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AGO D/A ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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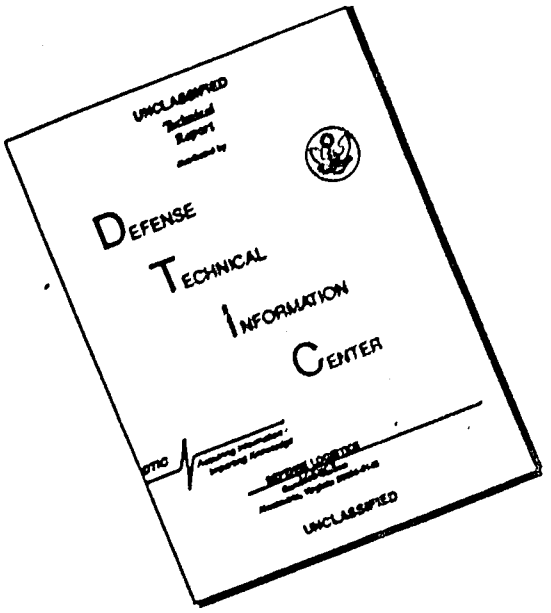

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (28 Dec 67) FOR OT RD 670724 8 January 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 69th Engineer Battalion (Const), Period Ending 31 July 1967

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation by USACDC in accordance with paragraph 6f, AR 1-19 and by USCONARC in accordance with paragraph 6c and d, AR 1-19. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from Lessons Learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

1 Incl
as

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HEADQUARTERS
69TH ENGINEER BATTALION (CONSTRUCTION)
APO San Francisco 96291
"BUILDERS FOR PEACE"

EGFA-CO 31 July 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR-65) for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1967.

THRU: Commanding Officer
34th Engineer Group (Const)
APO 96291

Commanding General
20th Engineer Brigade
APO 96491

Commanding General
USA Engineer Command Vietnam (Prov)
ATTN: AVCC-P&O
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Commanding General
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TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
Department of the Army (ACSFOR DA)
Washington, D. C. 20310

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Section 1, Significant Organization or Unit Activities.

1. The 69th Engineer Battalion (Construction) was alerted for deployment to the Republic of Vietnam on 18 Nov 66. In the alert, movement was directed to take place in February, but due to critical shortages of equipment, it was rescheduled for May.

2. The battalion was activated on 1 July 1966 under TO&E 5-115E as a D1 unit. The majority of cadre and filler personnel were present by late August. Eight weeks of BUT was initiated on 29 August 1966, immediately followed by eight weeks of AUT which terminated on 17 December 1966. The initial estimated delivery dates for engineer equipment were for late December 1966. As a result, the BUT/AUT schedule was modified to fit this delivery schedule. During October and November, it became obvious that delivery dates were not going to be met, and plans were made and materials ordered to conduct intensive training in vertical and horizontal construction after the first of the year in the event the unit's ERD was slipped. During the week of 27 November 1966 to 3 December 1966 it was announced that the ERD had been slipped from 29 January 1967 to 24 April 1967. The ATT scheduled for the week 10 December 1966 to 17 December 1966 was cancelled and rescheduled for late March 1967.

3. The battalion's personnel requirements were a continuing problem from the initial alert until deployment. Despite the fact that the battalion had a personnel readiness date of 12 February 1967, individual replacements continued to arrive until the day the battalion departed Ft. Hood. Many of these were lateral transfers from other units located at Fort Hood.

4. Another area which was not resolved was the hardship of married personnel assigned to the battalion after it was alerted. The restrictive clause in many of their orders precluded their families from accompanying them to Ft. Hood. As a result of the extended delay in deployment, some men were separated from their families for up to ten months in CONUS prior to commencing their overseas tour.

5. On 30 January 1967, the battalion began an operational phase of training which continued until 1 March 1967. The requirement for immediate POM, halted all training on 1 March and prevented the battalion from accomplishing additional training scheduled on large scale quarrying operations, asphalt construction and POL construction. Further, both the AGI and the ATT scheduled for the battalion during the month of March 1967 had to be cancelled. During 30 January to 1 March 1967, the battalion conducted additional training on selected BUT/AUT subjects, undertook training projects to increase MOS proficiency, and accomplished projects financed from funds for the Director of Engineering. During this training, extensive use was made of equipment obtained from outside resources in addition to the TO&E equipment received by the unit at the time.

6. The 69th Engr Bn (Const) conducted an FTX (practice ATT) during the period 27 November 1966 through 3 December 1966. Realism was increased by

employment of aggressors and the use of blank ammunition, booby-trap simulators and anti-tank mines during the exercise. Weaknesses noted were either corrected on the spot or included within those subjects which received additional emphasis during the operational training phase of the battalion. The FTX was based on the assumption that the battalion was operating in a non-nuclear environment and under conditions similar to those which exist within South Vietnam. The company commanders of the 69th had recently completed acting as umpires during the ATT of the 589th Engr Bn (Const). Consequently, these company commanders were able to make a special effort to correct weaknesses similar in nature to those which they had observed within the other battalion. Although the FTX was not graded by III Corps Headquarters, it was observed closely by members of the Corps G-3 and Engineer Sections.

7. Personnel have been trained by making extensive use of army schools, MOS schools run by the battalion, OJT whithin the battalion and completion of all mandatory training. The receipt by the battalion of nearly all authorized earthmoving equipment has given operators and maintenance personnel the opportunity to operate and maintain this equipment. The battalion conducted a special school on the operation of the Clark 290M wheeled tractors and the 18 Cu yd scrapers used in conjunction with this tractor. Vertical construction personnel were trained almost entirely by using hand tools, supplemented by powered equipment borrowed from other engineer units at Fort Hood.

8. The battalion demonstrated its proficiency to accomplish horizontal construction by the construction of stock pond, a concrete helicopter pad, several culverts, a storm drainage system, parking areas, preparation of foundations for new facilities, and construction, maintenance and repair of secondary roads on the Fort Hood reservation.

9. The battalion accomplished such vertical construction as T/O buildings, rehabilitation of and additions to existing buildings, and construction of a complete combat-in-cities complex.

