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AGO/DA ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (1 Aug 68) FOR OT RD 682248 15 August 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 538th Engineer Battalion (Const), Period Ending 30 April 1968

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure that the Army realizes current benefits from lessons learned during recent operations.

To insure that the information provided through the Lessons Learned 3. Program is readily available on a continuous basis, a cumulative Lessons Learned Index containing alphabetical listings of items appearing in the reports is compiled and distributed periodically. Recipients of the attached report are encouraged to recommend items from it for inclusion in the Index by completing and returning the self-addressed form provided $\exists k$ at the end of this report.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

tenneth G. Nickham

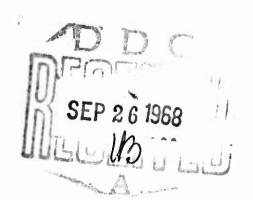
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY Headquarters 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) APO San Francisco 96233

THCON-ACO

30 April 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

THRU: Commanding Officer 44th Engineer Group (Construction) APO 96233

THRU: Commanding General USARSUPTHAI ATTN: 5TH MHD APO 96233

THRU: CINCUSARPAC ATTN: GPOP-DT APO 96558

TO: OACSFOR DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY WASHING TON, DC 20310

Attached is the operational report for the quarterly period ending 30 Apr 68.

EDWARD ARKI

1 Incl as

MAJ, CE Commanding

FOR OT RD 682248

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY Headquarters 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) APU San Francisco 96233

THCON-ACO

3 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

1. Section 1, Operations: Significant Activities.

a. The primary mission of this battalion is the construction of the Bangkok by-pass road extension from Korat to Kabin Buri. In addition, considerable construction effort has been employed in the Sattahip Canton ment Area and paving of the Korat Logistical Complex.

b. Construction of the class 50 road between Kabin Buri and Korat in nearing completion. This unit, augmented by the 23rd Engr Bn, Royal Than Army, and the 16th Engr Dump Truck Company, is to align, upgrade and pave the mountain road section (km 57 to km 96). Paving began on ! April 1968, Completion of the road, to include final shaping and ditching is scheduled for 30 June 1968. In late January 1968 the section of road from k 89 to k 96 was added to the military construction section and C Company, 809th Engr Bn (Const) began remedial work on this badly eroded side-hill cut and fill area. In late March 1968, C Company, 809th Engr Bn (Const) was placed under operational control of the 538th Engr Bn (Const). Also, during this reporting period, the 16th Engr Dump Truck Company was attached to C Company at Camp Sungwien in support of the base course and select fill hauls. The road construction effort is greatly hampered by dust and rain. Planning and construction progress is subject to change daily depending on weather and road conditions. The beneficial occupancy date assigned to the road project has necessitated the augmentation of contract construction equipment and the hire of local national laborers.

c. In addition to the road construction this unit has been assigned the high priority project of constructing the Sattahip Cantonment Area and portions of the Consolidated Supply Activity which will support the Sattahip port facility. D Company, 538th Engr En (Const) augmented by one platoon from B Company is currently constructing a 1,641 man cantonment area to include billets, mess hall, recreation facilities, and a complete utilities system. The 589th Engr Det (Utilities), one platoon of the 697th Engr Co (Pipeline) and one EB maintenance team are attached to D Company to provide necessary assistance. The timely receipt of building materials to meet deadlines has been the greatest problem of this project. Also, a high water table combined with a loose sandy soil created major excavation problems in construction of the utilities system. However, augmented by contract construction equipment and approximately 480 local national laborers, D Company is on schedule and the initial occupancy date of 1 May 1968 for 760 personnel has been met.

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3 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

d. On 8 March 1958, one platoon from A Company 538th Engr Bn (Const) working two ten hour shifts aided by one platoon from B Company completed the paving project in the Korat Logistical Complex. This project consisted of subgrade preparation and paving 16 km of roadway and about 50,000 M2 of hardstand at a cost of \$289,000. Also, at base camp, three 21 thousand gallon POL storage tanks were constructed (enclosed by a berm) to facilitäte a more efficient POL operation.

e. Though the general mission of units in Thailand is the construction of lines of communications to aid in the transport of supplies and materials there is an additional mission of good will and personal contact with the people in the form of civic action. Civic action projects are a regular activity of this unit, but are always limited by the availability of men and equipment. Probably the most effective and helpful civic action accomplished by this battalion is the medical treatment of over 1,500 local nationals every month. Elements of this battalion and the 23rd Engr Ba (RTA) are also engaged in the construction of an eight classroom school at a nearby village.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS (SFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

2. Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations, and Recommendations.

a. Personnel:

(1) US Military Personnel:

(a) Observations:

<u>1</u> The present distribution of enlisted grades in the battalion is as follows:

	E9	E8	E7	E6	_ E5	£4	E3	E 2	Et
Auth Asg PDY	1	8	32 14	55 43	272 245	375	174 93	4 7 C	02
PDY	1	6	14	43	240	365	91	69	2

2 The present distribution of officers and warrent officers is as follows:

	Officers	Warrant Officers
Auth	38	11
Asg	42	12
PDY	42	12

<u>3</u> Average assigned strength over the period was 80% of authorized strength.

