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AGO ltr 29 Apr 1980

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AGDA (M) (4 Jun 70) FOR OT UT 701307

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 70th Engineer Battalion, Period Ending 29 November 1969

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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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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY)
APO 96297

29 November 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 70th Engineer Battalion
(Combat)(Army), Period Ending 29 November 1969, RCS CSFOR-65(R2)

THRU: Commanding Officer
35th Engineer Group (Const)
APO 96312

Commanding General
18th Engineer Brigade
ATTN: AVBC-C
APO 96377

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

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

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

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701307
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1. Section I. Significant Organizational or Unit Activities.

a. Command

(1) LTC James McKnight assumed command on 7 November 1969, succeeding Major Richard E. Works, who had been acting commander since 31 October 1969.

(2) On 10 November CPT David A. Corbett assumed command of B Company, succeeding CPT Charles A. Myers, who was wounded and medically evacuated after a convoy ambush on 2 November. CPT John J. Rice assumed command of A Company, replacing CPT Corbett. On 19 November, B Company was redesignated as C Company, 19th Engineer Battalion (Combat). 1LT Dennis Clayton assumed command of the personnel from B Company who will return to CONUS with the Battalion, on that same date.

b. Personnel, Administration, Morale, Discipline.

(1) The Battalion continued to lose men throughout the reporting period. As of 29 November 1969, when the Battalion departed for CONUS, there were a total of 10 Officers and 315 Enlisted Men assigned, with a Battalion authorization of 36 Officers, 3 Warrant Officers and 665 Enlisted Men.

(2) The 1st Platoon, 630th Engineer Company (LE) maintained its authorized strength throughout the period. On 24 November, the Platoon departed to rejoin its parent unit in the 45th Engineer Group.

(a) 17 Article 15's were administered for the Battalion. There were 11 Field Grade Article 15's and 6 Company Grade Article 15's during the period. Also during the period, there were no Court Martials.

(b) The Battalion Chaplain conducted Protestant services weekly at the Battalion Base Camp and Hot Rocks Quarry. The Catholic Chaplain from MACV also gave services weekly at Camp Jerome and at Hot Rocks.

c. Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence

During the quarter, the S-2 Section performed its mission of collecting and disseminating intelligence, of being a repository for all secret documents and of coordinating all secret documents and of coordinating civic action, MADICAP and PSYOPS.

(1) Intelligence reports are obtained daily from Darlac Sector and the 23rd Division, ARVN in Ban Me Thuct. This information is disseminated at evening staff meetings, at the weekly commanders conference and as the situation warrants.

(2) The S-2 Section coordinated the destruction of all classified material prior to the Battalion's departure, and provided the necessary security debriefings for all personnel.

(3) There was no civic action provided under the supervision of the S-2 Section during the period 1-29 November.

Incl 1

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d. Plans, Operations, Training

The g-3 section provided operational control of the battalion's activities during the period. After stand down on 5 November, the battalion became primarily concerned with the teardown of Camp Jerome, the turn-in of equipment, and the preparation for the transfer of men and equipment to Hot Rocks Quarry to constitute Task Force 21. On 19 November, the battalions remaining projects were transferred to the 864th Engineer Battalion (Const) and Task Force 21.

(1) Combat/Operational Support

A COMPANY

A Company assumed the project of building the sixteen O-1 revetments at City Field, Ban Me Thuot on 2 November 1969, following their move in from Camp Reil-Davis. On 19 November the project was transferred to C Company, 19th Engineer Battalion. At that time, the revetments were approximately 25 per cent complete.

B COMPANY/C COMPANY, 19TH ENGR BN

(a) On 2 November, a convoy from B Company moving south on Route QL-14 to repair the airfield at Duc Lap, was ambushed. The convoy made it to Fire Base Dory that evening, and the next day moved on to Duc Lap to repair the airfield. On 10 November, TALO opened the field for C-123 traffic.

(b) B Company assumed the project of Airfield repair at Duc Xuyen from C Company on 11 November 1969. After re-doing a portion already completed by C Company, work progressed smoothly, and the completion date of 30 November 1969, should be met.

(c) On 16 November, a D-7E and two men were conveyed to Fire Base Dory to work on the gun pads and drainage at that location.

