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## **AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #5 OF 2026 – Early May**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As you are reading this, Lan and I are on the way to England to partake in a conference and Lan Phuong is on her way to Toronto for a different conference, this one organized by IMIA to discuss matters related to the mapping industry. Linh will be holding down the fort and supervising two active boys. These things happen in a family-run business, and I hope that everything goes smoothly. With the war in Iran still an issue, uncertainty is the watchword for the day! The highlight of our trip to the UK will be sailing to NYC on the last ocean liner still afloat, the Queen Mary II. Ocean liners were the only way to travel before airplane technology advanced to the point where it was faster and cheaper to travel by air, but the QM continues to defy the odds and carry passengers across the Atlantic on one of the largest ships ever built, in the lap of relative luxury. At least, that's what the advertising says. In New York, we are booked into an expensive hotel (are there any others in Manhattan?) close to Times Square and hope to take in a Broadway play and enjoy ourselves, despite being in the dreaded USA. We'll have fun, I hope, and not get seized by ICE! If you don't hear from us in June, send a card to Dilly, Texas!

### **NEW TITLES TO THE END OF APRIL, 2026**

Trump's War continues to wreak havoc throughout the world, causing massive fuel shortages and high prices everywhere. International shipping is being severely disrupted, including trucking, so maps coming from our printer are delayed much longer than expected. This is frustrating, but there isn't much I can do about it. Sales of maps continue to be robust, which means that our overall inventory continues to decline, and titles run out of copies. Although almost every title gets updated in time for printing, folding, and shipping, we have been side-swiped by this stupid war (apologies to all those who have died, but it IS the most foolish war in modern history). Despite everything, we are pleased to announce the following new titles.

Accra & Ghana South, Southern BC & Alberta, Colombia, Philippines, Rwanda & Burundi, and Tokyo & Region. That's 6 different maps, all in one month! Even I'm impressed. Ordering details are in New Releases, below.

### **AN UPLIFTING STORY OF FRANCE**

At this point in time, we all need cheering up. We are at war, like it or not, and war always creates misery, not only for those being bombed, but for all of us trying to see some light at the end of a very dark tunnel. France suffered a humiliating defeat by German forces in 1940. Most of us know that. Northern France was occupied by Germany, but the victors allowed the French to form a degree of self-governance in part of the southern portion of the country, headquartered in the town of Vichy, and headed by a respected WW1 Military general, Etien Petain. Italy, which had also invaded France, occupied all of France east of the Rhone River, essentially what is now the Rhone Alps Region and the Riviera, including Monaco. Petain proved to be an old man incapable of dealing with most matters and soon came to be despised by most Frenchmen, for collaborating with the occupying German army. With the perspective of the passage of time, we now accept that he really didn't have any freedom or independence, and probably hoped to mitigate against the worst abuses of occupation. If so, he failed.

Hitler soon ordered all Freemasons in France to be arrested and deported to Poland. What did he have against Freemasons? I don't know, but it was severe enough to kill several thousand Frenchmen. He then ordered all Romany (gypsies) to be arrested and shipped to Drancy, outside of Paris, for deportation to what were called 'work camps', but were in reality extermination camps. Again, thousands of peaceful gypsies were murdered. By 1941, he demanded that all non-French Jews be arrested and shipped to Drancy, and of course, it wasn't long before all French Jewish people were ordered to be rounded up and shipped to Drancy. This was a terrible time for everyone in France. Some people co-operated with the Germans, but not all. Surprisingly, about 20% of the rural population consisted of Protestants, who had a long history of resisting the authoritarian Catholic church, and they tended to emphasize with persecuted persons. So, for that matter, did a lot of local Catholic priests.

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There is a mountainous plateau west and a bit south of Lyon, called Vivarais-Lignon, in the Ardeche region. In 1940, it was populated mostly by Protestants who were bound together by a strong suspicion of anyone trying to tell them what to do. By chance, there happened to be several pensions/guest houses in the principal village of le Chambon and few customers due to wartime restrictions. France had a very active Boy Scout movement in those days, and these young men worked closely with welfare groups to move people threatened with deportation out of vulnerable areas (mostly larger cities), hoping to get them to Switzerland or Spain.