4 The critical skill shortages are as follows:

MOS	JOB TITLE	AUTH	ASG
05B	Radio Operator	33	13
51H*	Construction Foreman	36	21
51 K	Plumber	19	14
52F	Electrican	19	14
62D	Surface Equip Specialist	15	8
62D*	Const Machine Supervisor	27	10
91 C	Clinical Specialist	1	0

* NCO Positions

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending, 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

<u>5</u> Officers who have arrived in the command since January are as follows:

CPT Ferguson, James K. Adjutant 2110 210	DS .
ILT Bertoncini, RalphOperations Officer76111322LT Irvine, Paul R.Platoon Leader1331132CW2 Dodds, John H.Construction Section Chief632A632WO1 Olives, William M.Motor Officer621A621	28 28 28

(b) Evaluation: The shortage of experienced NCO's continues to be a problem. The lack of skill and training exhibited by many of the enlisted personnel requires a maximum of leadership ability and job knowledge in order to mold a platoon or section into a disciplined, efficient, and effective working unit. This unit is augmented with equipment excess to TOE in order to allow for the extensive construction efforts; however, personnel on hand fall far short of the TOE authorized, local nationals are being trained to compensate in part for this lack of personnel.

(c) Recommendations: That a program be initiated to determine a solution to the lack of qualified, capable NCO's. That the filling of critical MOS slots be given more attention and priority.

(2) Thai Local National Employees:

(a) Observations: The required completion dates of all assigned projects have required the hiring of over 995 local national equipment operators, campenters and various other skilled and unskilled laborers. Their productiveness is limited by the amount and quality of supervision given. It is not uncommon for a SGT (E5) squad leader to supervise eight military and thirty local national laborers.

(b) Evaluations: Generally, these personnel have had little previous experience and speak at best, rudimentary English. Both the language problem and the lack of experienced NCO's make training a very slow process. However, over the last two years a nucleus of well trained, skilled personnel have been developed.

(c) Recommendations: That a USARSUPTHAI wide engineer school for local nationals be developed to give both basic and advanced training to outstanding personnel in the skilled fields such as carpentry, electricity, and plumbing. That the MCA ceiling be lifted to allow more flexible operations geared to the units' type of mission.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

b. <u>Operations</u>:

(1) Thai Security Guards:

(a) Observations: The Thai Security Guards are responsible for providing security for the Battalions' base camps and equipment sites. Earlier in the year several problem areas were observed in reference to the Security Guard Program. Some of the problem areas were a lack of the ing personnel, failure of the sentinels to challenge persons entering their posts, a lack of motivation and dedication to duty and AWOL from duty.

(b) Evaluations: Upon recognizing these problems a program was immediately initiated to alleviate the existing situation, US personnel working with the Thai Guards were instructed to check each guard post at least two times each eight hour shift. In the more sensitive areas of base camp the guards are checked every two hours. A more strict program of discipline was initiated. Under this program when a sentifiel is caught sleeping on his post he is fined a minimum of three days pay. For a second offense he is fined seven days pay. If the same individual is observed committing a third offense he is dismissed from duty. A training program has been undertaken by the Battalion in cooperation with the commanding officer of the Thai Guards. This program consists of four hours of classes each week on such subjects as challenging, general and special orders, drill and ceremonies, and related subjects. Also, an awards program has been designed to recognize the guard who has performed his duties most proficiently each month. The outstanding individual for the month is presented a letter of commendation from the Battalion Commander and is given a three day pass. These programs have done much to raise the proficiency of the Security Guard.

(c) Recommendations: That a Military Police Team be assigned to the battalion to assist in training of the security guard and solve internal security problems.

(2) <u>Civilian Contractors</u>:

(a) Observations: One of the most troublescme and time consuming jobs of this units' S3 and S4 is the control and administration of contracts for construction equipment and material requests utilized on all construction projects. Nearly every construction project has suffered from a lack of timely delivery of building materials or the failure of the contractor to provide the specified type of construction material, equiptent and management. The problem of a language barrier exists however to st contractors have English speaking personnel.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

at the job sites. Deadlined equipment is successed to be replaced within 36 to 48 hours if it cannot be repaired, but this is rarely done. Time sheets by contractors are often submitted on teadlined emuipment or equipment not even on the job site. Contractors supervisors are often uninformed of the terms of the contract. Materials and equipment delivered are often substandard and not delivered in the specified time frame.

(b) Evaluation: Contracts are not awarded with penalty clauses for failure to perform. If substandard materials or equipment are delivered to the construction site, the refusal of such items is extremly costly since construction cannot continue and completion dates are not met. To facilitate the supervison of contracts, this Battalion has a finance officer and two contracting officers representatives who' coordinate closely in the administrative aspect of the contract. Alwo, designated personnel at the construction sites are responible for sub-

(c) Recommendations: That penalty clauses be entered into contracts for failure of the contractor to adhere to the specifications and agreements of the contract. That a procurement and contractting specialist be assigned to the Battalion on a full time basis.

(3) <u>Communications</u>:

(a) Observations: Many difficulties are encountered in the operational control of this Battalion due to a poor communications system. The telephone system is very unreliable and it is hard to be heard over long distances. To compensate for this problem it has been necessary to rely on vehicles for coordination and control. This takes extra time and personnel and limits job efficiency.

(b) Evaluation: Radio communication is sporadic at best, but should improve markedly with receipt of a civilian model radio recently leased.

