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IN REPLY REFER TO
DAAG-PAP-A (M) (5 Oct 72) DAFD-OTT

6 November 1972

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Major General Robert P. Young, CG, US Army Engineer Command, Vietnam, Period 5 Aug 71 - 15 Mar 72

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2. Transmitted herewith is the report of Major General Robert P. Young, subject as above.

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AVCC-CG

15 MAR 1972

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Robert P. Young, RCS CSFOR-74

THRU: Deputy Commanding General
United States Army, Vietnam
APO SF 96375

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
ATTN: FOR OT UT
Department of the Army
Washington, DC 20310

Country: Vietnam

Debriefing Report by: Major General R. P. Young

Duty Assignment: Engineer, US Army, Vietnam
Commanding General, US Army Engineer Command, Vietnam
Director of Construction, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

Inclusive Dates: 5 Aug 71 - 15 Mar 72

Date of Report: 15 Mar 72

This report is submitted in accordance with AR 525-14.

R P Young
R. P. YOUNG
Major General, USA
Commanding

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DEBRIEFING REPORT

Major General R. P. Young*

PREFACE

In preparing this report I have reviewed those submitted by my predecessors and have intentionally omitted discussion of subjects which have been adequately covered by them. In the interest of brevity, I have limited my comments to those missions and tasks which provide potentially meaningful lessons for future application.

During my tenure as Commander of the Engineer Command, our principal missions included:

Operational support of US Forces

Completion of the US Army portion of the LOC program

Accelerated Vietnamization of the LOC program

Provision of facilities engineering and high voltage power support throughout RVN

Rapid drawdown and retrograde of engineer units

Part A of this report consists of comments on the more significant aspects of my responsibility and Part B is supplemental statistical data.

* MG R. P. Young served in two positions during the period covered by the report. One as Director of Construction, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam and the other as CG, US Army Engineer Command, Vietnam and Engineer, US Army, Vietnam.

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PART A - NARRATIVE

1. THE ENGINEER COMMAND CONCEPT

In this theater Army Engineer units, except divisional battalions, have been assigned to the US Army Engineer Command, Vietnam, the headquarters responsible for commanding and managing these resources in carrying out the engineer mission in Vietnam. This organizational concept, commonly called a stovepipe organization, has also been used in organizing other combat support such as signal, medical, military police and aviation.

There appears to be substantial unanimity among the commanders of these stovepipe organizations that, when feasible, the stovepipe concept gives a better payback than the concept of assigning the technical and combat support resources to the Corps or field force commanders. The latter commanders don't necessarily agree. They prefer to have full command and control of military resources supporting the war effort in their area of responsibility. Both the centralized and decentralized concepts have merit, advantages and disadvantages can be cited for each. However, I believe for the engineer effort, the centralized, or stovepipe concept best serves in accomplishing the theater commanders' mission, and by a substantial margin.

Advantages. The stovepipe concept has several key advantages:

The single command structure permits one to organize in sufficient depth adequate management resources in terms of rank, quality, and quantity. At the peak of engineer strength, the Engineer Command had two subordinate Engineer brigades with six Engineer groups managing a total of twenty-eight (28) Engineer battalions and forty (40) Engineer companies. This structure permitted a concentration of management skill that did not have to be duplicated (and could not easily have been) in each military region. Engineer operations are strongly influenced by many technical and logistic considerations and the better the management the better the return on the investment. In a situation such as we have had in Vietnam where an overall integrated engineer effort has been feasible, I believe the quality of management provided by concentrating talent in an integrated command has been superior to that which could have been achieved by using the same resources in four separate commands.

In addition to quality of management, the centralized Engineer Command was able to provide much stronger technical support and provide greater depth in the engineering disciplines. Here I refer to the capability for design and for solving engineering problems. By using a mix of civilian and military talent, the Engineer Command was able to create a very competent engineering support organization having the required level of skill and depth of talent

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required in the various disciplines such as civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, structural engineering and so forth. This effort could have been fragmented but not without reducing the efficiency and technical strength of the operation.

Engineers need strong backup in supply and maintenance. The reasons are obvious, if the supplies are not on hand the troops waste time and if their equipment doesn't operate, their production suffers. Operating at theater level, the Engineer Command has the necessary strength and depth to produce support and expedite problem solving. The effectiveness of this support has been attested to by the unit commanders supported.

The stovepipe concept provided flexibility in use of engineer resources. When units are assigned to subordinate commanders it usually takes a major effort and time consuming staff actions to reassign units between commanders, or even to task units to support some other command operating in the same area. The theater commander can better respond to his priorities using an Engineer Command concept.

Disadvantages.

The use of centralized commands violates the principle of giving the field commander control of all the resources critical to his mission's success. This disadvantage has been more theoretical than real in Vietnam because procedures were set up so that the Corps and field force commanders could task supporting Engineer units directly for combat support and operational support missions with info copies to Engineer Command. I know of no instance where this system failed to respond to the requirements of the situation. Nonetheless, the major commanders with whom I discussed the concept seemed to prefer having the engineers (and other combat support units) under their command. However, it's only fair to say that these discussions were not necessarily extensive or in great depth and I believe that upon serious evaluation of the pro's and con's and full consideration to the increase in overall effectiveness, they would not necessarily reject the centralized command concept.

When all troops in the area are not under the sector commander, it complicates his ability to carry out his non-combat missions relating to such items as appearance, discipline, law and order, community relations and installation management. This is a genuine disadvantage but experience in both Vietnam and Europe has shown that major commanders have coped with it successfully and have achieved satisfactory results.

It has been argued that a strong Engineer section in the Army Headquarters can achieve substantially the same result as the Engineer Command concept by providing support through technical channels. .This just isn't true. Problem solving is much more difficult and time consuming. Experience in

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Europe in the 1960's provides a case in point. Engineers were diffused throughout the command and engineer support was considered unsatisfactory. An Engineer Command was created in 1966-67 to give responsibility to engineers for engineer support. I was there before, during, and after the command was created and as the commander can attest to the improvements it made possible. Problem solving in most cases was reduced from weeks and days to days and hours; response to the theater commander's directions and policies was faster and more effective; the level of engineer competence improved; and overall, without adding any manpower, engineer support improved. These are important advantages when resources are not unlimited.

2. TWO HAT CONCEPT FOR THE ENGINEER

When Major General Noble departed on 6 August 1971, he was not replaced. Instead, I was designated successor CG of the Engineer Command and Engineer for USARV, while retaining my responsibilities as Director of Construction, MACV. The question has been asked, did this two hat concept work? It did -- and quite well. From a personal point of view it worked successfully for two reasons: First was the fact that I had been the Engineer at MACV for seven months at the time I added the second hat. I was very familiar with the Engineer Command's mission, projects, commanders, and problems and the transition was easy. However, had I been new to the theater and had no familiarity with either of the two jobs, it might not have gone so well because in August 1971 the Engineer Command was still a major size unit with 15,000 troops, and the work at MACV was still sufficiently involved to require a substantial learning time.

The two hat concept created some very useful advantages in the period of drawdown and Vietnamization. A major MACV objective was Vietnamization of the RVNAF Engineer effort, particularly for the LOC program. RVNAF had taken on over 600 km of LOC road construction and MACV had directed that USARV prepare and execute a plan for training, equipping, and supporting RVNAF as needed to complete their commitment on the LOC after the US was no longer available. The coordination of this effort between USARV and MACV was enhanced by the two hat concept and I think the end result will be appreciably better because of it. This arrangement also enhanced coordination of and reduction of MACV-USARV conflicts in other areas such as new construction and base transfers at a time when the rate of transfers and associated problems has been accelerating.

3. LOC PROGRAM

Upgrade of the LOC became a major MACV program in 1967. The peak of USARV's effort occurred in 1969 when fifteen (15) US Army Engineer battalions were actively engaged in LOC construction. Army Engineers terminated all construction effort on this program on 31 December 1971.

