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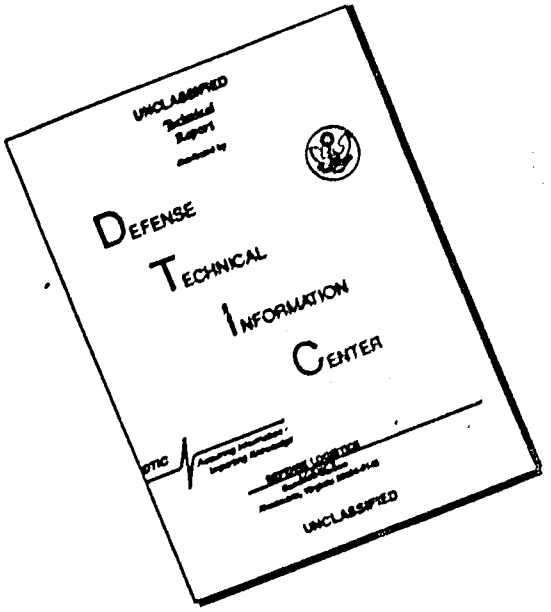

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IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (26 Mar 69) FOR OT-UT-691252 31 March 1969

SUBJECT: [redacted] Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 18th Engineer Brigade, [redacted]

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BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Operational Rept. on quarterly period ending 31 Jan 69.

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

1 Incl
as

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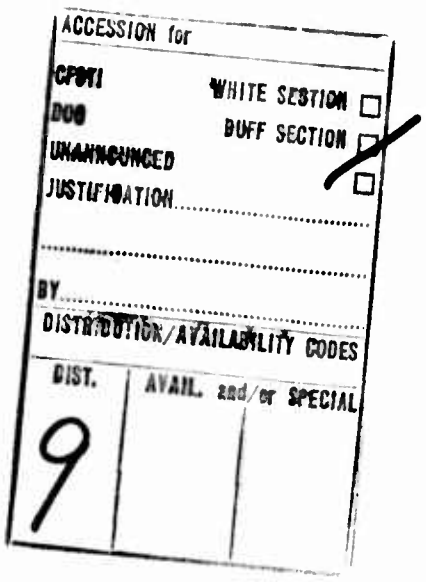

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 18TH ENGINEER BRIGADE
APO 96377

AVBC-CS

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 18th Engineer Brigade for Period Ending 31 January 1969, RCS, CSFOR-65

THRU: Commanding General
U.S. Army, Vietnam
ATTN: AVHGC (DST)
APO 96375

THRU: Commander in Chief
U.S. Army, Pacific
ATTN: GPOP-DT
APO 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
Department of the Army (AGSFOR DA)
Washington, D.C. 20310

1. Section 1, Operations: Significant Activities

a. Administration and Personnel

(1) During the period 1 Nov 68 - 31 Jan 69 the following awards were presented to Brigade personnel:

Distinguished Service Cross	0
Legion of Merit	5
Silver Star	0
Soldiers Medal	0
Bronze Star	211
Air Medal	16
Army Commendation Medal	421
Total	653

(2) Casualties inflicted on 18th Engineer Brigade personnel during the reporting period were:

KIA	15
WIA	86
Nonhostile Deaths	15
Total	116

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FOR OT UT
691252

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 18th Engineer Brigade for Period Ending 31 January 1969, RCS, CSFOR-65

(3) The overall personnel status of the Brigade again improved over the previous reporting period with the 28 January 1969 aggregate assigned strength at 14,775 with an authorized strength of 14,963, giving a strength ratio of 98.7% as compared with a ratio of 92.3% on 22 October 1968. The increase in strength ratio is partially attributable to the reorganization of the 84th and 87th Engineer Battalions under a Type B MTOE with the resulting loss of 225 spaces per battalion. During the period 1 December through 20 January 1969, over 1100 enlisted personnel with MOS 11A/B have been assigned to the Brigade. These personnel have been assigned very effectively in 12A/B positions, and to a variety of other positions throughout the Brigade.

b. Operations

(1) Land clearing was a very significant operational support activity carried on during this quarter. Three land clearing companies have been activated, two of which are presently committed in clearing operations in I CTZ and II CTZ.

