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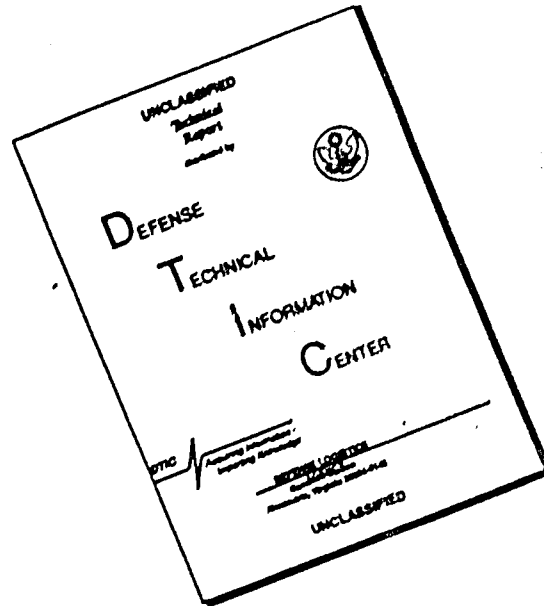
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OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310



IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (27 Nov 67) FOR OT RD 670797

30 November 1967

AD825387

SUBJECT: Operational Reports--Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 35th Engineer Battalion (Combat), 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:

C. A. Stanfiel

C. A. STANFIEL
Colonel, AGC
Secretary, The Adjutant General

1 Incl
as

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FOR OT RD
670797
(Continued on page 2)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 35TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT)
APO San Francisco 96238

EGD-BD-3

10 August 1967

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

THRU: Commanding Officer
45th Engineer Group (Construction)
APO 96238

Commanding General
18th Engineer Brigade
APO 96377

Commanding General
United States Army Engineer Command Vietnam (Provisional)
APO 96491

Commanding General
United States Army, Vietnam
ATTN: AVC-DH
APO 96307

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

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

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22 November 1968

SECTION I. Significant Organizational Activities

1. The following organizational changes occurred during the reporting period:

a. D Company of the 20th Engineer Battalion (C) which had been attached to this battalion on 23 February 1967, was redesignated as Company D of the 35th Engineer Battalion (C) and assigned effective 1 May 1967. The organic Company D which was detached and further attached to the 20th Engineer Battalion, 937th Engineer Group on 29 November 1966, was redesignated as Company D, 20th Engineer Battalion (C), effective 1 May 1967.

b. On 7 June 1967, the 2nd Platoon, 137th Engineer Company (LE) was attached for all purposes.

c. On 24 June 1967, the 1st Platoon, 70th Engineer Company (DT) was attached for all purposes.

d. On 2 July 1967, a land clearing platoon became organic to HHC of this organization under the modified TO&E.

e. On 24 July 1967, the 517th Engineer Company (LE), minus the 3rd Platoon, was attached for all purposes.

2. The battalion's assigned missions during this period were as follows:

a. Maintenance and upgrading of Highway QL-1 from the junction of QL-1 and QL-19 to Tam Quan.

b. Operational support of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in the Bong Son Plains and the An Loa Valley areas of operation.

c. Maintenance of English and Hammond Airfields.

d. Maintenance of road net in LZ Hammond area.

e. Conduct of daily minesweep of QL-1 from LZ Hammond north to Bridge 1-86 (BS904135).

3. A daily minesweep of QL-1 from LZ Hammond to Bridge 1-86 (BS904135) has been conducted by assigned units throughout the report period. On call minesweep mission in areas surrounding QL-1 from Bong Son to Tam Quan have been performed by Company B. Significant data on enemy employment of mines and booby traps continues to be generated and disseminated through intelligence channels.

4. During the report period, reconnaissance elements from the intelligence section, battalion headquarters, performed the following deliberate reconnaissances:

a. Route TL3A (north) from the intersection of QL-1 to LZ Pony, (BR800829).

