

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

U.S. Army, HEADQUARTERS
19TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY)
APO San Francisco 96238

EGC-19E-CO

31 December 1965

SUBJECT: Command Report For Quarterly Period Beginning 1 October - DECEMBER
1965 Report Control Symbol USGPO-28 (R1)(U)

Operation Report on Current Period

THRU: Commanding Officer
937th Engineer Group (Combat)
APO San Francisco 96238

TO: Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations
Department of the Army
Washington, D.C. 20310

US ARMY WAR COLLEGE

DEC 13 1966

MAR 1967

1. (G) Section I. Significant Organizational Activities

a. Administration:

(1) Strengths: Enlisted personnel strength dropped to low of 85% as of 30 Nov 65. On 15 Dec 65, programmed replacements began arriving and strength rose to 96.2% of TOE as of 17 Dec 65. An additional 35 enlisted personnel arrived and assigned during the balance of December, bringing the Battalion to 96% of TOE as of 31 Dec 65. It is anticipated that departures and arrivals will balance in the next few months and that strength will remain as a level of 96%.

(2) Rotations: This battalion and the 509th Engineer Company (PB) deployed from the States on 17 Aug 65 and under current rotation policy, a total of 25 Officers, 2 WO and 303 EM will be eligible for return to CONUS during the month of August 1966, due to rotation or separation. This will create an operational and administrative problem causing the battalion to simultaneously reorganize and perform its mission.

UNITS	ROTATION			SEPARATION			TOTAL		
	OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM
19th Engr Bn	18	2	232	4	0	8	22	2	240
509th Engr Co (PB)	2	0	51	1	0	12	3	0	63
TOTAL	20	2	283	5	0	20	25	2	303

b. Intelligence:

(1) During the month of October 1965, the Battalion reconnaissance teams carried out the mission of performing a hasty and deliberate road and bridge reconnaissance on Routes 1, 6, and 19. During this time the recon teams performed and deliberate reconnaissance on over 60

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

ECC-19E-CO

SUBJECT: Command Report For Quarterly Period Beginning 1 October
1965 Report Control Symbol CSGPO-28(RL) (U)

31 December 1965

bridges. The recon teams also had the mission of making a reconnaissance of Route 19 from Qui Nhon to An Khe twice weekly.

(2) The battalion receives its intelligence reports from two sources. One of these is from Binh Dinh Sector Headquarters where a battalion representative attends a daily intelligence briefing. A copy of the daily ISUM, the other source, is from the ROK Tiger Division's G-2. The battalion was given a copy of the ISUM from the 2/7 Marines during the months of September and October. However, the Marines have since departed this area.

(3) Physical Security: The Commanding Officer of this organization was appointed Valley Security Commander by Commanding Officer of US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon, a Headquarters not exercising command jurisdiction over this battalion. In addition, this organization was to establish an overall defense plan coordinating the firepower of all units camped in the valley and to establish warning devices and procedures to repel attack. This was a difficult task at best since the units which were to be coordinated come under Support Command jurisdiction and not within this organization's sphere. This problem has since been resolved and this battalion now has coordinating responsibility only.

(4) The still photographer assigned this section is required to take photos during deliberate recons and also to document the progress of the construction projects assigned the battalion. While the section also has developing equipment, there are no darkroom facilities organic to this organization or available in the Qui Nhon area.

c. Operations:

(1) This organization has been engaged in a construction mission for the quarter beginning 1 Oct 65 and ending 31 Dec 65.

(2) Major projects engaged in during the reporting quarter:

(a) Project 937-66 (Completed 20 Nov 65)
Enlargement and Improvement of an Existing Ammunition Supply Point in the Qui Nhon Area. Work was slowed to a considerable degree by frequent changing of priorities, equipment breakdowns and shortages of blasting materials.