(a) The 59th Engr Co (LC) was officially activated and attached to the 18th Engr Bde on 1 January 1969. The unit completed training and moved north to I CTZ by 9 Jan 1969. It is now operational with 45th Engr Gp at "Leatherneck Square".

(b) The 35th Land Clearing Team was converted to the 538th Engr Co (LC) and assigned to 18th Engr Bde under GO 114 effective 26 Dec 1968. The unit is now clearing QL-14 north of Ban Me Thuot under control of 937th Gp. As the 35th Land Clearing Team, the unit completed work along QL-1 and began clearing along LTL6B; however, coastal monsoon rains forced the LCT to move inland to QL-14. Over 1260 acres were cleared during the period.

(c) The 687th Engr Co (LC) was formed from the deactivated 87th Engr Bn (Const). This unit will deploy to southern II CTZ upon completion of its training cycle and undertake clearing operations there.

(2) Operational Support Construction involved the following projects:

(a) Phan Thiet Airfield (VA2-11) was rehabilitated by Co B/116th Engr Bn. Repair involved establishing a crown and CBR 80 base using sand cement, sealing with asphalt and M8A1 matting, and extending the runway. The airfield is now capable of C130 traffic.

(b) Co B, 299th Engr Bn (C) rehabilitated Dak Seang Airfield (VA2-238). Work was begun in July 1968, but was discontinued during the monsoon. The strip is now complete and trafficable to C-7A aircraft.

(c) The Duc Pho Airfield (VA1-201) was rebuilt by Co C, 39th Engr Bn (C). It was surfaced with MX-19 matting and is now a type II C-130 field.

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(d) Construction of new FSB's and improvement of existing ones continued throughout the quarter. In I CTZ, the 27th Engr Bn (C) completed FSB Roy while the 14th Engr Bn (C) has virtually finished work at the Rockpile, and LZ Dottie.

(3) Unit Location and Assignment Changes:

(a) Appended as Inclosure 1 is a current station list for this Brigade.

(b) Elements of the 19th Engr Bn (C) operating on QL-1 in I CTZ have been placed OPCON to CO 45th Engr Gp, effective 26 Nov 68.

(c) The 35th Engr Bn (C) and 517th Engr Co (LE) departed I CTZ for reassignment to the 20th Engr Bde, effective 30 Dec 68.

(d) The 497th Engr Co (PC) was transferred from this Brigade to 20th Brigade on 26 January 1969.

(e) The 87th Engr Bn (Const) (-) was brought to zero strength on 31 January and will be inactivated on 31 March. Co D, 87th Engr Bn will remain committed in I CTZ for the immediate future.

(f) The 70th Engr Co (Dump Truck) was brought to zero strength on 31 Jan 69.

(4) LOC work accounted for 47% of the Brigade effort with 38 km being paved to MACV standards during the reporting period.

(a) Ceremonies officially opening the Hai Van Pass were held in December. Maintenance of the road through the pass has been turned over to the Navy.

(b) The Brigade has implemented a rock quota system for each quarry in an effort to encourage quarry commanders to produce a maximum amount of rock. At the start of this program the Brigade averaged 16,800 CY per week. During the month of January the average rock produced per week was 28,400 CY. HCA equipment, bought specifically to increase rock production has begun to arrive and will greatly increase the Brigade's rock production capability.

(5) Base construction absorbed an average of 24% of the Brigade's effort during the reporting period. A list of projects directed, but for which completion reports have not been prepared, is attached as Incl 2. The list contains 208 projects with a total funded cost of $32,195,428. $11,841,888 of work remain to be emplaced. These figures are much below the same figures as of 31 October. At that time there were 234 open projects with a funded cost of $47,636,804 and $11,092,112 of work remaining. The decrease in the total funded cost is the first visible result of the Brigade's effort to close out old directives.

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(a) The portion of the Brigade's effort devoted to base construction will decrease markedly during the first one-half of CY 1969 as a result of troop to contract switches and cancellation of non-essential projects. Sufficient effort will be allocated to base construction to ensure timely completion of urgent projects.

