Twitter Thread by Ben Mayne

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So after the @WeHaveWaysPod on Gold Beach, a question relating to the Sanatorium came up. It got me thinking so I decided to look at the targets designated to Force D, Sword to see exactly what was in the plan for the most eastern landing beach.

Video- IWM ADM 1258

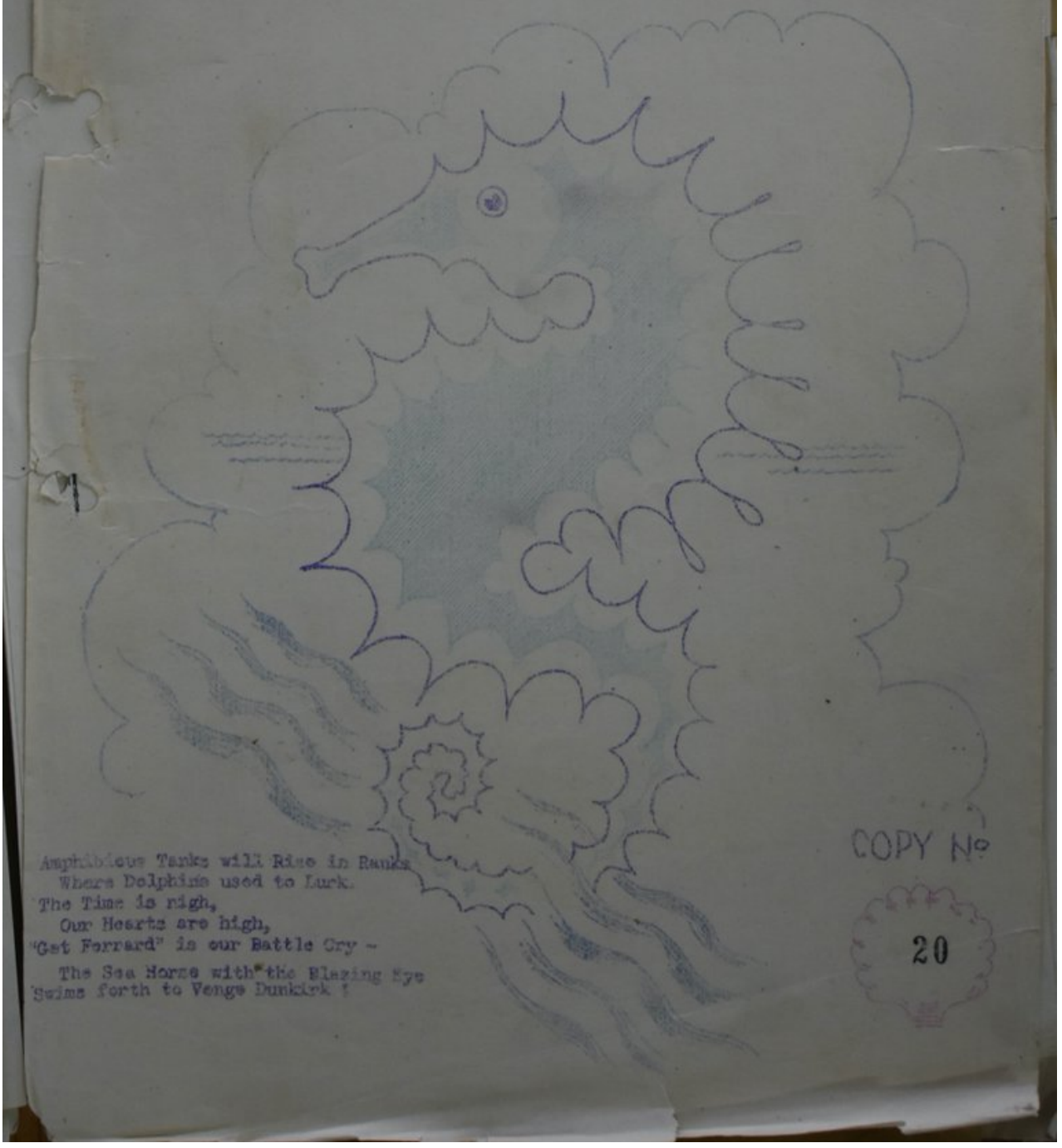


With the use of the 27th Armoured Brigade HQ Diary '44, I had documents of the proposed targets and timings on Force D and how the pre bombardment would go. Its worth remembering Force S could also have their own plan on targets and timings. There is also evidently an overlap.