10. The personnel readiness date (PRD) was three weeks after the equipment readiness date (ERD). All necessary administrative forms were completed and placed into the individuals alert folder, and each folder was checked for completeness. Immunizations were completed by the battalion medical section. Each man requiring a physical examination, eye or dental checks was examined by post doctors. M-14 rifles were turned in and new M16-A1 rifles were issued. The battalion operations section, assisted by the Post Advanced Marksmanship Unit, conducted instructor classes on the new rifle, and these people, in turn, instructed the company personnel. A time was then scheduled for everyone to fire the new weapon for familiarization and record. This range exercise was completed in one (1) day. Under the direction of the battalion CBR officer, the entire battalion went through an agent chamber exercise which provided a final check of all protective masks. Then only after all POR requirements were met, were individuals authorized a POM leave.

11. Upon receipt of the alert order, immediate action was taken to prepare the organic vehicles and equipment for shipment. Standard packaging and crating materials, as well as special design crates, were obtained from the Post Carpenter Shop. All rolling stock was properly prepared in that all windshields were secured and boxed, CVE was locked in the appropriate compartments, and accessories that were subject to damage in transit were removed and secured. 6.

12. Non-operational equipment was job ordered to Post Maintenance for immediate repairs, regardless of echelon, so that nothing would be left behind for non-operational reasons. As each piece of equipment was finished, a DD Form 1384 (Transportation Control Movement Document) was completed for transportation purposes. Conex containers were filled with both inserts and bulk items. They were then braced inside, covered with waterproof paper, and the doors were sealed with tape around all openings. As each conex insert and container was completed, a DD Form 1384 was prepared. When all documents were complete and approved by the Transportation Office, a train loading plan was designed. The day prior to "loading out", all of the conex containers were spotted at the railhead. This was done so that on loading day, a crane could pick them up and place them on the cars. This method saved time and prevented traffic problems.

13. Each company was assigned a specific day for loading and securing its rolling stock on a train. On the afternoon prior to each company's loading, all vehicles were lined up in the motor pool according to ramp and position number. This information was chalked onto the piece of equipment so as to avoid any confusion when they convoyed to the railhead. Guards were stationed around the railhead to minimize casual observation and loitering. As each company loaded its equipment on the train, the next company in the loading plan would move its equipment to the railhead so that loading could begin first thing the following morning. The majority of each loading day was spent in securing equipment to the railcars. Battalion troops did the work under the supervision of railroad personnel. All tie-down materials were supplied by the Post Carpenter Shop. After a thorough inspection by railroad inspectors, each train departed for the port.

14. Company A was given the mission of preparing the battalion's supplemental shipment. This mission consisted of receiving, marking and preparing DD Forms 1384, and finally, loading all incoming parts, supplies and MO&E shortages. This work kept two crews constantly busy until the final train departed two weeks after the initial shipment.

15. All POM leaves were completed by 7 April 1967. This lead time was essential in getting final gear and yellow TAT packed. On the afternoon of 9 April 1967, all main body personnel were given their loading and compartment number for the train boarding that night. All barracks bags and yellow TAT was loaded during the afternoon. At 2000 hours, a formation was held and a headcount was taken to insure everyone's presence. The next step was going by bus to the awaiting trains. At approximately 2230 hours, the first train (of two) left Fort Hood enroute to Oakland several hours ahead of schedule. The ride was excellent and was highlighted by the railroad's outstanding service rendered to the troops. The first train arrived in Oakland several hours ahead of schedule on 10 April 1967.

16. An Advance Main Body of approximately 120 officers and EM departed 10 April at 1000 hours by air. Three chartered aircraft were provided and gave non-stop service directly to Oakland International Airport where they were met by chartered busses which took the men to the ship. These men set up the guard and KP details, and began organizing the holds for the troops arrival. Included in this body were also the day members of the voyage staff, who organized the troop office, the ship newspaper, and the training film library.

17. Upon arrival in Oakland on 11 April 1967, the baggage cars were emptied, and the men lined up in the terminal to be checked and assigned new compartment numbers. Officers and NCO's, E-5 and above, were assigned cabin numbers as they checked in aboard ship. As the men boarded the USNS Geiger, they were checked off the master roster. The first night was spent "squaring away" personal gear and instructing the men as to the ships regulations. Sailing time was 1300 hours the following day. The officers and key NCO's occupied Voyage Staff positions and EM were assigned duty as kitchen police, guards, and sanitation police. Several E-5's operated the ships barber shop for the benefit of all aboard. During the trip, training was reduced to the minimum of Character Guidance and Command Information because of lack of room aboard ship. Besides this battalion, the 34th Engr Battalion and the 41st Artillery Group were aboard the "Geiger". Shore leave was granted in Subic Bay, R.P. to all those who were not on duty the day in port. After a stop at Qui Nhon to debark the 41st Arty Gp, this battalion reached its destination, Vung Tau, RVN, on 1 May 1967.

18. Battalion personnel were greeted by the advanced party members as they debarked the LCU's which brought them ashore. The men were loaded onto awaiting transportation and moved to the battalion area. After securing their personal baggage and combat gear, the men began to erect the tents to be used for living quarters and orderly rooms. The first night in-country, the men got settled and received a briefing on the Vung Tau area. The next several days were spent on site improvement, unpacking Red TAT as it arrived, and constructing floors from scrap lumber for the tents.

19. Preparation for arrival of TO&E equipment was the next step. The company motor pools and the battalion maintenance platoon set up in assigned areas. Maintenance NCO's conducted classes on international road signs so that operators could pass the required test prior to driving in Viet Nam. Company A's mechanics and repair parts personnel were given the job of cleaning up the RMK-BRJ yard located in Vung Tau. Mechanics repaired all non-operational equipment while repair parts people identified and placed in locator card files all remaining RMK-BRJ parts.

20. As TO&E equipment arrived, unit personnel went to the ship and began connecting the batteries and preparing the vehicles for movement from the port as the vehicles were moved by barge to the shore. As the equipment arrived in the unit area, personnel began removing all shipping material, checking for and repairing any damages acquired enroute, completely servicing the item, and stencilling on unit bumper markings.

