEMS.

***B* EMERGENCY STATIONS:-**

(Preparatory to Abandoning Ship - normally only applicable to Transports and ships with passengers.)

SIGNAL:- A SERIES OF MORE THAN 6 SHORT BLASTS, FOLLOWED BY A LONG BLAST. ON THE SHIP'S WHISTLE AND/OR A CONTINUOUS AND STEADY RINGING ON ELECTRIC ALARMS.

NOTE:- For "Practice Emergency Stations" in harbour or in convoy, the ALARMS ONLY will be used.

***C* FIRE STATIONS:-**

SIGNAL:- SHORT BLASTS ON MOUTH WHISTLES AND/OR THROUGH SHIP'S LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM; AND RINGING OF SHIP'S BELLS.

***D* ABANDON SHIP:-**

SIGNAL:- SUCCESSION OF LONG AND SHORT BLASTS ON SHIP'S WHISTLE AND/OR BY WORD OF MOUTH.

Signals for Action Stations, Emergency Stations, Fire Stations, Abandon Ship.

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Serial: 00691

TOP SECRET - NEPTUNE

OPERATION ORDER

Mc. BB-44

WESTERN NAVAL TASK FORCE
ASSAULT FORCE "O"
(TASK FORCE ONE TWO FOUR)
U.S.S. ANCON, Flagship,
PORTLAND, DORSET,
20 MAY 1944; 1200.

TASK ORGANIZATION

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(a) Landing Force - Major General Huebner, USA.
(124.1)

1st U.S. Infantry Division (less 26th R.C.T., plus 115th & 116th
R.C.T.s of the 29th Infantry Division, plus 2nd & 5th
Ranger Battalions), Reinforced.

(b) Shore Party - Brigadier General Hogo, USA.
(124.2)

2/3ds 5th Engineer Special Brigade.
2/3ds 6th U.S. Naval Beach Battalion.
1/3d 6th Engineer Special Brigade.
1/3d 7th U.S. Naval Beach Battalion.

(c) Assault Group O-1 - Captain Fritzsche, USCG.
(124.3) Captain Inley, USCG, Deputy.

APAs	CHASE(F), HENRICO	2 APAs
LCH	LCI(L)-87 (RF)	1 LCH
LSI(L)	EMPIRE ANVIL	1 LSI(L)
LSTs	309, 314, 357, 373, 374, 376	6 LSTs
LCI(L)s	83, 85, 88, 89, 493	5 LCI(L)s
LCTs	18, 20, 25, 195, 199, 200, 201, 206, 209, 213, 271, 276, 293, 335, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 623, 624, 625, 626, 637, 638, 769, 814, 815, 856, 2008, 2037, 2043, 2049, 2228, 2287, 2339, 2425, 2487.	53 LCTs
LCM(3)s	as assigned.	18 LCM(3)s
PGs	552, 553	2 PGs
SCs	1291, 1307	2 SCs
MLs	118, 187	2 MLs
LCCs	10, 20	2 LCCs

(d) Assault Group O-2 - Captain Bailey, USN.
(124.4) Captain Wright, USN, Deputy.

APAs	CARROLL(F), JEFFERSON	2 APAs
LCH	LCI(L)-86 (RF)	1 LCH
LSI(L)	EMPIRE JAVELIN	1 LSI(L)
LSTs	310, 315, 316, 317, 332, 372.	6 LSTs
LCI(L)s	84, 90, 91, 92, 94, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 540, 541, 553, 554, 555, 557.	17 LCI(L)s

Task Organization: Landing Force, Shore Party, Assault Groups O-1 and O-2.

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TOP SECRET - NEPTUNE
OPERATION ORDER
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WESTERN NAVAL TASK FORCE
ASSAULT FORCE "C"
(TASK FORCE ONE TWO FOUR)
U.S.S. ANCON, Flagship,
PORTLAND, DORSET,
20 MAY 1944; 1200.

TASK ORGANIZATION

LCTs	27, 29, 30, 80, 147, 149, 153, 197, 207, 214, 244, 294, 332, 364, 535, 536, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 622, 665, 666, 703, 704, 705, 713, 714, 767, 775, 776, 813, 2050, 2075, 2124, 2227, 2229, 2273, 2275, 2297, 2307.	54 LCTs
LCM(3)s, as assigned.		18 LCM(3)s
PCs	555, 568, 618, 1225.	4 PCs
SCs	1332, 1353, 1354, 1360.	4 SCs
MLs	153, 189.	2 MLs
LCCs	30, 40, 50.	3 LCCs

(e)
(124.5) Assault Group O-3 - Captain Schulton, USN.
Commander Unger, USCG, Deputy.

XAPs	ABUNDANT(P), DIX, THURSTON	3 XAPs
LCH	LCI(L)-492 (RF)	1 LCH
LSTs	6, 51, 75, 133, 134, 157, 285, 286, 347, 350, 375, 502.	12 LSTs
LCI(L)s	93, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498.	11 LCI(L)s
LCTs	7, 22, 202, 415, 431, 434, 460, 562, 618, 619, 628, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 657, 658, 659, 667, 706, 707, 708, 711, 712, 715, 768, 897.	39 LCTs
LSD	OCEANWAY	1 LSD
PCs	564, 565, 617	3 PCs
MLs	193, 304	2 MLs

(f)
(124.6) Assault Group O-4 - Commander Dennis, RN

LSI(S)s	PRINCE CHARLES(P), PRINCE LEOPOLD, PRINCE BAUDOUIN	3 LSI(S)s
LSI(R)s	HEM MY CHREE, AMSTERDAM, PRINCESS MAUD	3 LSI(R)s
LCT(5)	413	1 LCT(5)
MLs	163, 194	2 MLs

(g)
(124.7) Escorts - Captain Sanders, USN.