Chambon was an ideal place to hide threatened people, especially after the Vichy authorities created several 'concentration' camps similar to those cropping up in the USA today, to house tens of thousands of undocumented individuals who had fled to France from various parts of Europe and North Africa, hoping to escape the war and brutal German repression. Over the course of the war, from 1940 to 1945, some 3,500 threatened people passed through Chambon, many of them being hidden in remote farmhouses, or were pretend-adopted by French families. Guides volunteered to help as many as possible to cross either the Pyrenees to Spain or via illicit pathways into Switzerland, keeping in mind that neither country wanted these refugees.

Throughout the war,, some 150,000 people were deported from France to extermination camps, of whom 75,721 were Jewish. Only 2,564 survived to return home. Approximately 10,000 Jewish children were sent to the extermination camps; only 300 survived. The residents of Chambon and nearby parishes sheltered somewhere between 3,500 and 5,000 children, keeping them both hidden and safe. Nobody asked them to undertake this dangerous task, they just did it because it was right. The rescuers suffered a huge price for assisting children. Thirty out of 88 rescue individuals were captured and killed, mostly by the French fascist Milice police organization set up by the Vichy regime, others by Klaus Barbie, the Gestapo head in Lyon, who was eventually found in Bolivia many years after the war ended, returned to France, to be imprisoned for the rest of his life for his crimes.

By now, most of the saved children have died of natural causes, but very few were reunited with their parents. Israel has recognized the good works of the rescuers of Chambon by designating individuals and the community as Justes, for helping Jewish people from being captured and exterminated. To date, there are some 3,500 Justes in France, 70 of whom are from the plateau. In the 22 communes of the plateau, more people were saved than in any other section of France. This was accomplished in secret, by people only wanting to do what they felt was right. The town of le Chambon looks today much as it did in 1940. The little train station is now closed, but the Hotel May still welcomes guests, and guest houses still welcome those wishing to explore and enjoy the high elevation. To this day, locals do not talk about the war and their role in it.

### **A TALE OF TWO WARS**

Russia invaded Ukraine somewhat more than four years ago. The USA attacked, if not actually invaded, Iran, somewhat more than two months ago. Russia, to date, has lost 1,324,000 troops, 11,900 tanks, 24,400 combat vehicles, 34,600 artillery units/radar installations, and numerous planes and ships, and has used millions of shells, drones, and missiles – all for very little in the way of benefits. In fact, the Russians are losing territory. The USA has 'only' lost tens of thousands of bombs and missiles, depleting its stockpiles to dangerous levels, 428 military personnel killed or wounded, half a dozen aircraft, several ground support systems, and has caused worldwide economic chaos far more significant than anything Russia has accomplished.

On the surface, the two conflicts seem to be very different. One is a protracted land war for control over a fertile prairie-like grassland, the other an ideological attack on a different religious entity, but these are surface manifestations. What they share is an onslaught on peace and understanding that is decimating the travel industry. Somewhat surprisingly, maps of both Ukraine and Iran are selling quite well, for reasons unrelated to actual travel, but maps of Dubai, UAE, Qatar, and Oman are reducing, for the obvious reason that tourists don't want to go to a war zone. However, despite the jump in inflation in America brought about by higher fuel prices, people still want to travel – but to 'safe' destinations, such as the Caribbean, Canada, and Europe. As it now appears likely that the war besetting the Middle East at this point in time shows no sign of morphing into a generalized world war, the likelihood is that travel, as an activity, will continue to prosper – just not to as many destinations as were popular a month ago! Time to stock up on maps of Canada!