(b) Among the more significant projects completed during the period were AUTOSEVOCOMS in Qui Nhon and Pleiku, and a Dial Central in Pleiku. These projects required a very sophisticated level of construction and numerous supply problems had to be overcome to accomplish the mission. Technical assistance was provided by Quinton Engineers Limited.

(6) The Engineering and Plans Section, EPS, continued to review designs throughout the Brigade, and provided design criteria to the Groups. Significant accomplishments of EPS during this period included a 3600 ft bridge to be built by the ARVN's at Tuy Hoa, standardized designs of bridge protection devices, FSAs, 175 mm gun pads, and billet/bunkers, the initiation and training of a "core drilling detachment" which is presently conducting a subsurface soil exploration in the Tuy Hoa area, and reviewing and recommending changes to the electrical system of the 330th Radio Research Bldg in Pleiku.

c. Supply and Maintenance

(1) AUTOSEVOCOM projects were delayed by shortages of long lead electrical items. These items were of a non-standard nature and were not recognized by the depots when they were received in country, and as a result they were lost. The Brigade S-4 Section has studied the situation and hopes to solve the problem by recommending that long lead electrical items be consolidated before shipment and marked for the 18th Engineer Brigade. USAECAV will be asked to furnished representatives to identify the items. Then they will be diverted to the construction sites accompanied by a representative from the construction unit.

(2) The Brigade has instituted a road side spot check team, utilizing CMI personnel with DA Pam 750-10 as a guide. This team is programmed to inspect each group at least monthly. Reports to each group include a comparison of their standing with those of the other two groups. In time, when enough data is amassed, units in the Brigade will be given a composite score showing the condition of their vehicles over an extended period of time.

d. Surgeon

(1) The 18th Engineer Brigade now realizes a 100% assigned versus authorized Medical Corps officer personnel strength. This includes the Brigade Surgeon (Maj, MC), the 937th Engr Gp Surgeon (Cpt, MC), and fourteen Battalion Surgeons (CPT, MC).

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(2) The shortage of enlisted medical personnel has remained critical however the previous OJT program at battalion level has helped to ease this problem somewhat. The shortage of medics in grades E-5 and E-6 imposes a difficult hardship on the battalion Surgeon who must visit distant companies, leaving the aid station in the hands of relatively inexperienced medical personnel. The Brigade Personnel Section has become the central assignment area of all incoming enlisted medical personnel and the personnel section is in close liaison with the Brigade Surgeon to insure placement of incoming personnel to the areas of maximum need.

Section 2: Lessons Learned

a. Personnel

(1) Orientation of personnel

(a) Observation: Troop information, with particular emphasis toward the prompt orientation of newly arrived personnel is vital for individual and unit morale.

(b) Evaluation: To assist subordinate units in their orientation program, this headquarters is developing a 20-30 minute orientation program using 35mm slides and a script to depict the brigade missions and accomplishments. This orientation program is to be supplemented by the subordinate units with topics more directly related to the unit's mission.

(c) Recommendation: That all new personnel be given a similiar orientation with emphasis placed on the importance of their unit's mission to the overall military effort in Vietnam.

b. Operations

(1) Large Construction Directives.

(a) Observation: Many construction directives received by this headquarters are very large in scope. There may be several users for each type of facility and the scope of any one facility will be more than can be done by one constructing unit in a reasonable time.

(b) Evaluation: Large construction directives increase greatly the effort required for effective management and control of construction projects. Specifically, large projects tend to invalidate much of the data obtained by the construction reporting system. For example, it is not meaningful to report on the validity, estimated start and completion dates, and percent complete for 78 grease racks in Camp Enari. Only a few will be under construction at any given time, and nearly 78 using units are involved.

(c) Recommendation: A directive should be reasonable in scope and manageable. It should not include facilities for more than one user, and should not direct more facilities than can be accomplished in two battalion months.

(2) Rock Production

(a) Observation: When quarries have no immediate requirement for rock or quantities of rock are stockpiled, it has been noted that rock production drops off.

