

MAPPING AND MAP DISTRIBUTION

1ATF Policy Statement

ANNEX E — Mapping and Map Distribution — 1 ATF Policy Statement

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.

Scanned and transcribed from the original documents. The complete four-part memoir, and the wider Skitch family archive:

history.skitch.me

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RESTRICTED

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES
VIETNAM

HQ 1 ATF

NUI DAT

3 Jul 66

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See Distribution list

MAPPING AND MAP DISTRIBUTION*(Scanned and transcribed from the original)*

PART 1 MAP DISTRIBUTION

Responsibility

1. Det 1 Topo Svy Tp is responsible for the supply of all maps to 1 ATF Units and units of 1 ALSG.

Map Ordering Procedure

2. 1 ATF Units may request maps in the following:
 - a. Written minute.
 - b. Signal.
 - c. Verbally 'over the counter'.
3. ALSG Units should place map orders with GS03 INT HQ ALSG who will then collate and place request with Det 1 Topo Svy Tp. Maps will be supplied directly to GS03 INT HQ ALSG.
4. Combinations of information as indicated below will allow a map order to be successfully satisfied.

SERIES NO	SCALE	SERIAL NO	NAME	BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION	NO OF COPIES REQUIRED
/		/			/
/			/		/
	/	/			/
	/		/		/
	/			/	/
/				/	/

NOTES

1. The series number is the number used to designate a particular series of maps in a particular country.
 eg 1:50,000 series in VIETNAM is the L701 series.
 1:50,000 series in THAILAND is the L708 series.
2. Decimal scales are used on all maps in SE ASIA.
 ie 1:25,000
 1:50,000
 1:250,000

Grids throughout are in metres and heights on all ground editions are given in metres also. Air charts give heights in

feet; this is always clearly stated on the map.

3. The serial number designates a particular map sheet and is found in the top right hand corner of the sheet, together with the series number.

4. The map sheet may have a name (usually only 1:50,000 sheets) and this appears in the top centre and lower right hand corner of the map sheet.

5. Boundary description: When a unit does not have access to a map index, the boundaries of the required coverage should be described.

eg: 1:50,000 coverage of 1 ATF TAOR

or

1:25,000 coverage between grid lines

30-46 EASTING

64-74 NORTHING

6. No of copies required of each map sheet may be calculated to effect distribution down to infantry section level or lower if required. When a particular map sheet is in limited supply, Det 1 Topo Svy Tp will provide as many as stocks allow and indicate to the unit on a proforma when further supplies can be anticipated.

PART II

NOTES ON MAP SERIES AVAILABLE IN VIETNAM

Series L8020 1:25,000 "Pictomap"

1. This map consists of a photomap base with intensified photo images overprinted with standard map details (roads, railways, water courses and some contours) The series is keyed to the standard 1:50,000 L7014 series - see Para 7 below. Each sheet measures 15' longitude by 7 ½' latitude.

2. As stated a "pictomap" is basically a photomap and consequently contains many of the disadvantages of a photomap
eg:

a. The heavy background tends to obscure marked up detail.

b. The map user needs some photo interpretation experience to read the more subtle detail in the map eg cultivations, timber, village layout.

c. Positional accuracy is not necessarily precise. This means that a GR to a particular point of detail may disagree with the grid reference obtained from the standard 1:50,000. This is especially likely to be so in mountainous terrain where the differences in elevation of

the ground cause the photographic image to be displaced outwards from the centre of the photograph. For a feature 200 metres high above the surrounding country, the image of which is near the edge of the photograph, the displacement would be 0.2 inches or 150 metres on the pictomap series. In overprinting standard map detail, displacement due to height has been minimised by holding positional accuracy on the overprinted detail, regardless of the position of the photo image. This means that the overprinted detail may appear to 'miss' the feature.

d. Where photographs have been joined to produce the photomap base, 'steps' in detail can occur. Such a step might be at right angles to the join, in which case detail may be repeated twice, or be obscured by the overlap. If the step occurs along the join, detail will be displaced accordingly. Generally, however, on the pictomap series the joins between photographs are very good. Join displacements do occur in hilly or mountainous terrain, and this has been disguised to some extent by the colour intensification of the photo image and the overprinting of the standard map detail. This means that the pictomap contains minor misrepresentations of map detail which are not obvious to the user.

e. Pictomaps are printed out of the country and supplies are inclined to be erratic. It is intended that ultimately large bulk holdings will be held 'in country'. When this happens Det 1 Topo Svy Tp will carry 1000 copies of each sheet of interest.