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### **POPULAR TRAVEL DESTINATIONS IN SPRING, 2026**

The previous segment leads naturally into well, we know where people don't want to go, so where are they going (if anywhere), instead? Sales of maps gives me a good sense of what is 'hot' and what is not. Americans continue to travel around the USA in good numbers, so map sales are still OK within that country, but internationally, sales of maps of the USA are weak. Sales of maps of sections of Canada are doing very well, especially of those areas closest to Europe – Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. As summer approaches, sales of Ontario, Alberta, and BC tend to rise, and the Yukon is always popular. Japan is our number one area of interest for Asia, and this country is seeing record sales of sectional maps. Vietnam, South Korea, and Taiwan are very popular at the moment, Philippines, China, India, and Indonesia less so. Australia and New Zealand are popular, but the cost of getting there tends to reduce actual travel. Mexico is popular with vacation travellers, as is Costa Rica, but all of Latin America tends to be a winter travel destination, not a summer one. That belongs to Europe, and our two best-selling travel destinations are Iceland and Scotland. Surprisingly, we are seeing an up-tick in sales of maps of Russia. We will be visiting Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and several Baltic Sea countries this coming August, as well as Denmark, Norway, and northern France, so our family will certainly be contributing to travel to Europe!

### **A STORY THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MAPS BUT IS CRUCIAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE USA**

Postal administration began in Canada in 1763. Why then, and who cares? Canada, at that time the newly-conquered Nouvelle France that we now call Quebec, became Britain's 17<sup>th</sup> American colony, officially, in that year. Yes, that's right, the seventeenth. 13 of those colonies would later rebel and break away from the mother country, but in 1763, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Acadia (now called New Brunswick), and Newfoundland were just as much American colonies as New York or Virginia. However, these 'northern' colonies had relatively few settlers. That came later, as hundreds of thousands of residents of the southern colonies fled rampaging rebels (my ancestors among them). So, in 1763, Britain needed a postal system for their recently-expanded empire, and could not justify setting up a new system, so they just lumped together all the northern colonies with the already-existing system operating further south. This made Benjamin Franklin the Postmaster General for all of North America. He was a very capable individual, as we know from history, and managed the four 'new' postal areas quite well.

This worked until 1775, when the British organized what we now call the Philadelphia Convention. Yes, kiddies, the British arranged it, not the disparate 17 colonies. Here is where history becomes jingoistic. The hotheads from Virginia were all for rebellion and breaking free of Britain by using force. Other colonies were not so keen; in fact, the delegates from Quebec argued forcibly against armed insurrection, and eventually walked out, taking the delegates from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland with them, in frustration. We know what followed, but this schism created a fundamental divide in how the two countries resolve disputes that lasts to this day. Canada tends to talk out situations, preferring discussion to violence in solving disputes. Americans seem to be unusually quick to revert to violence as a way of 'solving' problems. Diplomacy? Who cares! Can anyone imagine Canada going to war over Iran?

Anyway, back to 1775, or more accurately 1783, when the rebellious colonies were successful in gaining their independence (not in 1776). That left Benjamin out of a job and Britain with a huge problem. Some 800,000 American settlers sided with the British during the Revolutionary War, and most of these uprooted from wherever they were living and boarded British ships to 'loyalist' colonies, generally, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Bermuda, and various Caribbean islands, not to mention those heading home to Blighty. Thousands of others headed north by land to the Eastern Townships of modern-day Quebec, but there were simply too many, so the British started settling what became the southern portion of Ontario. All these people needed a postal service, but none were populous enough to afford their own systems, so Britain did it until April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1851, when they turned over the responsibility to each of the individual colonies.

This worked for the next decade or so, but war clouds were once again raising their ugly heads in the dis-united United States and led to the terrible US Civil War 1860-1865. The various Canadian colonies, while horrified by the violence, were terrified that a northern victory would result in a battle-hardened army on their doorstep, took the sensible decision of talking through a united approach, through discussions in a series of conferences, that led to approaching Britain with an offer they couldn't refuse.