21. The battalion was assigned to the 34th Engr Gp (Const) upon its arrival in country. Almost immediately, personnel and equipment of B Company were transferred to the 577th Engr Bn at Tuy Hoa, and C Company of the 577th, located permanently at Dong Tam became B Company of the 69th. Since full scale operations were not possible at first due to the lack of TO&E equipment, personnel from the battalion worked closely with D Company, 46th Engrs and prepared for eventual takeover of all D/46 projects in the Vung Tau and surrounding area. Toward the end of May, the 2d construction platoon D Company deployed to Can Tho for take over and completion of unfinished RMK/BRJ contracts. At 0001 hours 2 June 1967 the battalion was pronounced fully operational. On 7 June the last equipment ship arrived off shore after a 60 day plus voyage enroute. The units equipment was finally off loaded on 14 June.

22. Following is a narrative on the projects started and/or completed by this unit during the months of May, June, and July 67:

a. QUARRY OPERATIONS AND OUTLOADING OF BARGES: Company A was assigned the mission of operating two quarry sites on a twenty-four hour schedule and outloading barges with various types of crushed rock. The original commitment was for one million (1,000,000) cubic yards of rock. Both blast rock and crushed rock are to be maintained at a fourteen day stockpile level. The production is directed toward combat support (barges) and support of the Australian forces in the Vung Tau area and LOC and base construction in the delta. The 103d Engr Co (CS) Quarry Platoon has been attached to A Company to provide the quarries with additional manpower. Seventy trained Vietnamese drilling and quarry machine operators are employed to assist in quarry operations. A day and night crew work at both quarries and the barge loading site. At the close of the last weekly construction report, a total of 31,817 U.S. and 23,171 Vietnamese man hours have been expended. Over 14,000 equipment hours have been recorded. Nearly 8,000 U.S. manhours have been recorded in the loading of barges. 40,837 cubic yards of granite have been crushed with a stockpile of 16,582 cubic yards and 35,778 cubic yards of blast rock has been issued for projects. 51 barges have been loaded with 10,960 cubic yards of crushed rock.

b. DONG TAM: A 500 acre cantonment on hydraulic fill with all facilities necessary for sustained operations to include logistical, port, hospital and airfield facility projects.

c. EIFFEL TRUSSES: Consisted of repairing three damaged Eiffel trusses. Damaged sections were floated on barges from Cau Muong to U.S. Navy yard at Cat Lo and will be floated back into place after repair. Effort required 2,144 U.S. manhours, 18 VN manhours and 130 equipment hours.

d. 100,000 BBL POL TANK FARM: Consists of construction of a 48-8" valve manifold system, 9000 LF of 8" pipeline, truck-loading stand, with technical and equipment assistance for construction of 4200 LF of security fencing (self-help). Future construction will consist of installation of 3 ea 50,000 BBL welded steel POL tanks and a T2 tanker pier. Manhours expended this period were 5379 U.S., 1404 VN, with 2700 equipment hours recorded.

e. 386 MAN CANTONMENT (1/83d ARTY, NUI DAT): Consists of technical and equipment assistance on 21,660 SF of EM billets, 1800 SF BOQ. 1000 SF administration building, messhall, shower, dayroom and 1800 SF supply space.

9

f. AIRCRAFT PARKING AREA (NUI DAT): Combat support mission. Consists of upgrading an 81,000 SF area adjacent to Luscombe Field runway to C130 capability. Area was leveled and shaped and is being brought to grade with compacted 4" layers of laterite.

g. AFRT RADIO STATION (CAT IO): Consists of construction of 960 SF transmitter building, 64 SF tuning shed, installation of poles for transmission line, installation 108,000EF of ground antennas, and construction of causeway for vehicle access to antenna site. Manhours expended to date are 3591 U.S. with 648 equipment hours.

h. REGIONAL INDOCTRINATION CENTER: Consists of technical and equipment assistance for construction of sewer system, roads, and hardstands. Manhours to date are 39 U.S. and 832 equipment hours recorded.

i. 905 MAN CANTONMENT: Consists of 110,294 SF of vertical construction, 13 grease racks, and 15,000 SY of maintenance hardstand. Manhours include 10,864 U.S., 19,451 VN, with 322 equipment hours recorded to date.

j. 4100 MAN CANTONMENT: Consists of construction of 14,700 SF of motor repair shops, 22 ea grease racks, 9240 SF of wash platforms, 1 ea general store house, 2050 SY of open storage, 3000 SF dispensary space, 1 ea dental clinic, 12,000 SF administrable space, 258,000 SF EM billets, 57,400 SF of mess halls, 8200 SF theater/chapel, roads, parking area, and latrines. Manhours expended to date are 2335 U.S., 48 VN, 56 self-help, with 215 equipment hours recorded.

k. AMMUNITION SUPPLY POINT: Consists of construction of 30 ea M8A1 pads w/aprons (ea 100'x100'), 800 SF administrative space, 2220 SY roads, 23,600 LF fencing, and 11,800 LF of lighting. Manhours expended to date are 31612 U.S. with 10571 equipment hours recorded.

l. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER: Consists of construction of 40'x60' wood frame building, air-conditioning shed, generator shed, 600 LF of fencing, and 10-pole security lighting system. Manhours to date are 4636 U.S., 3420 VN, with 588 equipment hours recorded.

m. BARGE MODIFICATION: Combat support mission. Consists of framing top surface of flat barges with 4" x 12" creosote material and bracing with steel angle. Barges are used for hauling rock and general fill material to the delta. Manhours to date are 496 U.S. with 239 equipment hours recorded.

n. CAU KHE CAUSEWAY: Consists of constructing a 30' x 415' causeway on Route QL 15 at Cau Cay Khe. To date 18265 cubic yards of blast rock have been hauled. The project is 35% complete. To date 13,599 manhours have been expended.