(b) Project BDE-65-69DC-937. Design and Construction of a 50,000 Barrel POL Storage Facility with Inlet and Output Pipelines and Truck Fueling Facility. Although construction on this project started 7 Sept 65, only a portion of the initial earth work has been completed at this time as a result of non-availability of culvert, steel tanks, piping and fittings. Steel tanks arrived in Qui Nhon early in December. Two tanks were complete with a third missing only a small number of bolts; the fourth and fifth being

CONFIDENTIAL

ECC-19E-00

SUBJECT: Command Report For Quarterly Period Beginning 1 October
1965 Report Control Symbol CSGPO-28 (R1) (U)

somewhat less complete. A single tank is presently under construction in order to determine the serviceability of the tanks by actual test. Another part of the project is construction of a Temporary POL Storage Facility. This project started 15 Sept 65 with the placing of approximately 19,000 cubic yards of fill material of a total requirement of 21,000. This project has been suspended as a result of heavy commitments on other projects. The truck fueling facility of the POL Storage Facility will be constructed at this location some time in the future.

(c) Project BDE-65-4DC-937. Construction in the ROK Division Cantonment Area consisting of the widening of eleven (11) miles of existing roadway, to include the replacement and/or reinforcement of six (6) existing bridges to class 25, one way, and construction of by-passes for heavier vehicles, plus the construction of nine (9) miles of perimeter road, much of it through rice paddies. This project has been delayed by weather and lack of culvert material. The project was started 28 Sep 65 with the construction of several miles of sub-base without culverting in order to provide access to the Division area. When the rainy season started, with eighteen (18) inches of rain in one six (6) day period, the rains inundated the project, washed out the roads, and either stranded or mirrored the heavy equipment for a period of up to two weeks. Most of the previous work had to be redone in order to restore the project to the percent completion at the time prior to the rains. Work continues but is slowed by the continuously wet weather.

(d) Project BDE-65-10DC-937. Design and construction of a heliport to accommodate fifty (50) HU-1B helicopters and facilities for two (2) Aviation Companies. The construction involves large amounts of earthmoving, surfacing with a penetration macadam treatment, and construction of a half mile of access road and a bridge. This project was held up by rain and shortage of culvert material however, most of the culvert is now on site and the job is progressing according to schedule.

(e) Project BDE-65-32DC-937. Design of a heliport to accommodate fifty (50) HU-1B helicopters and facilities for two (2) Aviation Companies with the construction of only one-half of the facility at this time. Like 2 (d) above, the Heliport will be surfaced with a penetration macadam treatment.

(3) A panel bridge company and two float platoons were attached to this organization during October and December. The panel bridge company arrived at Qui Nhon at approximately the same time as this organization, but was without its equipment for a 1 1/2 month period. When the equipment did arrive, it did not include the bridge. The company is now being utilized as a dump truck company to haul fill material for a number of the projects assigned the battalion. The float bridge personnel are conducting a feasibility study on the employment of their equipment by tactical units in the vicinity.

(4) Communications

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

EGC-19E-CO

31 December 1965

SUBJECT: Command Report For Quarterly Period Beginning 1 October
1965 Report Control Symbol CSGPO-28(RL) (U)

(a) FM radio frequency allocations were received 1 Nov 65. Prior to that time, control of battalion projects and personnel dispersed over large areas, had been very difficult. The use of FM radios has greatly simplified the control problem and has enabled battalion personnel to respond quickly to changes in missions and equipment breakdowns, etc.

(b) The high humidity, which characterizes the local climate, causes an unusual amount of damage to the radio and wire equipment producing a higher than average downtime rate for communications equipment. Further, the lack of second, third and fourth echelon parts in the command increases the amount of time that downtime communication equipment is inoperative.

d. Logistics:

(1) During the past quarter supply activities have been concerned with three main areas:

(a) Project materials (MCA).

(b) Improvement of troop living condition (O&MA).

(c) Procurement of supplies and equipment required for maintenance of equipment, sustenance of troops and improvement of unit combat readiness.