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The funded LOC Construction Program, now 85 percent complete, will eventually provide more than 3,500 km of improved, interprovincial highways for RVN. Although initiated as a vital wartime program, it remains a key program for pacification and for the continued economic development of the nation. The initial concept of the program, established in 1967, called for the construction of 4,076 km of primary highway throughout the length of RVN, with the responsibility for construction divided between USARV and the US Navy. USARV was to construct 3,642 km and the US Navy 434 km. The USARV portion was further subdivided between the US CPAF contractor and Engineer Command with US Engineer troop units tasked for the construction of 2,510 km.

As LOC construction progressed during subsequent years funding cuts reduced the active LOC Program to about 3,500 km. Additional constructing agencies were drawn into the program and redistributions of the original responsibilities were effected. Construction of the LOC Program has been a joint and combined endeavor involving significant contributions by US Army, US Navy, RVNAF, Australian, and Korean Engineer troops, and the US CPAF contractor. By mid-1971 a plan to engage Vietnamese contractors had been approved and the first Vietnamese contractor began work in November 1971.

In mid-1971 it was anticipated that US Engineer troops would be able to complete 1,601 km, with all battalions disengaged by the end of April 1972. However, as a result of accelerated redeployment US troop construction on QL-20 and LTL-7A, totaling 142 km, could not be completed and RVNAF accepted responsibility to complete these two roads. US Engineer troops completed 1,456 km of the original 2,510 km troop program.

Although some work remains for the US CPAF contractor, the responsibility for completion of the LOC Program basically lies with RVNAF and the Vietnamese contractors. The accelerated turnover of US Engineer troop responsibilities to RVNAF has been accomplished, but not without cost to the program. The inexperience of newly assigned RVNAF Engineer units coupled with the lack of adequate time for advance planning by RVNAF has resulted in the loss of some construction effort during this construction season. However, as discussed elsewhere in this report, I believe the RVNAF Engineers can complete the 466 km of LOC remaining in the 671 km total for which they accepted construction responsibility.

4. VIETNAMIZATION OF THE ENGINEER MISSION

Vietnamization has taken on an increasing sense of urgency in the past seven months because Presidential decisions on troop withdrawals accelerated the redeployment of US Engineers from Vietnam. The need to accelerate turnover of engineer tasks which should not be abandoned, particularly on the LOC, resulted in both MACV and the Engineer Command placing major emphasis on this task. Several important aspects of the Vietnamization Program are discussed in the following paragraphs.

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LOC construction requires large quantities of crushed rock and asphaltic concrete. Progress in road construction can be measured by the availability of these materials. The initial Vietnamization plan called for turning over three industrial sites to RVNAF, one in MR 3 at Nui Le and two in MR 2, Ban Me Thuot and Weigt-Davis. However, accelerated redeployment of US Engineer units precluded completion of the US assigned section on QL-20 and as a result a fourth industrial site, Dillard, has been selected for transfer to RVNAF to support the 61st ARVN Engineer Battalion in completing construction work on QL-20. The Engineer Command has made a very careful study of each industrial site to identify and list all equipment required to operate that site and these lists have been converted into formal authorizing documents which are used as a basis for equipping, supplying and maintaining the site. Procedures were established in mid-1971 which permitted Engineer Command to transfer equipment directly to these industrial sites to the extent that it was available in Engineer Command assets. These procedures avoided unnecessary turn in of equipment already located and installed at the sites and permitted expeditious fill of shortages from assets becoming surplus in Engineer Command. The Engineer Command fully exploited this authority, and, in addition, established a PLL and ASL at each site for turnover to RVNAF. The initial MACV/USARV plan called for all four sites to be transferred and training completed prior to 31 June 1972. With the support and cooperation of RVNAF we have been able to complete this assignment and to schedule withdrawal of US troops from the industrial sites by 31 March 1972 to meet US strength reductions required to implement Increment XI.

To improve the US and RVNAF capability in road construction, MACV approved a USARV recommendation to purchase special construction equipment with MCA funds. This became known as the MCA-LOC program which eventually resulted in purchase of 741 items for US units and 56 for RVNAF units. As US units phased down, appreciable quantities of MCA-LOC equipment, much in fair to good condition, have become available. A decision was made to transfer 485 items of MCA-LOC equipment to the RVNAF to augment the capability of the industrial sites and the equivalent of nine battalions now assigned to LOC work. It was carefully screened to be sure that the best equipment would be turned over to the RVNAF. Of the 485 items, 343 are for units assigned to the LOC, 93 for the industrial sites, and 49 for the maintenance float. MCA-LOC equipment not required by the Vietnamese has been advertised worldwide as excess property. For those pieces of equipment falling in SCRAM Code 3 or 4, authority has been secured for selective cannibalization to recover needed components prior to transfer to PDO. A US firm, Dynalectron, has maintained MCA-LOC equipment on a contract basis for both US and RVNAF units. This contract is being continued to provide a maintenance capability for RVNAF.

The bulk of the US training effort in the past seven months has been on training RVNAF Engineers to manage and operate industrial sites, particularly

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the rock crushing equipment and asphalt plants. Care has been taken to insure that RVNAF learns the requirements and techniques of quality control. Most of the training has been accomplished by on-the-job type training, although not completely. For example, prior to shutting down in January 1972, the Engineer Command's PLL school trained 62 ARVN soldiers to be PLL clerks and PLL NCO's.

Until mid-1971, USARV supplied all LOC materials to RVNAF units through its supply system. Actual issues were made through US Engineer battalions designated to support specific RVNAF battalions. This commitment was made at the time RVNAF agreed to accept responsibility for constructing bridges, and later roadways, on the LOC. Unfortunately the Engineer Command was not always able to supply RVNAF needed materials on a timely basis and this was a cause of friction from time to time. RVNAF assumed that we could deliver materials when and where needed, and when we could not meet a requirement they found themselves with troops deployed to the construction site and committed to the project, but unable to work effectively. To change this situation, MACV established a procedure in early 1971 whereby the RVNAF Engineer Advisors would requisition needed road and bridge materials on the Army supply system through Okinawa for direct delivery to RVNAF depots. This successfully eliminates USARV as middleman and gets the materials in the hands of the RVNAF based on requisition schedules they themselves establish with their Engineer advisors. This new system places an added burden on the RVNAF distribution system because under their old system a great deal of the supplies were delivered to work sites with US transportation. The new system places that responsibility on the RVNAF and it remains to be seen whether or not it can handle the many new demands being placed upon it as the US Army withdraws and reduces its logistic support system.

RVNAF Engineers are spread quite thin and do not have very great depth in backup support such as dump truck companies, light equipment companies, construction support companies, quarry detachments, asphalt plant detachments and similar units. When it came time to take over the industrial sites, RVNAF could not support the total manning required and we found it essential to augment RVNAF's limited resources by providing local national hire to assist in operating MCA-LOC equipment and the industrial sites. Support of this kind now amounts to nine LN's at Nui Le, four LN's at Ban Me Thuot, fourteen (14) LN's at Weigt-Davis, and 163 LN's at Dillard. This concept is not very expensive and is working out very well.

As USARV Engineer units and capability have phased out, it has been necessary to plan also to phase out USARV's responsibility for managing contracts which support the RVNAF. As noted above, the responsibility for monitoring and, in effect having COR responsibility for ordering materials for RVNAF, has been transferred to the Engineer Advisory staff. In addition, the Engineer Advisory staff will soon pick up the COR responsibility for managing the Dynalectron contract which provides maintenance for the RVNAF MCA-LOC equipment.

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My comments and conclusions in regard to Vietnamization are as follows:

It has been encouraging during my tour to observe the steady progress by RVNAF Engineers in assuming increased responsibility and in developing technical competence and high standards of performance.

