

# DGC Appraisal Policy and Methodology

Owner: DGC Senior Information Officer

Review: Annually

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## Executive summary

1. This policy is about how the Defence Geographic Centre (DGC) will meet its statutory obligation as a public record body to select geographical records for permanent preservation under the Public Records Act 1958 (PRA). This policy does not consider corporate records, selection of which are covered by extant Ministry of Defence (MOD) policy. Selection will happen by the appraisal process and methodology in this policy. Selected records will be subject to a sensitivity review before transfer to The National Archives (TNA) or an approved place of deposit as set out in the PRA.

2. The DGC is a subordinate organisation of the National Centre for Geospatial Intelligence (NCGI) under UK Strategic Command. The purpose of the DGC is to deliver Geospatial Intelligence (GeoINT), Geospatial Information (GeoINF), services and liaison to Defence, including deployed forces, and to other government departments and international partners, underpinning strategic to tactical level decision-making and action.

3. Responsibilities of public record bodies under the Public Records Act:

- Selection of records for permanent preservation, guided and supervised by the Keeper of Public Records.
- The safekeeping of records.
- Transfer of selected records to TNA or an approved place of deposit by the due date. This applies unless they need to be retained. In this case, the approval of the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport must be obtained.
- Carry out formal applications for retention and closure through TNA. These are reviewed by The Advisory Council on National Archives and Records.
- Disposal of records not selected for preservation by destruction or presentation to another institution.

4. Responsibilities of the DGC for information and records management within the MOD are set out in:

- Joint Service Publication 440 – Defence Manual of Security and Resilience
- Joint Service Publication 441 – Information, Knowledge, Digital and Data in Defence
- Joint Service Publication 465 – Defence Geospatial Intelligence Policy
- NCGI Information Directive
- DGC Departmental Records Officer Delegation Framework

## History of the DGC

5. The DGC can trace its history back to the establishment of the Depot of Military Knowledge under the Office of the Quarter Master General of the Army, Horse Guards in 1803. Here, provision was made for a Topographical Branch for presentation and compilation of draft and manuscript maps, and a Military Library. In 1857 the Depot was merged with the Topographical and Statistical Depot of the War Office, established in 1855, the new organisation being known as the Topographical Department, War Office.

6. In 1873 the Topographic Department was transformed into the Intelligence Branch, War Office reporting to the Adjutant General. Fifteen months later the Branch was transformed again, transferring to the Quarter Master General's Department, thence back to the Adjutant General's Department in 1888 as the Intelligence Division. Throughout there remained a Topographical Section as a component part of the organisation.

7. By 1901 the Intelligence Division had become subordinate to the Mobilisation and Military Intelligence Department, itself reorganised in 1904 as the Directorate of Military Operations (DMO). The directorate was made up of several sections. Military Operations Section 4 (MO4) was concerned with topographical information and military mapping and was commonly referred to as the Topographic Section, General Staff (TSGS) and by 1908 the Geographical Section, General Staff (GSGS). Further change occurred in 1922 when the DMO was reorganised as the Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence (DMO&I).

8. In 1939 at the beginning of World War Two the DMO&I was reorganised into the Directorate of Military Intelligence, its subordinate sections retitled as Military Intelligence Sections (MI), thus MI4 the Geographical Section. Like many elements of the War Office MI4 was moved out of central London, in its case to Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The accommodation proved to be inadequate and after a few months MI4 moved to Eastcote, Middlesex where the designation MI4 was dropped in favour of GSGS. GSGS absorbed the Air Ministry Map Section into the organisation at this time. Eastcote soon proved to be too small to accommodate the Staff Planning and the Production elements of the organisation. While Staff Planning remained at Eastcote the Production side moved into buildings requisitioned from a corrugated cardboard factory at Hanwell, Middlesex, codename 'Hygrade' after the name of the company. At the same time the Air Intelligence side moved into Hughenden Manor, near High Wycombe, codename 'Hillside'.

9. As the war progressed and the responsibilities of the GSGS grew it was recognised that it should be regraded upward to become, in 1943, the Directorate of Military Survey (D Mil Svy) under Brigadier Martin Hotine RE. In 1948 'Hillside' and 'Hygrade' were relocated to new accommodation. 'Hillside' re-designated Survey Production Centre (Air) (SPC (Air)) moved to Bushy Park, Surrey, whilst 'Hygrade' re-

designated as Survey Production Centre (SPC) moved to Park Royal, Middlesex. The Directorate HQ remained at Eastcote until 1953 when it, and the map library (D Mil Svy Section 2b, later the Map Research and Library Group (MRLG)), moved to Tolworth, Surrey. Also in 1953, SPC Park Royal was re-designated as No. 1 SPC and SPC (Air) Bushy Park as No. 2 SPC (Air).

