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AUTHORITY

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

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGDA (M) (22-Jun 70) FOR OT UT 701077 29 June 1970

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 39th Engineer Battalion, Period Ending 31 January 1970 (U)

AD 510060

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Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
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39th Engineer Battalion

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 39TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT)
APO San Francisco 96325

31 January 1970

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat)
for Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI)

THRU: Commanding Officer
45th Engineer Group
ATTN: S-3
APO 96308

Commanding General
10th Engineer Brigade
ATTN: AVFC-C
APO 96377

Commanding General
United States Army, Vietnam
ATTN: AVHGC-DST
APO 96375

Commander in Chief
United States 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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(C) SECTION I

A. (C) General:

1. (U) Organization:

During the report period, the 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat) consisted of headquarters and headquarters Company and four lettered line companies. The 511th Engineer Company (Panel Bridge) and the 137th Engineer Company (Light equipment) remained attached to the Battalion throughout the report period. The 39th Engineer Battalion Provisional Land Clearing Platoon remained assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company and under the operational control of the 9th Fleet Marine Force Engineer Battalion.

2. (U) Command:

The 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat) remained under the command of the Commander Officer, 45th Engineer Group (Construction). The Battalion remained in support of the Americal Division throughout the report period, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company located within the CM Lai Base (B534036). Incumbent commanders at the close of the report period were as follows:

CO, 39th Engr Bn
CO, HHC, 39th Engr Bn
CO, Co A, 39th Engr Bn
CO, Co B, 39th Engr Bn
CO, Co C, 39th Engr Bn
CO, Co D, 39th Engr Bn
CO, 137th Engr Co (LE)
CO, 511th Engr Co (PB)

- LTC Hugh G. Robinson
- CPT Terrence A. Graham
- CPT Bruce A. Elliott
- CPT Harry D. Taylor
- CPT Larry D. Warren
- CPT Larry W. Tidwell
- CPT Fernand A. Martineau
- CPT Robert J. Reilly

3. (C) Major Activities:

During the report period, the Battalion continued to concentrate its effort on the upgrade and paving of CM-1 between MO DUC ("S640525") and DUC ("S607377"). The Land Clearing Platoon continued land clearing for the Americal Division and Third Marine Amphibious Force under the operational control of the 9th Engineer Battalion. Other projects included the completion of the 7th Surgical Hospital revetments at CM Lai, continuous repair of water damage and enemy damage, minesweeps of 0.4 kilometers along CM-1, the initiation of construction of the TAI CM-1 bridge and causeway (B592010), and pre-fabrication at CM Lai of reinforced concrete slabs for the reconstruction of the SONG GO MA bridge (B567646).

a. The upgrade of CM-1 from DUC PHO to MO DUC continued, with the base course laydown complete on 25 January 1970 and 29.26 lane kilometers of the 32 lane kilometers of highway complete. The upgrading and paving was seriously hindered and delayed due to heavy monsoon rains.

b. The Land Clearing Platoon cleared 6400 acres at three different locations for the Americal Division and Third Marine Amphibious Force. All

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land clearing operations were joint Army-Marine Corps operations as the platoon remained OPCON to the 9th MIF Engineer Battalion.

c. The 27th Surgical Hospital revetments were completed on 23 January 1970. The project included placing 400 linear feet of MCA matting revetments, filling them with sand, and placing a sand-cement cap on them.

d. A considerable portion of the construction effort during the entire report period was devoted to repairing water damaged areas of CL 1 and keeping the road open to traffic between 21NK SOW (15601722) and the I/JI Corps Tactical Zone Border (1590149), a distance of 10.5 kilometers. This involved hasty placing of new culverts, replacing culvert headwalls and wingwalls, placing of blast rock on shoulders, recovering shoulders, installing and maintaining bypasses, and other steps to reduce and repair water damage.

e. A total of eight culverts, with 16 QIP tubes were installed on CL 1 between 21NK SOW and 21NG NGW (15645728) to replace destroyed and damaged culverts. The project included culvert placement, headwall construction, backfill and compaction, and asphalt patching. The project was completed on 15 January 1970.

f. On 3 January 1970, work began on a 6 span, 120 foot timber pile bent bridge and a 660 foot causeway at 24M 24N. To date the 440 foot west causeway, the west abutment for the bridge, one bent, and one span have been completed. The project is 37 per cent complete.

g. On 5 January 1970, work began to prefabricate 27 reinforced concrete bridge deck slabs for the 20M 20N bridge. Concrete for the first slab was placed on 26 January 1970. At the end of the report period six slabs had been placed.

4. (C) Activities of Headquarters Company:

Throughout the report period, Headquarters Company, 39th Engineer Battalion was located at CHU LAI (17534036). Headquarters Company continued its mission of supporting the line companies and accomplishing engineer support tasks for the American Division within the CHU LAI Base area. Headquarters Company supported Company D for messins throughout the report period.

Throughout the period, the Heavy Equipment Platoon was employed assisting the line companies as needed. Compaction equipment was placed OPCON to Company C for compaction of new culvert sites and around culvert headwalls. Graders were employed within CHU LAI Base for road maintenance and OPCON to Company B for road maintenance and repair. The platoon also undertook preparations to place the stabilization plant into operation.

At the beginning of the report period the Land Clearing Platoon was clearing the coastal area just north of DUC PHO (15807378) under the operational control of the 9th MIF Engineer Battalion. The operation was concluded on 24 November 1969 and the platoon returned to CHU LAI by sea. A

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total of 3683 acres were cleared during this operation. After a fifteen day maintenance stand down, another amphibious landing was made along the coastal area just south of DA NANG (RT005755). This operation was concluded on 31 December 1969 after 2030 acres had been cleared. After a short maintenance stand down at CHU LAI, the platoon moved by sea again to DA NANG and began clearing another area south of DA NANG on 9 January 1970. In this report period, the Land Clearing Platoon cleared a total of 6490 acres at the three different locations. Over 700 meters of tunnels and trenches and 437 bunkers were destroyed. The platoon found and destroyed 32 artillery rounds, mortar rounds, and mines, and captured 3 individual weapons. The platoon had 8 personnel wounded in action.