The RVNAF Engineers have come a long way on LOC construction and are now able to build good roads and good bridges. However, they continue to exhibit some weaknesses and there is still a requirement for the US to provide assistance and advice for improving such areas as quality control procedures and in acquiring certain skills such as welding, an important skill in bridge construction.

The RVNAF have taken on a major share of the LOC (671 km) and there remains approximately 466 km of roadway and 70 bridges for them to construct in their assigned segments of the LOC. I believe they will succeed in this task, although I fully expect a minor hiatus in the first half of CY 72 as they struggle to bring industrial sites up to the needed level of production in the absence of American assistance and support in site management and equipment maintenance. I am confident that they will solve their problems, but this construction season they will not achieve the same rate of production as would have been the case if US troop support had not been withdrawn.

In assessing the RVNAF Engineers it is important to realize that their Engineer Corps increased from a strength of 23,000 in 1968 to a strength of 36,200 in 1972. This very rapid increase challenged their ability to find needed technical competence for the officer corps and needed management capability in both the officer and NCO ranks. Although they still have many problems to solve in this area, they have passed their crisis point and are steadily improving their capabilities.

The RVNAF Engineers are fully committed on major tasks, but will continue to have demands placed for additional Engineer work. The Engineer Advisory Division of MACV carries a very heavy load in supporting the RVNAF Engineer effort. It is extremely important that the Engineer Advisors not be cut in strength below that minimum needed to insure success of the RVNAF Engineer effort.

5. LOGISTIC SUPPORT

I would rate the logistic system as fair with respect to satisfying engineer requirements. It is a complex system which is dependent upon every individual in the chain from company supply clerks to the ICCV. It is also dependent on all managerial personnel, from the Company Commanders to USARV DCSLOG. Good soldiers were available but logistical training and in-depth experience were lacking, particularly in the commodity groups of Class IV materials and Class IX (engineer equipment).

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As a result of a lack of experience, it was necessary to maintain a large Materiel Directorate within the Engineer Command with the main mission of assisting commodity managers at ICCV to forecast, manage and control critical items of supply. Further, at one time the command required over sixty Materiel Readiness Expediters (MRE) NCO's and Officers who hand carried requisitions and went into depots to locate materials. In many cases, required items were not shown on stock record accounts in the depots or ICCV and it was necessary to locate or "scrounge" needed parts or materials. It was also necessary to train PLL/ASL clerks within the command. A school for these clerks was operated by the Engineer Command from July 1968 to January 1972 which produced approximately 3,300 trained individuals. We eventually got our repair parts supply system computerized with six NCR 500's operating within the DSU's of the construction battalions, but unfortunately these units were phased out before we could properly evaluate that system. However, it appeared that where men were well trained we were getting better repair part supply.

In most instances it was easier to train commanders, construction foremen and operators, and even mechanics and supervisors on the job than good logistical supervisors and clerks. Unfortunately a commander, preoccupied with mission accomplishment, usually does not feel the impact of logistical errors until his mission is in jeopardy and is interrupted or accomplished at a greater cost to the US Government. I do not advocate going back to the old tech service supply concepts, but I do feel that the Engineer School must do more training in logistical matters and place increased emphasis on logistical management. I was hardly ever asked for technical help in "how to do a mission" but constantly asked for help in "getting the supplies or repair parts to do the mission."

A look at the tremendous quantities of bulk construction materials consumed even at a time of drawdown helps explain the problem. During the period July 71 - March 72 we consumed:

400,000 bags of cement
260,000 drums of asphalt
215,000 bags of lime
2,000,000 linear feet of reinforcing bars
50,000 linear feet of steel angles
20,000 linear feet of bearing piles

The majority of materials were purchased from off-shore OMA funds and furnished through the depot system.

Fortunately we had a special system for obtaining nonstandard construction materials and materials not available through the Army supply system. It was a simple system -- we used the procurement and expediting capability of the San Francisco District Engineer Office. This supply channel was essential to permit timely procurement of special electrical, air conditioning, and plumbing equipment.

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My conclusion has been that the engineer mission has not been too well served by the supply system in Vietnam, although I don't attribute this to indifference on the part of the individuals operating the system. To the contrary, I found attitudes and motivation quite commendable. My impression has been that we have placed too much confidence in our computer system outputs, just because "the computer told us it was so." We should and did, through our MRE's, challenge these outputs. I found that in too many cases the inputs were in serious error; therefore, the entire system produced poor data on which management decisions were being based. A second conclusion is that once a commander challenges the system, it is nearly impossible, or it is an extremely time consuming process, to change the computer programs to rectify the commanders' problems.

I have also concluded that the engineer must get back into the supply business in some way, or the supply system must find a way to improve its support to engineer missions, or both.

6. NON-STANDARD REPAIR PARTS SUPPORT FOR FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

In Vietnam a large number of major bases were constructed using many items such as kitchen equipment, plumbing fixtures, and hot water heaters not normally carried in the Army supply system. Likewise, the repair parts to support this post, camp, and station equipment are not carried in the supply system and as a result they are characterized as non-standard repair parts.

In August 1971 an Engineer Command review of the support situation on non-standard repair parts revealed serious situations in the stock of kitchen equipment and refrigeration repair parts. By the normal requisitioning procedure, a fill of 2% was being experience on non-standard repair parts for this equipment. Extensive use of expedited procedures (Red Ball) was essential to produce a reasonable supply of parts.

This situation resulted in many deadline items of kitchen equipment, refrigerators, and air conditioners and a growing backlog of dissatisfied unit commanders concerned for the welfare of their troops. It was understandable because the lack of repair parts caused delays of six months or more in providing simple maintenance support.

Engineer Command initiated an intensive effort in coordination with the DCSLOG and the ICCV to find a workable solution to improving the fill on non-standard repair parts. After four months and many meetings each element of the supply system was able to identify the discrepancies within its sphere and to develop corrective action which would allow the very complicated system to function somewhat more effectively. One of the major problems identified exemplifies the complexity of the system and the difficulty to get redress except in extremis. It was found that the edit cycle of the computer

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program did not recognize or could not cope with manufacturers parts numbers and thus rejected the requisitions, but with no explanation. The facility engineer contractors who were submitting the requisition to the computer naturally became discouraged at the high rate of rejection, but it required an exhaustive effort just to track down this one anomaly of the computer. In the end, the solution was reasonably simple -- bypass the computer and process these requisitions by hand.

Another solution which appears to be too easy is to follow AR 420-30 which allows the user to obtain non-standard repair parts direct from the National Inventory Control Points. DCSLOG has requested approval for this action from USARPAC. Authority to implement AR 420-30 should substantially improve the non-standard repair parts support for facilities maintenance.

7. EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Although the command was able to maintain an operational readiness (OR) rate above the USARV objective of 85%, we could begin to notice an adverse impact on the LOC construction mission when we fell much below 90%. After several months of hard work we finally achieved our 90% goal in December 1971. The key to keeping the OR rate up was the supply of repair parts. This is not to say that other important factors such as operator and organizational maintenance, turning in equipment that was excess to the mission, and command supervision were not important. They were, but these factors were all directly influenced by command emphasis and visits to field units by our Maintenance Assistance and Instruction Teams (MAIT). Repair parts supply, however, was dependent upon the logistical supply system, our skill in using the system, and funds available for Class IX. Our MAIT's, incidentally, proved to be extremely helpful in obtaining necessary parts.

We conducted our own Prescribed Load List (PLL) clerks' school at Long Binh. During the past year 939 students completed the five-day, 40-hour course. Although the PLL school was conducted primarily for Engineer Command personnel, approximately 36% of its total student input came from other USARV commands. Personal comments from students in the course, formal inspections, and comments from other commanders revealed that the school offered excellent instruction in repair parts procedures. Again, the key to keeping equipment operational was the availability of parts, rather than technical maintenance skills which seemed to be in ample supply. This relates back to my comments on LOGISTICAL SUPPORT. However, on repair parts supply the Engineer battalions make a direct input (demand) to the computerized system. The entire chain of command must be intimately familiar with the system. The squad leader must know that the part needed to get his truck off deadline is in fact on order.