o. 1200 MAN CANTONMENT (CAN THO): Consists of constructing a temporary standard 1200 man cantonment with central water and sewage, 2942 SF airconditioned avionics building 3840 SF motor repair shops, grease racks and wash racks, 1920 SF warehouse, 14,600 SY of open storage, 6720 SF Co Hq & supply, mess facilities, latrines, hutments and roads. To date 840 manhours have been expended.

p. MER (CAN THO, VUNG TAU): Consists of providing the minimum essential requirements for incoming units.

q. COMPLETION OF RMK/BRJ CONTRACTS (CAN THO): Consists of 1 ea 100'x140' hangar, 1 ea 100'x120' hangar, 14000 SF motor repair shop, 4000 SF Dial Center, 4000 SF communications center, 5000 SY aircraft parking area, and 2000 SF dispensary. Project is 85% complete. To date 14,440 manhours have been expended.

r. VUNG TAU PORT FACILITY: Consists of an open storage area, administration and transit sheds with access roads and filled area for Vinnell electrical switching station and Alaska Barge and Transport administrative area.

s. MICROWAVE RELAY BUILDING: Consists of 1 ea 2000 SF air-conditioned artic quonset. To date 3852 manhours have been expended.

t. AIRCRAFT PARKING AREA: Consists of 15,136 SY aircraft parking area. Project is 22% complete. To date 1455 manhours have been expended.

u. COMPLETION OF RMK/BRJ CONTRACTS (SOC TRANG): Installations of acoustic and vinyl tile, air conditioner vents and exhaust flow.

v. TEMPORARY HELICOPTER REVETMENTS (VUNG TAU, CAN THO, SOC TRANG: Engineer equipment and technical support and construction where necessary to provide at least minimum protection for all army helicopters.

w. WATER WELL PUMP INSTALLATION (VUNG TAU): Installation of eight deep well pumps for use in future development of contonment water system.

x. AIRFIELD MAINTENANCE (VUNG TAU, CAN THO): Necessary repair of runway to maintain operational capability.

Section 2, Part I, Observations (Lessons Learned).

1. Personnel:

a. ITEM: Rotation hump should be solved over a period of time.

(1) DISCUSSION: The loss of a company and the gain of an in-country unit with an immediate hump problem forced an immediate transfer of many personnel. With no replacements available, all three construction companies were understrength in most skills.

(2) OBSERVATION: A slow process of infusion of personnel to insure continued operations is possible and can be properly planned. An awareness of replacement MOS and skill, not just numbers of personnel is the basic criteria. An overlap of 14 days will allow a smooth transition and maintain unit efficiency.

b. ITEM: Excess equipment requires excess personnel.

(1) DISCUSSION: This unit was issued many items of equipment from RMK-BRJ assets. Personnel necessary to operate the equipment on a 24 hour basis had to be taken from TO&E authorizations. Since most of the equipment was used in quarry operations, it required high maintenance. Mechanics authorized for TO&E equipment were diverted.

(2) OBSERVATIONS: Units which have directed missions requiring equipment beyond TO&E capability can be authorized overstrength personnel to operate and maintain the equipment.

c. ITEM: Temporary hire of local nationals creates poor labor management relations.

(1) DISCUSSION: A specific case best illustrates this concept. An indigenous laborer was hired by this command 5 months ago. He moved his entire family from a VC controlled area into our vicinity. Funds to pay this individual were cut off by higher headquarters and we were forced to "layoff" this individual. Unable to return to his former home for fear of VC terrorists and incapable of planting rice crops due to lack of land and wrong season, what choices remain open to this man? This command feels that due to our temporary hiring practice, we have created many ripe prospects for a VC recruiting program. No permanent hire authority exists in this area (Dong Tam).

(2) OBSERVATIONS: Maintain good labor-management practices with the temporary hire indigenous personnel, by clearly stating contract terms prior to employment and insuring that they understand or are aware that policy changes can accure overnight.

d. ITEM: Over-exposure and sunburn.

(1) DISCUSSION: Troops, being unaccustomed to the tropical sun, will over-expose themselves to it and get excessive sunburn. This is unquestionably bad for the health of individuals concerned and also causes lost work time.

(2) OBSERVATION: Troops should be cautioned to the extreme burning effect of the tropical sun and the consequences it can bring. 12

2. Operations:

a. ITEM: Proper equipment for mission.

(1) DISCUSSION: Quarry operations require equipment designed for the mission. The requirement to produce rock at all cost also requires use of TO&E equipment not designed for use in quarries. Front loaders and hydraulic operated dozers suffer abnormal wear and increase maintenance requirements.

(2) OBSERVATION: The importance of rock to the war effort cannot be over-emphasized. The support equipment necessary to produce rock from hard rock sources should be obtained. In the interim an aggressive program of training and supervision to insure proper utilization of TO&E equipment must be initiated and the reduced capability due to down time must be integrated into project planning.

b. ITEM: Protection of truck beds.

(1) DISCUSSION: Blast rock causes serious damage to 5 ton dump truck beds when the requirement is to haul for extended periods of time.

(2) OBSERVATION: A wood liner for dump beds reduces wear and tear. The design should be kept simple for easy replacement when liner becomes damaged. This unit has found that 2"x12" liners held in place by angle iron will reduce wear on dump truck beds.

c. ITEM: M8A1 matting.

(1) DISCUSSION: When replacing M8A1 matting quality control is often overlooked requiring the removal of placed matting or spot welding the matting in place.

(2) OBSERVATION: Carefully controlling the spacing on each piece of matting significantly reduces handling and replacing matting. Although it takes more time to place each piece of matting, overall job time is reduced by eliminating costly errors. Simple testing will readily determine the required spacing for the different makes of matting. Usually this distance is from 1 1/8 to 1 3/8 inches between ends of each mat sheet depending on the make of matting being placed.

d. ITEM: Over design and Under design.

(1) DISCUSSION: Over design of facilities results in waste, greater job effort and increased cost. Under design results in waste and damage to men and equipment.

13

(2) OBSERVATION: Make good use of Engineer Manuals and references for designing concrete and wood structures. A building with studs on 2' centers is wasteful when 4' centers would have served an equal purpose. Also twice the effort is expended placing a reinforced 12" slab when a reinforced 6" slab would have served an equal prupose.

e. ITEM: Shipping equipment for deployment.

