

ORDNANCE SURVEY



The formal 'foundation date' for the **Ordnance Survey** is usually June 1791, but its origins lie further back. Britain's mapping agency has its roots in military strategy: mapping the Scottish Highlands following rebellion in 1745. Later, during the French Revolution, the British government ordered its defence ministry of the time – the Board of Ordnance – to begin a survey of England's vulnerable southern coasts. Until then, maps had lacked the detail required for moving troops and planning campaigns.

During World War II, Ordnance Survey produced maps of France, Italy, Germany and most of the rest of Europe in preparation for the invasion. The Normandy Landings alone devoured 120 million maps, and a total of 342,000,000 were produced for the entire war effort.

In peacetime, Ordnance Survey was back to business as usual. A resurvey of larger towns and cities corrected past inaccuracies and mapped wartime destruction.

Then the digital age began and with it the first computerised large-scale maps appeared. Ordnance Survey became a fully civilian and more commercial operation. In the last two decades, more products were launched, with innovative uses for mapping data which became available to more people than ever before.

A brand new headquarters was officially opened in Southampton and OS data supported the hugely successful London 2012 Olympic games.



Surveying in wartime.



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