10. In the early 1960's it was decided to bring the HQ and production elements of the Directorate together on one site and the RAOC Depot at Feltham, Middlesex, was selected. By 1962 HQ D Mil Svy and a merged, single Survey Production Centre Royal Engineers (SPC RE) were well established whilst the map library remained at Tolworth. Eight years later in 1970 the SPC RE was re-designated the Mapping and Charting Establishment Royal Engineers (MCE RE) and remained as such until the dissolution of D Mil Svy and the establishment of the Military Survey Defence Agency (Mil Svy DA) in 1993. MCE RE ceased to exist as a discrete unit, its functions absorbed into the agency as Geographic Service Division (1993 - 1996) later Geographic Production Division (1996 – 2000).

11. In 2000, following the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, Mil Svy DA was re-designated as the Defence Geographical and Imagery-Intelligence Agency (DGIA) with three principle subordinate units. The Joint Air Reconnaissance and Intelligence Centre (imagery Intelligence), Geographic Engineering Group (field deployable geographic Force Elements) and the Defence Geographic Centre (topographic mapping and geographical information services).

12. In 2003 the MRLG known by that time as the Geographic Information Group, was collocated with the DGC at Feltham where both remain to the present day whilst the DGIA evolved into Defence Geospatial Intelligence, the Intelligence Collection Group, the Joint Forces Intelligence Group and from 2020 the National Centre for Geospatial Intelligence (NCGI) headquartered at RAF Wyton, Cambridgeshire. The DGC provides the Foundation Geospatial Intelligence (GeoINT) component for NCGI alongside analytics, field deployable Force Elements, and technology.

## Selection decisions

13. The MOD Appraisal Report sets out the types of documents that must be kept as they are likely to warrant permanent preservation in line with The National Archives' Records Collection Policy. The DGC will apply the following criteria, extracted from Joint Service Publication 441 section "Understanding document types which must be preserved as records" to the appraisal of geographical records that are likely to be selected for preservation:

Document MOD actions when defending UK interests by projecting power strategically and through expeditionary interventions.
Demonstrate MOD's support to the Government's overseas objectives by directing international defence engagement towards support to operations, defence diplomacy and defence sales, conflict prevention, security sector reform and capability building in priority countries.
Are used by Official Historians or marked for retention by them.
Contain maps, plans, and drawings of possible historical interest for UK and overseas – including technical drawings of important equipment and installations.
Are of subjects of general national or international interest.
Report on significant military campaigns and operations, intelligence, organisational and logistics matters; which will include Commanders Diaries/Unit Historical Records.
Depict the operations of the Special Forces in deployed environments.
Depict the operations of the Navy, for example: Ships' books, drawings, plans and specifications.
Depict the operations of the Army including Commander's Diaries, and key Operational Records.
Depict the operations of the Royal Air Force, including Operations Records Books.
Depict the strategic intelligence used by the Department to inform policy and decision-makers.
Demonstrate MOD's support to civil emergency organisations in times of crisis, where the records depict the Department's contribution of military assets to provide assistance to civil authorities and its peace-time contribution to Other Government Departments.

14. The DGC will identify records of historic value as the corpus of topographic military cartography for UK Defence under section 4(1) of the Public Records Act that meet the following criteria:

- Give a complete set of the corpus of military cartography for UK Armed Forces.
- Related to the strategic production of Foundation GeoINT as directed by the Land and Aeronautic Geospatial Requirements Groups.
- Related to DGC and deployed Force Elements production of Geospatial Information (GeoINF) and intelligence (GeoINT) for named military operations in the Land environment as directed by the Permanent Joint Headquarters and/ or the Chief Royal Engineer (Geographic).
- Related, but not duplicated material identified as having archival value.

15. Records within these functions will not usually be considered for permanent preservation as a Public Record where:

- Copies are already known to be held by a place of deposit as Public Records.
- The DGC establishes it is a duplicate copy of an item selected for preservation as a Public Record.
- The DGC establishes it is not the lead department.

16. To widen the scope for public access, whilst not degrading the status of material forming the Public Record, DGC will consider duplicates for Presentation to other libraries and institutions under section 3(6) of the Public Records Act. Other material not selected for preservation under section 4(1) but of potential interest under section 3(6) of the Public Records Act will be considered for Presentation in full consultation with the MOD Records Review subject matter experts and The National Archives on a case-by-case basis.

## Places of deposit

To facilitate greater access to DGC geographical records and recognising the volume of material likely selected for preservation the following decisions have been made regarding places of deposit:

- a. Pre-1970 material to be deposited with the British Library Map Library in continuation of the Maps MOD deposit arrangement of c2000. See Note 1.
- b. Post-1970 selected strategic and routine geographical records to be deposited to the British Library Map Library where not a continuation of an existing accumulation on deposit at The National Archives.
- c. Post-1970 selected operational geographical records to be deposited as discrete collections at The National Archives.
- d. Collections of Aerial Survey photography and related ephemera to be deposited to the National Collection of Aerial Photography.

Note 1: Material dated 1881 to 1970 selected for preservation was transferred to the British Library Map Library under the banner 'Maps MOD' in the early 2000's by mutual agreement between MOD, the British Library and The National Archives. The cut-off date of 1970 was selected in reference to the 30-year rule extant at the time.