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- b. Route TL3A (south) from the intersection of QL-19 to LZ Minh (BR710760).
 - c. Aerial reconnaissance of trail between LZ Minh and LZ Pony.
 - d. Aerial reconnaissance of Route 505 from CP19 (BR933813) to the South China Sea.
 - e. Railroad from Phu Cat Air Base to LZ Hammond (BR880533).
 - f. QL-1 from Bong Son to I Corps/II Corps border.
 - g. QL-1 from LZ Hammond to LZ English for the following purposes:
 - (1) Locate possible water points.
 - (2) Locate various fill sites.
 - h. Go Boi Road from An Nhon east to Go Boi.
 - i. Deliberate reconnaissance of the following airfields:
 - (1) LZ Hammond (BR880533).
 - (2) LZ Litts (BR908704).
 - (3) LZ Crystal (BR895659).
 - (4) LZ Two Bits (BR847948).
 - (5) LZ Pony (La Bonte) (BR800829).
 - (6) Airfield at Phu Cat Training Center (BR905485).
5. In support of Revolutionary Development activities and Civic Action programs, elements of the battalion accomplished the following on the Go Boi Road:
- a. Opened the Go Boi Road from QL-1 (BR966359) to An Nhon (CRO65373) to support Class 12 traffic.
 - b. Constructed on the Go Boi Road at CRO49375 a 64 foot, timber trestle, single lane, Class 12 bridge.
 - c. Constructed on the Go Boi Road at CRO53375 a 84 foot, timber trestle, single lane, Class 12 bridge.
 - d. The opened road is 10km in length and provides a route for civilians from Go Boi and the villages there, to take their products to market.

3.

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6. Company A: Company A continues its mission of upgrading QL-1 before the arrival of the next monsoon season. From 1 May until 31 July, Company A has been assigned the section of QL-1 from Phu Cat (BR926426) north to Bridge 1-58 (BR904685), a distance of 16.8 miles. The work consisted of placing and compacting 79,011 cubic yards of fill to bring the road to final grade and 32 foot MACV standard width in preparation to receive a base course of 3" minus crushed rock. One mile of base course has been placed in a 6" lift, compacted and sealed with an asphalt cutback. The work also included emplacing 688 lf of 24" to 60" diameter culverts, and constructing 12 bypasses. Company A has also been assigned the mission of opening the Go Boi Road. Company A is providing the 41st Artillery Group at Phu Cat Air Base with aid and technical advice in the construction of a cantonment area under the self-help program. In addition, Company A performed a daily minesweep of QL-1 from LZ Crystal to LZ Uplift.

7. Company B: Company B continued to provide operational support for the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in the An Loa Valley and Bong Son Plains Area. Three timber trestle, pile revetment abutment, Class 35/50 bridges of 40', 35' and 221' were constructed north of Bong Son on QL-1. The highway was upgraded and repaired and has been opened to the I Corps/II Corps border. In the An Lao Valley bulldozers have been working in support of the clearing operations of the 1st Cavalry. Included in the varied support missions were on-call mine sweeps and identification and destruction of booby traps in the Bong Son Plains area. Company B began redecking the Bong Son Railroad Bridge, spanning the Song Lai Giang, on 4 July and completed that project on 15 July. On 24 June, Company B began the repair of the Bong Son Highway Bridge also spanning the Song Lai Giang, to replace two destroyed spans that left a 194 foot gap in the center of the bridge. Two timber pile piers were constructed and a Class 12 Eiffel Bridge was constructed on the piers to close the gap on 29 July. Company B has continued maintenance of English Airfield during this report period. The company performs a daily minesweep of QL-1 from Bong Son south to Bridge 1-67 (BR916838) and on call, from Bong Son north to Bridge 1-86 (BS904135).

8. Company C: Remaining elements of Company C were relocated at LZ Uplift and the company continued its mission of upgrading QL-1 to an all weather highway from Bridge 1-58 (BR904685) north to the Song Lai Giang just south of Bong Son, a distance of 22 miles. The work consisted of hauling, placing and compacting 169,098 cubic yards of fill. At the time of this report, sections of QL-1 totaling 10 miles in Company C's AOR have been brought to final grade and 32 foot MACV standard width in preparation to receive a base course of 3 inch minus crushed rock. Included in the upgrading, Company C emplaced 1407 lf of 18" to 60" diameter culvert and completed 12 bypasses along various sections of the road. Company C constructed four timber trestle, pile revetment abutment, Class 35/50 bridges totaling 141 linear feet of bridging. Company C conducts a daily minesweep of QL-1 from LZ Uplift to Bridge 1-67 (BR916838).