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This resulted in the British North America Act, by which Canada became an independent nation on July 1, 1867, peacefully, by negotiation. It is the first country in the world to do so, and has been the model by which dozens of British colonies have gained their independence. Among many details of Canada's independence, all the Canadian colonies merged their postal services into one large system, which remains to this day, and we're still trying to figure out how to make it pay! And don't get me started on the Pig War, or this newsletter will never get finished!

### ENDING ON A HIGH NOTE

There is hope for the USA, despite all the negative press and unfortunate wrong turns. Americans, generally, are decent, friendly, nice people. We know this, but it needs confirmation now and again. Recently, at an ice hockey game in Buffalo, NY, the crowd of 16,000 plus Americans always start their games by singing the Canadian national anthem, O Canada, even if neither team playing is from Canada. They have done so since 1970, game after game after game for over 50 years. Buffalo Sabres fans are the only team in North America to do so and last Friday was no exception – except that the anthem is usually sung into a microphone by the official singer, and the mike failed. The singer paused, not sure what to do, and was rewarded by 16,000 Americans belting out 'O Canada, Our home and native land, True patriot love, In all thy sons demand' etc. right to the end. With relations being rather testy between Canada and the USA, there were very few Canadians present, but that didn't matter, the fans knew the words and the entire arena erupted in song, then they all applauded themselves. By now, someone had found a replacement microphone, so the singer sang a rousing rendition of the American national anthem, with the crowd on their feet, singing along, then the two American teams that were playing took to the ice and Hockey Night was enjoyed by all. Canada feels somewhat unloved by Americans at the moment, so this gesture of true friendship is much appreciated. Trump won't last forever, nor will the hateful vitriol his MAGA supporters spew out. Relations between our countries will probably never return to the level of casual togetherness that both countries enjoyed pre-Trump, but it's nice to know that we have some friends in Buffalo! Many thanks, eh.

### OUT OF STOCK TITLES DURING APRIL, 2026: 850,000

ITMB regrets that the following titles are unavailable at the moment:

Madagascar – unfortunately, this title is at the printer's, but as yet unprinted. No ETA.

Mexico's Baja California – new edition has been printed and should be available shortly

USA/Mexico Border – this title is discontinued until 2027

For all of these titles, please keep ordering using the former ISBN. We will fill orders as soon as inventory arrives. While we endeavour to have a fresh edition arrive shortly after the previous one sells out, this is not an exact science. We have 19 titles at the printer as I write, with Lan and her team working on updating another five. We hate disappointing anyone by not being able to provide every titles every time, but we have to live in the real world, not in one where everything happens magically. This means that, despite our best efforts, some titles arrive only long after inventory levels have been depleted to zero.

### NEW RELEASES DURING APRIL, 2026

**Accra & Ghana South Travel Reference Map 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2026 1:23,000/1:525,000 ISBN 9781771290449 UPC 817712904492 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 12.90** – Ghana is a nice, pleasant African country wedged between volatile Ivory Coast, unstable Burkina Faso, and the mini-state of Togo. ITMB publishes a map of the entire country, but as most visitors want to see only the southern half of the country, as well as spending time in the capital city of Accra, we publish this title as well, and it is reasonably popular. It is also the ONLY map of Accra in print, which perhaps helps sales. Regardless, Accra is a very interesting West African city, which dominates Side One. Side Two covers the coastal region of the country as far north as Digya National Park, and includes inset maps of historic Cape Coast and Kumasi, the former royal capital. **AVAILABLE**

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**Southern BC & Alberta Travel Reference Map 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2026 1:850,000 ISBN 9781771291187 UPC 817712911872 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 12.90** – The two western provinces of Canada are both linked by the Rocky Mountains and separated from each other by the mountains. Most visitors concentrate on the southern halves of both provinces and don't go north of Edmonton or Prince George. ITMB provides this map because it enables us to expand text and provide a more readable map than would be the case with a map showing large expanses of land of relatively little touristic interest at a less detailed scale. That's not to say that both versions don't have their own markets, they do, and both sell very well, but some customers want the entire area of coverage, while others prefer the better scale. As always is the case with Canada, distances tend to be much exaggerated in comparison to what Europeans and even Americans are used to having, so keep in mind that even this map is larger than most countries in Europe and most American states. Detailed inset maps of Edmonton and Calgary are included.