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The conclusion is the same as in the last war, we must have personnel trained in repair parts supply, which in itself is complex because of all of the different makes and models of equipment. Further, you must have one of your better officers in charge of maintenance activities. As a final suggestion, it would be cost effective if every battalion and group commander attended the senior officers' maintenance school at Ft Knox, before being sent overseas to command a unit.

8. DISPOSING OF SURPLUS FACILITIES

Since 1970 the US Army in Vietnam has had an increasing number of surplus bases and other infrastructure to dispose of as they became excess to US requirements. First priority has been to transfer the facilities to RVNAF, to the extent that each would fill a recognized need, or upgrade existing but inadequate Vietnamese real property. Second priority has been to transfer facilities to GVN civil agencies to meet their recognized needs.

The key to orderly transfer is advance planning. In the latter part of 1970, detailed information on every US base was provided to RVNAF, with a request that each base be evaluated for use in RVNAF base development planning, assuming that it would become available for transfer at some future date. At the same time USAID was invited to evaluate US bases for potential use in economic development of the nation. In December of 1970 the GVN formed a cabinet level inter-ministerial allocation committee, chaired by the Minister of Planning and Development, to stimulate interest among GVN civil agencies in planning potential uses for excess bases, as well as to establish priority among various claimants should several agencies desire the same facility.

In May 1971 the JGS, RVNAF issued an interim study which identified certain US bases they would like to acquire. In July 1971, the study was updated and expanded. The civil agencies began to develop an active interest during the same period (Jan - Jul 71), and officials from various Ministries visited selected bases throughout RVN to evaluate their potential to support their agency mission, or for economic development. As a result, the US and GVN established clear and effective channels of communication on disposition of surplus bases, and established effective procedures to facilitate the planning and execution of the actual transfer.

Considering the many potential problems, the disposal of US Army facilities has gone well. One major problem has occurred where the RVNAF or a GVN civil ministry wanted a facility, but could not work out final details to take over the property and provide security by the date the US units desired to evacuate the base. This problem is expected to become more acute as the US troop levels are reduced.

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In a number of instances, although they did not desire to use the base, elements of GVN have requested authority to dismantle the buildings to salvage useful supplies. The National Police especially have been active in seeking buildings to be used as police stations in the many villages and hamlets. A few bases have been transferred for use by the Ministries of Education, Public Works, Communications and Post, and War Veterans. In a number of instances the PDO has sold a base, or a group of buildings on a base, after all efforts to find a more beneficial use have failed. In a few instances a small base or a group of buildings on a base have been abandoned due to tactical and other considerations.

The base transfer program must live with the fact that US forces can not provide firm planning data for the GVN, and with the fact that there is a relatively short period available to plan and implement the transfer of a facility after a redeployment increment has been announced by the President. However, within these constraints the transfer of US Army facilities has gone well. Although problems may arise in disposal actions in MR's 1 and 2 during the peak transfer in the next several months, I expect the disposal and transfer actions to be accomplished smoothly and efficiently, unless disrupted by enemy tactical activity.

It should be noted that although we maintain and report on the acquisition cost of each base, this cost is not representative of its current value. The extent to which our bases have deteriorated varies with the quality of initial construction. Some structures are still in good condition and have an appreciably useful life, but the great majority of camp construction was designed for a 5-year life, and has served its useful life. Much of what is left has minor salvage value only because it is in Vietnam where building materials are not plentiful. Returns from PDO sales have been nominal, but the PDO does provide an acceptable disposal procedure when all other efforts to use the property to enhance the local, provincial, or national government have been unavailing.

Current status of transfer of Army facilities is shown in Part II.

9. USE OF ENGINEER TASK FORCES

Experience in Vietnam has indicated that the use of an Engineer task force to perform missions in excess of a few weeks should be avoided for heavy engineer tasks.

Circumstances arose where a battalion was inactivated prior to completing its assigned section on QL-1. In the planning prior to standdown of the battalion it was estimated that the battalion would have little if any work remaining and that such work could be quite easily completed by a task force composed of some separate companies that were available. As it turned out the battalion left more unfinished work than had been estimated and the task force organized

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to complete it took almost twice as long to do the job as would have been the case had the battalion remained. In retrospect it is clear that the mission was well beyond the capability of the task force headquarters assembled from personnel of various units. A major project of this type requires an experienced headquarters capable of managing a task which involves a high level of technical excellence, quality control and coordination of very important supply, maintenance, and personnel matters. The impact became apparent within a week or so after the task force began to operate. Equipment maintenance began to suffer; supply operations did not keep pace with requirements; serious technical and quality control problems began to surface; and to add to the difficulties, personnel and disciplinary problems began to get out of hand. In the end all of these problems were overcome and the task force did go on to complete the mission, but it took about four months to do the job instead of the two it should have and then only after the expenditure of a tremendous effort while operations were proceeding full blast, to bring the task force up to operational readiness.

The lesson learned is that task forces have limited coordinating, management, and support capability and no staying power when the going gets rough. TOE organizations should be used and extended on the job when the job isn't completed.

10. DRAWDOWN AND RETROGRADE

During my tour the Engineer Command experienced its most concentrated drawdown and retrograde operations. Assigned strength decreased from 15,000 in August 1971 to less than 3,000 in March 1972. Equipment on hand at the start of this same period was approximately 100,000 tons, but after the drawdown and retrograde it will stand at a little over 4,000 tons.

More was involved than just reducing strength and turning in equipment. During this period we were continuing to operate undustrial sites and were constructing up to the last possible moment in an effort to complete assigned LOC segments or to terminate them in a professional workmanlike manner. We were also involved in transferring equipment and responsibility for construction to the RVNAF. Here again emphasis was placed on thorough coordination in passing uncompleted work to RVNAF. We devoted considerable effort to providing the RVNAF Engineers a clear understanding of the status of the project and of the thousands of tons of supplies not yet incorporated into the work.

The key to success was detailed planning, which encompassed the many considerations pertaining to our reduction and retrograde operations. However, advanced planning was quite theoretical until such time as the President made his decision on each subsequent increment. In addition to the emphasis on planning, the following major actions initiated by the Engineer Command facilitated

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accomplishment of the retrograde program:

Retrograde staging areas were established near the Keystone turn-in facilities at Da Nang, Cam Ranh Bay, Long Binh, and Vung Tau to accommodate the Engineer units which were too far from the ports to stage from their base camps.

A provisional unit was established at Long Binh with the specific mission of providing billeting and messing support and transportation and convoy support to all field units and industrial work sites retrograding through Long Binh and Vung Tau.

Washing and cleaning facilities were established to preclean equipment prior to processing it through Keystone facilities.

We taught ourselves many lessons the most important of which were:

Reduction planning requires as much attention and effort as construction planning.

As the RVNAF capability to assume new missions became saturated, it was necessary to exert more thoroughness, patience and understanding in coordinating project transfers with them.

11. CONTROL OF NEW CONSTRUCTION

The conditions created by drawdown and redeployment required imposition of tight centralized control over new construction. Even though troops were on the way home and bases were to be closed, many requests for construction or major rehabilitation continued to be submitted as essential projects. These requests were usually justified as being vital to the health, welfare, morale, or safety of the troops without full appreciation of the probable short useful life of the facility.

Local authority to approve new construction is limited to $200 at the installation level and to $500 at the Engineer District level. The USARV Facilities Review Board, established to review the need for new construction, reviews every project costing in excess of $500. The Deputy Commanding General, USARV, must then personally approve every project which the FRB considers justified. This procedure drastically limits subordinate commands but experience has shown it to be a necessary and highly effective means of controlling new construction. During the period August to March, only 15 essential MCA projects were approved for a total expenditure of $570,000 and only 147 O&MA projects were approved for expenditure of $690,000. Most of the approved projects were related to security or were necessary to facilitate retrograde and the transfer and consolidation of facilities.