9. Company D: Company D continues its mission of erecting semipermanent bridging. Company D's area of responsibility now extends from the junction of QL-1 and QL-19 to Bong Son. Since the last report period Company D has constructed

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20 semi-permanent timber trestle bridges totaling 785 linear feet of bridging. Construction consists of pile revetment abutments, pile bents and piers, and wood and steel stringers depending on length of spans. Company D has constructed one permanent bridge 40 feet in length utilizing reinforced concrete abutments, 36WF150 steel stringers and timber decking. In addition, Company D was responsible for the routine maintenance of Hammond Airfield which includes cutback asphalt patching and maintenance of existing drainage systems. Company D also conducts a daily minesweep of QL-1 from LZ Hammond north to LZ Crystal.

10. Attachments: Since arrival in June, the 2nd Platoon of the 137th Engineer Company (LE), and the 1st Platoon of the 70th Engineer Company (DT), have been supporting the line companies with their equipment, greatly increasing the equipment capabilities of the battalion. Although arriving in July, the 517th Engineer Company (LE) was engaged in their own cantonment construction their first week in Vietnam. They began full operation in support of the battalion on 1 August, the same day the platoon of the 137th Engineer Company (LE) was detached.

SECTION II, Part I, Observations (Lessons Learned)

OPERATIONS

ITEM: Concrete Forms

DISCUSSION: In the construction of bridges with concrete abutments, it was decided that an efficient and quick method of forming the abutments was needed to insure that construction deadlines were met. A reusable concrete form was designed consisting of modular 1', 2', and 4' sections. The sections were constructed of 3/4 inch plywood with 2x4" studs and 3x3x3/8" angle as walers. Steel connection plates were cut to bolt the adjoining sections together. The form sections were prefabricated, carried to the job site, and assembled much like a jigsaw puzzle. Once the concrete had been placed and cured, the forms were removed and taken to the next job site.

OBSERVATION: This method of form construction necessitated the construction of forms only once. This in itself cut the time needed to construct the bridge. The method by which the forms were assembled made it possible to form an abutment in approximately half the time required by other methods. The flexibility of the modular construction permits construction of virtually any size form, quickly and efficiently.

ITEM: Bending Reinforcing Bar

DISCUSSION: This organization was assigned the mission of constructing two large concrete bridges. The most difficult problem encountered during the initial phase of construction was a method of bending the many hundreds of feet of reinforcing bar required in the footing and abutment walls. This reinforcing bar required several complicated bends and it was desirable that the bends be uniform throughout the bridge. It was also necessary to make the bends without causing the

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metal to loose any of its strength. A cold forming press was constructed from waste of H bearing piles. The fixed portion, as well as the top, must be shaped to produce the desired bend in the reinforcing bar when forced together. It is necessary to attach the drop hammer (pile driving attachment to 20 ton crane) to the movable portion of the press in the same manner it is attached to the pile driving cap. By raising and dropping the hammer with a crane, enough force is produced to bend eight one inch diameter reinforcing bars at once.

OBSERVATIONS: Using this press, a combat engineer battalion can produce any bend required in the construction of concrete bridges. It was also noted that the required amounts can be produced at night in a secured area, utilizing the crane and a minimum number of men for only a few hours.

ITEM: Booms for 5 Ton Dumps

DISCUSSION: As this unit constructed bridges along QL-1, it was noted that much effort was required to lift heavy timbers, and that a crane was not always available. Timbers had to be loaded on trucks daily for movement to several bridge sites, stringers had to be placed across spans and heavy bundles of materials unloaded. It was determined that a boom could be fabricated utilizing discarded railroad rails and the truck winch as a source of power. The boom was constructed as a A-frame, and holes were cut to allow its base to be attached to the lifting shackles on the front bumper. Cables running across the headache board of the 5 ton dump holds the boom in place as well as allowing the boom to be raised and lowered by manipulating the dump body.

OBSERVATION: Much time can be saved and back injury avoided, by using these booms. Many applications in addition to bridge building can be found for this rig. The effective use of the 5 ton dump boom allows cranes to be released for heavier tasks.