**AVAILABLE**

**Colombia Travel Reference map 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 2026 on waterproof stone paper 1:1,300,000 ISBN 9781771291941 UPC 817712919410 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 12.90** – Colombia is one of the nicest and touristically friendly countries in South America. Most visitors arrive either at the airport in Bogota, the capital, or by sea at Cartagena, on the Atlantic Coast. The northern portion is fairly flat, but rich agricultural land. The interior around Bogota is mountainous. Road quality is reasonably good on main highways, although there do not appear to be any motorways. Cities such as Bucaramanga, Cali, or Pasto may not be familiar to outsiders, but they are all interesting cultural landmarks, and well worth visiting. A detailed inset map of Bogota is included (again, the only map of the city in print), as well as of Medellin and of Cartagena, and the map includes an interesting Top Attractions list. Surprisingly, Colombia has never developed its Pacific coastline or its Amazon eastern region, nor is there any connection by land with Panama. Relations with Venezuela are fairly static at the moment, and reasonably cordial with neighbouring Ecuador. There are no land border crossings with either Brasil or Peru.

**AVAILABLE**

**Philippines Travel Reference Map 7<sup>th</sup> Edition 2026 on waterproof stone paper 1:1,000,000 ISBN 9781771296373 UPC 817712963734 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 12.90** – The thousands of islands that make up the Philippines would take a lifetime to explore. This map covers the entire archipelago, with Luzon and the Visayas Islands dominating side 1, and the more southerly Mindanao region the second side. The more distant islands of South Palawan are shown in an inset, as is an inset map of central Manila. Copious capsule comments are scattered throughout the map, as while most of us know about the country, few of us know it's fascinating history or many attractions. This is a country worth investing in exploring over an extended time period, and this is just the best map to take along. **AVAILABLE**

**Rwanda & Burundi Travel Reference Map 8<sup>th</sup> Edition 1:300,000 ISBN 9781771296748 UPC 817712967480 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 12.90** – Of all of the countries located on the African continent, the two small former-Belgium countries of Rwanda and Burundi are part and parcel of the turbulence often seen in that continent. Both are very scenic, and while both are reasonably passive at the moment, neighbouring Katanga/Kivu in DEM Congo isn't, and this spills over into Rwanda in particular. Side 1 concentrates on Rwanda, with its capital of Kigali, while side 2 focusses on Burundi, with its capital of Bujumbura (inset maps of both cities are included and, again, these are the only maps of these urban areas in print). Rwanda's big attraction is Lake Kivu, and while ferry boats do ply the waters between Goma and Bukavu, they are not for the faint of heart. Burundi's treasure is Lake Tanganyika, with a ferry going to Nyanza in the far south, and on into Tanzania, There are border posts to DEM Congo in the west (not recommended if you want to live to retirement), and to Ngara, in Tanzania. Definitely adventure travel! **AVAILABLE**

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**Tokyo and Region Travel Reference Map 7<sup>th</sup> Edition 2026 on waterproof stone paper 1:14,000/1:600,000 ISBN 9781771298179 UPC 817712981790 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 12.90** - Japan is very popular as a preferred travel destination, and rightly so. Tokyo is a huge urban area, consisting of dozens of cities centred on Tokyo Bay. The touristic focus of the metropolitan area is our map of Tokyo, from Higashi in the north to Shibuya in the south, and from the Shinjuku Shopping District in the west to the Asakusa Historical District in the east. This still occupies a huge area of coverage, so we have provided a detailed rapid transit map of side 1 (the city side), as well as on the back cover (for ease of usage). This is a brilliant map, showing all main buildings, hotels, shopping areas, historical attractions, temples, palaces, and transit connections, such as the monorail to Haneda Airport. Side 2 is equally interesting, being a regional map of central Honshu Island, from Osaka to Koriyama, providing excellent coverage of central Japan from Narita Airport to Kyoto/Nara, showing shinkansen fast-rail lines as well as ordinary train lines. This region, in itself, would more than justify a week-long train pass, and would take several visits to explore properly. Get started with this map! **AVAILABLE**