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12. TERMINATION OF LEASES

Both MACV and USARV have pursued a strong program to reduce the number of leased facilities in RVN. Although by far the greatest number of leases are in the Saigon area, there are leased facilities in all Military Regions.

We have frequently encountered tendencies on the part of occupants of leased facilities to retain use of the property beyond a justifiable time. The motivation ranges from sincere conviction that the leased facility is essential for mission accomplishment to reluctance to give up a standard of living to which the occupants have become accustomed. As a result, all requests for lease renewal must be closely monitored to insure that they are cancelled when no longer required. USARV has given this matter the full attention it requires and the lease reduction program has been particularly effective because of strong support by the Deputy Commanding General of USARV who personally reviews each lease prior to renewal. Between August 1971 and March 1972 this action resulted in the reduction of 73 leases with a resultant decrease in annual rent of $1,300,000.

Although not a new lesson to be learned, the success achieved in the USARV program to reduce leases emphasizes the importance of top management participation in making decisions on the allocation of resources.

13. COMBATING DRUG ABUSE

During the period of my command, USARV launched its offensive to reduce the American Soldier's use of drugs in Vietnam. From my evaluation as a major commander, I can only report that the offensive was a success. All elements of the program are important, and some really outstanding work has been done in the education area, such as the DEFT teams and the film and media campaign. However, it would not have succeeded in any reasonable time frame without the far reaching and repetitive urinalysis test program by which drug users are positively identified. Prior to this innovation, commanders were severely handicapped by administrative and judicial considerations in their attempts to identity and deal with drug users within their commands.

No less important than the identification was the drug program's capability to remove the user from the unit and his source of drugs within a time frame acceptable to the unit commander. The capability to rapidly remove the drug user to a professionally staffed facility is extremely important for the unit as well as for the individual concerned.

At the same time, I strongly believe there must continue to be some form of exemption program for the soldier who wants to admit his mistake and make a new start. This is essential for a humane and compassionate approach to a problem many of our soldiers don't, at first, fully comprehend. It is also an essential action to conserve the trained manpower our soldiers represent.

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But we should not confuse the genuine need for this opportunity for rehabilitation with the elements of the program which really brought it under control. I have concluded that until the US solves its overall drug abuse problem, the Army will be obliged to continue some form of comprehensive drug test program.

14. CONTRACTOR AUGMENTATION

The concept of using contractors to augment troop capability has again been proven in Vietnam. Construction, technical services, engineering design, facility engineering and power contractors have all demonstrated their capability of serving alongside the soldier and augmenting the military effort in areas where the enemy threat does not preclude their operation. Although the contractors have proven their worth, their operations do demand the same supervision and attention that any contract demands.

Contractor augmentation was especially valuable in Vietnam because of the short one year tour policy and the drafting of young, unskilled soldiers. Contractors were able to furnish highly skilled technicians on a long-term basis. This provided the continuity needed for major construction projects and supplemented troop construction skills with needed expertise and assistance. It would have been far more costly to attempt all construction in Vietnam utilizing only troop resources, even if sufficient troops were available.

Contingency planning should analyze construction requirements, provide for contractor support in a theater of operations and phase this support into a theater as the immediate threat is eliminated. A sound organization for management of contractor effort must also be planned and mobilized concurrently with the introduction of such support into a theater. Although use of contractors has been valuable in Vietnam because of the nature of the enemy threat, their capability does not eliminate the need for well trained engineer troops equipped with modern efficient equipment. It is essential that the active force structure retain sufficient military engineer organizations to satisfy the immediate engineer requirements in hostile tactical environments.

15. US ARMY ENGINEER GROUP VIETNAM

The Engineer Command is in the process of reducing to a 1002 military space residual force. This force will be organized into a TDA Engineer Group with TDA Engineer units in each Military Region. The force will include two TOE well drilling detachments and a port construction platoon. The Group Commander will also serve as the staff Engineer. The organization will manage the country-wide engineer effort which we believe will be principally facilities engineering. For the most part, facilities engineering is to be accomplished by contractors. The Engineer Group will, however, include tailored, platoon-sized troop organizations which will be able to accomplish limited minor construction and provide a measure of combat support for

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remaining US forces. This concept combines troop construction and contractor management responsibilities under a single Engineer in each Military Region. This austere approach to engineers in the total force structure can not provide the level of engineer support, particularly combat engineer support, dictated by experience and doctrine. It is a reasonable, calculated risk which will succeed if no major combat action or natural disaster is experienced. If we should develop a requirement for engineers beyond those provided, we must look primarily to RVNAF for support, although we can mobilize some limited construction support from within our facility engineer contractor forces.

16. CONCLUSION

At the time I departed for Vietnam in December 1970, I wondered just how busy I would be in view of the reduction in appropriations for SE Asia and the assigned mission of "winding down the war." As a hedge I brought a dozen books from my library and at the last minute in the San Francisco Airport bought two more relating to investing in the stock market. This turned out to be an unnecessary precaution. I quickly found out that winding down a theater operation in a professional manner is as challenging in many ways as building it up. In addition, there are many more constraints that challenge the skill of those planning and executing the mission, and at the same time the offers of advice and assistance, including audit services, from outside the theater have increased.

My tour in Vietnam has been a fine experience. I have had the privilege of serving with as fine a group of professional officers and NCO's as the services can assemble and with young soldiers, the vast majority of whom are the best our country has produced.

And during my tour the Army demonstrated once again its unique and unmatched capability to bring organization and management skills to bear on any given problem and solve it. In this case it was drug abuse. The US Army, Vietnam's planning and execution of its anti-drug campaign is a success story that exemplifies the Army's unmatched professional competence.

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PART B. STATISTICAL DATA

STATUS OF THE LOC PROGRAM
1 MARCH 1972

	Total Program, KM	KM Completed	KM Remaining
Troops (Army, Navy)	1759 (1456, 303)	1759 (1456, 303)	0
US Contractor	1006	976	30
RVNAF	671	205	466
Australians	12	12	0
LN Contractor	92	0	92
	3540	2952	588
Deferred	536		536
	4076	2952	1124

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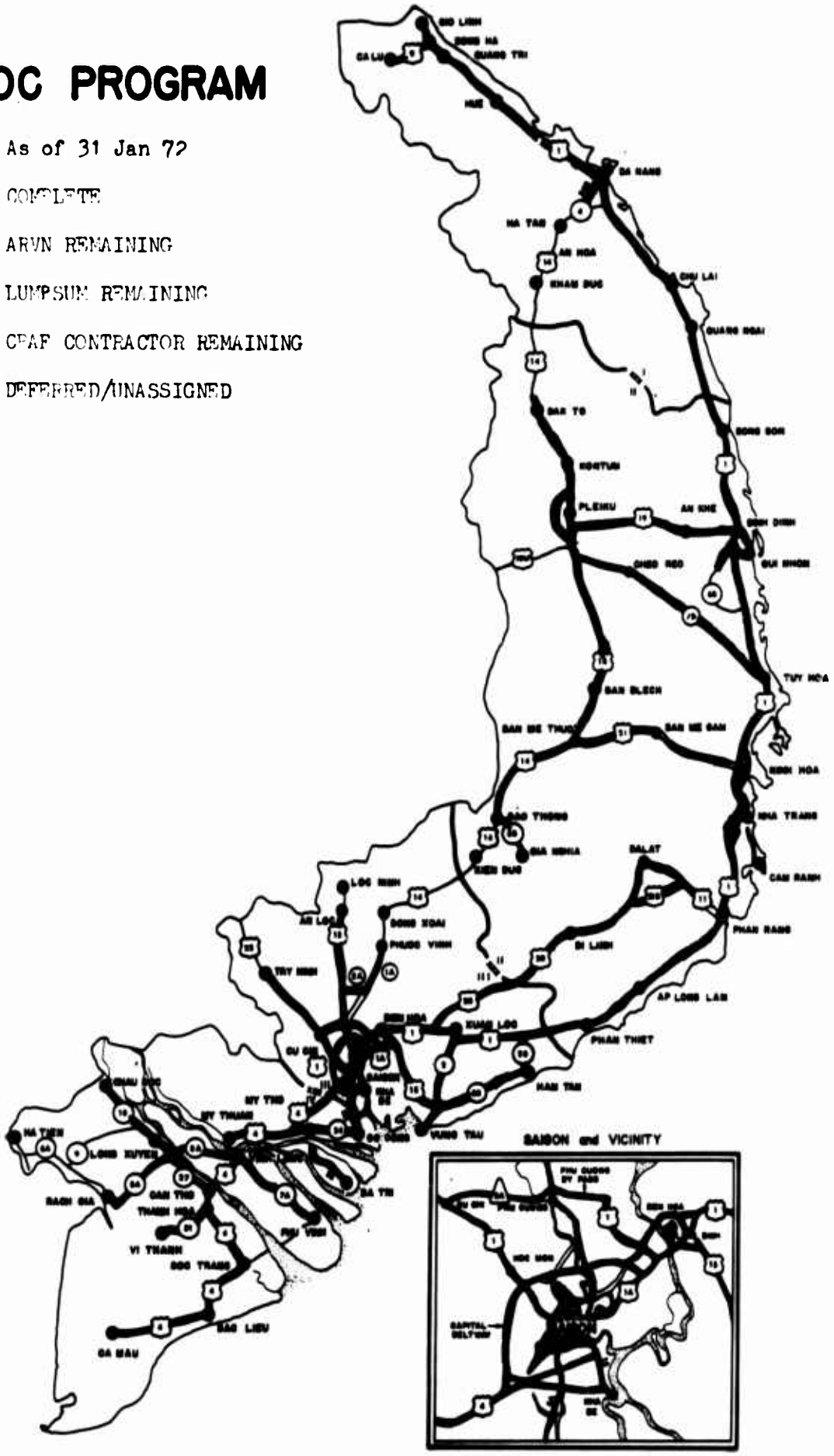
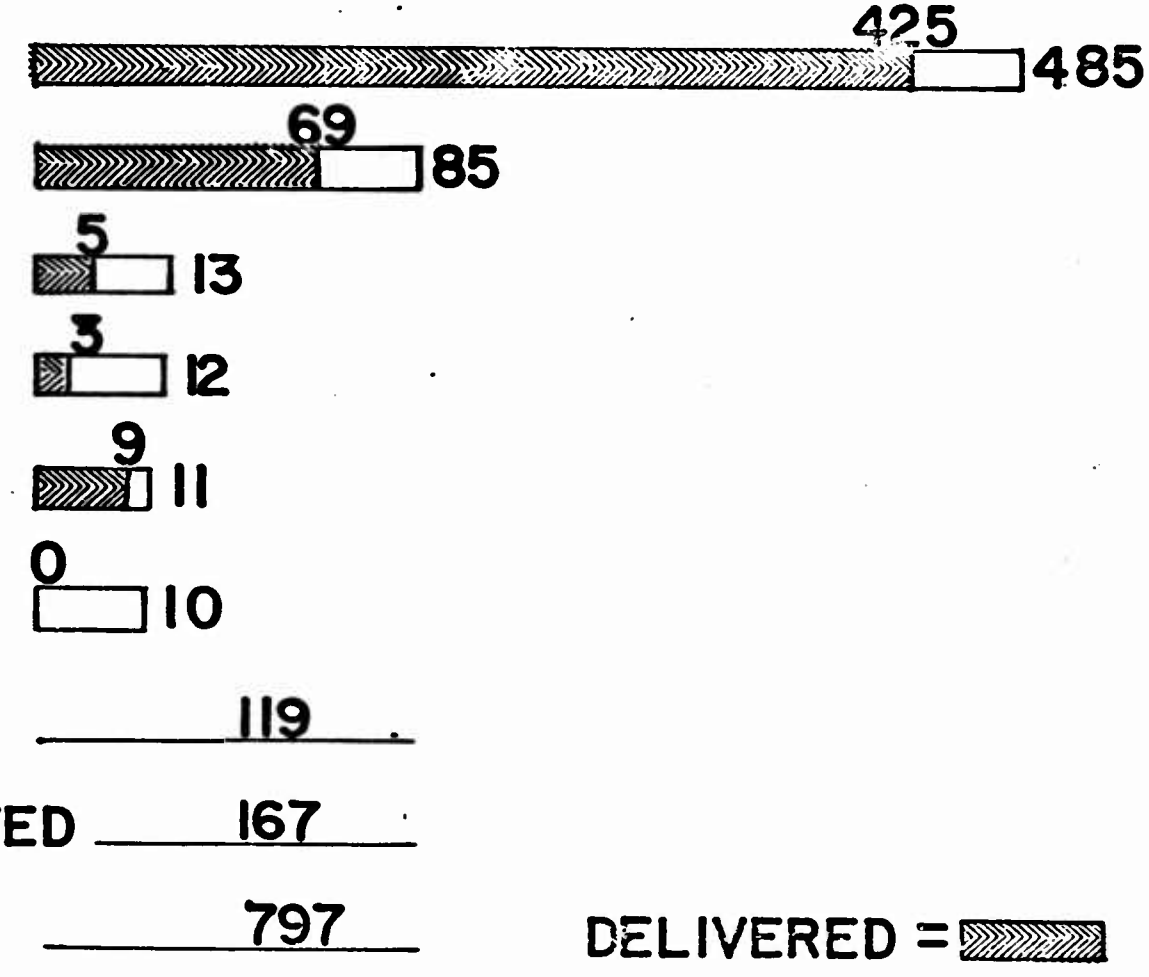
LOC PROGRAM

