

During World War II, between September 1943 and April 1944, temporary Royal Engineers officers W. B. R. King and F. W. Shotton remotely generated water supply maps at a scale of 1:50 000 for coastal areas of northern France eastward from the Cherbourg peninsula to Calais: the first series of British groundwater development potential maps. These maps guided drilling of at least 30 boreholes, needed to supply water to British installations in Normandy following the Allied landings that commenced on D-Day, 6 June 1944: part of the infrastructure necessary to facilitate the ensuing mobile campaign. Additionally, between April and September 1944, Shotton and King assisted by the Cambridge academic Maurice Black similarly compiled maps but 1:250 000 in scale for northern France eastwards from Brittany into Belgium. These guided emplacement of at least 20 Royal Engineer boreholes in Belgium during late 1944 and early 1945, part of the infrastructure for the final advance of Allied troops into Germany. Between November 1944 and May 1945, maps also at 1:250 000 and of similar but developing style were prepared for much of northern Germany by W. R. Williams and J. R. Foster-Smith, also temporary Royal Engineers officers but of the Inter-Service Topographical Department, easing the pressure of work on Shotton and his colleagues generated by campaign momentum. One of these maps guided emplacement of the few British boreholes sited in western Germany by May 1945, as the war in Europe came to an end. Overall, British military maps were innovations distinct in style from water supply maps compiled for contemporary German or US forces. They helped to pioneer British hydrogeological mapping, which has developed extensively post-war but under entirely civilian auspices.