(c) Recommendations: That the new family of radios be issued to the battalion ASAP.

(4) Planning:

(a) Observations: Prior planning is the most important and the most difficult phase of this units' construction project. Facilities in the battalions' operations section are utilized to a maximum to effect short and long range plans. An officer from the S3 section

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RUS CSFOR-65 (R) UIC WBAN TO

is assigned as a project officer for each major project. This enables close coordination and managment between the working unit and the S3 section.

(b) Evaluations: A lack of materials, adverse weather, failure of contractor to deliver and equipment breakdown's are common unpredictable occurances which alter construction schedules daily. Short construction times necessitated by the operational requirement reduce planning to a minimum.

(c) Recommendations: That before assigning completion dates to projects a more realistic evaluation be made of the units capabilities, environment of the project and the availability of equipment and materials in order to reduce the impact due to the lack of time for planning.

(5) <u>Civic Action</u>:

(a) Observations: A joint project between the 23rd Engineer Battalion RTA and the 538th Engr Bn (Const) is in progress to construct an eight room school for 400 children in a local village called Sakasrat near Camp Essayons. Both units have contributed a total of \$2142 and the Thai Government has contributed \$2500 for an overall of \$4642. The estimated cost of the project is \$7500. The additional funds needed are expected to be provided by higher headquarters. Other civic action requests from the head monks of various villages have been considered and action will be taken upon them with the availability of men and ecuipment. These requests range from road and bridge repair to digging waterholes to major construction projects such as the school. All civic action projects are coordinated with the District Chief of Pak Thong Chai District.

(b) Evaluation: It has been found that the most practical way to undertake civic action projects is to provide tools, equipment and supervisors, but to make maximum use of the local villagers for the labor force. This "help them help themselves" concept requires less military effort and allows for a greater number of projects to be accomplished.

(c) Recommendations: None

c. Training:

(1) Observations: As a result of the magnitude of work assigned of this unit, directives from higher headquarters authorized suspension of all training except command information, character guidance and

THCON-ACO

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

safety. However, an extensive OJT program is required to make polished craftsmen out of the lower grade collisted personnel assigned to the Battalion.

(2) Evaluation: None

(3) Recommendations: None

d. Intelligencet

(1) Observation: This Battalion is not directly involved in intelligence work; however does report any unuasual ocurances in our area of responsibility.

(2) Evaluation: None

(3) Recommendations: None

e. Logistics:

(1) Observations: Although logistics have improved the order and shipping time is still not short enough to allow for timely receipt of supplies in order to meet short time frames for construction. Repair parts support has improved. The receipt of materials and equinment from local purchase is also a problem due to the long lead time required by the procurement and contracting office to award the contracts. In addition the separation of the units' work sites (Route 304 and Sattahip), the necessity to maintain two warehouses, a class I breakdown point and a class III disbursing unit, have necessitated the augmentation of the S4 Section. The lack of qualified personnel has also been a problem.

(2) Evaluation: The timely receipt of materials and equipment directly effects the ability of this unit to complete construction projects on the established BOD. The lack of qualified nersonnel has effected the efficiency of the S4 section.

(3) Recommendations: That better control, breakdown and delivery of equipment and materials be established. That the lead time on contracts be shortened. That a purchasing and contracting specialist be assigned to this unit. That more trained personnel (NCO's) be given to the S4 section to compensate for the formidable work load.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

f. Maintenance:

(1) Observation:

(a) With the requirement to supply maintenance to all construction companies and the extreme separation distances, our maintenance resources have been taxed to the maximum. The distance between the supported units amounts to about 200 miles. At the present time, the contact teams cannot adequately perform all the on site repair work that is desired because of personnel shortages. Personnel have to be diverted from other MOS's in order to fill more important slots, leaving a gap somewhere else, resulting in a loss of efficiency. The problem of personnel shortages is compounded by the fact that every company is excess construction equipment in accordance with the present TOE, causing a greater work load for all maintenance personnel. This has been overcome in part by Local National personnel.

(b) Since 1 January 1968 to 31 March 1968, 661 job orders were completed out of the 679 submitted. The constant use of equipment over a 24 hour period has added to the maintenance problem. During this reporting period 54 job orders were completed on just replacing 5 ton dump truck multifuel engines. The maintenance shop has replaced engines which had less than 78 hours of operation and traveled less than 200 milés. This unit has tried reducing the speed to 20 MPH, changing oil very day, cleaning air filters 4 times a day and changing fuel filters sooner than what is normally required. Still these engines are continuing to fail about every 120 hours of operation.

(c) The Equipment Maintenance Section also has the responsibility of providing special equipment and operators to the three construction companies. In addition to this support the section operates a quarry section in conjunction with the 809th Engr Bn (Const). The placement of asphalt pavement on Route 304 is another responsibility of the equipment maintenance section. Constant maintenance on all paving equipment is required in order to prevent government down time on the civilian asphalt plant operated by CONSACO-CARPAC.

(d) To compensate for the lack of personnel and extensive work load, the equipment and maintenance section has employed trained operators and mechanics. These local nationals have proven to be valuable and necessary in order for this section to fulfill its maintenance mission.

(2) Evaluations: Considering the extensive work load of A Company (Equipment and Maintenance) the deadline rate is a respectable 13.7% (Ordnance 12.4 and Engineer 15.1%). This is a result of hard work double shift, logistical support and close coordination between operations and maintenance.