3. Notice should be taken of the name describing the series that is - PICTOMAP SUPPLEMENT TO STANDARD 1:50,000 SCALE SERIES. This clearly indicates that the Pictomap is meant to supplement the 1:50,000 series and be used in conjunction with it.

Series L701 - VIETNAM 1:50,000

4. This is the standard large scale coverage of VIETNAM. The sheet is 10' lat by 15' long. Relief is shown by 20 metre contours. The series is generally reliable in detail with the follow exceptions:

- a. Village detail is inaccurate and must be treated as being representative,
- b. Creeks and contours tend to be generalised that is, creeks do not show small meanders and bends and contours may not show small re-entrants,
- c. It should be kept in mind when using this series that the maps were compiled from air photos without field

inspection. Therefore man made detail may be in error as the result of misinterpretation. Also in many areas, the heavy jungle canopy precluded the plotting of many non-perennial creeks and small re-entrants.

Series L7014 VIETNAM 1:50,000

7. This series is a revised version of the L701 series with sheet size changed to 15' X 15'. It is anticipated that the new series will be available for issue in about Aug - Sep 66. The map will be very similar to the L701 series in general appearance.

8. When available Det 1 Topo Svy Tp will replace bulk holdings of the L701 series with L7014 series.

Series 1501 Joint Operations Graphics Scale 1:250,000

9. The JOGs are the standard medium scale maps covering all of VIETNAM. All sheet are on UTM projection with 10,000 metre UTM grid. The JOGs are designated (G) for ground and (A) for air use. The ground version shows relief by 100 metre contours and relief is given a three dimensional effect by the combined use of elevation tints and shaded relief. The air version JOG is basically the same except that contours are labeled with the approximate value in feet and each 1 degree square is overprinted with its highest elevation. Additional air information is shown on the JOG (A).

10. Det 1 Topo Svy Tp carries bulk holdings of all relevant JOGs (G) and JOGs (A), the latter being held for distribution to army aviation.

USAF Pilotage Charts - 1:500,000

11. This is an air navigation chart covering an area 4 degrees Long and 6 degrees Lat. It is contoured with a contour interval of 500 feet. Relief is shaded to produce a three dimensional effect. The chart is suitable for a general purpose wall map. The sheets are easily obtainable and are held by Det 1 Topo Svy Tp in reasonable quantity.

RAF Topographical Tactical Chart 1:500,000

12. This sheet is compiled from the USAF Pilotage Chart. It contains similar information, however, it uses stronger colours in depiction of relief. It therefore makes a better wall map than the Pilotage Chart. The series is held in limited numbers by Det 1 Topo Svy Tp.

RAF Topographical Navigation Chart 1:1,000,000

13. This sheet is of similar type to the 1:500,000 sheets previously mentioned. Limited copies are held by Det 1 Topo Svy Tp.

Series 5303 South East Asia Road Map 1:1,250.000

14. This map covers all of S VIETNAM in one sheet. It shows topographical detail, road classifications and categorized population places by population. Reasonable quantities of this map sheet are held by Det 1 Topo Svy Tp.

Series 1206 Continental SE Asia 1:2,500,000

15. This map shows relief by colour tinting, railroads, principal roads, all weather and seasonal airfields. Populated places are categorized by population. Reasonable quantities of this map are held by Det 1 Topo Svy Tp.

(signed) J.S. Rowe Maj for
(O.D. Jackson)
Brig
Commander 1 ATF

Distribution

List A

HQ ALSG (25 copies)

HQ AFV (5 copies)