U
27 Armd Bde.
MAY 1944
War Diary
Box 351

NEPTUNE
BIGOT
MOST SECRET

OVERLORD
27 ARMD BDE
OPERATION ORDER



Amphibious Tanks will Rise in Ranks
Where Dolphins used to Lurk.
The Time is nigh,
Our Hearts are high,
"Get Forrard" is our Battle Cry -
The Sea Horse with the Blazing Eye
Swims forth to Venge Dunkirk !

COPY No

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So which vessels formed Force D and what were there main armaments?

HMS Danae and Dragon both with five 6-inch guns and a 4-inch gun.

Photographs from https://t.co/TLuLXokg0T



HMS Ramillies with four twin 15-inch guns and fourteen 6-inch guns. Image- IWM FL 9004

HMS Roberts with two 15-inch guns and over 40 anti aircraft guns. Image- IWM FL 3787



HMS Frobisher with seven 7.5-inch guns. Image- IWM A 24099

HMS Mauritius with twelve 6-inch guns and eight 4-inch guns. Image- IWM A 10614



HMS Arethusa with six 6-inch guns and eight 4-inch guns. Image- IWM FL889

HMS Warspite with four twin 15-inch guns and fourteen 6-inch guns. Image- IWM A 23975

I have heard two first hand accounts of veterans that passed Warspite firing broadsides, it always remained with them.



These eight ships with significant firepower each, wasn't the only group that would bring fire down. This being complemented by the Airforce, Force S and smaller craft in hitting targets for the pre bombardment.

Image of HMS Arethusa, Danae and Mauritius IWM A24094



From the fire plan, it details target description, map references, timings and who's task it was from RN, Army and RAF.