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THCONACO

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) UIC WBAN TO

(3) Recommendations: That more attention be given to keeping the critical maintenance slots filled.

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15 Incl

1. Map of Central Thailand

2. Staff Directory

3. Organization Chart

4. Construction Schedule Route 304

5. Doedline Rate

6-15 Construction Photographs

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Commanding

8-15, WITHDRAWN, HQS, DA

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THCON-OP 1st Ind

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for the Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) VIC WBANTO

DA, Headquarters, Lith Engineer Group (Construction), APO 96233, 17 May 68

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Support, Thailand, APO 96233

1. The Operational Report for the Quarterly Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) for the 538th Engineer Battalion is forwarded with comments as indicated.

2. Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations, and Recommendations:

a. Personnel:

(1) US Military Personnel:

(a) Observations: The observations made are reflected throughout 44th Engineer Group.

(b) Evaluations: Shortage of trained NCO's is a critical problem throughout With Engineer Group.

(c) Recommendations: Since shortage of Engineer NCO's is worldwide, program to improve the situation would have to be undertaken at the highest levels. Action has been taken by the Chief of Engineers to expend school quotas at the Engineer Center to increase the output of trained NCO's.

(2) Thai Local National Employees:

(a) Observations: As unit strength increases, this problem area will be reduced, but not eliminated.

(b) Evaluations: Concur with Battalion Connander.

(c) Recommendations: This headquarters is presently studying the establishment of a Thai Local National training program in utilities. Fallout from this study will provide insight into a possible similar training program in other skills.

b. Operations:

(1) Thai Security Guards:

(a) Observations: Concur with Battalion Commander.

(b) Evaluations: Program to improve the proficiency of this

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Datualion (Construction) for the Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS OSFOR-65 (MI) VIC WEAPPO

organization's Thai Security Guards is indeed an excellent one. The key aspects of the program will be disseminated to all Group units.

(c) Recommendations. Assigning military police perconnel to this task is a valid requirement.

(2) Civilian Contractors:

(a) Observations. This area is receiving command attention. The comments are valid.

(b) Evaluations. The entire system is under study by this headquarters, and actions are being taken to reduce our requirements for contract equipment.

(c) Recommendations. Penalty clauses cannot be enforced in Thailand; thus, they are not feasible. Battalion will be asked to submit formal requests and justification for a procurement specialist.

(3) Communications:

(a) Observations. Concur with Battalion Commander.

(b) Evaluations. Concur with Eattalion Commander.

(c) Recommendations. Agree with recommendation that new family of radios be issued. However it is understood that higher priority requirements in Vietnam proclude issue at this time.

(4) Planning:

(a). Observations. The project officer system is used by this headquarters and each major subordinate unit.

(b) Ivaluations. For most projects, completion dates are determined by mission requirements.

(c) Recommendations. Every effort has been and will continue to be made to assign completion dates that are as realistic as possible; however operational requirements will continue to determine most of the completion dates assigned.

(5) Civic Action:

(a) Observation. 44th Engineer Group is very active in civic action projects. A civil affairs officer, with design experience, is available at this headquarters for review of suggested projects.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Tattalion (Construction) for the Period Ending 30 April 1968, ROB COPOL-65 (RI) VIC WEANTO

(b) Evaluation. This is an excellent method of supporting civic action projects. Best results are obtained if the local population is encouraged to help themselves.

(c) Recommendations. N/A

- c. Training:
 - (1) Observations: Concur with Battalion Commander.
 - (2) Evaluation: M/A
 - (3) Recommendations: N/A
- d. Intelligence:
 - (1) Observations: Concur with Battalion Commander.
 - (2) Evaluations: N/A
 - (3) Recommendations: N/A
- e. Logistics:

(1) Cheervations: This is a valid comment for the entire 44th Engineer Group.

(2) Evaluations: Concur with Battalion Commander.

(3) Recommendations: A complete examination of the supply system in Thailand is being undertaken by G-4, USARPAC. The results of this examination will result in many improvements which should help solve a number of our current supply problems. The recommendation for the battalion to be assigned a purchasing and contracting specialist cannot be supported at this time unless more complete justification is furnished. Some of the current procurement actions will soon be undertaken by the 501st Depot.

f. Maintenance:

(1) Observations: These comments are valid. Concur with the Battalion Commander.

(2) Evaluations: Deadline rates achieved by this battalion are indeed commendable, and are the result primarily of strong command supervision by Major Edward F. Clarke, the Commanding Officer.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Ingineer Battalion (Construction) for the Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) VIC WBANTO

(3) Recommendations: Shortages of maintenance personnel exist Group wide. Allocations of available, qualified personnel will be made as equitably as possible.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for the Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) UIC WEANTO

DA, Headquarters, United States Army Support Thailand, APO 9.233 17 JUN 1968

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

TO: ACSFOR, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. Reference Section 2, paragraph a: Headquarters, USARPAC continues to monitor the overall strength posture of USARSUPTHAI in conjunction with OPO, DA. Target date to attain 100% strength posture is October 1968.

2. Reference Section 2, paragraph b: This Headquarters concurs with the Thai Security Guard improvement program established by the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction) and is in the process of distributing this program to other units of this command.