ITEM: Secondary Drainage Systems

DISCUSSION: Many of the old culverts previously constructed along the roads of Vietnam were of the siphon variety. Many of these culverts are inadvertently covered in the course of widening and elevating the road. Flooding of these culverts causes rice paddies on one side of the road or the other to dry up creating hardships for the farmers in the area. The entrances to the culverts are usually small concrete apertures overgrown with vegetation and almost impossible to observe unless searched for. Two indications of a possible culvert location are ditches and thick hedgerows running perpendicular to the roadway.

OBSERVATION: Work parties should be instructed to carefully observe the terrain surrounding work sites. Any characteristic ditches and hedgerows should be carefully examined to determine if secondary drainage systems exist. Steps should be taken to provide access to these systems before fill is placed.

ITEM: Mineclearing Operations

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DISCUSSION: The reluctance of the American soldier to get dirty if he doesn't have to has been used to an advantage by the Viet Cong. There have been numerous instances where mines have been placed in mud puddles or where emplaced mines have been covered with a layer of buffalo dung. In some of the incidents regarding mud puddles, the mines have been emplaced at a depth greater than 36 inches. If a reading is noted on the mine detector and probing the first 18" to 24" fails to produce the mine, many times the prober will conclude that there is nothing present.

OBSERVATION: It is extremely important that any readings on the mine detector be followed-up, especially in mud puddles or in areas where most people would be reluctant to check. The minesweep team must be impressed with the necessity of following up each reading to determine the cause and if anything is found, to remove it and recheck the area to determine if anything else is present.

ITEM: Security of Tactical Bridging

DISCUSSION: There have been three instances where the Viet Cong have destroyed bridging in this area of operation. Two bridges were pile bent timber bridges, the other was a 38 foot 4 inch dry span of tactical bridging.

OBSERVATION: The shortage of bridging material and the heavy commitment of Engineer Troops and equipment makes enemy destruction of bridging intolerable. The situation will be compounded with the arrival of the monsoon season when bypass construction may not be possible. Planning for construction of bridging in unsecured areas must include a plan for bridge security. Engineer troop resources should not be considered for security missions after construction.

ITEM: CMP Culverts

DISCUSSION: There have been instances of theft of the end sections of culverts, after emplacement.

OBSERVATION: Culverts 36" and above are assembled in the company area in increments of 16 feet to facilitate loading and transportation. The end sections are welded to prevent theft.

ITEM: C-Ration Discipline in Fill Sites

DISCUSSION: There is a need to stress the importance of not discarding C-Ration cans carelessly. The practice of "C-Ration Discipline" should be initiated to keep cans from getting mixed with fill and getting on the road.

OBSERVATION: Mine sweeping road and adjacent fillsites is a necessary mission which is accomplished daily by most engineers. Because fillsite operation is continuous, all meals are C-Ration type and there is the tendency to discard the waste about the fillsite. This creates unnecessary work for minesweep elements who sweep both the roads and the fillsites. It also provides the Viet Cong with an additional source of booby-trap materials which they are employing in increasing amounts. Because the C-Ration can is so commonplace, Charlie will put a hand grenade inside and the unwary soldier may become a dead one.

ITEM: Repair of M8A1 Airfield Matting

DISCUSSION: The end connecting lugs and the end sections of M8A1 matting tear loose after the heavy continuous traffic of C130 aircraft. After the initial break the affected portions may be welded to hold for a few more sorties; but inevitably the sections break loose again and separate from the parent mat. This creates a serious safety hazard as the breaking occurs along the touchdown and tire travel area of the aircraft.

OBSERVATION: As stated, continuous loading on the matting breaks not only the welds, but the entire end section. Rather than expend the effort and time required to replace the damaged matting, 1/4 inch steel plate was cut to the required size and welded over the damaged area. This is a satisfactory solution and keeps the airfield operational with a minimum of maintenance time.

ITEM: Use of Eiffel Bridging

DISCUSSION: This organization utilized old sections of Eiffel Bridge to repair the destroyed spans on the Bong Son Highway Bridge. The transoms and panels of the bridge were assembled on site with the stringers interlocked. Once the piers were complete, the sections were lifted into place utilizing a 40 ton crane. After minor adjustments, the decking and tread were placed.