(1) DISCUSSION: Difficulties and problems were found in several areas. Lack of experience in railway loading and lack of proper coordination with proper railway personnel caused slight delays in getting equipment moved out initially. At the port it was found that there was not enough experienced operators available to transfer equipment from train to ship. This was especially true in cases of larger pieces of engineer equipment. It was also found, at this point, that vehicles must be filled with water and oil and some fuel. Because of the lack of experienced port personnel, numerous battery cables and batteries were abused and damaged while connecting the batteries to remove the equipment from the train.

(2) OBSERVATION: If at all possible, obtain the help of personnel experienced in railway loading or have your own loading personnel watch another unit load so they will be familiar with the special techniques and requirements of the local railway personnel. Prior to the equipment movingout from the home station it is important to secure all OVM and removable objects from the cab to prevent pilferage of these items. It was found that this can be easily accomplished by placing these items in the vehicles OVM box and spot welding it shut. In order to prevent hold-up or damage to equipment from inexperienced operators, it is important to insure that adequate operators are on hand, either from your unit or from available personnel at the port. In order to prevent damage to batteries and battery cables, they should reamin connected until they have reached their final loading spot aboard ship. This will eliminate connecting them at the port

f. ITEM: Control of equipment on deployment.

(1) DISCUSSION: During loading, shipping and unloading equipment, it is necessary for a unit to be able to quickly identify a piece of equipment or vehicle. The use of forms and a check off system is important and necessary. A visual system to segregate vehicles by company is also necessary in order that documents can be checked rapidly and insure a continuous flow in and out of the port area.

(2) OBSERVATION: To maintain recognition by sight, a color code of some type should be adopted in addition to the official markings required. It is important that the color code be put at least once on every piece of equipment and package on each side and the top so that the piece of equipment can be recognized from any angle. This code marking will expedite segregation by unit and allow rapid deployment of companies from the port. Strict control can be insured in at least two ways. In preparation of DA Form 1384, have at least 6 to 8 people involved deeply enough that they are familiar enough with the documents to know the approximate location of the document for any piece of equipment in relation to the other documents. This will insure that there is more than one or two people who are completely familiar with the equipment and the paperwork. It was found that a home-made master worksheet will greatly help in control of the equipment. It should contain, in tabulated form, all basic information found on the individual DA Forms 1384, less contents of equipment or package, plus whatever information deemed necessary by individuals concerned. This worksheet in addition to the DA Form 1384 will also greatly aid in the control and inventory of equipment when it arrives in-country.

g. ITEM: Truck drivers.

(1) DISCUSSION: After receipt of equipment in-country, the earthmoving elements, including the dump trucks, were immediately rolling 24 hours each day. This caused many problems, initially because only the TO&E authorized trained operators were assigned to most pieces of equipment.

(2) OBSERVATION: Take necessary time and effort to insure that all pieces of TO&E equipment have at least two (2) trained operators, that they are licensed and are assigned to each piece of equipment. A third operator should be cross trained from the platoon to insure that equipment can be used on a continuous 24 hour basis. The reduced vertical construction capability is considered in other project planning.

h. ITEM: Accompanying equipment on voyage.

(1) DISCUSSION: It is imperative that experienced personnel accompany equipment on the voyage.

(2) OBSERVATION: A detail composed of one or two maintenance personnel, one or two experienced operators, an NCO and an Officer should be picked as soon as possible to accompany the equipment for the duration of the trip. This detail will insure that no foul play falls on the equipment and also gives the owning unit positive control of their equipment and the opportunity to maintain it as well as possible.

i. ITEM: Placing of concrete.

(1) DISCUSSION: Many problems were encountered initially when placing concrete. This was caused mainly by lack of experience with the tropical weather conditions. In a sandy area, the hot dry sand will draw the water out of fresh concrete causing it to set up abnormally fast; many slabs were damaged by rains which arrive fast, heavy, and unexpectedly.

(2) OBSERVATION: By soaking the prepared ground immediately prior to placement, the drawing of the water from the concrete can be reduced. Since the tropical rains are sudden and heavy, precautions should be taken prior to placing. A cold joint should be pre-fabbed and ready to put in place and scrap canvas should be on hand to cover the fresh concrete. Erosion from around the slab can be prevented by placing sandbags around it. This is especially applicable in sandy areas.

15

j. ITEM: Drainage.

(1) DISCUSSION: Because of tropical climate and frequent and heavy rains, the water table and natural drainage systems change frequently and quickly. This can cause sudden flooding of seemingly safe areas.

(2) OBSERVATION: Have in effect at all times a drainage plan for all areas, including cantonments and project sites and insure that it is checked at least once weekly for full capability.

k. ITEM: Areas designated for construction have been occupied prior to completion of earthwork.

(1) DISCUSSION: Upon partial completion of a specific area, occupying units proceed to "move-in". Further ditching and crowning of the area by the engineers was impossible. After the first healthy shower, pooling of water and erosion becomes apparent.

(2) OBSERVATION: Allow sufficient time for all engineer earthwork to be completed before occupying unit moves on to a specified area.

l. ITEM: Stabilizing road ditch sides has proven necessary for construction on hydraulic fill areas.

(1) DISCUSSION: To assist the road in sheding rainwater and to prevent vehicles from initiating destructive "shoulder breakdown", some sort of permanent ditching arrangement has proven necessary.

(2) OBSERVATION: From the many solutions attempted, the method of stretching burlap over a 2x4 framework on the ditch sides, followed by coating with peneprime has proved successful.

m. ITEM: Lack of equipment hampers training.

(1) DISCUSSION: The total BUT/AUT program for this unit had to be revised constantly to obtain the maximum value from training time with the equipment available. RDD's for equipment were inaccurate. Equipment was borrowed but was not in sufficient quantity to allow for training, only exposure.

(2) OBSERVATION: Units organized for deployment should have TO&E equipment prior to BUT.

n. ITEM: Construction projects and materials necessary for training.