3. Reference Section 2, paragraph b (4): This Headquarters will make every attempt to assign completion dates that are realistic and possible to meet; however operational requirements will continue to dictate most of these completion dates.

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4. Reference Section 2, paragraphs c, d and e: Concur with recommendations of the Commanding Officer of the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction).

FOR THE COMMANDER:

CPT, AGC Asst Adjutant General GPOP-DT (30 Apr 68) 3d Ind SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 538th Engr Bn (Const) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 1 5 JUL 1968

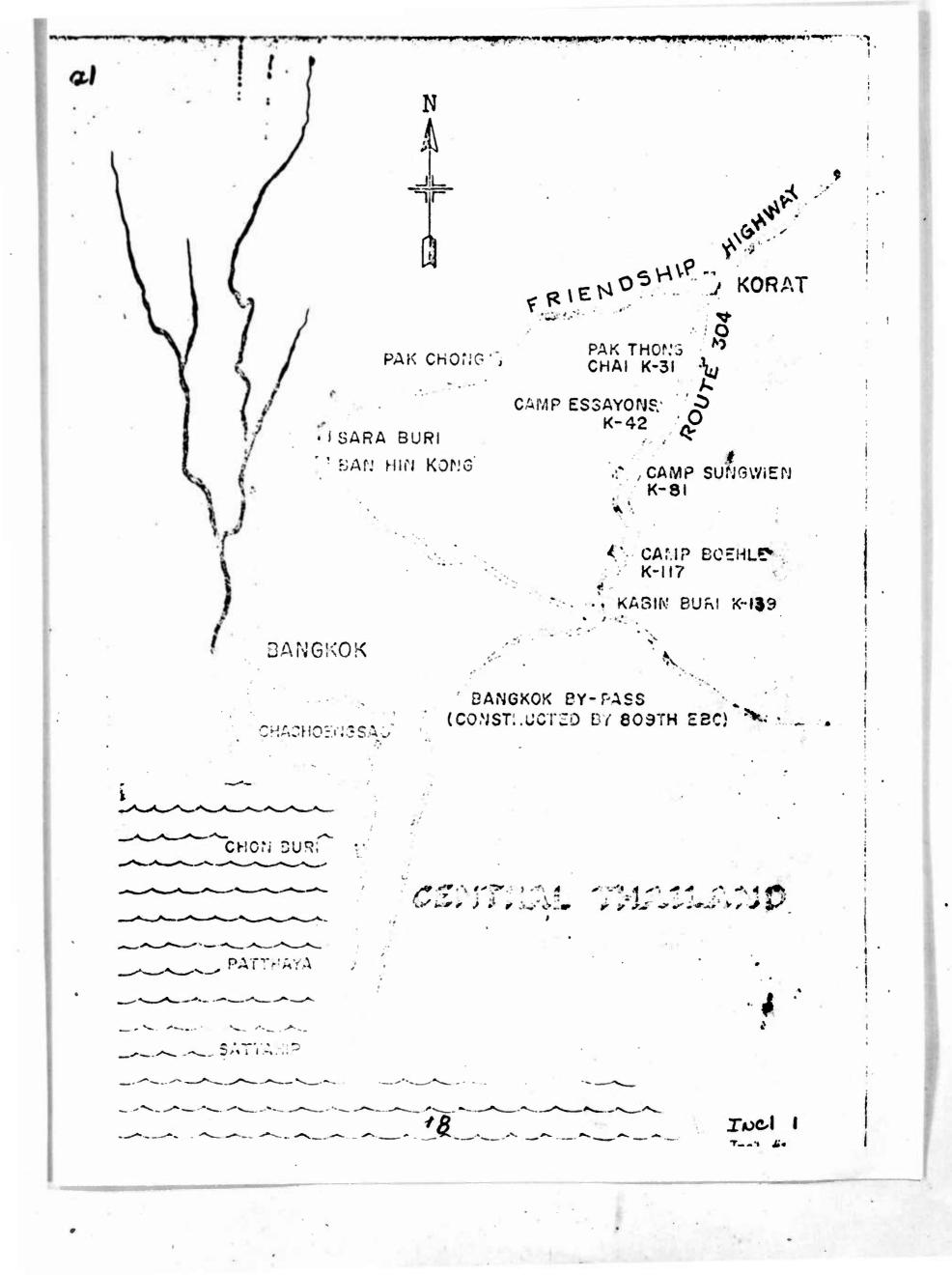
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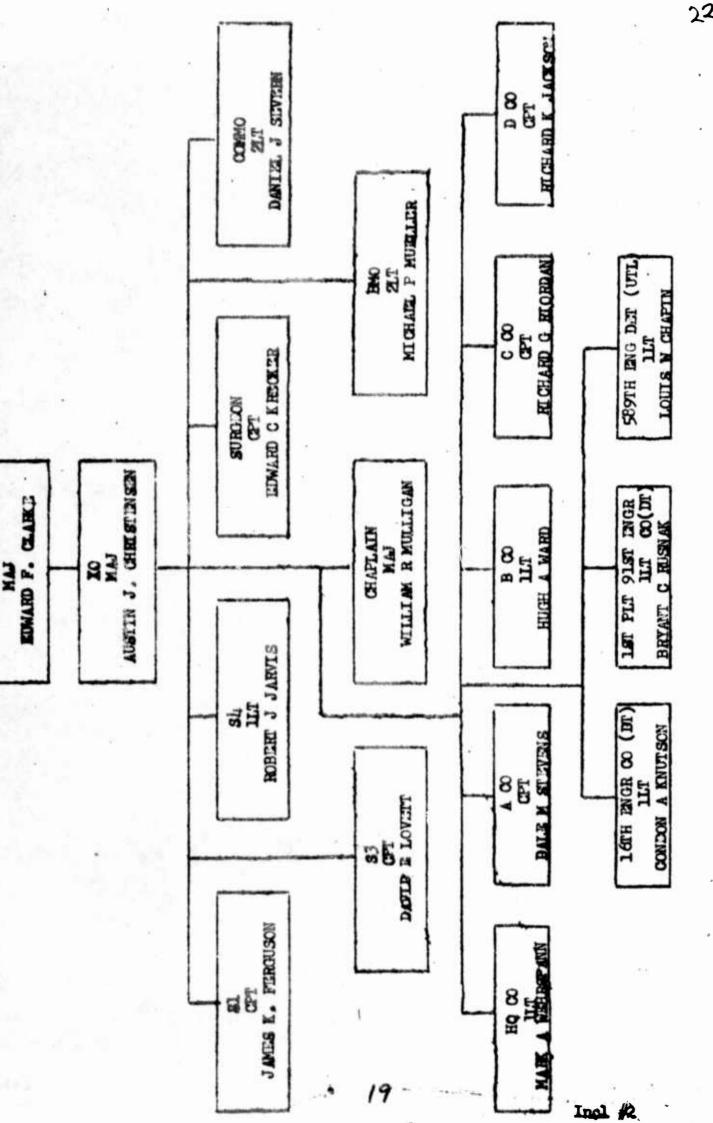
This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