During the report period, extensive work was completed to improve the defenses of the battalion base camp area. A secondary hem and 7 fighting positions were constructed by Headquarters Company personnel.

5. (C) Activities of Company A:

At the beginning of the report period, Company A Headquarters and First Platoon were located at CHU LAI (RT534036). The Second and Third Platoons were at LZ Max (RS763472) under the operational control of Company C and the 137th Engineer Company (LE) respectively. Assigned missions included minesweeps from CHU LAI to LZ DOTTIE (RS672556) and from DUC PHO (RS607778) to I/II Corps Border (RS902149), support of the 511th Engineer Company (FE) with dump trucks and security for rock and asphalt haul, security for the 137th Engineer Company (LE) road upgrade, and repair of enemy damaged culverts from DUC PHO to NO DUC (RS740525).

On 10 November a portion of Company A Headquarters and the First Platoon relocated to LZ RONCO (RS15383). The Second Platoon was released from OPCOM by Company C and also relocated to LZ RONCO. Company A assumed responsibility for repair of enemy and water damaged culverts and minesweeps of LZ 1 from LZ RONCO to the LZ LIZ access road (RS774449). Heavy rainfall during the last report period and during this report period caused much effort to be expended simply to keep the road open. While at LZ RONCO, Company A constructed a total of 5 new culverts on LZ 1 consisting of 13 GTP culvert tubes and installed timber headwalls on another 5 culverts.

Completion of this mission required construction and placement of 650 feet of culvert as well as excavation, backfilling, and compacting approximately 700 cubic yards of fill.

On 19 November, the north span and abutment of the 57 foot, class 60, timber pile bridge at RS75359 were destroyed by enemy activity. The bridge was immediately opened to traffic and work started on repair of the bridge. Seven piles were driven, wingwalls reconstructed for the abutment, eighteen stringers were placed and complete decking, treadway, curb, and handrails were unplaced for the destroyed span. The company also constructed a defensive position at the bridge site. On 6 December the bridge was completed and opened to traffic.

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On 1 January Company A relocated to CHU LAI with the exception of the Second Platoon which relocated to LZ MAX and was placed OPON to the 37th Engineer Company (LE). The Second Platoon continued to provide a minesweep team for the 11th Infantry Brigade daily tactical road opening operation of CL-1 from LZ FRONCO to the I/II Corps border and security for CL-1 upgrading and paving operations.

Company A assumed the mission of reconstructing the Song Go Ma bridge (RS691646) on 5 January. This project includes the prefabrication of 27 reinforced concrete deck slabs, removal of a 120 foot temporary Bailey bridge, construction of a new reinforced concrete abutment, removal of two damaged spans, placing 12 steel stringers and the deck slabs, and repair of a section damaged by an artillery round. A concrete slab pre-casting site was prepared at CHU LAI in the company area by the First and Third Platoons. Ten slab sites were leveled and formed. Concrete for the first slab was placed on 26 January and five additional slabs were placed during the report period. The Third Platoon also prepared a base camp area at LZ SMOKEY (RS-700607) from which the platoon will operate for on-site bridge construction scheduled to begin early in the next report period. On 29 January, the Second Platoon relocated from LZ MAX to CHU LAI to assist in prefabrication of the reinforced concrete slabs.

Company A provided dump trucks, under the operational control of the 11th Engineer Company (F2), for rock and asphalt haul from CHU LAI to the work site on CL-1 throughout the report period. Security for the rock and asphalt haul was also provided in the form of vehicle mounted patrols.

Enemy activity was relatively light during the report period. On 7 December 1969, the minesweep team detected a 100 pound bag of TNT rigged to a bamboo firing device at RS795405. The charge was subsequently destroyed. On 12 November 1969, the minesweep team supporting the 11th Infantry Brigade road opening operation was ambushed at RS90P413. The minesweep team received approximately 1000 rounds of automatic and semi-automatic weapons fire, 12 RPG rounds, and 4 hand grenades but suffered no casualties or damage. The infantry security element, however, suffered 1 KIA, 7 WIA, and destruction of one APC and one 1/4 ton vehicle.

During the report period, Company A relocated from CHU LAI to LZ FRONCO and LZ MAX and back to CHU LAI. The north span and abutment of the bridge at RSC15359 were repaired. The Company installed, repaired, and upgraded culverts, headwalls, and wingwalls from LZ FRONCO to the LZ 112 access road on CL-1. The Company also initiated the prefabrication of reinforced concrete slabs for the SONG GO MA bridge and continued to haul rock and asphalt for CL-1 upgrading and paving operations.

6. (C) Activities of Company B:

At the start of the report period, Company B was located at LZ DMTES (RS627156) with the mission to maintain and upgrade the bridges, drainage structures and roads of CL-1 from BINK SON (RS601922) to the north bank of the SONG VE River (RS694636), approximately 27 kilometers. In addition,

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Company B conducted a daily minesweep of CL-1 from LZ DOTTIE to the LZ DRAGON access road (DS737530), via MO DUC (BS740525), a distance of approximately 34 kilometers. The Second Platoon relocated to LZ NORTH ENGLISH (BS 880049) on 3 January 1970. At the start of the report period major emphasis was placed on the repair of enemy damage and maintenance and upgrade of CL-1 to keep the highway open during the monsoon season.

Projects under construction at the start of the report period were as follows: the hydroseeding and bermspraying of the banks and shoulders of CL-1 from QUANG NGAI (BS642747) to MO DUC, approximately 22 kilometers; the repair of all damaged culverts between BINH SON and QUANG NGAI; the upgrade of all drainage structures from QUANG NGAI to MO DUC; asphalt and rock haul from CHU LAI (BT534036) to the laydown site vic LZ MAX (BS763472); and the construction of new living/fighting bunkers at LZ DOTTIE.

The hydroseeding and bermspraying of the banks and shoulders along CL-1 from QUANG NGAI to MO DUC which started during the last report period was completed on 2 November 1969. Of the original 22 kilometers, 9 kilometers were completed during this report period. The surface treatment prevented the erosion of the banks and shoulders of CL-1 and kept the road from washing out at several critical locations during the heavy monsoon rains.

