

SILK SCREEN REPRODUCTION FACILITY FOR 1 ATF

Letter to HQ AFV

ANNEX D — Silk Screen Reproduction Facility for 1 ATF

One of thirteen annexes (A–M) to “War in Vietnam: A Surveyor’s Story”, by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Francis Skitch (Retd), 1934–2026 — Officer Commanding, Detachment 1st Topographical Survey Troop, Nui Dat, 1966–67.

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ANNEX D

Int/29/66

1 ATF
Nui Dat
30 Jun 66

HQ AFV

SILK SCREEN REPRODUCTION FACILITY FOR 1 ATF

(Scanned and transcribed from original)

Introduction

1. 1 ATF has a continual requirement for the reproduction of operational intelligence, particularly in the following forms:

- a. Enlargements from existing 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 pictomap coverage for battalion and TF operations.
- b. Photo plots of towns and villages for battalion and TF clearing operations,
- c. Overlays and traces showing operational boundaries and free fire areas.

2. To supply an enlargement or photoplot to section level in a battalion operation requires 171 copies, and for a Task Force operation, 750 copies. If the operation is at all prolonged, a further 100 copies in the case of the battalion and 300 copies in the case of the Task Force may need distribution to make up for wastage; and in any case a reasonable number should be held in reserve.

Resources Available

3. Resources available within 1 ATF at present are:

- a. Gestetner office duplicating machine capable of handling brief size paper operated by 1 ATF
- b. Dyeline printing machine operated by Det 1 Topo Svy Tp.

4. Det 1 Topo Svy Tp currently has the facility for reproduction in the form of a dyeline printing machine. This machine produces a direct positive copy on sensitized paper from a trace. It suffers from the following limitations:

- a. Dyeline paper is soft and absorbent. It therefore has no durability and quickly deteriorates, particularly when distributed at battalion level.
- b. In this humid climate, the paper rapidly absorbs moisture and does not

easily take pencil or ink.

c. Partly because the process is wet and partly because of the humid conditions, the paper has no dimensional stability, that is, it is given to stretching, this has been found to be as much as 1/8th of an inch in a 2 inch grid square.

d. It is impossible to maintain adequate stocks of dyeline paper in the theatre due to the fact that the sensitized surface deteriorates. This means that the background colour of the paper progressively darkens from an initial creamy colour to a dirty brown. In the final instance, the paper will no longer produce an acceptable image.

Suggested Solution

5. Provision has been made in the organisation of 1 Topo Svy Tp for a Lithographic section with a capability of operating a silk screen printing press. This equipment has been acquired and is now held by the loaned-back element of the Troop at AHQ Survey Regiment in BENDIGO VICTORIA. OC 1 Topo Svy Tp reports that the user trials indicate that the equipment is functioning satisfactorily.

6 The silk screen printing press is capable of reproducing line drawings in unlimited numbers at the rate of about 100 per hour. In any four hour period, 200 copies could be produced allowing 1 hour to prepare the screen, and a further hour for drying. The latter factor may be variable in the climatic condition of VIETNAM. A further colour could be overprinted on the first colour if required to give two colour copy or to be registered to an existing map. The equipment is designed to be carried complete in a Landrover ¾ ton excluding expense stores, paper, inks, and film.

7. The establishment of the Survey Troop provides for a Lithographic section of 7 personnel to completely operate and maintain the silk screen printing press and its ancillary photographic equipment. OC Det 1 Topo Svy Tp suggests that this number could be reduced to two and the draughtsmen held on the Det establishment in VIETNAM could be trained to assist in the operation of the equipment. If the current theatre ceiling cannot be exceeded, OC Det 1 Topo Svy Tp suggests that the Lithographic personnel be introduced in lieu of the following:

Spr Storeman
Pte Cook

Recommendation

8. The following recommendations are made:
- a. The establishment of Det 1 Topo Svy Tp be adjusted along the lines suggested.
 - b. The silk screen printing press be procured from AHQ Svy Regt BENDIGO VIC and sent to the theatre, (if possible by air).

(Signed)
(O.D. Jackson)
Brig
Commander 1 ATF