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K. F. OSBOURN MAJ. AGC Asst AG

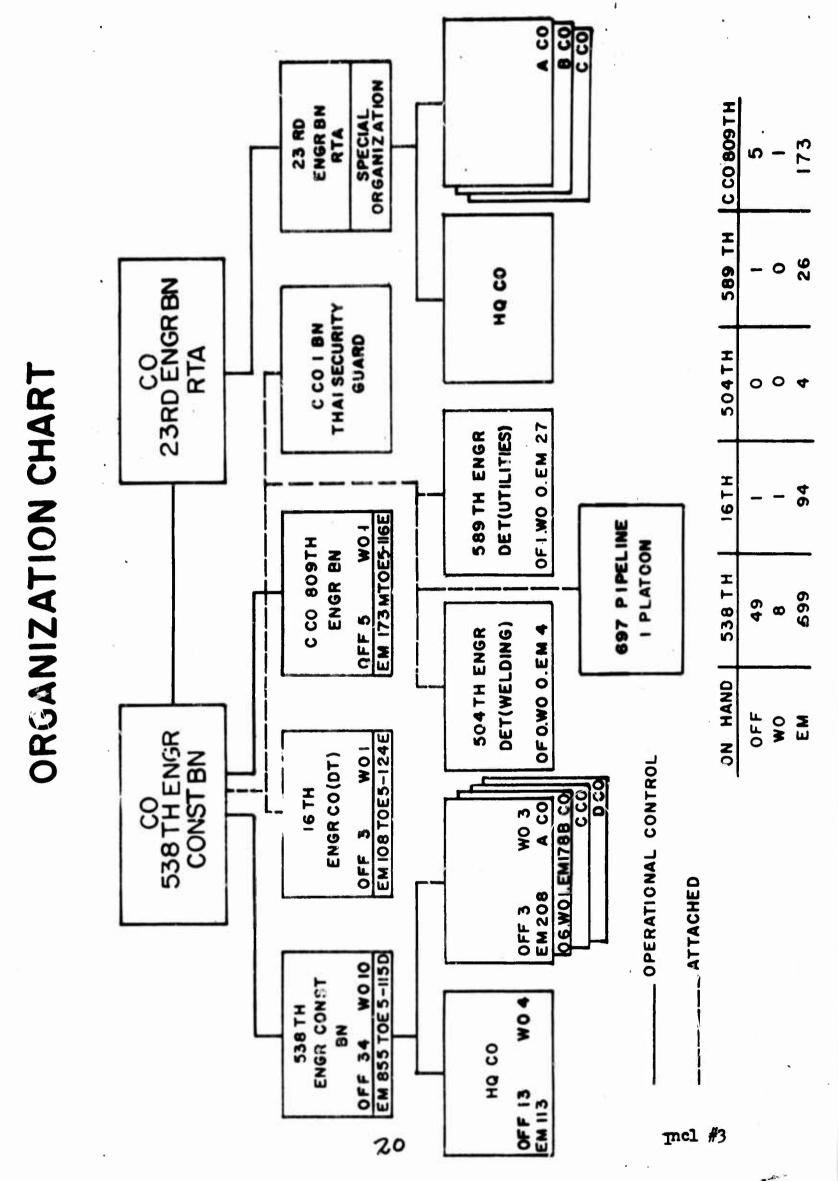