The repair of all damaged culverts between BINH SON to QUANG NGAI, which also began during the last report period, was an extensive project which included the removal of damaged culverts at 8 locations, the replacement of 16 culverts 60 feet in length, the construction of timber headwalls, and the paving of CL-1 at each site. All work was completed on 15 January 1970. In addition, 2370 cubic yards of laterite and base rock were hauled to backfill the culvert sites.

In order to upgrade all of the drainage structures from QUANG NGAI to MO DUC, all of the culvert headwalls had to be backfilled and connected, headwalls had to be reconstructed at culvert sites at BS670669, BS668677, and BS65702. Also, the wingwalls at the bridge located at BS65658 had to be rebuilt and the bridge approaches had to be upgraded. All work was completed on 14 November 1969. Nine-hundred and twenty cubic yards of laterite and base rock were hauled to complete this task.

Company B trucks hauled 520 tons of asphalt and 140 cubic yards of base rock in support of the battalion's paving operations and CL-1 upgrade, vic LZ MAX. The project which started on 19 October 1969 terminated on 22 November 1969 when all trucks returned to LZ DOTTIE to support company operations.

At LZ DOTTIE four living/fighting bunkers were constructed, six foot bridges were installed over drainage ditches, one shower was built, two ammo bunkers were reconstructed, and a 75 foot by 100 foot helipad was constructed. All work was completed by 6 January 1970.

On 10 November, work began to upgrade all of the wire at LZ DOTTIE to meet 17th Engineer Brigade standards. Two rows of triple concertina, two

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at LZ MAF from the beginning of the report period until 9 November 1969 for support of minesweeps, security, and culvert repair. Projects in progress at the beginning of the report period included minesweeps in AOR; repair of enemy damage and water damage control on 'L-1' from 'S72P556 to 'S8053P2; repair of damaged culverts on 'L-1' from HQ DUC (P 740525) to DUC PHO (P S 807372); security for 137th Engineer Company (LE) work parties on 'L-1'; essential facilities at engineer base camps; and civic actions in the AOR. During the report period construction of a bunker at LZ DANGKH (BS725538) for the 4th Regimental Advisory Team was initiated.

Company C was responsible for minesweep operations of 'L-1' from HQ DUC to DUC PHO, a distance of 16 kilometers. With the completion of paving north of LZ MAF, Company C continued its minesweep north to the SONG VE River (S 8694536). Then the last element of Company C moved from LZ DANGKH (P S 8153P3) on 26 January 1970, Company C provided the minesweep team for the TAOR commander's daily road opening operation of 'L-1' to the I/II Corps border (S 6908149).

Heavy rainfall in the previous report period and throughout this period made it necessary for Company C to expend nearly all of its effort on keeping 'L-1' open to traffic and repairing water damage. The most urgent projects included placing 7 each 48 inch G&P culverts at 'S776445 where the base course and subbase had been completely washed out and placing 7 each 60 inch culverts at 'S758489 after culverts previously emplaced had been damaged by enemy activity and subsequently washed out. Pilesases were first constructed at each site, then the culverts were placed, piles for headwalls driven, and headwall constructed. A total of 1168 cubic yards of fill and 833 cubic yards of fill and 603 cubic yards of rock to the latter.

During the report period Company C placed 5 other culverts on 'L-1' at 'S778443, 'S784427, 'S754496, 'S7L7512, and 'S77744. Headwalls were constructed at all these sites and repaired at 6 other sites. A total of 2110 feet of culvert was assembled and placed. Eighty six piles were driven for new headwalls and a total of 5529 board feet of 3x12's and 2304 board feet of 4x8's were placed on wingwalls and headwalls. A total of 4304 cubic yards of fill and 1950 cubic yards of rock were hauled and placed at these culvert sites. Throughout the report period culvert construction continued to be hampered by the heavy rains.

Since bad weather prevented much work on 'L-1', considerable effort was spent by Company C on the upgrade and maintenance of the defensive perimeter and living/fighting bunkers at LZ MAF. Additional protective wire was installed and all guard positions and towers were reinforced.

Company C continued to provide security for the upgrading operations being performed by the 137th Engineer Company (LE) along 'L-1'.

In late January when the weather improved, Company C began removing temporary bypasses constructed during the monsoon and clearing fill and debris from culverts. A total of 780 cubic yards of fill was removed from

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bypasses and hauled to VINH HILN (BS776445) as a civic action project to build a market place for the local Vietnamese population.

On 26 January, Company C began construction of a 36 foot by 48 foot bunker at LZ DRAGON for the MACV 4th Regimental advisory Team. The site was first leveled, footers installed, and a plywood floor placed. At the end of the report period two exterior walls had been constructed.

Enemy activity was relatively light during the report period. On 2 November the minesweep team received several rounds of small arms sniper fire at BS776452, but the sweep continued. On 8 November, the culvert at BS724571 was destroyed and five booby trapped hand grenades were detected at the site. While repairing this culvert on 14 November, the work force from Company C received 10-12 rounds of small arms sniper fire. Bloody trapped mines, grenades and artillery rounds were discovered on 8 other occasions during the report period. The reduced mining incidents along QL-1 in the Company C minesweep sector can be attributed to the company's active Voluntary Informant Program. Over \$100,000 was paid for miscellaneous mines, grenades, and artillery ammunition turned-in under the program.

At the end of the report period, Company C had installed 2950 feet of culvert, used 17,253 board feet of lumber, driven 66 piles and placed 9566 cubic yards of fill. In addition to providing security for the upgrading operations on QL-1, Company C mineswept 52 kilometers of QL-1 daily. Extensive upgrade of drainage and defensive facilities at LZ MAX was also completed.

8. (C) Activities of Company D:

Throughout the reporting period Company D was located at CHI LAI (RT 534036). The assigned missions of the company included daily minesweeps from CHI LAI to LZ DOTTIE (S627856), continuation of rock and asphalt hauls for the upgrading and paving of QL-1, construction of revetments, construction of an armored cavalry squadron base camp, construction of a rock crusher headwall and other crusher facilities, preparation of a stabilization plant for sand-cement stabilization operations, and bunker construction at LZ CEN-TRE (BT052253) and LZ WEST (A1990).