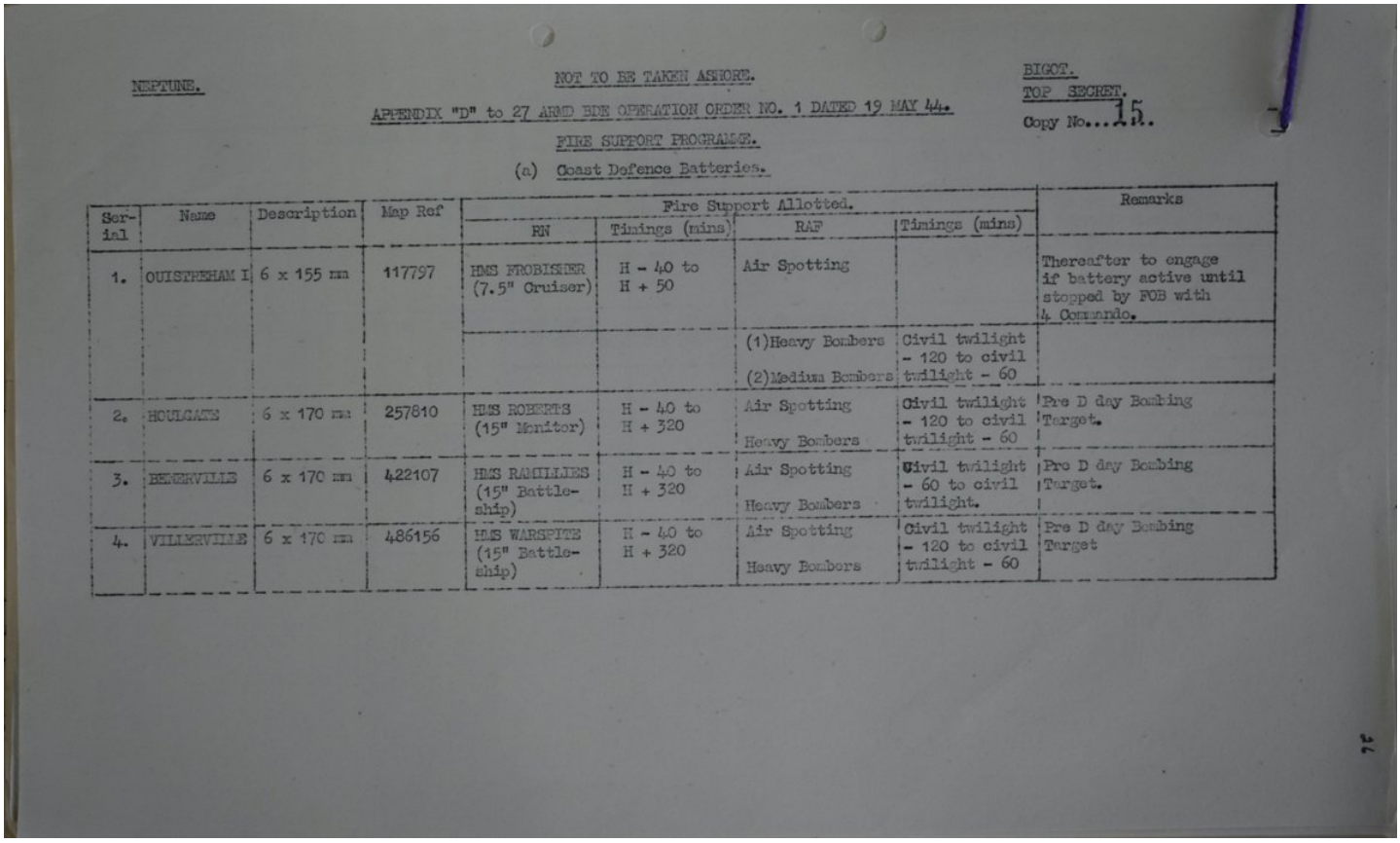
To assist those who haven't looked at timings before H-Hour is the time the landings began, - is before and a + is after, both in minutes.

Video- ADM 671



Using NCAP, Google, IWM images and videos I hope this thread will give an idea of the planning that went into this phase of Operation Neptune. It also worth remembering that these targets were selected after many reconnaissance flights and the gathering of intelligence.

Here is an example of the orders for the Force D bombardment of Sword Beach and other areas. In total 33 phases with single or multiple targets. Starting with 1. Ouistreham...



NEPTUNE.

NOT TO BE TAKEN ASHORE.

BIGOT.
TOP SECRET.
Copy No...15.

APPENDIX "D" to 27 ARMD BDE OPERATION ORDER NO. 1 DATED 19 MAY 44.

FIRE SUPPORT PROGRAMME.

(a) Coast Defence Batteries.

Serial	Name	Description	Map Ref	Fire Support Allotted. RN	Timings (mins)	RAF	Timings (mins)	Remarks
1.	OUISTREHAM I	6 x 155 mm	117797	HMS FROBISHER (7.5" Cruiser)	H - 40 to H + 50	Air Spotting		Thereafter to engage if battery active until stopped by FOB with 4 Commando.
						(1)Heavy Bombers (2)Medium Bombers	Civil twilight - 120 to civil twilight - 60	
2.	HOULGATE	6 x 170 mm	257810	HMS ROBERTS (15" Monitor)	H - 40 to H + 320	Air Spotting Heavy Bombers	Civil twilight - 120 to civil twilight - 60	Pre D day Bombing Target.
3.	BENERVILLE	6 x 170 mm	422107	HMS RAMILLIES (15" Battle-ship)	H - 40 to H + 320	Air Spotting Heavy Bombers	Civil twilight - 60 to civil twilight.	Pre D day Bombing Target.
4.	VILLERVILLE	6 x 170 mm	486156	HMS WARSPITE (15" Battle-ship)	H - 40 to H + 320	Air Spotting Heavy Bombers	Civil twilight - 120 to civil twilight - 60	Pre D day Bombing Target