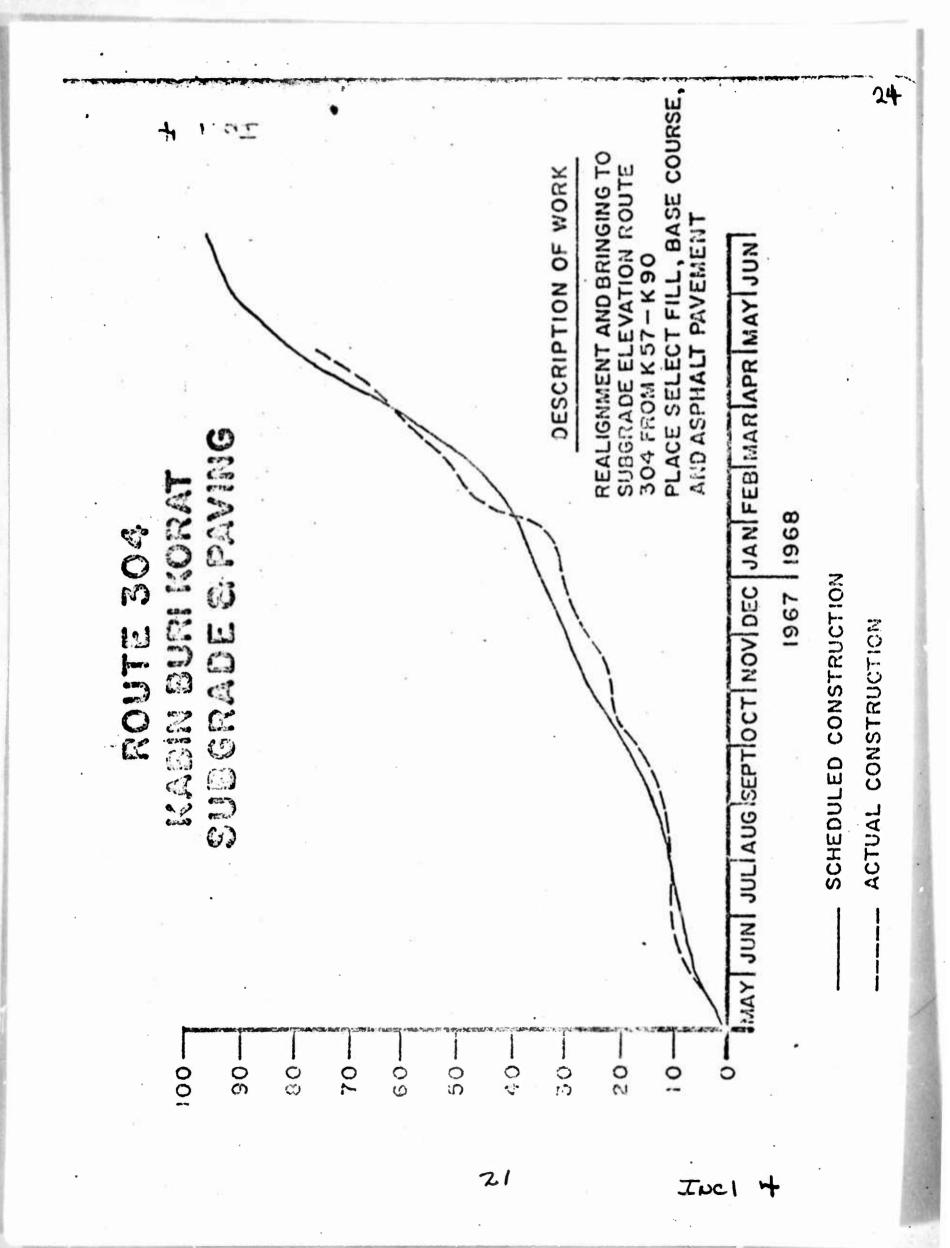
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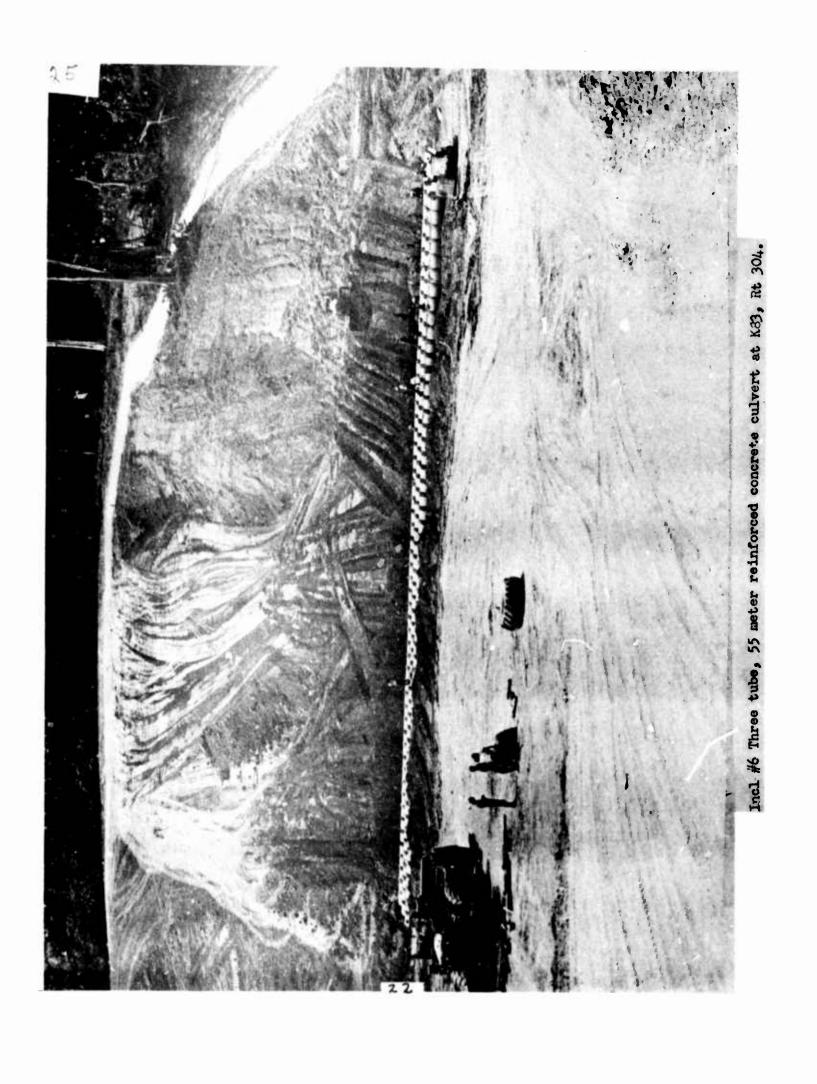