From the start of the report until 23 January, Company D constructed 1200 linear feet of steel matting revetments around the 27th Surgical Hospital at CHI LAI. Of the 1400 linear feet required, 2056 linear feet were constructed during this period. The revetments were filled with sand and covered with a sand-cement cap.

Beginning on 10 November and continuing throughout the report period Company D conducted a visual minesweep of QL-1 from CHI LAI to LZ DOTTIE before initial rock or asphalt convoys. The company also continued to haul rock and asphalt for QL-1 upgrading and paving. During the report period, Company D hauled 3944 cubic yards of rock and 750 tons of asphalt. Throughout the report period company D provided security and control vehicles

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OPCON to the 511th Engineer Company (PE) for rock and asphalt convoys.

On 20 November, the company began upgrading the 39th Engineer Battalion base camp defensive wire at CHU Lai to meet 18th Engineer Brigade criteria. A total of 16,497 meters of barbed wire and 334 rolls of concertina were installed in double apron and zigzag fence. Work was completed on 29 December.

On 1 January, the company received the mission to construct a permanent base camp for the first Squadron, First Armored Cavalry at CHU Lai. The cantonment area included construction of 50 SEM huts, three 100 man mess halls, 3 showers, and 8 burn-out latrines. By the end of the report period, 27 SEM huts had been constructed.

During the report period work was also begun to prepare a site for a rock crusher to be operated by the 137th Engineer Company (LE). An existing headwall on the site had to be replaced because of deteriorated piles and timbers and a new headwall built. A reinforced concrete pad, 10 feet by 41 feet, was placed for the secondary crusher, a SEM hut was constructed for a crusher office building, a demolitions storage area was constructed at the company area, access roads to the headwall and around the crusher were constructed, and protective revetments at the crusher site were built.

On 16 January, the Third Platoon relocated to LZ WEST and LZ CENTER to construct living bunkers for the infantry at these two isolated locations. The project was temporarily delayed because all construction materials had to be air lifted to the construction sites. Nevertheless, by the end of the report period 9 bunkers had been constructed at LZ WEST and 12 at LZ CENTER.

Company D also constructed two wooden platforms for stacking cement at the battalion stabilization plant and a retaining wall for stockpiling sand at the plant.

Enemy activity was extremely light during the report period. The mine-sweep team discovered only one mine. However, a 10-ton tractor and 25-ton trailer were destroyed by a command detonated mine while returning to CHU Lai from DA NANG (RT005755) in a convoy.

During the report period, Company D constructed bunkers, built a base camp, constructed protective revetments for a hospital, prepared a site for rock crushing operations, and hauled rock and asphalt for LZ upgrading and paving.

9. (C) Activities of the 137th Engineer Company (Light Equipment):

Throughout the report period the 137th Engineer Company (Light Equipment) was located at LZ MAX (RS763472). The Quarry Section of the Support Platoon was located at CHU Lai (RT534036) with the mission of operating the quarry for the 39th Engineer Battalion and preparing to operate the company's T-62 crusher. At the beginning of the report period the mission of the Company was the continued upgrading and paving of LZ-1 from MC DUC (RS740525).

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to DUC PHO (ES707370). During the report period the company assumed the mission of upgrading the LZ LIZ access road, RS755436 to "S776449.

The primary mission of the 137th Engineer Company (LE) was the upgrading and paving of CL-1 from MO DUC to DUC PHO to CENCON Class A standards. Throughout the report period this area received 24.40 inches of rain causing considerable water damage and erosion of the base course, subbase, and shoulders. Asphalt was placed on only seventeen days in the report period because of adverse weather. Nevertheless, base course laydown was complete on 25 January and final grade and compaction of all base course was complete on 20 January.

Upgrade of the LZ LIZ access road began on 17 January to a single lane all weather surface road with turnouts every 500 meters. Seventeen thousand five hundred cubic yards of laterite were placed, graded and compacted and five 48 inch GMP culverts were emplaced.

On the final day of the report period, 31 January, the 137th Engineer Company (LE) was involved in its only enemy initiated incident. A 2001 tractor pulling a 35-ton roller on the LZ LIZ access road struck a 40 pound mine. The operator was not injured but the 2001 was damaged.

During the report period the 137th Engineer Company (LE) completed repair of the subbase of CL-1 which had been washed out between MO DUC and DUC PHO, graded and compacted 11,64 cubic yards of base rock and placed 6000 tons of asphalt to complete 0.06 lane kilometers of paving. At the end of the report period only 2.74 lane kilometers remained to be paved of the 22.0 lane kilometers between MO DUC and DUC PHO. A total of 29400 gallons of MC-250 had been used for base course priming of CL-1.

10. (C) Activities of 511th Engineer Company (Panel Gridire):

Throughout the report period, the 511th Engineer Company (Panel Gridire) was located at QIU LAI (CT534036) with the mission of supporting the 30th Engineer Battalion. During this period the 511th Engineer Company (PG) continued its missions of organizing and supervising rock and asphalt hauls from CENCON-301 in QIU LAI to the work sites on CL-1 between MO DUC (ES740525) and DUC PHO (ES707370), providing organizational maintenance support to all CENCON vehicles, and providing security and control vehicles for asphalt and rock convoys.

During the quarter, the 511th Engineer Company (PG) hauled 10,890 cubic yards of blast rock, 16,242 cubic yards of base rock, and 6510 tons of asphalt for CL-1 upgrading and paving operations.

During the months of December and January the company was tasked to haul laterite from LZ DiGOM (ES725530) to a secondary road upgrading project vicinity of MO DUC whenever there was no rock available for haul for CL-1 upgrading, or adverse weather prevented asphalt from being hauled. A total of 2266 cubic yards of laterite was hauled for this project. The project was completed on 23 January 1970.

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Throughout the period when its vehicles could not haul rock or asphalt, the 511th Engineer Company (PE) also hauled and placed 5140 cubic yards of sand to construct a secondary berm for the battalion's defensive perimeter at CHU Lai.