OBSERVATION: The Republic of Vietnam has numerous bridge sites where Eiffel Bridge span the gap or has been pulled to one side. These bridges can be utilized with good effect in many instances and can be installed much as above. Due to the shortage of tactical bridging in some areas, all attempts should be made to use Eiffel Bridging.

SECTION II, Part 2, Recommendations

Operations:

- (1) Any unit involved in concrete construction make use of re-usable, modular forms. Not only does it cut down in construction time, but it saves in material costs.
- (2) A cold forming press is recommended similar to the one discussed to make it possible to bend a large amount of reinforcing bar in a short time.
- (3) In units that do a large amount of lifting and moving of materials, A-frame booms mounted on 5 ton dump trucks should be used to release cranes for more important tasks.
- (4) During road grading and filling operations, all culverts should be located and marked so that they will not be blocked and interfere with irrigation of local crops.

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(5) Planning for bridge construction in unsecured areas must include security plans by tactical units.

(6) In areas where culvert ends are likely to be stolen, the section should be tack welded together.

(7) Tin cans should be policed from all fill sites to insure that they are not spread on the road and become a weapon for the Viet Cong.

(8) In the repair of M8A1 airfield matting, the use of 1/4" steel plate is a suitable patching material and should be used.

(9) Due to the amount of Eiffel Bridging in Vietnam, and with the present shortage of tactical bridging in some areas, all possible use should be made of existing Eiffels.

David N. Hutchison

DAVID N. HUTCHISON
LTC, CE
Commanding

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EGD-3 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR)
for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1967

HEADQUARTERS, 45th Engineer Group (Const), APO 96238, 18 August 1967

THRU: Commanding General, 18th Engineer Brigade, ATTN: AVBC-C,
APO 96377
Commanding General, USA Engineer Command Vietnam (Prov)
ATTN: AVCC-P&O, APO 96491
Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam, ATTN:
AVHGC-DH, APO 96307
Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN:
GROP-OT, APO 96558

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

1. Operational Report-Lessons Learned of the 35th Engineer
Battalion (Combat) for the Quarterly Period ending 31 July 1967
is forwarded.

2. Concur with observations and recommendations except that
reusable forms (sec II part 2 sub paragraph (1)) are only applicable
to repetitive tasks.



K. T. SAWYER
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Commanding

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AVBC-C (10 Aug 67)

2nd
1st Ind

Lt Hegmann/cky/DBT-163

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned For the Quarterly Period
Ending 31 July 1967

28 AUG 1967

Headquarters, 18th Engineer Brigade, APO US Forces 96377

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

1. This headquarters has reviewed the report submitted by the 35th Engineer Battalion and considers it an excellent report of unit activities and accomplishments for the period ending 31 July 1967.

2. This headquarters concurs with the observations and recommendations of the Battalion Commander.

Harold J. St. Clair
HAROLD J. ST CLAIR
Colonel, CE
Commanding

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AR 345-15

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AVCC-P&O (10 Aug 67) 3rd Ind CPT Whitley/bw/LBM-4581
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 July 1967.


HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY AIRBORNE CORPS AND
VIETNAM (PROV), APO 96491

26 SEP 1967

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, AFTR: AVHCC-DH,
APO 96375

This headquarters concurs with the 35th Engineer Battalion's ORLL
report as written.

OP: THE COMMANDER:



PAUL A. LOOP
Colonel, CE
Chief of Staff

Info cys furn:
CG, 8th US Army
CG, 18th Engr Bde
CC, 45th Engr Gp
CC, 35th Engr Bn

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AVHGC-DST (10 Aug 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 19 OCT 1967

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, 35th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (AZ5A) as indorsed.

2. Concur with basic report as indorsed. Report is considered adequate.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


STANLEY E. SCHULTS
Major, AGC
First Adjutant General

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GPOP-DT (10 Aug 67) 5th Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report for the Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1967
from HQ, 35th Engineer Battalion (UIC: WAZ5AA)(RCS CSFOR-65)

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 14 NOV 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:



K. F. OSBOURN
MAJ, AGC
Asst AG

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