

REQUEST FOR STEREOTOPES

ANNEX C — Request for Stereotopes

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:

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ANNEX C

From: Capt R.F. Skitch
Det 1 Topo Svy Tp
1st Aust Task Force
NUI DAT
VIETNAM

14 Jun 66

Maj W. Child
Directorate of Military Survey
Army Headquarters
CANBERRA ACT

(Scanned and transcribed from the original)

Dear Major Child

Today I have submitted an RVE through HQ 1 ATF
for the following equipment:-

Stereotape Zeiss	Quantity 2 (for det)
Stereoscope OLD DELFT	Quantity 1 (for det)

I have included on the RVE a fairly comprehensive statement under the section marked 'reasons'. I have a real need for the Zeiss Stereotape and if supplied as requested they will tremendously increase the capability of the Troop in the theatre.

Gradually the pattern of our role is unfolding and as can be imagined, it is closely allied to intelligence, civil affairs and operations generally. There is a big demand for large scale plots of villages and close patrol areas at scales of 1:5000.

We have provided enlargements from the existing 1:50,000 maps but these leave something to be desired in the way of detail. New photography is easy to get, although it tends to be patchy, since it is basically flown for tactical reconnaissance purposes. I have considered the possibility of sending this sort of stuff back to AUSTRALIA for plotting and although this could be done it would be difficult to achieve the result required by HQ 1ATF. In the plotting stage information becomes available from Int sources which assists in photo interpretation. Furthermore it would be difficult to achieve a completed annotation before sending data back, since this has to be done a bit piece-meal when protection and linguists are available. Thus this can proceed whilst the plot is in progress.

Most work we do is done in a tremendous hurry and to make matters more difficult, night work is not possible for security reasons. Thus the requirement

exists for two of the instruments.

It would be simple enough to obtain height control on the overlap to be plotted, barometrically, and scale could, at the worst be obtained by direct measurement on the face of existing map sheets. Where security permits, ground control could be established.

If approved, it would be necessary to get the equipment here as soon as possible. I appreciate the difficulties of getting supply into the theatre, however if delay occurs in obtaining the equipment we will to some extent 'miss the boat' and have to resort to a compromise solution. All units are getting tremendous amounts of material into the theatre, and the presence of two stereiotopes will certainly not create an embarrassment.

The OLD DELFT Stereoscope is intended to supplement the Zeiss in aiding photo-annotation.

Do hope you see your way clear to give me support in this matter,

Yours sincerely
Bob Skitch