(2) Project Materials (MCA Funded Projects): Several problem areas arose, resulting from shortages of many items at the depot:

(a) Requisitions were processed on a "fill or kill" basis with no dues-out issued for materials which were not available at the time of issue.

(b) In some instances it was possible to determine materials on hand at the depot which could with varying degrees of success, be substituted for non-available items. More often however, suitable substitutions could not be arranged because the depot was reluctant to provide information as to what materials were available.

(3) Improvement of Troop Living Conditions:

(a) Efforts were made, and are continuing, to improve living conditions through better drainage sumps for messhalls, permanent latrines, insect-proofing mess and latrine facilities, provision of shower facilities, concrete floors for tents, etc. Materials for such improvements were requested from Post Engineer Repairs and Utilities, but shortages of materials and funds seriously hamper the work. During one period of about 6 weeks, all Work Order Requests had to be forwarded to Saigon for approval causing considerable delay.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

EGG-19E-CO

31 December 1965

SUBJECT: Command Report For Quarterly Period Beginning 1 October
1965 Report Control Symbol CSQPO-28(X1) (U)

(b) Recently a problem has arisen concerning cement issued for O&M projects, such as improvement of troop sanitation. Such cement is funded by Post Engineer R&U from O&M funds. An issue release is given to the unit for the required number of bags of cement to be picked up from the 82nd Engineer Company Supply Point. When the unit arrives to pick up the cement, a forced issue is made of main damaged unserviceable cement. If the unit refuses to accept the unserviceable cement, the explanation is given that this is the only cement to be used for R&U projects, "take it or leave it". In view of the perfectly adequate supply procedures established for disposal of unserviceable supplies, the fact O&M funds are expended at full cost to purchase unserviceable cement, and the requesting unit's need for X number of bags of usable cement, not X number of bags of partially or totally unusable cement, this is a most questionable procedure.

(c) A special problem exists concerning bunkers for troop protection and contourment area security. In theory, these installations are to be constructed out of O&M funds; i.e. from materials provided by Post Engineer R&U. In actuality however, Work Order Requests for necessary bunker materials have been repeatedly disapproved because this organization has been given a very low priority for such installations. Nevertheless, many of the bunkers most necessary for area security have been constructed using materials obtained from every possible source including barter with other units, adaptation of scrap material and diversion of limited amounts of material from other projects. Several bunkers are still needed for troop protection in event of mortar attack. No materials for these are forthcoming at this time.

(4) Procurement of Supplies and Equipment:

(a) Severe shortages of all supply items exist. During the past quarter, 204 requisitions for non-expendable items, other than repair parts and construction materials, have been submitted to Consolidated Supply Activity, Qui Nhon Support Area. Nineteen have been cancelled for various reasons and only 34 have been filled. In addition, of 161 nonexpendable requisitions submitted during September 1965, 17 have been cancelled and only 14 filled. During the present quarter, of the 586 requests for expendable items submitted; 103 were cancelled as being Self-Service Supply items (although not on hand at Self-Service Supply Center); and only 48 were filled.

(b) This battalion has been assigned a low priority for issue of clothing and equipment. Numerous requisitions for individual clothing and equipment items have been submitted, but such items continue to be unavailable to this organization. Some small improvement in the system of supply has been noted in recent weeks, and hopeful signs are the receipt of due-outs for requisitioned items and some deviation from the arbitrary issue priority system heretofore in use.

CONFIDENTIAL

ECC-19E-CO

31 December 1965

SUBJECT: Command Report For Quarterly Period Beginning 1 October
1965 Report Control Symbol USGPO-28(RL) (U)

(5) Imprest Fund: The Imprest Fund of the 937th Engineer Group has been extremely valuable to the operations of the battalion. Through this fund, numerous essential items, otherwise not available, have been locally purchased. Among items purchased are the following:

(a) Ice for food preservation in the absence of mechanical refrigeration facilities.