(1) DISCUSSION: A construction battalion training for deployment needs a lot of training material. This unit was forced to train skills such as electricians, plumbers, and masons with materials from any source that they could be obtained. Training funds could not be used to construct a building which would normally be funded from MCA or O&MA. Temporary structures on skids were to be torn down prior to deployment. Electrical and plumbing supplies were in short supply and training classes lacked practical application because of a lack of material and projects. 16

(2) OBSERVATION: Before a construction battalion is organized at a post, funded projects should be made available for training. These projects should be of a scope that they provide the training outlined in the ATP. The post commander and post engineer should understand that other training requirements will slow the actual construction and the projects may not be completed depending on deployment timing. These inconveniences will be more than off set by the training value gained by the unit.

o. ITEM: Training for 24 hour operations.

(1) DISCUSSION: TO&E 5-115E is not organized to operate on a 24 hour basis at platoon level and maintain unit integrity. The emphasis in training of this unit was on unit integrity.

(2) OBSERVATIONS: Units training for deployment to RVN should spend time in 24 hour operations in order to understand the problems and become accustomed to the required reorganization necessary.

p. ITEM: MOS schools necessary.

(1) DISCUSSION: With the accelerated build up this unit received personnel that had been virtually assigned a skilled MOS, i.e. electricians, plumbers, masons, etc. They did not have a minimum of skill.

(2) OBSERVATIONS: An MOS school for skilled building trades should be incorporated into the Army school program.

3. Logistics.

a. ITEM: Rough terrain fork lifts.

(1) DISCUSSTION: The construction battalion is not authorized a fork lift yet is required to handle thousands board feet of lumber and other construction material. This battalion has a requirement to pick up and store for future issue 1.6 million board feet of lumber. Use of cranes for this purpose is feasible; however cranes are a premium item for construction and necessary for off load at each site in the delta area.

(2) OBSERVATION: Two fork lifts capable of operating in loose sand would be invaluable. An alternate to using a truck mounted crane is mounting a 10 ton crawler on the rear of a 25 ton low bed for greater mobility.

17

b. ITEM: Project material.

(1) DISCUSSION: The largest problem in construction is the timely supply of materials.

(2) OBSERVATION: Regulations currently require that when a project is approved, the materials are ordered and stored in a depot near the project site for use by the constructing unit. Project development and planning should be accomplished in advance of the directive to construct. The construction directive should be issued far enough in advance to allow the unit to accumulate the materials so that construction can be performed in an efficient and orderly manner.

c. ITEM: Civilian quarry machinery.

(1) DISCUSSION: Limited supply of parts for civilian equipment has hampered early repairs.

(2) OBSERVATION: Red Ball requisitions were submitted on all necessary parts in order to prevent extended periods of down time.

d. ITEM: Basic issue of clothing and TA 50.

(1) DISCUSSION: It has been found that wear and tear on clothing, foot gear and web gear increase greatly and at a higher rate than stateside troops are accustomed to. Depending on unit priority, certain items of clothing and foot gear are in great demand and usually average sizes in boots and fatigues are not available through DX system to non-combat units.

(2) OBSERVATION: Insure that individuals have their complete issue of clothing and TA 50 prior to overseas shipment and that these items are in good condition. Individuals should be made aware of the importance of their personal gear and the problems that will arise when replacing lost or worn out items.

4. Maintenance.

a. ITEM: Battalion maintenance.

(1) DISCUSSION: Battalion maintenance status report for the period ending 31 July 67 is as follows:

(a) Third echelon job orders:

1.	Total received:	277
2.	Total completed:	183
3.	Total outstanding:	94

(b) Repair parts:

1. Normal supply channels:

a. Total requisitions submitted: 948

b. Total requisitions completed: 220

c. Total requisitions cancelled: 208

d. Total requisitions outstanding: 520

2. Red Ball supply system:

a. Total requistions submitted: 205

b. Total requistions completed: 31

c. Total requisitions cancelled: 24

d. Total requisitions outstanding: 150

(2) OBSERVATION: The Army and Red Ball supply systems are presently organizing to support commercial (non-standard) quarry equipment. Substantial numbers of requisitions submitted by this unit have been cancelled due to the fact that higher repair parts supply facilities do not have the applicable parts publications. Parts publications for each level of supply are necessary when non-standard equipment is introduced into the system. This unit has received rapid response to requests sent to civilian manufacturers for publications. When non-standard items become inoperative and repair parts are not available, they should be turned over to a collection point and used as a source of parts to support other items of equipment.

b. ITEM: Availability of maintenance records upon arrival in-country.

(1) DISCUSSION: Not all of necessary records for preventive maintenance operations were shipped Red TAT. This caused numerous problems in bringing log books and records up to date when they did arrive.

(2) OBSERVATION: Insure that the following maintenance records are shipped Red TAT so that they will be on hand when equipment arrives and starts to roll:

(a) Equipment log books.

(b) DD Form 314 (Preventive maintenance schedule and record).

(c) Equipment operators and drivers DA Form 348 (Driver qualification record).

(d) Visible index files w/DA Form 2527 (Record of Demands).

(e) Document register.

c. ITEM: Repair parts:

19

(1) DISCUSSION: Upon arrival it was found that starting the repair parts supply system was time consuming and certain parts were not available.

(2) OBSERVATION: Have on hand a six (6) month supply of all repair parts, especially the following items:

(a) Air filter elements, tractor ind. whld 290M.

(b) Relay emergency valves, scraper, towed 18 cu yd.

(c) Cutting edges, grader, road Cat 12.

(d) Turn signal distribution boxes, trk, cgo 2½T & trk, dump 5T.

(e) Rock end bits & track pads, tractor, FT D7E.

(f) Tires and tubes for all wheeled vehicles and trailers.

(g) Seals & bearings for all wheeled vehicles.

d. ITEM: Maintenance blank forms.

(1) DISCUSSION: Blank forms required to operate maintenance section are difficult to obtain through normal supply channels immediately on arrival in-country.

(2) OBSERVATION: Unit should bring at least a 6 month supply of all blank forms Red TAT.

e. ITEM: Maintenance of hand tools.

