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HEADQUARTERS 31ST ENGINEER BATTALION (C)(A)
APO San Francisco 96491

4 November 1971

SUBJECT: Operational Report — Lessons Learned, 31st Engineer Battalion (C)(A) Period Ending 31 Oct 71, RCS CSFOR — 65 (R3)

TO:
Commanding Officer, 159th Engineer Group, ATTN: AVEGB-OP, APO 96491
Commanding Officer, USAENGCOMDU, ATTN: AVCG-DO, APO 96491
Commanding Officer, USAVE, ATTN: AVHDO-DO, APO 96375
Commander-in-Chief, USAARV, ATTN: GPOP-DT, APO 96588

FROM: Assistant Chief of Staff For Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington D.C. 20310

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1. Experience (b) -  Observations, Evaluations, and Recommendations

a. Personnel: None

b. Intelligence:

(1) Security of Plans

(a) Observations: During the 60ths Land Clearing operation in Hau Giu, the security forces consisted of RF/PF forces. The following days cut plans would be issued with the security commanders at an operations meeting the evening before the next day's operations. The unit came under small arms fire and 90mm fire when entering the cut area, on several occasions.

(b) Evaluation: The enemy appeared to know when and where to make contact with the Land Clearing companies, indicating a security leak.

(c) Recommendations: Coordination for the next day's cut operation should be done the day prior to the morning of the cut when RF/PF forces are utilized.

(2) Command Action: Requested RF/PF units be replaced with American mechanized units for security.

c. Operations:

(1) Security Forces for Land Clearing

(a) Observations: The RF/PF Infantry forces which secured the 60th LC Company during the Trung Don, Kien Giang province cut, proved to be undesirable. The foot security could not move as fast as the plows or react quickly enough to turn the enemy under immediate fire, thus leaving the plows unsecured.

(b) Evaluation: The infantry security could not protect the plows. The plows proceeded at a rate faster than the security. In addition they were constantly exposed to falling trees, booby traps and mines.

(c) Recommendations: Forces used to secure Land Clearing operations should be mechanized.

(d) Command Action: Placed organic AFO's and gun bearing 75's in cut to pull security. Requested that infantry be replaced by armored cav unit.

(2) Heavy Equipment Towing:

(a) Observations: There is often a requirement for recovering either an 830 wheeled tractor or a 10 Ton tractor truck and there is seldom an H8C or 10 ton wrecker available. To compensate for this units often use another 10 ton or an 830 bolt it and tow the inoperable vehicle using chains.

(b) Evaluation: Often when the prime-mover is connected in a rear to front combination with a disabled 830 or 10 Ton, there is lack of lateral stability causing the towed vehicle to enter the lane used by opposing traffic. This was found to be true even at speeds of 7 to 10mph.

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(a) **Requirement:** Recommend that a half-ton 3/4 ton dump truck, K703, be used for clearing operations. This is effective at low to medium levels in low class roads. Lifting shackles can be used to lift the K703 to clear obstacles.

(b) **Requirement:** That a control helicopter (cut LOH) for the Land Clearing Operations Commander be used for the clearing operation.

(c) **Requirement:** That a cut LOH be provided on a daily basis, with officers of the Land Clearing Company Commander, to the Land Clearing Company Commander.

(d) **Operation:** The 3/4 ton dump truck, K703, can be used effectively on low class roads, where 5 tons are too heavy to be utilized.
4 November 1971


4. The characteristics of the 3/4 ton dump truck must be emphasized. The axles will snap consistently if 4 wheel drive is attempted without knowledge and experience to operate it. The vehicle can be released and released too quickly. Also, if any part of the vehicle becomes wedged in the leaves of the springs under the cargo bed, the bolts connecting the leaves of the springs under the cargo bed are under designed bolt.

5. REMARK: That modifications be made on the 3/4 ton dump truck or its axles.

6. REMARK: That drivers were schooled not to attempt to drive the vehicle when a stuck position in both forward and 4 wheel drive, but to be pulled from the position.

7. REMARK: That perimeter bunkers for perimeter bunkers

8. REMARK: That by discontinuing requirements for heavy overhanging for bunkers, that direct hits (Protection it rarely affords) or hitting the bunkers have protection from elements only, the need for heavy overhanging bunkers is well founded.

9. REMARK: Adequate protection for other than direct hits would be provided. Only direct hits from present weapons would result in destruction of the structure with or without overhead protection, in this type of bunker.

10. REMARK: That the perimeter bunkers be constructed without heavy overhanging protection.

11. REMARK: This unit issued prefab perimeter bunkers of such design by directive of Board when 2 x materials were not available to allow for heavy construction.

JAMES R. ANDERSON
LTC, CE
COMMANDING
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For the Commander in Chief:

This headquarters concurs in subject report as indorsed.