(b) Evaluation: It appears that rock production was highest when quarry operators had some sort of goal to work towards. Quotas based on the capability of each quarry were assigned by the brigade. In addition, a weekly comparison was made between the groups and a broken pick was awarded to the group that missed its quota by the biggest margin during the entire month. This has provided a spirit of competition between groups and quarry production has jumped markedly since the quota system was initiated. Once sufficient rock has been produced, even though much of it is stockpiled, the crusher can be relocated to a new project.

(c) Recommendations: That quotas be assigned to quarries to encourage maximum rock production even during slack periods. Quotas assigned should be reasonable and based on quarry capability so that an obtainable goal is established that will encourage rock production. Announcing results creates competion between quarries and provides another incentive to maintain peak rock production.

(3) Planning

(a) Observation: Lack of timely decisions regarding construction programs and force structure planning impedes adequate planning in units charged with the execution of such plans.

(b) Evaluation: Construction program planning, to be effective should be carried out as far in advance as possible. This is particularly true in Vietnam where seasonal climatic conditions have great impact on construction. Lack of timely information on future programs as well as resources that will be available to accomplish these programs has made advance planning difficult and has resulted in an inordinate number of unit moves during prime construction weather with resultant loss of effort.

(c) Recommendation: Programs must be planned as far in advance as possible, and major changes in priorities must be kept to a minimum. Delays in making important decisions should not be permitted. Subordinate units must be informed of changes as soon as they occur, particularly, in the area of force structure development.

(4) Unit Moves

(a) Observation: If permitted, units will devote an inordinate amount of time in their own base camp construction at the expense of their assigned construction mission.

(b) Evaluation: All commanders are taught to improve their

positions and the living conditions of their men. A balance between this desire and the timely execution of assigned construction projects must be found.

(c) Recommendation: Establish a schedule for occupation and construction of a new base camp, specifying a time frame and the percentage of the unit's effort that may be used in construction of the camp. At the same time require the unit to have a certain percentage of its effort on its assigned projects within a certain time frame after movement occurs. Base camp construction can be quickly tapered off until it is performed only during times when work cannot be done on assigned projects.

(5) Living-Fighting Bunkers

(a) Observation: Engineer units make frequent moves in the execution of a construction program, usually necessitating construction of base camps. Time required to build such base camp detracts from completion of the mission.

(b) Evaluation: Units must have a base camp providing a minimum standard of living and at the same time, must have defensive bunkers to be used to defend the camp. Construction of both defensive bunkers as well as separate living quarters consumes an unnecessary amount of effort. A single dual purpose structure reduces construction time, minimizes casualties during an attack and enhances base camp defense by having the men in their fighting positions prior to any attack.

(c) Recommendation: When a unit moves into a new area, combination living-fighting bunkers should be constructed on the perimeter. These are used exactly as the name implies and negate the need for construction of separate facilities.

(6) Weather Considerations Affecting Land Clearing

(a) Observation: Attempts to begin clearing in a coastal area during October and November at the beginning of the NE monsoon caused the loss of a month's work because of unsuitable wet soil conditions.

(b) Evaluation: Monsoon rains will seriously hamper land clearing operations.

(c) Recommendation: That land clearing be programmed in advance to provide for movement of the land clearing companies to areas not affected by monsoon rains.

(7) Support of Land Clearing Companies

(a) Observation: Daily helicopter support is essential to land clearing operations.

(b) Evaluation: Daily requirements for coordination, recon, and movement of personnel supplies, laundry, and repair parts demand helicopter support for at least one-half day. Land clearing units are normally remotely located and cut off from daily ground contact with supporting elements by distance and insecure LOC. In II CTZ, the coordination for this support is the responsibility of the engineer units, but the priority for receipt of helicopter support from aviation units on an "as available" basis. There are insufficient UH-1 assets within 18th Brigade to dedicate one or two helicopters for this mission.

(c) Recommendation: That an additional UH-1 helicopter be assigned to 18th Engineer Brigade to provide daily support to two LCC's operating in II CTZ.

(8) MTOE Actions

(a) Observation: The standard procedure for changing the strength and equipment authorizations in troop units by the submission of MTOE's is too inflexible and slow to be workable in a combat zone during wartime.

(b) Evaluation: The current procedure for changing the composition of engineer troop units in order to gain needed MOS skills and items of equipment that are compatable with the unit's mission is to submit an MTOE. This system is based on peacetime conditions and works quite well during non-hostile periods. However, the system is unworkable during war time for the following reasons:

1. Time Involved. The submission of an MTOE requires that the document be made up and submitted through channels all the way to Department of the Army. Once the MTOE is approved at DA it must come all the way back through channels to the unit for implementation. The entire process can take up to a year from the time the MTOE is submitted until the unit can begin implementing it. In the meantime no additional MTOE's for that unit can be submitted. In a combat zone, by the time an MTOE is submitted, approved, and returned to the unit for implementation the original reason for its submission has usually been overtaken by later events such as change in unit missions. As a result the unit is then required to implement a MTOE that calls for equipment and MOS skills that were desperately needed a year ago but are merely burdensome overhead by the time they are finally on hand in the unit.

2. Inflexibility. The present system of standardized MTOE's even if it were not so slow, is unworkable because a change in the TOE of one unit requires that all other like units be so changed. For instance, all engineer combat battalions in the 18th Brigade are now organized under the G series MTOE. This rigidity in no way considers the wide divergence in missions. It is obvious that a combat battalion that is engaged mainly in operational support does not need the same equipment and personnel composition as a combat battalion that is engaged mainly in base construction or LOC upgrading.

The above two shortcomings of the MTOE authorization system were somewhat mitigated in the early years of the Vietnam War by the rather liberal policy of 180 day loans of special equipment needed for specific missions. However, current Hqs USARV policy is to not favorably consider 180 day loan requests unless they are accompanied by an MTOE submission that includes the items requested.

(c) Recommendation: That a procedure be established whereby a unit commander can submit a simple authorization document for the equipment and MOS skills that he needs to perform his mission. This document and total time frame from submission to implementation should be on the order of 30 days.

c. Logistics

(1) Loss of Requisitions

(a) Observations: Requisitions for both end items and repair parts are frequently lost in supply channels.

(b) Evaluation: Replies to follow up requisitions often indicate that no record exists at either DSU, DSSA, or ICC level. The burden of making the system function falls on the unit in resubmitting requisitions to ensure that a valid demand exists.

(c) Recommendation: When a follow up card is submitted by a unit citing MILSTRIP date, action should be taken by the DSU, DSSA, or ICC reinstate the requisition if no record exists.

(2) Release of Command Controlled Items

(a) Observation: Construction Directives require units to complete projects utilizing command controlled items.

(b) Evaluation: Construction Directives are published and disseminated prior to the starting date of almost all projects. These directives are the authority for release and list all command controlled items which are required. Units, which are assigned these projects, fail to submit requests for release of items until late in the construction stage. This requires all levels to expedite their requests. When a late release is obtained, emergency air shipment is required. Often the items must be released for pick-up as a special case to ensure expeditious shipment causing a needless waste of man hours. Undue strain is placed on the supply and transportation systems because of this failure to make early requests.

(c) Recommendation: As soon as a unit is assigned a project, it should review the directive and submit its requests for command controlled items through its supply channels. These actions must be monitored at all levels of command.

(3) Direct Support Capability for Combat Engineer Battalions

(a) Observation: There are eight combat engineer battalions (TOE 5-35G) in this command. These are supported by seven light equipment companies (TOE5-58G) to increase their construction capability to the level of a construction battalion (TOE 5-115G). Construction engineer battalions have organic direct support capability. However, neither the combat battalion nor the light equipment companies have the direct support maintenance capability of the construction battalions. These units must therefore be supported by the 1st Logistical Command direct support maintenance companies. Frequent moves impair the flow of repair parts because it takes at least two months for the gaining DSU to build up a new ASL stockage to support the battalion. Over the last quarter, combat engineer battalions have had an average deadline rate of 11.0% and light equipment companies 10.9%, as compared with 6.4% for construction battalions.

(b) Evaluation: The deadline rate of combat engineer battalions is affecting their mission accomplishment.

(c) Recommendation: Recommend that the TOE of combat engineer battalions be modified to give them direct support maintenance capability.