(b) Nails, hinges, bolts and other standard hardware required on projects and for improvement of troop living conditions and sanitation.

(c) Repair parts for mission-essential equipment.

(d) Cleaning materials (brushes, steel wool, etc.) for unit messes.

In view of the many deficiencies of the existing supply status and system, it is extremely desirable that every unit have access to an Imprest Fund. Recalling the old story of the battle being lost for want of a nail, too often there are shortages of minor but necessary items. The Imprest Fund provides a means of obtaining them.

a. Maintenance:

(1) Much of the equipment has come on and off deadline several times during this quarter. The reason this has been the case is that since arrival in Vietnam, the battalion has never had adequate repair parts supply to satisfactorily repair its equipment and make-shift repairs simply cannot last long when equipment is subjected to heavy usage. More than 80% of parts on requisition have not been received, however, the "Red Ball Express" requisitioning procedure, in effect for approximately two (2) weeks, has the potential of solving many parts problems. This organization has received immediate reaction to a number of high-priority deadline "Red Ball" requisitions; repair parts essential to the battalion's operation are now arriving in greater numbers than previously.

(2) Direct support maintenance units charged with maintenance support of the battalion have neither the material nor adequate numbers of qualified personnel (e.g. generator repair technicians) and tools (e.g. 100 ton press and electrical test equipment) to accommodate the needs of supported units.

2. (C) Section II, Commander's Recommendations:

a. Administration:

(1) Strength: See (2) below.

(2) Rotation policy

CONFIDENTIAL

(a) A rotation policy be announced to allow for rotation of personnel beginning one month prior to and ending one month after the rotation date of the approximately 300 officers and men of the battalion who moved overseas with the unit and will remain in country one year.

(b) Announcement of a rotation plan in accordance with (a) above at an early date, would allow for necessary adjustment of personnel requisitions and an orderly phase out of rotating personnel and phase in of replacement personnel.

(3) Medical: Refrigerator and generator for storage of perishable medicines should be authorized the Medical Section.

b. Intelligence:

(1) The S-2 Section is required to submit monthly reports, but is authorized neither a clerk typist nor a typewriter. This work must be passed onto another staff section. The addition of a clerk typist and typewriter would enhance the efficiency of the section.

c. Operations:

(1) In areas subject to heavy rainfall, hasty drainage design is simply not adequate and can only result in construction being washed out when the rainy season starts. Deliberate design based on local weather data is a necessity and has proven itself to be well worth the effort involved.

(2) Communications: The necessary 24 hour operation of the battalion net control station requires all large amount of DC power. This power requirement must be supplied from either one (1) 1.5 kw DC generator or the operation of a 3/4 ton truck. For the sustained radio operation presently required, the above sources of power are inadequate and cannot meet the necessary demand. Fortunately, the battalion's present location has available a source of AC power which incorporated with a rectifier, provides the battalion NCS with the power necessary for its continuous operation. It should be noted, however, that if the battalion should move or if the landing unit were to vacate its present location, the Battalion Communication Section would not be able to maintain its present continuous operation. Even with limited operation, the organic sources of power could not be relied on for too long a period of time due to the already expended operation life of the generator and lack of repair parts for ordnance vehicles. An EML has been submitted to augment the Battalion Communication Section with two (2) 5 kw AC generators for alternate utilization and a rectifier for current conversion and to provide more efficient and possible diverse utilization of an available power source.

d. Logistics:

(1) Requisitions for project (MOA) materials should not be processed on "fill or kill" basis. Further, efforts should be made at all echelons, including the issue point, to ascertain suitable substitution items. The supply facility could greatly assist by providing up-to-date information as to materials on hand.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DGC-19E-CO

31 December 1965

SUBJECT: Command Report For Quarterly Period Beginning 1 October
1965 Report Control Symbol CSGPO-28(R1) (U)

(2) Unserviceable cement should be dropped as an operational loss by the Supply Activity, turned into the Property Disposal Officer, and then drawn as salvage material by units for minor "self-help" projects. Cement issued as serviceable should be serviceable.