C COMPANY

(a) C Company continued to work on Duc Xuyen Airfield until 11 November 1969, when the project was taken over by B Company.

(b) Under Combat Support, directive 191-5361-1-11 a project for the 17th Air Cavalry, Ban Me Thuot, East Field was assigned to C Company, 70th Engineer Battalion on 3 November 1969. The work consisted of pushing up dirt berms with D-7E's to form four (4) L-shaped revetments. Each revetment measures 48' by 24' and 4' high. All four of these revetments have 1 layer of sandbags placed on the top. Also there were six (6) parallel dirt revetments pushed up that measure 48' long and 4' high. One layer of sandbags were placed on these revetments also. Work was completed on 10 November 1969. 105 man days, 166 equipment hours were expended on the ten (10) revetments.

(c) Aircraft revetments for CH-47, directive 205-5313-1-11 was assigned to C Company on 28 September 1969. The directive calls for construction of two (2) each U-shaped, 55' long by 25' wide by 9' high revetments for Chinook helicopters at 155 Camp Coryell, Ban Me Thot. By 1 November 1969 all structural work for the revetments was complete. During this period, 1 November 1969 through 29 November 1969, 480 cubic yards of fill dirt was used to fill up the revetments. There was 1080 cu yds of fill dirt hauled for the inside to build up the area so the rotor blade would clear the top of the revetments. Each revetment measures 7' to the top from the inside. 150 cu yds of 3" (-) rock was placed on the surface to control dust. On each of the revetments, 30" corners were cut down 4' and 8' back to clear the rotor blade when turned off. There were 800 man hours and 600 equipment hours utilized during the period. Work was completed on 10 November 1969 and project was closed out last month.

D COMPANY

D Company performed no Combat/Operational Support missions during this period, but concentrated on tearing down the base camp.

1ST PLT 630TH ENGINEER COMPANY (LE)

This unit stood down on 1 November, and had no constructive engineer effort after that date, except for the quarry section, which will remain with task force 21. The quarry section worked intermittently through out the period, due to large maintenance problems which occurred with the equipment.

(2) Base Camp Construction/Destruction

(a) A, C and D companies concerned themselves with tearing down Camp Jerome, starting on 5 November. By 27 November, a platoon from C Company, 19th Engineer Battalion, moved in to complete the teardown. The camp should be completely leveled by 15 December, and all salvageable materials removed and returned to 18th Engineer Brigade assets.

(b) B Company spent a great deal of effort renovating the quarry and base camp at Hot Rocks to accept the Headquarters element of the Task Force, as well as B Company, 864th Engineer Battalion, which will form another part of the Task Force.

(3) LOC Maintenance and Upgrading

(a) A Company and C Company, as well as the 1st Platoon, 630th Engineer Company (LE) did no work on LOC Maintenance and upgrading during this period.

(b) B Company continued work on bridge QL21-36, but the inherent turmoil of transfer and movement prevented completion of the bridge.

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Once C Company, 19th Engineer Battalion gets shaken down, the completion of that bridge should take less than a week. Hopefully this will be accomplished by 30 November 1969.

(o) D Company, during the reporting period worked on IOC Maintenance of QL-21. A total of six miles of roadway was pot-holed with cold asphalt mix using sand, 3/4"(-) rock and RS-1. One mile was completed starting at bridge 34 and working eastward. The remaining five miles was from the intersection of the battalion access road and QL-21, again working in an eastward direction.

e. Logistics

(1) The S-4 section assumed even greater importance during the period of this report. The turn-in of equipment was accomplished through a process of TI by representatives of the Cam Ranh Area Support Command, and backloading the equipment on convey trucks that haul supplies to Ban Me Thut. All TOE and Post Camp and Station property was turned in in this manner with the exception of serviceable items, which were laterally transferred within the 35th Group, or turned in to Cam Ranh Army Depot for re-issue.

(2) Tonnage and type of aircraft used during this quarter for supply and transportation of equipment are as follows:

<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>
UH-1D Huey	2 tons
CH-54 Flying crane	18 tons

(3) During the period, the battalion operated two (2) water points B Company produced under 50,000 gallons but the battalion produced 314,000 gallons during the period 1 - 27 November 1969.

f. Force Development: None

g. Command Management: None

h. Inspector General: None

i. Information: None

j. Civic Affairs: Due to the turn-in and tear down work, as well as the requirements for combat and operational support which kept the unit busy even during the stand down, no civic action type missions were performed.