During this report period the 511th Engineer Company (PE) was involved in only one enemy-initiated incident. On 30 January, one truck received sniper fire at BS625049 while returning to CHU Lai.

In accomplishing its primary mission of rock and asphalt haul, vehicles of the 511th Engineer Company (PE) drove over 110,000 miles.

B. (C) INTELLIGENCE:

1. (C) Reconnaissance:

A battalion representative flew a daily helicopter reconnaissance of CL-1 in the battalion's AO, checking for enemy and water damage. Ground reconnaissances were made on an as-needed basis to evaluate and assess damage to bridges and culverts caused by the enemy and weather. During the period, 7 air reconnaissances and 16 ground reconnaissances were made in the battalion AO along CL-1. Included in the ground reconnaissance missions were a quarterly update and three monthly updates of bridge and culvert locations. On 29 January 1970, a preliminary ground reconnaissance was made from DONG BIAH (2) (BS565900) to HCN DA (BT617015) to include the river data on the SONC TRA BONG ferry crossing site, (BT615017 to BT620213).

In addition to reconnaissance missions, site and area studies were initiated on Route 52, Route 51B, Route 521, Route 524-525, TIEN PHUOC (BT116-38) and TIA BONG (BS355F1) airfields.

2. (C) Enemy Activity:

Enemy activity was moderate during this report period. Incidents were limited mainly to mines and booby traps encountered by the Land Clearing Platoon and by the daily mine sweeps. Only occasional incidents of sniper fire were reported and none resulted in any sustained contacts. On 30 January 1970, a 5-ton dump truck in route from LZ SMOOTY (BT700507) to CHU Lai (BT534036), was ambushed at BS625049 on CL-1, resulting in one WIA and minor damage to the 5-ton. There was a reported increase of NVA infiltration into the Battalion AO, during the report period but this increase in overall enemy strength has not been felt by the battalion.

On 11 January 1970, Company B's minesweep team received a Chieu Hoi who was immediately evacuated to CHU Lai and interrogated. He was then turned over to the Americal Division.

On Christmas Day, Company C found VC propaganda leaflets written in English which told the American fighting men to go home.

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a. Mines: During the report period 13 mines were encountered in the Battalion A/C. The mines ranged in size from 4 pounds to 50 pounds, with bamboo type firing devices, electrical blasting caps, and batteries. A total of four mines were detonated resulting in one member of the battalion being wounded in action. The following is a breakdown of mines detected/mines detonated:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DETECTED</u>	<u>DETONATED</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
November	6	1	7
December	2	0	2
January	1	3	4

b. Booby traps: During the report period the Battalion encountered 20 booby traps. These booby traps resulted in 7 US WIA, all of whom were members of the Land Clearing Platoon. The following is a breakdown of booby traps by month:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DETECTED</u>	<u>DETONATED</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
November	2	1	3
December	2	2	4
January	1	12	13

c. Other enemy initiated activities during the report period were as follows:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NOVEMBER</u>	<u>DECEMBER</u>	<u>JANUARY</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Ambushes	1	1	1	3
Ridges blown	1	0	0	1
Culverts blown	4	0	1	5
Road obstacles	0	5	0	5
Sniper attacks	3	7	1	11

3. (U) Weather data:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>RAINFALL</u>
November	9.96
December	10.97
January	<u>6.20</u>
Total	30.13

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C. (C) CASUALTIES:

During the report period, the battalion suffered the following casualties:

<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KNH</u>
HHC	0	7	0
Co A	0	0	0
Co B	0	1	0
Co C	0	0	0
Co D	0	0	0
137th (La)	0	0	0
511th (PB)	0	1	1
Total	0	9	1

D. (U) OPERATIONS AND TRAINING:

1. (U) Operations:

The battalion operated on a seven day work week with Sunday afternoon used for maintenance, training and recreation when possible.

a. The combat and operational support missions were conducted in coordination with Americal Division, providing support in Southern I Corps Tactical Zone. This consisted chiefly of minesweeps and minor construction of defensive structures, and accounted for approximately 45% of the engineer effort expended.

b. The LOC upgrading projects were originally assigned by USAECAV and are part of the overall MACV-LOC program. Approximately 50% of the engineer effort of the battalion was devoted to the LOC program.

c. The land clearing mission was coordinated through the III Marine Amphibious Force. The Provisional Land Clearing Company composed of the 9th Engineer Battalion (USMC) and the 39th Engineer Battalion (C) cleared land in support of the Americal Division and 1st Marine Division tactical operations. This accounted for less than 5% of the engineer effort expended throughout the period.

2. (U) Training:

Aside from the regularly scheduled weekly training during the period, special training for the monsoon season continued from the last period. In accordance with an 18th Engineer Brigade letter, each company was to prepare 15 days of training to be given on days that projects could not be worked due to weather. This Consolidation Month Training offered a means for more accurately instructing the troops in the field without reducing the commitment to the projects. With the rain, however, came a considerable amount of water days which kept most units adequately employed. At the end of the period, approximately 80% of the training had been conducted.

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E. (U) MOVEMENTS:

1. (U) Company moves:

a. 3 November 1969, Company A (-) relocated from CHU LAI (BT534036) to LZ BRONCO (BSR15383).

b. 1 January 1970, Company A (-) relocated from LZ BRONCO (BSR15383) to CHU LAI (BT534036).

2. (U) Platoon moves:

a. 9 November 1969, 2/A/39 relocated from LZ MAX (BS763472) to LZ BRONCO (BSR15383).

b. 16 November 1969, 1/A/39 relocated from LZ MAX (BS763472) to LZ BRONCO (BSR15383).

c. 12 December 1969, 3/A/39 relocated from CHU LAI (BT534036) to LZ BRONCO (BSR15383).

d. 1 January 1970, 2/A/39 relocated from LZ BRONCO (BSR15383) to CHU LAI (BT534036).

e. 3 January 1970, 3/B/39 relocated from LZ DOTTIE (BS627756) to LZ BRONCO (BSR80049).

f. 14 January 1970, 511th Advance Party returned from PHU LAI (YDF78140) to CHU LAI (BT534036).

g. 20 January 1970, 2/A/39 relocated from LZ MAX (BS763472) to CHU LAI (BT534036).