As of 31 Jan 72

- COMPLETE
- ARVN REMAINING
- LUMPSUM REMAINING
- CRAF CONTRACTOR REMAINING
- DEFERRED/UNASSIGNED

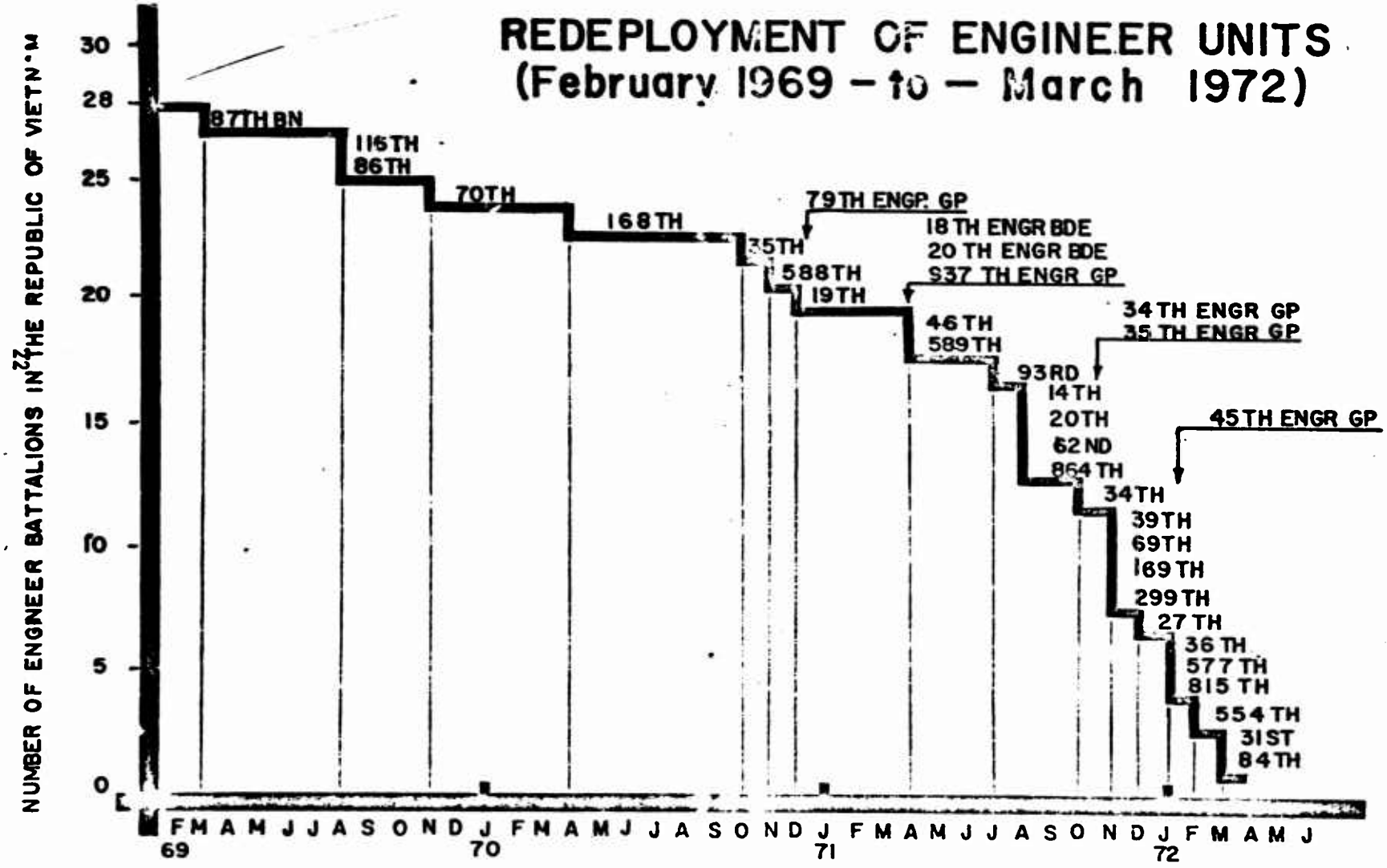


MCA/LOC EQUIPMENT DISPOSITION (9Mar72)



MCA/LOC EQUIPMENT ALLOCATED TO RVNAF

ITEM	To RVNAF Units	To Industrial Sites	To RVNAF Float
1. Bucket, Concrete	4	-	-
2. Compactor, Hand	12	-	2
3. Compactor, Segmented	14	-	2
4. Compressor, 600 CFM	-	19	3
5. Crusher, 250TPH	-	5	2
6. Crusher, Cone	-	1	-
7. Distributer, Bitum, 800 Gal	2	-	1
8. Distributer, Water, 5000 Gal	20	-	2
9. Drill Rock, Truck	-	19	3
10. Heater, Hot Oil	-	4	1
11. Loader, Scoop, 6CY	6	15	3
12. Mixer, Transit	14	-	2
13. Paver, Asphalt	6	-	-
14. Plant, Concrete	3	-	-
15. Roller, SP Vib	12	-	2
16. Roller, SP 8-13T	12	-	2
17. Sharpener, Drill	-	5	1
18. Spreader, Material	12	-	-
19. Stabilizer, Soil SP	3	-	-
20. Tractor, Full Tracked Hvy	4	14	2
21. Tractor, Wheeled	6	-	1
22. Truck, Dump 12 CY	176	-	14
23. Welder, 400/600 Amp	13	9	1
24. Welder, Attachment	8	2	2
25. Welding Set, Semi Automatic	9	-	1
26. Excavator, Hydraulic	7	-	2
	343	93	49



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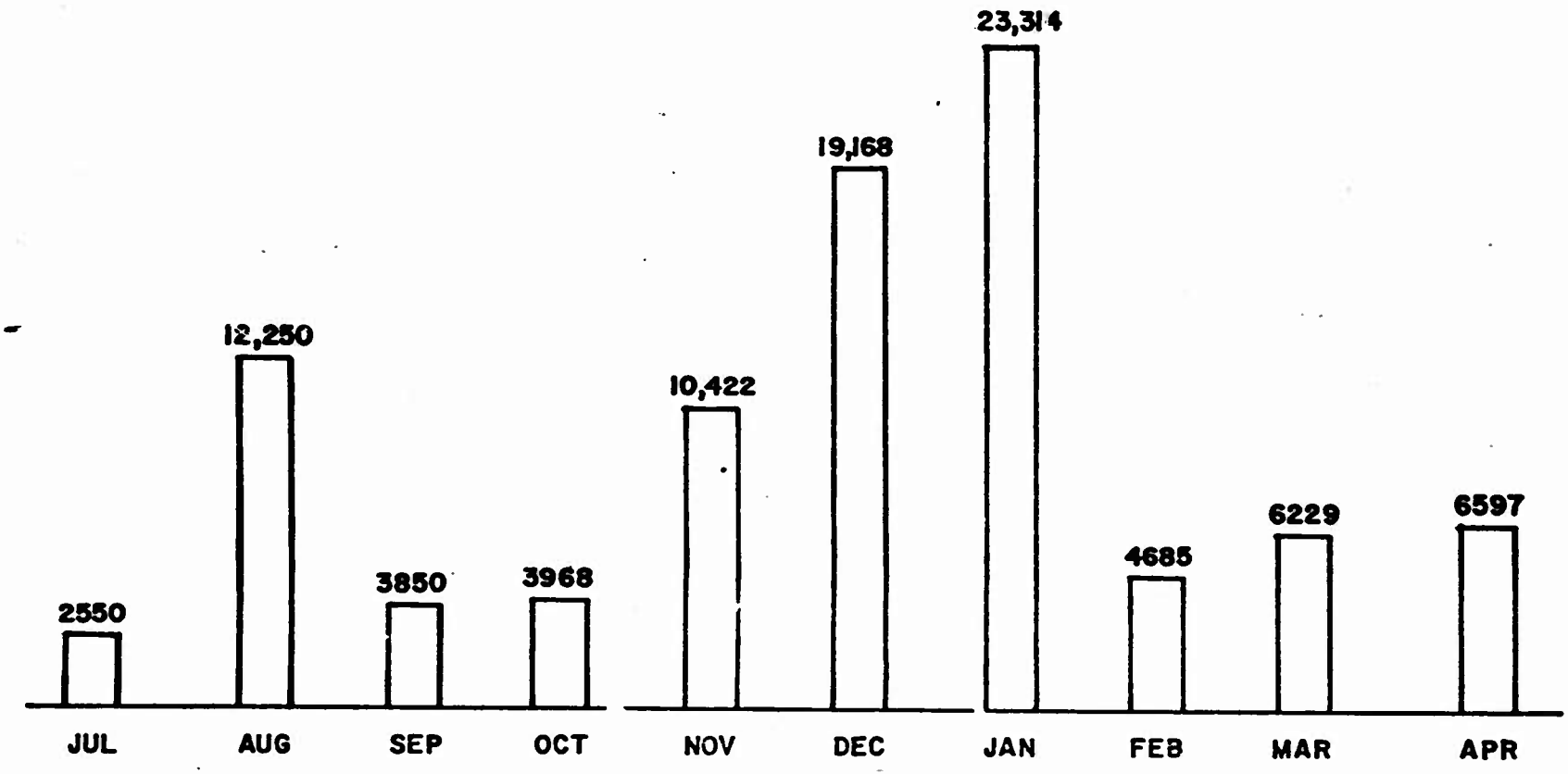
RETROGRADE OF ENGINEER EQUIPMENT
(SHORT TONS)
JUL 71 – APR 72
TOTAL 93,033 TONS