(1) DISCUSSION: Tropical conditions will cause hand tools to rust extremely fast.

(2) OBSERVATION: Hand tools should be greased and oiled daily to prevent rusting and deterioration.

f. ITEM: Protection of deck-loaded equipment.

(1) DISCUSSION: It was found that the larger items of equipment that are usually deck-loaded, especially cranes, 290 tractors and scrapers and 25 ton low boy trailers, will rust and deteriorate during the voyage.

(2) OBSERVATION: This can be prevented by coating each piece of equipment thoroughly with auxiliary automotive grease (GAA).

g. ITEM: Loading of equipment and packages for shipment.

20

(1) DISCUSSION: It was found that there was a common tendency to underload equipment on deployment and not take advantage of all available room.

(2) OBSERVATION: Trucks can be fitted with home made boxes as long as they do not exceed the cube dimensions of the vehicle. This also holds true for low bed trailers. It was found that cavities between the individuals packages can be effectively packed with empty sandbags which become valuable upon arrival in-country.

h. ITEM: Use of filters.

(1) DISCUSSTION: Because of the unusual weather conditions and environment found in Vietnam, it has become necessary to schedule maintenance two and three times more often than normal. This resulted in changing oil and filters more often than necessary in order to satisfy a maintenance directive.

(2) OBSERVATION: Continue to schedule the directed maintenance services but use a visual check to determine if oil and filter changing is necessary. This will result in the saving of filters.

5. Supply.

a. ITEM: Property accountability.

(1) DISCUSSION: Because of sudden, unexpected personnel changes, sometimes in key positions, it is not hard to lose proper accountability.

(2) OBSERVATION: Insure that property is accounted for immediately prior to shipment and that all hand receipts and annexes are up to date and signed by proper individuals. Immediately on arrival in-country, all property should be inventoried by hand receipt and annex and shortages noted and sent through proper channels. Hand receipts and annexes must be adjusted and signed over every time there is a change in hand receipt or annex holder.

b. ITEM: Equipment support to other units.

(1) DISCUSSION: A common method of insuring a unit has the assets to accomplish a mission is with equipment support, less operators. Length of time and distances involved make it difficult to maintain property accountability.

(2) OBSERVATION: The handreceipt holder can return the equipment to the property book officer. The property book officer in turn will receipt the equipment to the using unit. This centralized control will lessen the chance of lost accountability.

21

OVER →

Section 2, Part II, Recommendations.

1. DISCUSSION: Initial organization and training of this unit was seriously hampered by the lack of junior NCO's (E-6). These vacancies for 20 of the 48 squad leaders were filled by DA almost two months after the commencement of Basic Unit Training. These vacancies were filled by privates (E-2) who had completed AIT just prior to arrival in the unit. 22

2. RECOMMENDATIONS: That personnel on a D/A fill scheduled for squad leader positions be selected for leadership upon completion of AIT and given a leader's candidate course prior to shipment to a deploying unit.

3. DISCUSSION: Retired personnel who had been recalled to active duty with a one-grade promotion were of marginal value. These personnel were in poor health, had little or no skill in their MOS or did not have the ability to perform in a higher than their retired grade.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS: That the records, (service and health) be carefully screened for problem areas, prior to the time the individual is recalled.

5. DISCUSSION: Qualified personnel specialists did not arrive at this unit until well after the arrival of filler personnel.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS: That D/A establish teams to organize and initially operate the personnel section of newly activated units.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS: Those personnel which were not allowed to move their families to Fort Hood prior to deployment be given extra consideration in selection of assignment on return from Vietnam.

WILLIAM F. PENCE
LTC, CE
Commanding

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EGF-OP (31 July 1967) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR-65), for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1967

Headquarters, 34th Engineer Group (Const), APO 96291 22 August 1967

73

THRU: Commanding General, 20th Engineer Brigade, ATTN: AVBI-EO, APO 96491

TO: Commanding General, US Army Engineer Command Vietnam (P), ATTN: AVCC-P&O, APO 96491

1. The subject report, submitted by the 69th Engr Bn (Const), has been reviewed by this headquarters.

2. This headquarters concurs with the recommendations made by the submitting commander, subject to the following comments:

a. Para 1a, Section 2, Part I, recommends that the rotation hump should be solved by a slow process of infusion over a period of time. This headquarters does not concur. The provisions of USARV Reg 614-9 for correction of rotational hump problems are adequate and will be implemented during the next reporting period.

b. Para 1b, Section 2, Part I, states the need for excess personnel for excess equipment. Additional personnel by appropriate MOS and skill level should be authorized as overstrength to operate and maintain excess equipment when needed to perform a special mission.

c. Para 1c, Section 2, Part I. The overall civilian labor program needs modification. Long range, stable programs will increase confidence in the US Army, whereas frequent changes in the availability of funds resulting in reduction of work force, followed by a new influx of extra funds and rehiring on an urgent basis have hampered the civilian hire program.

d. Para 2a, Section 2, Part I. Efforts have been made to obtain sufficient heavy, tracked equipment for the Vung Tau Quarries. However, loading equipment is at a premium and the requirement for large quantities of rock in support of combat operations has necessitated the substitution of rubber tired front loaders for track mounted cranes.

e. Para 2k, Section 2, Part I. Every effort is made to impress tactical commanders with the need for proper drainage. However, this has been only moderately successful as the urgencies of the tactical situation frequently prevents adequate shaping of the ground, particularly in the Delta, prior to occupancy.

EGF-OP (31 July 1967) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR-65), for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1967

24

f. Para 3b, Section 2, Part I. Timely supply of materials continues to be a problem though all effort has been made to accomplish project development and planning as far ahead as possible. The demands of a combat situation combined with changing priorities contributes to the problem. Higher headquarters have been asked to assist in forecasting materials needed. Substitution in materials are used where feasible to allow project advancement to continue.

g. Para 3c, Section 2, Part I. Many parts for civilian quarry machinery are now available through RMK Island. If the parts are unavailable there, they must have Redball requisitions submitted.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

s/W. C. Tomsen
t/W. C. TOMSEN
Major, CE
Adjutant

Copies furnished:
ACSFOR, DA
CO, 69th Engr Bn

AVBI-OPN (31 Jul 67) 2d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR-65) for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1967

DA, Headquarters, 20th Engineer Brigade APO 96491 31 August 1967

25

TO: Commanding General, USAECV(P), ATTN: AVCC-P&O, APO 96491

1. The subject report, submitted by the 69th Engineer Battalion, 34th Engineer Group, has been reviewed by this headquarters, and is considered comprehensive and of value for documentation and review of the reporting unit's activities and experiences.