3. (U) Squad moves:

a. 16 January 1970, 1/3/B/39 relocated from CHU LAI (BT534036) to LZ BRONCO (BT052253).

b. 20 January 1970, 3/B/39 relocated from CHU LAI (BT534036) to LZ BRONCO (BT050607).

c. 22 January 1970, 2/3/D/39 relocated from CHU LAI (BT534036) to LZ BRONCO (BT050250).

d. 26 January 1970, 2/3/A/39 relocated from CHU LAI (BT534036) to LZ BRONCO (BT050607).

4. (U) Moves of the Land Clearing Platoon (Provisional):

a. 7 December 1969, completed relocation to CHU LAI (BT534036) from site west of DUC PHO (BS807378).

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b. 15 December 1969, relocated to site south of DA NANG (BT0275), first night defensive position via PT230500.

c. 2 January 1970, relocated to CHU LAI (RT534036).

d. 11 January 1970, completed relocation to site south of DA NANG (RT0275), first night defensive position via PT05567P.

F. (C) SUPPLY:

1. (U) General:

During the report period Companies A, B, and D continued to be supplied through CHU LAI (RT534036) and Company C was supplied Class I, III and IV through DUC PHO (BS20737E).

2. (U) Logistics Support:

Logistics support was provided by the following organizations:

a. 23rd Supply and Transportation Battalion, located at CHU LAI (RT534036), organic to the Americal Division.

b. 528th Maintenance Company (DS), located at CHU LAI (RT534036), organic to the 20th General Support Group.

c. 661st Ordnance Company (Ammo), located at CHU LAI (RT534036), and DUC PHO (BS20737E), organic to the 528th Ordnance Battalion located in DA NANG (BT0275).

3. (C) Equipment Status:

Several Truck, Utility, 1 Ton and Truck, Tractor, 10Ton were received during the report period, thus removing these items from the critical shortage item list. The following items still remain critically short:

<u>NOMENCLATURE</u>	<u>AUTH CTY</u>	<u>O/H CTY</u>	<u>SHORTAGE</u>
Semi-trailer, 25 ton	13	6	7
Grader, Road, Motorized	13	2	5
Cranes	9	3	6

4. (C) Combat Losses:

Combat losses during the report period were as follows:

<u>FSN</u>	<u>NOMENCLATURE</u>	<u>USA #</u>	<u>CTY</u>	<u>DATE</u>
2320-055-9263	Truck, Dump, 5 Ton	5E6563	1	0012
2320-226-6011	Truck, Tractor, 10 Ton	05450768	1	0004

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5. (C) RVN Modernization and Improvement Program (Switch Four)

During the reporting period a number of end items were laterally transferred to the 505th RVN Heavy Equipment Company. The following items were included:

a. Truck, Dump, 5 Ton	4 each
b. Truck, Utility, $\frac{1}{2}$ Ton	1 each
c. Grader, Motorized	2 each
d. Loader, Scoop	2 each
e. Truck, Cargo, $2\frac{1}{2}$ Ton	3 each

6. (U) Water Supply:

During the reporting period the Battalion operated water points at four (4) different locations: LZ MAX (BS763472), LZ DOTTIE (BS627856), Headquarters Company, 39th Engineer Battalion (C), GIU LAI (FT534036) and Special Forces Detachment B-11, GIU LAI (FT534034). Presently the four (4) water points are producing 50,000 gallons of water a day.

G. (C) MAINTENANCE:

1. (C) General:

The maintenance program has shown increased effectiveness; however, the deadline rate has remained at the same level throughout the reporting period due to an increased program of early detection and a full awareness on the part of operators. The more stringent criteria resulted in equipment on deadline which under previous criteria would have been allowed to operate.

The NOME fill of maintenance personnel has increased from a low of 74% at the beginning of the period to a high of 96% at the close. The majority of the new personnel are recent graduates of GIT schools.

There is still a critical shortage of parts for 10 ton tractors, 20 ton (J.I. or not), 1/2 mixers, and road graders. Cranes and graders will be critical cause of the large amount of bridge and road work scheduled for this battalion.

2. (U) Support:

The 9th Light Maintenance Company provided direct support during the reporting period. A total of 147 job orders were completed during this period. The average turn time of 12.3 days for each item of equipment. Thirty-five job orders were processed through the Engineer Section and 112 job orders were processed through the Automotive Section.

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3. (U) Prescribed Load List (PLL) and Repair Parts Summary:

The zero balance of repair parts in this Battalion is 77%. This figure reflects the improved support from our Direct Support Unit. The zero balance for last period was 37%.

H. (U) MEDICAL:

During the report period, skin infections, upper respiratory infections and cold syndromes within the units assigned to this battalion showed an increase over previous months, especially among troops living on the LZ's. The number of cases increased greatly in the latter part of this period. It is believed the wet weather of the monsoon season caused this increase. A large number of these cases did not respond to local treatment by medical aidmen and were referred to the Battalion Surgeon. A few of these cases were hospitalized, while others were given cutters for an extended period of time. By removing these infected personnel from the LZ's to a cleaner atmosphere where closer supervision of personal hygiene could be maintained, the response to treatment was much better and the recovery time decreased.

I. (C) CIVIC ACTION:

1. (U) Civic Action:

During this period, MEDCAP teams accompanied the minesweep teams on the daily minesweeps of LZ-1. They treated the local Vietnamese and coordinated MEDCAP's when necessary. In addition, 322 cubic yards of laterite were hauled to a Vietnamese village in the vicinity of 13776445 for upgrade of the market place.