1. Ouistreham, believed to be a battery of six 155mm guns amongst other guns. This was known as Widerstandsnest (WN) 08.

To be hit at H-40 to H+50 by HMS Frobisher. It would also be bombed during the night twice by Heavy and Medium bombers.



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ncap.org.uk/NCAP-000-000-071-141

2. Houlgate, six 170mm guns that could fire towards the naval armada.

To be hit at H-40 to H+320 by HMS Roberts. It would also be bombed during the night by heavy bombers.

AA guns from this location would also cause issues for planes heading into LZ and DZ during the night.



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3. Benerville, six 170mm guns that could fire west towards the naval armada.

To be hit at H-40 to H+320 by HMS Ramillies. It would also be bombed during the night by heavy bombers.

AA guns from this location could also trouble planes for the initial drops.



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4. Villerville, six 170mm guns that could fire towards the naval armada.

To be hit at H-40 to H+320 by HMS Warspite. It would also be bombed during the night by heavy bombers.



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Targets 2, 3 and 4 are the most eastern points. The guns here would not be able to fire onto Sword Beach but could have hampered naval craft out at sea. Smoke screens at sea we also laid to prevent spotting from observations posts to target the

naval armada.

5. Colleville Sur Mer, WN16 also known as Morris, with four 105mm guns.

To be hit at H-40 to H+140 by HMS Dragon. The RAF via air spotting to hit up to H+30 by medium bombers or fighter bombers.

*guns actually found at locations may have been different to the intelligence.



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Remark- On call FOB with 1 Suffolk on completion of task.

With timings, HMS Dragon given a window to fire up till H+140, it was key that naval spotters on the ground with infantry could communicate and give ranging, update on targets and friendly force locations.

6. Ouistreham II, WN12 also known as Daimler with four 155mm guns.

To be hit at H-40 to H+50 by HMS Danae. The RAF via air spotting to hit up to H+30 by medium bombers or fighter bombers.



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Remark- On call FOB with 2 East Yorks on completion of task.

7. 107765, recorded as two 75mm guns.

This location just north of Le Port and Benoville was to be neutralised by 6 Airborne Div.

Nothing is clear from the reconnaissance photograph but may have been ATK Guns covering the main road of Ouistreham/Caen.



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8. Sallenelles, WN1 The Merville Battery with four 150mm guns.

To be hit at H-40 to H+50 by HMS Arethusa. Heavy Bombers of the RAF were to hit at H-230 to H-220.

This was an objective of 9 Parachute Battalion, 3 Parachute Brigade, 6 Airborne Division.



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Remarks- RN will engage this battery only in the event of 6 Airborne Div failing to capture it.

The actions at the Merville Battery are worthy of its own thread at a later date.



9. Langrune, WN26 that was positioned along the beach front containing a 5cm KwK L/60, numerous MG positions and mortar.

To be hit at H-45 by two fleet destroyers.

RAF heavy day bombing.

Remark- All destroyers at call FOsB when landed.