2. This headquarters concurs with the submitted report, with the following comments:

a. Reference Part I, paragraph 1a: Current USARV policy permits in-country infusion to take place over a six month period. Providing that the provisions of USARV Regualtion 614-9 are strictly adhered to, no unit should experience undue hardship in accomplishing the objectives of the command infusion program.

b. Reference Part I, paragraph 3a: Approval is pending for the release of two 10 ton rough terrain fork lifts to each construction battalion.

c. Reference Part I, paragraph 4a: Inoperative equipment should not be cannibalized unless it is uneconomically repairable.

d. Reference Part I, paragraph 4c: Upon completion of the standardization program, stocks of required parts will be available in-country. High mortality items should have a higher stockage level authorized by an appropriate maintenance directive.

e. Reference Part I, paragraph 4d: Current directives require a 60 day supply of blank forms be carried by units arriving in-country. Prompt requisitioning action will insure delivery before on-hand stocks are depleted.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

s/Cecil D. Clark
t/CECIL D. CLARK
Major, CE
Adjutant

Info copy:
CO, 34th Engr Gp

AVCC-P&O (31 Jul 67) 3d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending 31 July 1967

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY ENGINEER COMMAND VIETNAM(PROV), APO 96491 18 Sep 67

26

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DH, APO 96375

This headquarters concurs with the 69th Engineer Battalion ORLL report as written, subject to the following comments:

a. Reference Section 2, Part I, paragraph 1a, page 9; paragraph 2a, 1st Ind; and paragraph 2a, 2nd Ind: Concur with 1st and 2nd Indorsements.

b. Reference Section 2, Part I, paragraph 1b, page 9, and paragraph 2b, 1st Ind: Concur. Units are being directed to prepare draft MTOE changes for review by this headquarters.

c. Reference paragraph 2k, page 13 and paragraph 2e, 1st Ind: Concur with 1st Indorsement.

d. Reference Section 2, Part I, paragraph 3a, page 14, and paragraph 2b, 2nd Ind: Concur. An emergency MTOE was submitted to USARV G3 for 10,000 lbs rough terrain forklifts to be issued one per combat battalion and two per construction battalion on 5 August 1967. Informal coordination with USARV G4 indicated that these forklifts will be issued against this pending emergency MTOE approval. These forklifts will give each battalion an increased construction material handling capability.

e. Reference Section 2, Part I, paragraph 3b, page 15, and paragraph 2f, 1st Indorsement: Concur with 1st Indorsement.

f. Reference Section 2, Part I, paragraph 3c, page 15, and paragraph 2g, 1st Indorsement: Concur with 1st Indorsement.

g. Reference Section 2, Part I, paragraph 4a, page 15, and paragraph 2c, 2nd Indorsement: Concur. The supply of nonstandard repair parts is not adequate at present. 1st Logistical Command is negotiating for the purchase of the civilian contractor's repair parts warehouse at Cam Ranh Bay. The contract will include a provision for contract maintenance service for nonstandard equipment. DA has authorized controlled cannibalization of equipment received as a result of contractor demobilization.

h. Reference Section 2, Part I, paragraph 4c, page 17, and paragraph 2d, 2nd Indorsement: Concur with 2nd Indorsement.

AVCC-P&O
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending 31 July 1967

1. Reference Section 2, Part I, paragraph 4d, page 17, and paragraph 2c, 2nd Indorsement: Concur with 2nd Indorsement.

27

FOR THE COMMANDER:

t/PAUL A. LOOP
Colonel, CE
Chief of Staff

Info cys furn:
CG, 8th US Army
CG, 20th Engr Bde
CO, 34th Engr Gp
CO, 69th Engr Bn

AVHGC-DST (31 Jul 67) 4th Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending 31 July 1967 (RCS CSFOR-65) (U)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375

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

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the period ending 31 July 1967 from Headquarters, 69th Engineer Battalion (Construction) (DZKA) as indorsed.

2. Pertinent comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning temporary hire of local nationals, page 9, paragraph 1c and 1st Indorsement, paragraph 2c. Nonconcur in the recommendation that the overall civilian labor program needs modification. USARV Regulation 616-2 establishes policy and outlines manpower procedures applicable to local national direct hire personnel used in support of organization missions. Use of daily hire personnel paid from assistance-in-kind (AIK) funds in lieu of direct hire to perform regular recurring duties is in violation of referenced regulation, USARV Regulation 37-1, in that use of AIK funds is limited to employment of local nationals on a daily hire basis. Action will be taken by this headquarters to insure that future requirements of the 69th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for local national manpower to perform regular recurring duties for extended periods of time will be in accordance with USARV Regulation 616-2.

b. Reference item concerning retired personnel, page 20, paragraph 3. Concur. The voluntary recall of personnel is a DA controlled program. This headquarters agrees with the reporting unit that careful screening of records and a complete physical examination are required prior to recall of retired personnel.

c. Reference item concerning personnel specialists, page 20, paragraph 5. Concur. Recommend DA or USCONARC consider providing personnel specialist teams to organize and initially operate the personnel sections of newly activated units.

3. A copy of this indorsement will be furnished to the reporting unit through channels.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

J. Q. Munn, 1LT

cc: HQ, 69th Engr Bn
HQ, US Army Engr Comd

GPOP-DT (31 Jul 67) 5th Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report for the Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1967 from HQ, 69th Engineer Battalion (UIC: WDZKAA) (RCS CSFOR-65)

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558

1 DEC 1967

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

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

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

HEAVRIN SNYDER
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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CO, 69th Engineer Battalion (Construction)

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28

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