2. (C) Voluntary Informant Program:

During the report period turn-ins under the Voluntary Informant Program amounted to a total of 127,650 SVN. The following is a breakdown of turn-ins:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NOVEMBER</u>	<u>DECEMBER</u>	<u>JANUARY</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Grenades	147	20	26	193
60mm Rounds	8	18	29	55
82mm Rounds	17	51	2	70
100mm Rounds	1	1	1	3
105mm Rounds	0	1	1	2
105mm Rounds	21	8	1	30
155mm Rounds	15	4	15	34
M60-2	3	3	1	7
Mines	25	2	1	28
Printers paid	51,200	38,050	38,400	127,650

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(U) SECTION II Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations

a. (U) PERSONNEL: None.

b. (U) OPERATIONS:

1. (U) Culvert Headwall Construction:

a. OBSERVATION: A great amount of time is expended in the construction of conventional timber and cable deadmen.

b. EVALUATION: Much time and effort could be saved if the deadmen were placed at the same time fill is placed on the culverts.

c. RECOMMENDATIONS: That a single cable be strung between opposite piles on opposite sides of the roadway. By placing the cable in the roadbed as the fill is added and compacted above the tubes, time is saved and all that remains to be done is to tie the cable to the piles.

2. (U) Culvert Installation:

a. OBSERVATION: During the repair or installation of culverts on M-1, it is important that the road be kept open to traffic at all times. It is difficult and time consuming to construct half a culvert at a time while keeping the other lane open to traffic.

b. EVALUATION: Much time could be saved with a method that would allow the whole culvert to be placed while keeping the road open.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That if a bypass cannot be economically constructed, an AVLB be utilized to keep traffic moving while emplacing a culvert. By using a dozer to excavate a trench perpendicular to the road and only as wide as necessary and then placing an AVLB over the trench while installing the culvert, traffic can pass normally. The culvert can be installed and fill compacted around the tubes prior to removal of the AVLB.

3. (U) Headwall Construction:

a. OBSERVATION: Cracks in timber headwalls allow the compacted backfill to move through the headwall when the fill becomes saturated by heavy monsoon rains.

b. EVALUATION: Before backfilling and compacting fill behind headwalls, material should be placed behind the headwalls to fill the cracks.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That sandbags, tarpaper, old canvas or a soil-cement mixture be placed in the cracks to keep the fill from seeping through the headwall.

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4. (U) Headwall Construction:

a. OBSERVATION: The piles used in timber headwall sometimes fail under the increased pressure exerted by fill which becomes saturated during heavy monsoon rains.

b. EVALUATION: One deadman for each pile decreases the probability of such a failure.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That each pile used in a timber headwall be supported with a deadman.

5. (U) Preparation of Culvert and Bridge Sites for Paving:

a. OBSERVATION: Because of the uncertain weather during the monsoon season, several days or weeks may elapse between the time bridge and culvert sites are prepared for paving and when they are paved.

b. EVALUATION: Unless the culvert sites are paved immediately upon being prepared, normal traffic will cut ruts into the roadway and allow water to soak into the base course.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That a sand-cement mix be placed on the prepared sites. By using this procedure, traffic cannot cause ruts that allow water to soak into the base course, the drainage is improved, and it is unnecessary to re-work the same site several times in preparation for paving.

6. (U) Clamshell Transportation:

a. OBSERVATION: Considerable time is wasted in connecting and disconnecting the clamshell from the R/T crane everytime the crane has to move from one job site to the next.

b. EVALUATION: Valuable time can be saved by placing the clamshell, still connected to the crane boom, in the bed of a 5-ton dump truck and allowing the crane to follow the 5-ton to the next jobsite.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That the clamshell, still connected to the crane boom, be placed in the bed of a 5-ton dump truck and the crane follow the 5-ton short distances to the next jobsite.

7. (U) Change of Roof Design for Standard SEA Huts:

a. OBSERVATION: High peaked roof designs on standard SEA huts are actually unnecessary and material consuming.

b. EVALUATION: Since there is no snow in tropical climates there is actually no need for high peaked roof design. Current designs utilize an excess of lumber and corrugated metal.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That 16x32 SEA huts utilize an off-center peak which

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results in one long slope and one short slope, producing a savings of 25% in corrugated metal. For toxic gas huts, use a flat, slightly sloping design with no peak, which saves nearly 50% in corrugated metal roofing.

8. (U) Construction of Revetments:

a. OBSERVATION: When constructing revetments of MPAL matting, designs specify intermediate braces of 2x4 lumber every 8.5 feet.

b. EVALUATION: Once the revetments are filled with sand the braces serve no purpose. However, building the revetments without the braces is extremely slow.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That the construction braces be removed when the revetments are partially filled. One set of braces can then be used as construction braces on all the revetments. Construction time is decreased and 166 board feet of 2x4 material is saved for every 8.5 feet of revetment erected.

9. (U) Concrete Test Cylinder:

a. OBSERVATION: To insure proper quality control of the concrete being used in the construction of pre-cast deck slabs for a concrete bridge, concrete sample cylinders have to be prepared.

b. EVALUATION: The standard cardboard concrete sample cylinders are many times not available, as they are in short supply in Vietnam.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That 155mm cannisters be used as concrete cylinder molds as they are the correct diameter and can be used as expedient cylinder molds. A twelve inch section can be cut from the middle of a cannister and then the section again cut lengthwise. The halves can be held together with 6 inch rubber bands while placing the concrete in the cylinder.

10. (U) Changing Heavy Equipment Tires:

a. OBSERVATION: Without the proper equipment, many problems arise during the changing of heavy equipment tires.

b. EVALUATION: A satisfactory and safe method should be developed to expedite the changing of heavy equipment tires.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That the following methods be used in the absence of the proper tire changing equipment. Use a chain with two lead binders to make a walking lead binder to circle the tire and draw it up. This will seal the tubeless tire during inflation. The blade of a DVE dozer can be used in the chance of a tire exploding to prevent the safety ring from coming off and injuring personnel.

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11. (U) AVLB Utilization:

a. OBSERVATION: When using an AVLB to keep CL-1 open to traffic, small vehicles sometimes fall through the center of the AVLB.

b. EVALUATION: It would be advantageous from the stand point of traffic flow and maintenance to cover the center of the AVLP between the treadway for protection of the hydraulic lines.

c. RECOMMENDATION: That M6A1 matting be placed on the center of the AVLB to offer protection for the hydraulic hoses and other critical parts nested in the center of the AVLB. The matting can also be used as an extension of end ramps which is especially useful for Lambrettas.

c. (U) TRAINING: None.

d. (U) INTELLIGENCE: None.

e. (U) LOGISTICS: None.

f. (U) ORGANIZATION: None.