US DDs	FRANKFORD, MCCOOK, CANNICK, DOYLE, EDDICOTT, BALDWIN, HARDING, SATTERLEE, THOMPSON	9 US DDs
Hunt DDs	TANATSIDE, TILYBONT, MELHBREK	3 Hunt DDs
US DE	BORIN	1 US DE
ODDs	VESPER, VIDEITE	2 ODDs

Task Organization: Assault Groups O-3 and O-4, Escorts.

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OPERATION ORDER

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WESTERN NAVAL TASK FORCE
ASSAULT FORCE "O"
(TASK FORCE ONE TWO FOUR)
U.S.S. ANCON, Flagship,
PORTLAND, DORSET,
20 MAY 1944; 1200.

Frigates L'ADVENTURE, L'ESCARMOUCHE	2 Frigates
A/S Trawlers BRESSAY, OCELL, SHYB	3 A/S Trawlers
PCs 552, 553, 564, 565, 567, 568, 617, 618, 1225	9 PCs
SCs 1291, 1307, 1332, 1353, 1354, 1360	6 SCs
MLs(970) 118, 153, 163, 304, 448	5 MLs(970)
MLs 187, 189, 193, 194, 214, 230, 907	7 MLs
HMMLs 1383, 1387	2 HMMLs

(h)
(124.8) Gunfire Support Craft - Captain Sabin, USN.

LCH LOI(L) 520(F)	1 LCH
LOFs 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12	7 LOFs
LCC(L)s 424, 426, 449, 687, 811	5 LCC(L)s
LCT(R)s 366, 423, 447, 450, 452, 464, 473, 482, 485	9 LCT(R)s
LCP(L)s, as assigned.	28 LCP(L)s

LCT(A)s 2008, 2037, 2043, 3124, 2227, 2228, 2273, 2275	8 LCT(A)s
LCT(EB)s 2049, 2050, 2055, 2229, 2287, 2297, 2307, 2339, 2425, 2487,	10 LCT(EB)s

(i)
(124.9) Bombardment Group - Rear Admiral Bryant, USN.

BBs TEXAS, ARKANSAS	2 BBs
CLs GLASGOW, MONTCALM, GEORGES LEYGUES	3 CLs
US DDs FRANKFORD, MCCOCK, CARMICK, DOYLE, ENDICOTT	9 US DDs
Hunt DDs BALDWIN, HARDING, SATTERLEE, THOMPSON	3 Hunt DDs

(j)
(124.10) Sweeper Group - Commander Cochrane, RN.

(1) 4th MS Flotilla - Commander Cochrane, RN.

(124.10.1)

MSs KELLETT(S.O.), PANGBOURNE, ALBURY, SULTON, LYDD, SELKIRK, ROSS, SALTASH, THUNDER.	9 MSs
Deinlayers FUDAY, RIGHTO, NEILL SMITH	3 Deinlayers
MLs 140, 142, 143, 255	4 MLs

(2) 11st MS Flotilla - Commander Storrs, RCNR.

(124.10.2)

MSs CARAQUET(S.O.), BLAIRMORE, COWICHAN, FORT WILLIAM, MALPEQUE, VEGREVILLE, MINAS, WASAGA, MULGROVE	9 MSs
Deinlayers BAYFIELD, GREEN HOWARD, GUNMAR	3 Deinlayers
MLs 345, 454, 465, 473	4 MLs

- 3 -

Task Organization: Escorts, Gunfire Support Craft, Bombardment Group, Sweeper Group.

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OPERATION ORDER
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WESTERN NAVAL TASK FORCE
ASSAULT FORCE "C"
(TASK FORCE ONE TWO FOUR)
U.S.S. ANCON, Flagship,
PORTLAND, DOMEST,
20 MAY 1944; 1200.

TASK ORGANIZATION

(3) 167th BYMS Flotilla - Lieutenant Heath RMR.
(124.10.3)
BYMSs 2155(S.O.), 2069, 2156, 2210,
2047, 2051, 2061, 2182 8 BYMSs

(4) 104th MS Flotilla -
(124.10.4)
MSs 31, 37, 74, 75(S.O.), 84, 86, 279,
305, 307 9 MSs

(k) Far Shore Service Group OMAHA - Captain Camp, USN.
(124.11)

Accommodation Ship	SS ELIAZAR WHEELLOCK	1 Accon Ship
ARL	ADONIS	1 ARL
LCM(CRU)s		12 LCMs

Ferry Craft:

LCI(L)	83, 84, 85, 88	4 LCI(L)s
LCI(L)	89, 90, 91, 92 (Temporarily until relieved by four LCHs)	4 LCI(L)s
LCI(L)	86, 414, 492, 520 (when assigned)	4 LCH
LCI(5)&(6)s		72 LCI(5)&(6)s.
RHFs		20 RHFs
LCM(3)s		139 LCM(3)s
LCV(2)s		72 LCV(2)s
LCVPs	(lifted in LSTs)	172 LCVPs

Service Craft:

Hoisting Trawlers		9 Fuel Trawlers.
LHEs		16 LHEs
LBOs		26 LBOs
LEWs		5 LEWs
LEKs		2 LEKs

CS Group OMAHA:

Pontoon Drydock		1 Pont Drydock
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(l) Dispatch Boats -
(124.12)

US PT	PT-72	1 US PT
BM Seaplane Tenders	210, 269, 270, 271, 283, 1547, 1548, 1549, 1586.	9 Disp. Boats

(n) Rescue Vessels -
(124.13)

USCG Cutters	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	15 USCG Cutters
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Task Organization: Sweeper Group, Far Shore Service Group OMAHA, Dispatch Boats, Rescue Vessels.