2. Section II. Commander's Evaluations and Recommendations/Lessons Learned.

a. Personnel

(1) Observation: The units scheduled rotation was generally known a

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good deal in advance of receipt of official announcement however reassignments for individuals were not received as a result of implementing an emergency AOR, until beginning 10 days prior to units scheduled departure even though the emergency AOR was submitted 6 weeks in advance of units scheduled rotation. Implementing directives required, by levy, selection of certain individuals for reassignment from residue personnel prior to units rotation added to administrative turmoil.

(2) Evaluation; All of these factors created more than necessary amount of administrative turmoil, as well as adverse morale on the part of individuals not knowing their unit of assignment (even though they knew they were returning to CONUS) until the week of this units redeployment. The large number of personnel actions required by late receipt of assignment instructions, during the week of departure, in view of required equipment turn-in, military requirements such as guard, K.F., dismantling facilities, etc, unnecessarily taxed individuals during a period which should have been utilized to mop up operations.

(3) Recommendation; units rotation be officially announced 90 days in advance and categories of personnel identified and emergency AOR submitted so that publication of reassignment orders may be accomplished and eliminate the necessity of publication of alert orders for shipping of hold baggage, change of address cards, posting records, etc.

That personnel be identified for "in-country" reassignment and then individuals selected for reassignment and emit furnished assignment information and appropriate orders published.

That immediately upon selecting a unit for redeployment proper procedures for redeployment of personnel be implemented throughout the chain of command, and that appropriate actions be accomplished by the most expeditious manner.

b., Operations

(1) Size of work crews

(a) Observation; In most instances a platoon's sole job for a day would be dismantling of a particular building. With platoon strength at approximately twenty-five, it was found that this was too many people and caused a safety hazard.

(b) Evaluation; smaller work crew could be more effectively utilized.

(c) Recommendation; split the platoon into two squads. Have one squad work on disassembly for one-half day while the other squad engages itself in cleaning equipment for turn-in, cleaning personal gear, getting haircuts and various other things necessary before the unit returns to the States. At mid-day the two squads interchange. In this manner everyone has ample time to prepare for moving, necessary dismantling is completed and safety is greatly enhanced.

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(2) Chinook Revetments

(a) Observation: The CH-47 revetments, although built within specifications, proved too large for a CH-47.

(b) Evaluation: The specifications should be realistically re-evaluated to account for blade sag at engine cut-off.

(c) Recommendation: That the specifications for rotary-winged aircraft be examined.

(3) Unit Stand down

(a) During unit stand down, several instances of urgent missions arose, which caused great turmoil in the units preparation for departure.

(b) Evaluation: The lack of engineer units in the area necessitated calling for support from a deactivating unit.

(c) Recommendation: That interim support be supplied from outside resources so that the departing unit can hold the turmoil down to that required for departure.

c. Training and Organization: None

d. Intelligence: None

e. Logistics:

(1) Vehicle Utilization

(a) Observation: Unit vehicles had to be utilized while the units TOE property was being turned in. As less and less vehicles became available, and transportation requirements for turn-in and normal administrative activities continued, bottlenecks developed that resulted in some operations not occurring as planned.

(b) Evaluation: Vehicles cannot be turned in while a requirement for their use still exists.

(c) Recommendation: That a light truck platoon be administratively assigned to a deactivating unit, enabling them to immediately turn in TOE vehicles, and at the same time continue necessary administrative and logistical functions.