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as

Hugh G. Robinson
HUGH G. ROBINSON
LTC, CE
Commanding

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END-3 (31 Jan 70) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat) for the Period Ending 31 January 1970 (RCS CSFOR-65)

DA, Headquarters, 45th Engineer Group (Const), APO 96308 24 FEB 1970

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

1. The Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat) has been reviewed by this headquarters and is considered to be an excellent account of the 39th Engineer Battalion's activities during the reporting period ending 31 January 1970.

2. Comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning clamshell transportation, section 2, para 6; nonconcur. This practice would be a definite violation of safety standards, and will not be allowed.

b. Concur with the remainder of the observations and recommendations of the Battalion Commander.

William R. Wray

WILLIAM R. WRAY
COL, CE
Commanding

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AVRC-OP (31 Jan 70) 2nd Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 39th Engineer Battalion
(Combat), Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS COFOR-65 (R2)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 18TH ENGINEER BRIGADE, APO 96377

TC: Commanding General, U. S. Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVNGC-DST, APO 96375

1. This Headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat), as indorsed by the 45th 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 Section II, item B3. Concur. However, weep holes should be used to relieve hydrostatic pressure on the headwall. This can be accomplished with 3" diameter pipe spaced 4' - 0" C.C. The area surrounding the entrance end of each drain pipe should be backfilled with 3"(-) rock to prevent loss of backfill material through the pipe.

b. Reference Section II, item B4. Concur in principle. However, the number and spacing of deadmen required for a headwall is determined by analysis of the overturning moment due to soil pressure loading. The effect of hydrostatic loading can be largely eliminated through the use of weep holes as described in item a above.

c. Reference Section II, item B7. Non-concur. The minimum allowable slope for corrugated metal roofing is 3 inches on 12 inches (TM 5-209-2). The existing SEM hut design incorporates an acceptable slope of 4 inches on 12 inches. The recommended reduction in roof slope will allow water to be blown under the lags, resulting in leakage. Units should adhere to the standard SEM hut roof design.

J. W. Morris
J. W. MORRIS
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

CC:
1 - CC, 45th Engr Gp
1 - CC, 39th Engr Bn

AVHGC-DST (31 Jan 70) 3rd Ind

11 APR 1970

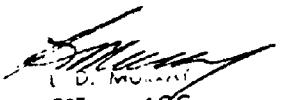
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat)
for Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, APO San Francisco 96375

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 31 January 1970 from Headquarters, 39th
Engineer Battalion (Combat) and concurs with the comments of indorsing
headquarters.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


L. D. MORRIS
CPT, AAC
Assistant Adjutant General

Cy furn:

18th Engineer Brigade
39th Engineer Battalion (Combat)

GPOP-DT (31 Jan 70) 4th Ind (U)

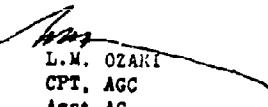
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat)
for Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 27 APR 70

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

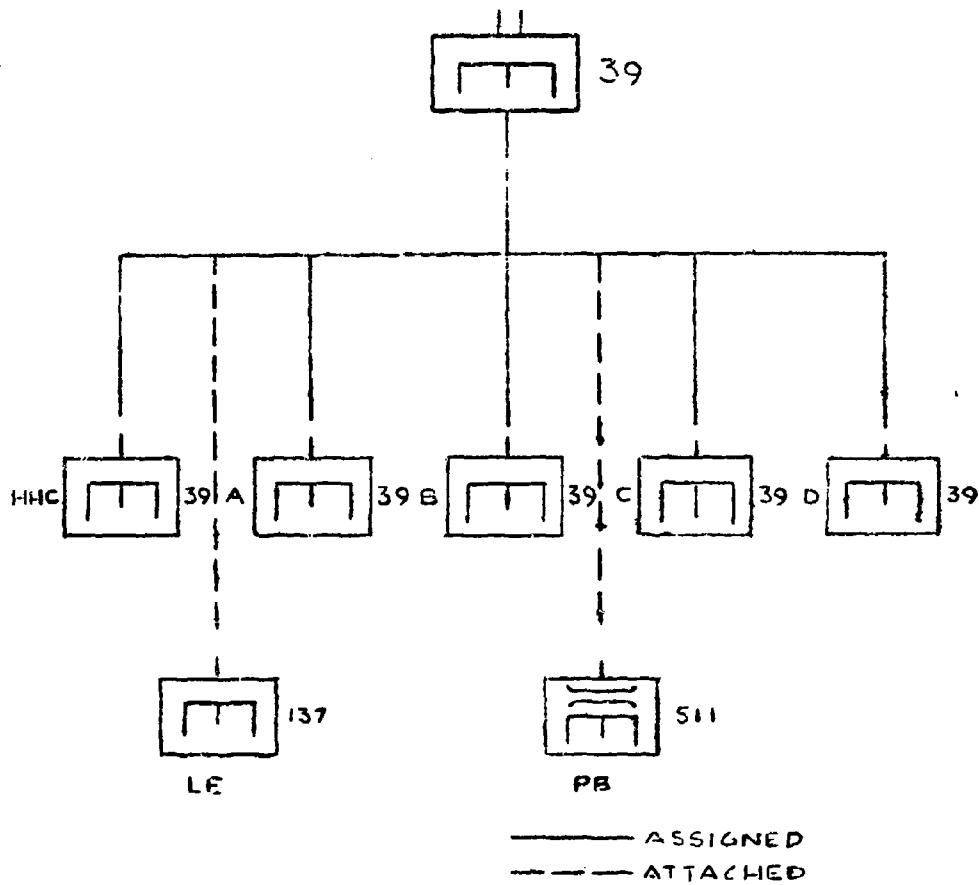
This headquarters concurs in subject report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:


L.M. OZAKI
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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ORGANIZATION
39TH ENGINEER BATTALION(C)(A)
31 JANUARY 1970



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