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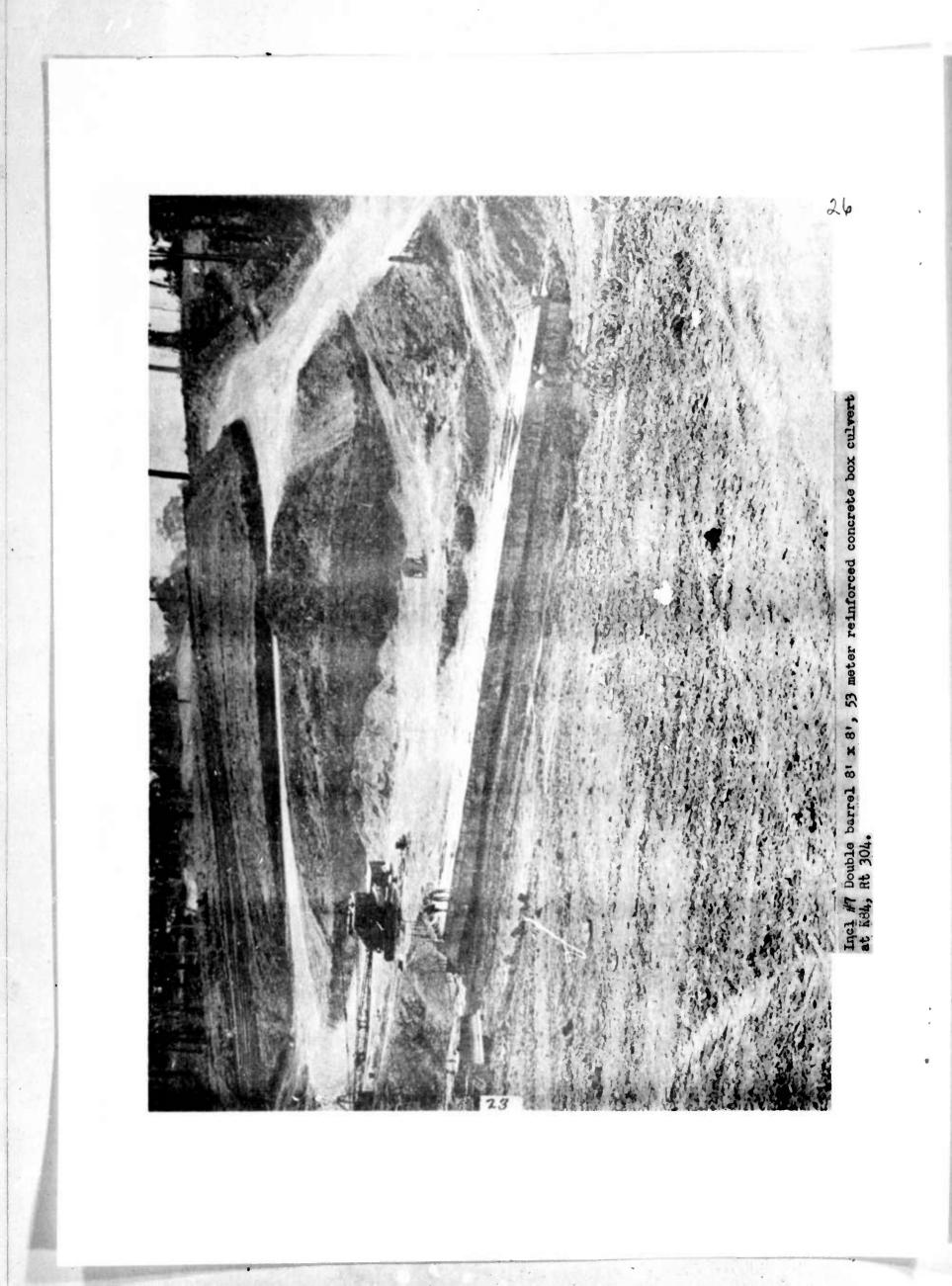
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