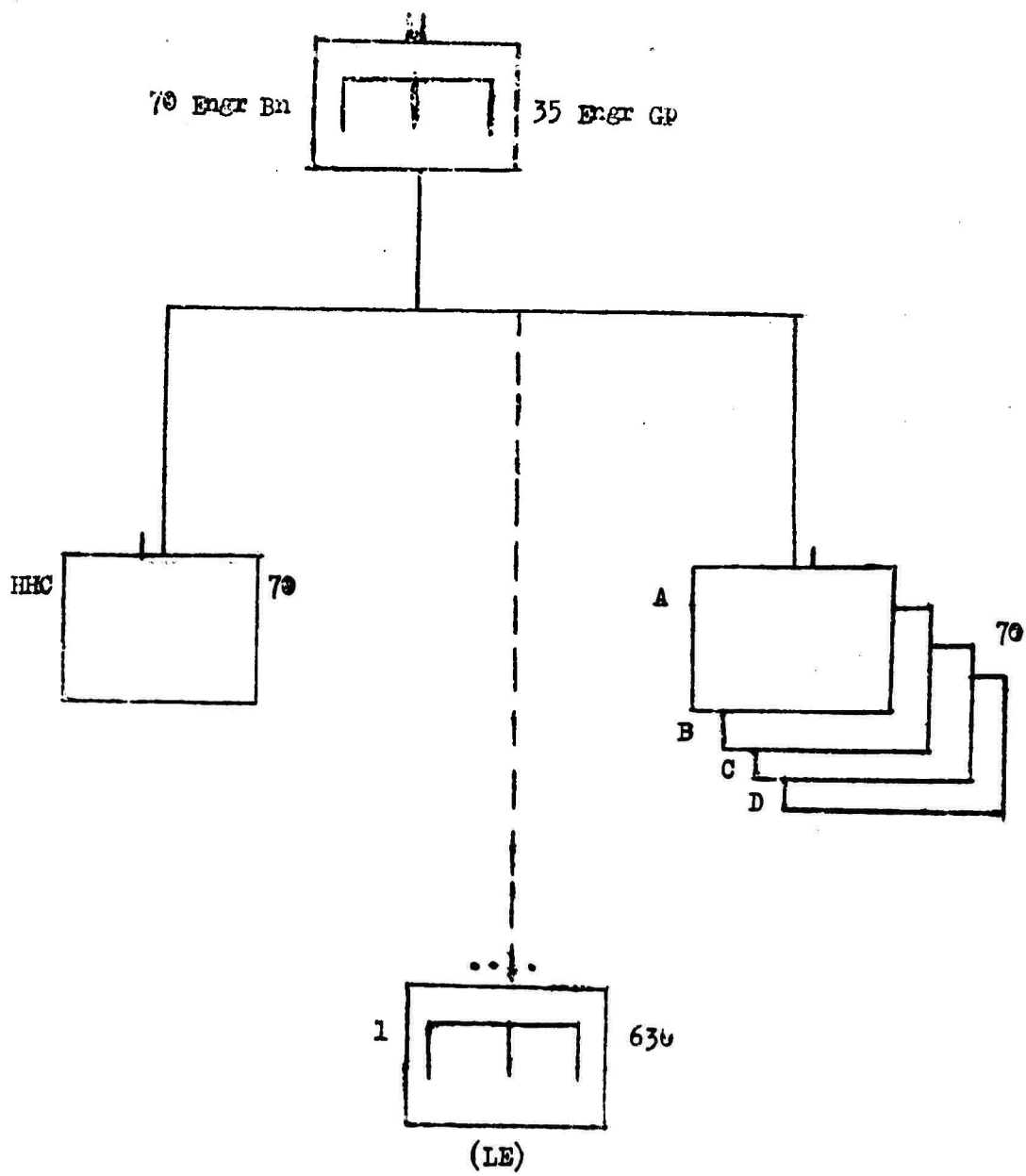
f. Other: None

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Incl
Organ. structure

Brent C. Wright
BRENT C. WRIGHT
CPT, CE
Adjutant

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EGA-3 (29 November 1969) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 70th Engineer Battalion
(Combat)(Army), Period Ending 29 November 1969, RCS CSFOR-65(R2)

DA, Headquarters, 35th Engineer Group (Const), APO 96312, 13 December 1969

TO: Commanding General, 18th Engineer Brigade, APO 96377

1. The close out Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Army), Period Ending 29 November 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R2) has been reviewed by this Headquarters and is an accurate report of the battalion activities during the reporting period.