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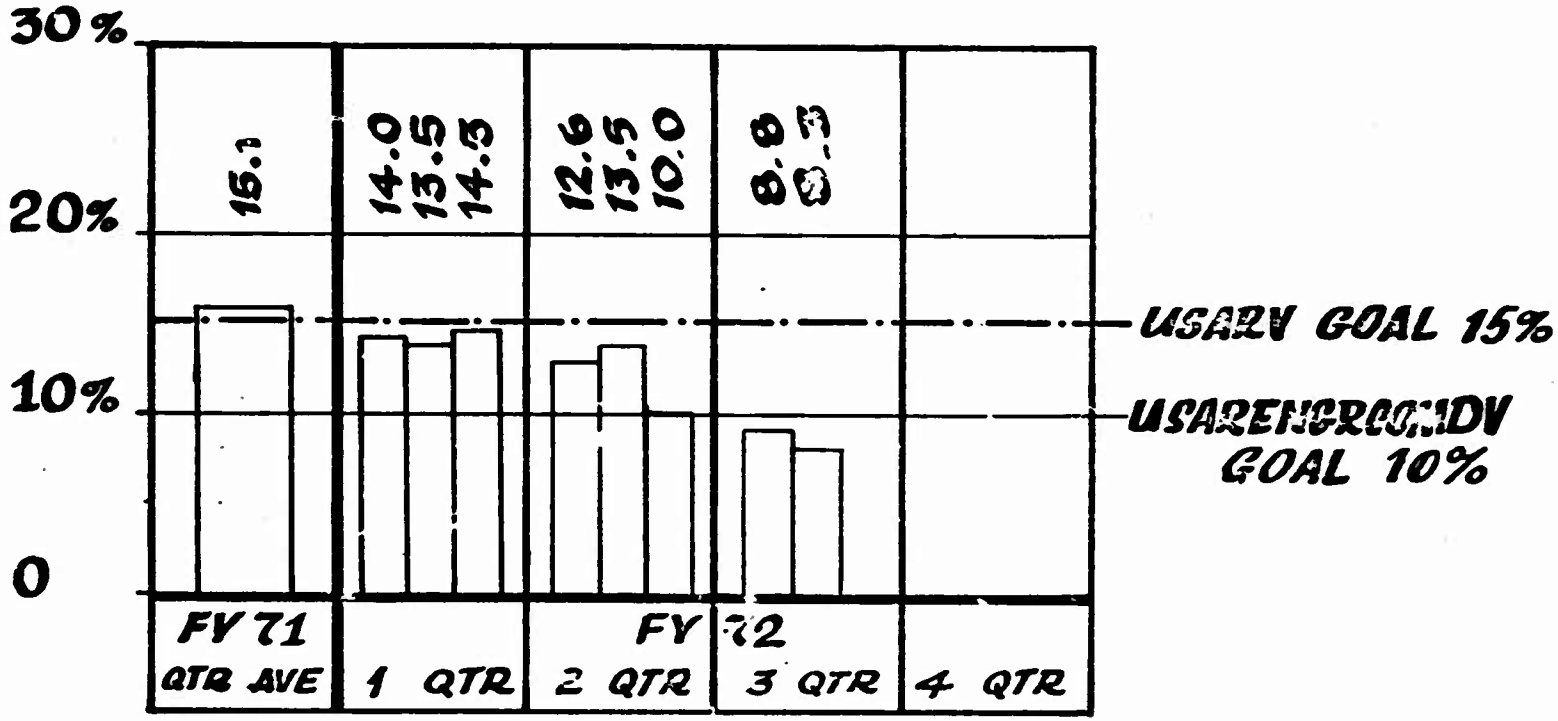
CRITICAL EQUIPMENT DEADLINE



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Facilities

Status of Transfer

1 March 1972

	TOTAL INVENTORY	ALREADY TRANSFERRED	TRANSFER UNDERWAY	TRANSFER NOT STARTED
Army Facilities	318	186	63	69
Navy Facilities	79	73	4	2
Air Force Facilities	20	8	9	3
Industrial Sites	56	21	30	5
Advisor Facilities	380	51	62	267
TOTAL	853	339	168	346

Totals (w/o Navy & Air Force Facilities):

	754	258	155	241

NOTE: It is expected that 150-200 sites, primarily CORDS province and district advisor facilities, will remain active for the foreseeable future.

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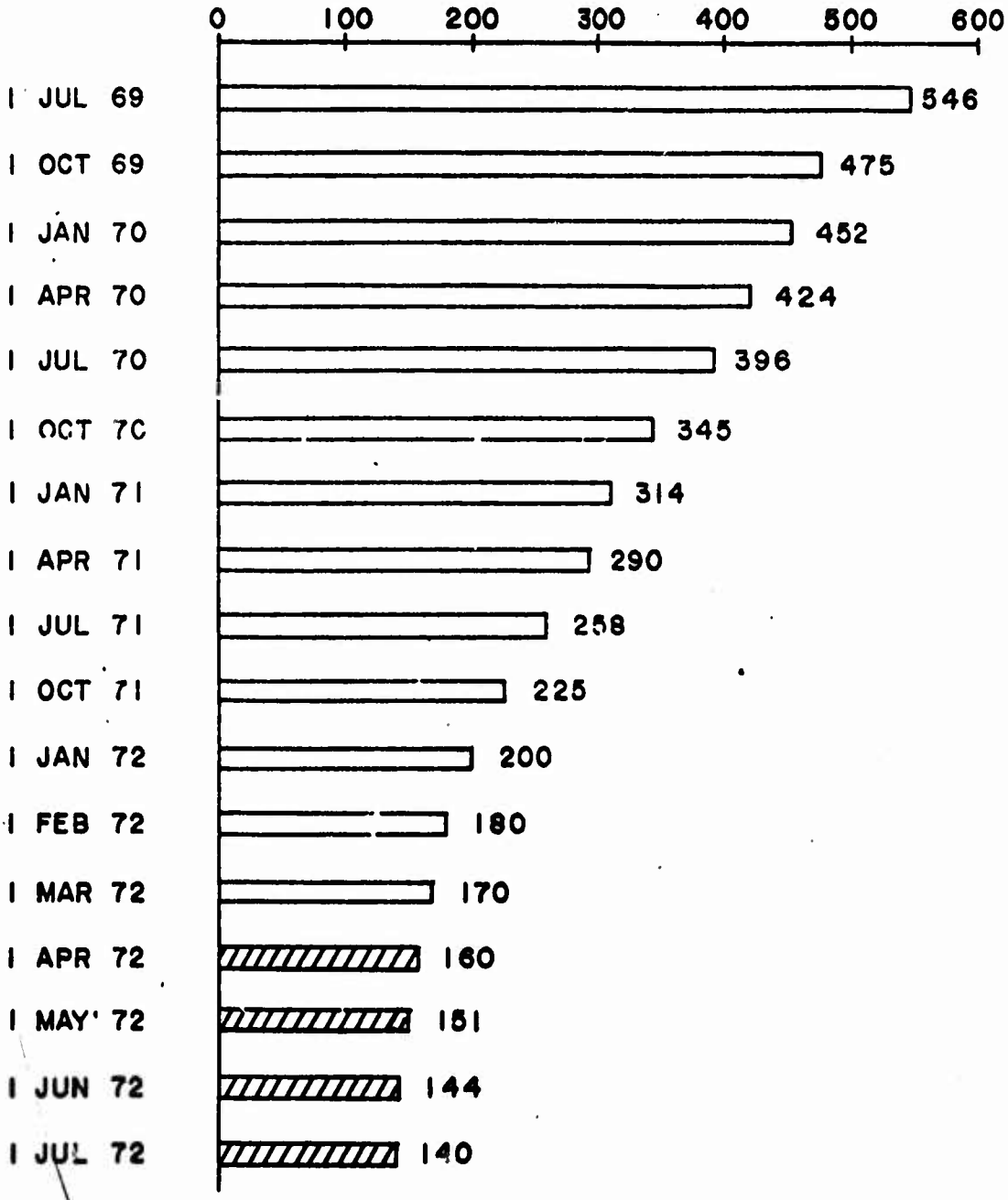
REDUCTION OF LEASES



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