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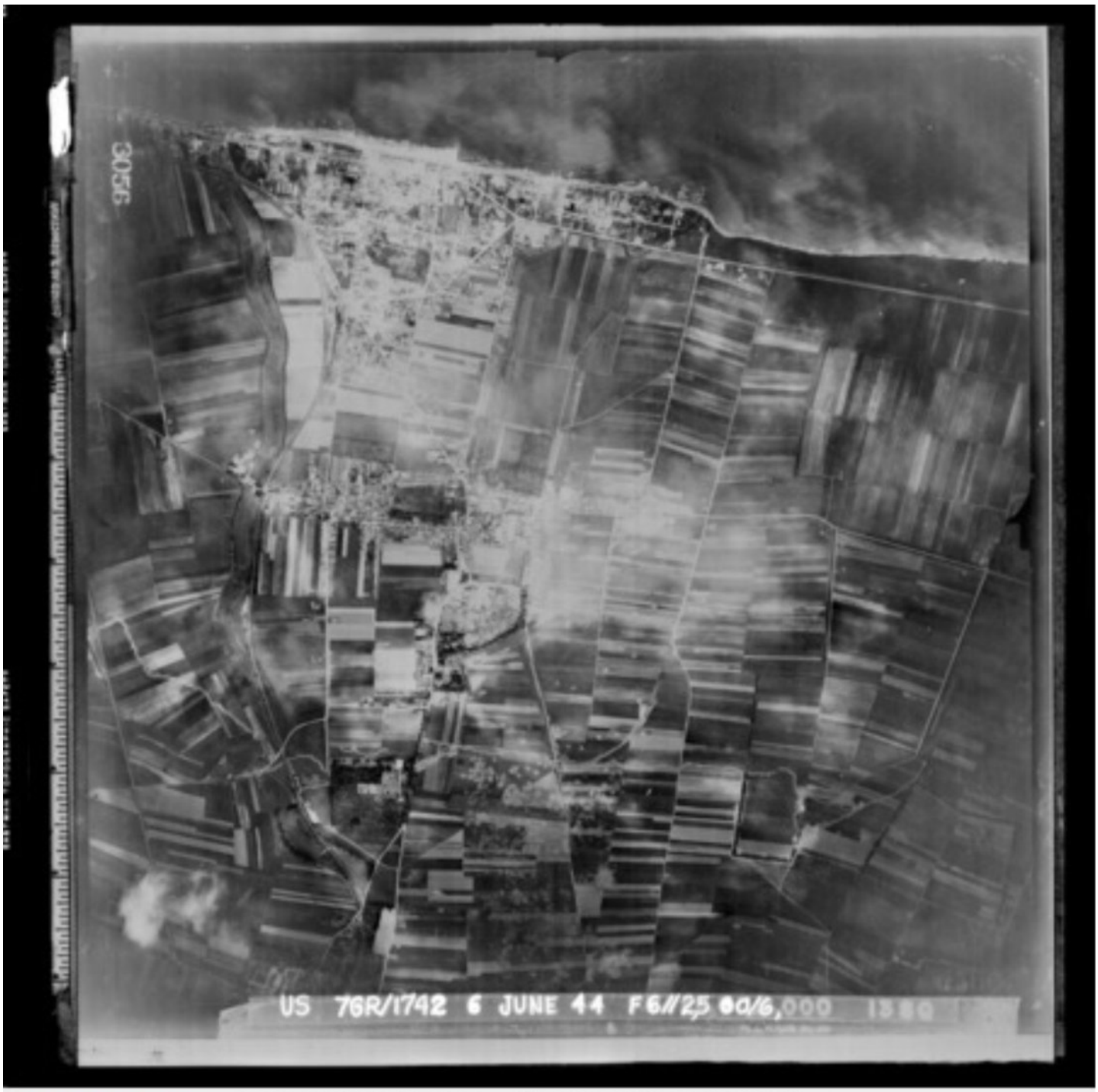
10. Lion Sur Mer, first grid 058825.

This comes back to Luc Sur Mer and south east of the town.

To be hit at H-45 by three fleet destroyers.

RAF heavy day bombing.

Trench lines can still be seen faintly on the ground today in the fields.



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10. Lion Sur Mer, WN21 known as Trout on the sea front. Contained a 7.5cm gun, two 5cm guns as well as numerous MG positions.

To be hit at H-45 by three destroyers.

RAF heavy day bombing.

The British 3rd Infantry Division would be landed just to the east of this position.

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