

DEFENSE MAPPING AGENCY  
HYDROGRAPHIC/TOPOGRAPHIC CENTER  
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Details of the origin of the Military Grid Reference System (MGRS) have become obscure with the passage of time. The earliest information available in this office, the Study and Discussion of Military Grids, probably early 1947, contains all the specifications of the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) grid. This study does not mention the MGRS.

A memorandum from the Commanding Officer of the Army Map Service to the Chief of Engineers, 6 December 1946, (Encl 2 to the above study) gives examples of grid references. It is noted that the 100,000-meter grid square letters, an integral part of the MGRS, are not here used in the grid references.

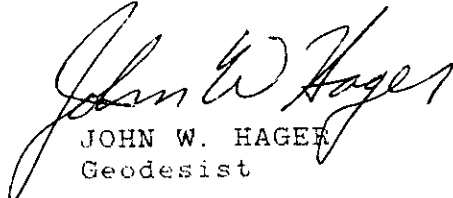
The letter from Brigadier Martin Hotine, Directorate of Military Survey, (Encl 3 to the above study) states that the specifications for a six-degree Transverse Mercator world-wide system were communicated to the British in October 1945.

On 27 February 1948, the Joint Mapping Photography Committee Ad-hoc Committee on Universal Military Grid Referencing System proposed a grid referencing system containing all the specifications of the MGRS as it is currently used.

The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued JIC Papers 410/1 and 410/2, approved 14 November 1949, prescribing the use of the Universal Transverse Mercator Grid, the Universal Polar Stereographic Grid and the Military Grid Reference System by all branches of the Armed Forces for joint operations use.

AGAO-S 061.3 (28 Dec. 49) CSGID-M, issued 29 December 1949 by the Office of the Adjutant General, Department of the Army, prescribed the use of those grids and grid reference system for the Department of the Army.

Army Map Service Technical Manual No. 36, Grids and Grid References, January 1950, elaborated the details of the military grids and grid reference system. This was subsequently replaced by Department of the Army Technical Manual 5-241-1, same title. The latest elaboration of these details is contained in Defense Mapping Agency Technical Manual 8358.1, Datums, Ellipsoids, Grids, and Grid Referencing Systems.

  
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