JOHN H. ELDER, JR.
Colonel, CE
Commanding

2 Incl
~~1. 18th Engr Bde Station List~~
~~2. Open Projects List~~
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AVHGC-DST (31 Jan 69) 1st Ind(C)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 18th Engineer Brigade for Period Ending 31 January 1969, RCS CSFOR-65

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 7 MAR 1969

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT, APO 96558

Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. (U) This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 31 January 1969 from Headquarters, 18th Engineer Brigade.

2. (C) Comments follow:

a. (U) Reference item concerning large construction directives, section 2, paragraph b(1). Concur with recommendation that directives should be reasonable in scope and manageable. Large unmanageable construction directives were issued in 1967 and prior years, and still remain as active projects in various states of completion in troop reports. These old construction directives are being identified and closed out as part of the overall clean-up of the construction program. Construction directives which have been issued in the past six months have been definitive in scope and are manageable.

b. (C) Reference item concerning support of land clearing companies, section 2, paragraph b(7). Nonconcur. The 18th Engineer Brigade has a 100 percent fill of the six (6) UH-1D/H helicopters authorized, even though USARV is in a deficit position status on UH-1D/H aircraft. Because of this shortage, many units are being maintained at a 90 percent fill level. Assigning additional UH-1D/H helicopters to this brigade would only increase the shortage in units authorized UH-1D/H aircraft. Since the helicopter assets of the brigade cannot logistically sustain land clearing operations, the supported tactical command must be called upon for assistance.

c. (U) Reference item concerning MTOE actions, section 2, paragraph b(8). Concur in the recommendation that the time for approval for authorization documents should be shortened so that additional personnel and equipment may be requisitioned on a timely basis to meet mission requirements. However, final approval of authorization documents and, thus, approval for personnel and equipment fill rests with DA and is not delegated. This procedure is based on the fact that DA must conduct capability studies to determine availability or projected availability of both personnel and equipment requirements.

d. (U) Reference item concerning loss of requisitions, section 2, paragraph c(1); concur. 1st Logistical Regulation 700-16 calls for the direct support supply activity to schedule a reconciliation of backorders

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AVHGC-DST (31 Jan 69) 1st Ind (C)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 18th Engineer Brigade for Period Ending 31 January 1969, RCS CSFOR-65

with customers every 60 days. The customer must re-requisition the item if it is not recorded at the DCSA but still required. Paragraph 4-42h Army Regulation 725-50 states processing points, in receipt of follow-ups for which there is no record of receipt of the original requisition, will process the follow-ups as requisitions.

e. (U) Reference item concerning direct support capability for combat engineer battalions, section 2, paragraph c(3). Although it is desirable to augment the combat engineer battalion with a direct support maintenance capability, the 1st Logistical Command has a direct support maintenance capability which is designed to support the battalion regardless of its location. Close coordination with the direct support activity and command emphasis should decrease the deadline rate spread in comparison with the construction battalions. In accordance with DA standardization policy, any MTOE change must be equally applicable to all like units. Accordingly, a change for the combat engineer battalions in the 18th Engineer Brigade requires a like change for those in the 20th Engineer Brigade. In addition, MTOE action requires a large number of personnel spaces which are not readily available at this time because of the Department of Defense imposed manpower ceiling.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

C. D. Wilson

C. D. WILSON
1LT AGC
OIC AG CLASSIFIED

Cy furn:
18th Engr Bde

GPOP-DT (31 Jan 69) 2d Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 18th Engr Bde for Period Ending 31 January 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 15 MAR 1969

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorsement and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

C. L. SHORTT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author)	2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
HQ, OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310	Confidential
	2b. GROUP 4

3. REPORT TITLE

Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Hq, 18th Engineer Brigade (U)

4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)

Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations, 1 Nov 68 to 31 Jan 69

5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)

CO, 18th Engineer Brigade

6. REPORT DATE	7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES	7b. NO. OF REFS
Urdated	16	

8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.	9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)
b. PROJECT NO. N/A	691252
c.	9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)
d.	

10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY
N/A	OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310

13. ABSTRACT

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