### **NEW RELEASES DURING MARCH, 2026**

**British Columbia & Alberta Travel Rockies Reference Map 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2026 1:750,000 ISBN 9781771291194 UPC 817712911940 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 11.90** – The two westernmost provinces of Canada share an unusual boundary, in that part of it follows the height of land dividing the continent into those rivers flowing to the Pacific Ocean from those flowing into Hudson's Bay. The Rockies are one of the world's younger mountain chain, and were formed when two tectonic plates collided, sending one plate high upwards, while the other one dipped underneath it. Hence, Mount Rundle, at Banff, a perfect example of a slab tilted on edge. It also created Lake Louise, Emerald Lake, and other exceptionally scenic natural wonders. The Canadian Rockies are one of the most-visited natural wonders in North America, with Banff and Jasper National Parks on the eastern side of the continental divide, and Yoho, Kootenay, and Glacier on the west side. This entire region was set aside at a wilderness preservation area in the 1880s, when the concept of protected parks first began. Now, Banff, the second oldest such park in the world is over-touristed and needs special protection that our forefathers could not have imagined. The map includes detailed insets of central Calgary, Banff townsite, Lake Louise, and Jasper. ITMB also publishes more detailed maps of Banff and Jasper National Parks as well, but this map covers everything on one double-sided sheet. **AVAILABLE**

**Indonesia Travel Reference Map 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 2026 on waterproof paper 1:2,400,000 ISBN 9781771293761 UPC 817712937612 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 11.90** – Indonesia is a vast country of hundreds of inhabited islands that emerged out of the colonial Dutch East Indies. This map shows the entire country, with portions of nearby countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. Being a series of islands, sea communications are as important as air routes, and the islands are linked by numerous ferries, which are shown on our map. We also show the growing network of motorways joining land destinations, primarily on Java, but increasingly on Sumatra. Indonesia has such touristic treasures as Bali, Lombok, and Java, as well as more adventuresome off-the-beaten-path destinations such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and West Irian. Indonesia is the fourth most populated nation on earth and has a treasure trove of wonders to explore. **AVAILABLE**

### **NEW RELEASES DURING FEBRUARY, 2026**

**Egypt & Cairo Travel Reference Map 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2026, on waterproof paper 1:1,000,000/1:12,000 ISBN 9781771292764 UPC 817712927644 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 11.90** – **AVAILABLE**

**England South Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 2026 1:270,000 ISBN 9781771292757 UPC 817712927576 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 11.90** – **AVAILABLE**

**Lima & Peru Pacific Coast Travel Reference Map 2nd Edition 2026 1:11,500/1:300,000 ISBN 9781771294539 UPC 817712945396 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 11.90** – **AVAILABLE**

**Marrakesh & Northern Morocco Travel Reference Map 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2026 1:7,000/1:1,100,000 ISBN 9781771295024 UPC 817712950246 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 11.90** – **AVAILABLE**

**South East Asia Travel Reference Map 8<sup>th</sup> Edition 2026 on waterproof paper 1:4,000,000 ISBN 9781771297448 UPC 817712974488 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 11.90** – **AVAILABLE**

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**Tibet Xizang Travel Reference Map 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2026 on waterproof paper 1:1,680,000 ISBN 9781771298148  
UPC 817712981486 \$14.95cdn/us E/GBP 11.90 – AVAILABLE**

**Vietnam Travel Reference Map 9<sup>th</sup> Edition 2026 on waterproof paper 1:920,000 ISBN 9781771298780 UPC  
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