2. The Commander's Evaluation and Recommendations/Lessons Learned Section II is an excellent account of areas where further investigation is required. Paragraph b(2), Chinook Revetments, poses the problem of design height. The design height is 9' for parallel; however, if U-shaped revetments are constructed, a design height of 7' is the maximum height due sag of front rotor. Paragraph b(3), Unit Stand Down - interim support was unavailable due to priorities throughout the Group AOR. In the case of the 70th Engineer Battalion, this could have been alleviated by organizing C/19th at an earlier date to be available for the priority missions.


HARRY A. GRIFFITH
COL, CE
Commanding

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AVbC-CG (29 November 1969) 2nd Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 70th Engineer Battalion
(Combat), Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFGR-65 (R2)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 18TH ENGINEER BRIGADE, APO 96377 26 MAR 1970

TO: Commanding General, U.S. Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST, APO 96375

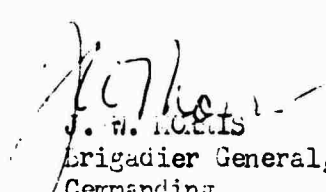
1. This Headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat), as indorsed by the 35th Engineer Group (Construction). The report is considered to be an accurate account of the Battalion's activities during the reporting period.

2. This Headquarters concurs with the observations and recommendations of the Battalion and Group Commanders, with the following comments added:

a. Reference Sec II, item a. Concur in part. The observation erroneously implies that assignment instructions for all personnel were delayed until 10 days prior to the date of departure. It is true that a large number of assignments were delayed and that this inconvenienced individuals, in addition to causing an administrative burden. The recommendation that unit redeployments be announced 90 days in advance of the scheduled date of redeployment is unrealistic. The amount of lead time depends upon timetables established by the President. Criteria for in-country reassignment of personnel is provided in Annex L to USAFV OPLAN 183-69.

b. Reference Sec 2, item b(2). USAFV letter, dated 6 Aug 69, subject: Aircraft Revetments, specifies a height of 9'-0" (+1", -3") for CH 47 revetments. The CH 47 blade, when stationary, will dip to 5' 4" at a point directly to the front of the aircraft. For this reason, the aircraft must be ground handled into and out of the revetment inclosure.

c. Reference Sec 2, item e(1). Concur. Attempts should be made by the parent unit of a deactivating unit to obtain transportation support from Support Commands. Failing this, the parent unit must provide the necessary transportation.


J. W. MORRIS
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

CF:

1 - CG, 35th Engr Gp

1 - CG, 70th Engr Br

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AVHGC-DST (29 Nov 69) 3d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 70th Engineer Battalion
(Combat)(Army), Period Ending 29 November 1969, RCS CSFOR-65(R2)

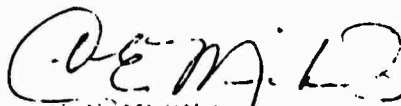
Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, APO San Francisco 96375 1 APR 1970

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

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 29 November 1969 from Headquarters, 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Army) and concurs with the comments of indorsing headquarters.

2. Reference item concerning "Chinook Revetments", page 7, paragraph 2b(2); paragraph 2, 1st Indorsement; and paragraph 2b, 2d Indorsement: concur. Present USARV criteria states that parallel configured revetments, nine feet in height, be constructed for CH-47 aircraft. This configuration permits the taxiing of the CH-47 into and through the revetment. If it is to be shut down in the revetment, care must be exercised to assure that the helicopter is sufficiently forward in the revetment to preclude the forward rotor blade striking the revetment walls. Upon shutdown, with flight controls in the neutral position, the forward rotor blade droops to 7 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the ground; less clearance may occur if gusty surface winds exist. The USARV Aviation Section is examining the validity of existing criteria for CH-47 revetments. Notice of any changes will be disseminated to all units. No action by higher headquarters is recommended.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


C. E. NICHOLS
MAJ AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

CF:

18th Engr Bde

70th Engr Bn

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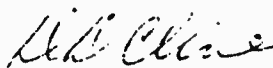
GPOP-DT (29 Nov 69) 4th Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat)
(Army) for Period Ending 29 November 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R2)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 17 APR 70

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

This headquarters concurs in subject report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



D.D. CLINE
2LT, AGC
Asst AG

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Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations, 1 Nov 69 to 29 Nov 69.			
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CO, 70th Engineer Battalion			
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