(3) Continuing emphasis must be given by all organizations and supply activities to establishing a supply system in accordance with current directives, not some arbitrary "priority" system.

(4) Every engineer unit should have an Imprest Fund. Cashiers should be at Group Headquarters with authorized Ordering Officers in each battalion or separate company. Field maintenance units also require Imprest Funds.

e. Maintenance:

(1) It is recommended that more logistic support be brought into the theater. Such support should consist of specialized and adequately equipped units with full strengths of highly trained personnel. For example more engineer direct support units with capable engineer equipment repair parts specialists as well as DS and GS repair technicians. There is also a critical shortage of DS and GS generator repair personnel in this area. Also needed are facilities (i.e. generating plants) for the manufacture of oxygen and acetylene.

(2) It is further recommended that the Qui Nhon SSSC be fully stocked with all varieties of expendable tools, to include grease guns. Such items are badly needed by this battalion.

(3) It is suggested that DS units maintain adequate stockage of materials (e.g.; brake linings, parts kits, etc.) to repair promptly and properly those items listed for direct exchange. Their failure to do so has resulted in numerous and prolonged deadlines on ordnance equipment.

(4) A contact maintenance truck was included on the EML submitted by this battalion. Our organic and attached heavy equipment is distributed over several project sites situated throughout the Qui Nhon area. A contact maintenance truck is essential to an effective maintenance operation under present conditions.

(5) This unit's 25 ton trailers are being used for considerably more than transporting equipment. They are well suited for carrying culvert and other materials and supplies for the S-4 Section. However, the TOE provides two (2) individuals for each dozer and no additional operator to drive each tractor-trailer when our dozers become fully committed. This situation has created difficulties over the past four months, and should be corrected by a change in the TOE, i.e., adding a heavy truck driver for each 5 ton tractor.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

HC-19E-CO

31 December 1965

SUBJECT: Command Report For Quarterly Period Beginning 1 October
1965 Report Control Symbol CSGPO-28(R1)

(6) In addition, the TOE should provide Battalion Maintenance and each company Maintenance Section with a clerk-dispatcher; this man should possess a clerical MOS. This will eliminate the necessity for borrowing mechanics or line company personnel for the primary duty of maintenance administration. Preferably, a new MOS should be assigned to a school-trained "Maintenance Record Specialist".

(7) The reorganization of all the battalion's heavy equipment personnel into a consolidated Heavy Equipment Platoon was necessitated by our being committed on extensive, largely static construction projects. This centralization of control is a distinct advantage. However, we are in critical need of three (3) additional non-commissioned officers to assist the Heavy Equipment Platoon Sergeant in the supervision and control of our immense Equipment Platoon. The Platoon Sergeant, an E-6, now controls over 70 men, approximately four times the number the TOE authorized the Heavy Equipment Platoon. The Heavy Equipment Platoon Leader is responsible for more major pieces of equipment than a line company commander, yet he has only one NCO to assist him. The Heavy Equipment Platoon Sergeant should be an E-7; he should be assisted by three E-6s. As long as this unit is required to perform functions similar to a construction battalion, it is only reasonable that we be provided with adequate heavy equipment supervisory personnel.

(8) The scoop loader is an extremely valuable piece of equipment in the particular type of work the battalion is currently doing. Nevertheless, its value is undermined by a combination of its fragility and the lack of repair parts in the theater. Immediate stockage by supporting units of ample quantities of high mortality and other major component parts for scoop loaders is emphatically recommended.

AMOS C. MATHEWS
Lt Col, CE
Commanding

A TRUE COPY:

ROBERT L. SANDERS
Captain, CE
Adjutant

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL