DATELINE
40 YEARS AGO....FEBRUARY TO APRIL 1970

During this report period the major portion of the 19th Combat Engineer Battalion has been concerned with it's primary mission of upgrading 81 kilometers of National Highway QL-20 from Di Linh to the II/III CTZ Boundary, with major emphasis on upgrading 42 kilometers from Camp Smith to the II/IIIBoundary.

The S-4 has worked steadily to procure required construction materials which continued to be a major problem due to the 19th's remoteness and long haul supply distances from Cam Ranh Bay. Coordination was difficult and convoys were few in number. To resolve the Logistical Supply problem, an individual from the battalion was stationed at Cam Ranh Bay to head the Battalion rear detachment. Through his efforts, all supplies and required coordination for DOM's and transportation were successfully obtained. His presence along with specialized expeditors in the fields of maintenance, supply, and transportation resulted in the successful completion of many of the 19th Engineer Battalion projects.

A company was concerned with upgrading QL-20. The old roadway was widened in several places by blasting, filling and cutting, with hill sloping and clearing on each side of the road, particularly from YT841623 to YT833623.

B company manpower was spread over a variety of projects. LOC restoration consumed the majority of man and equipment hours. Recurring maintenance was required on the runway matting at the Bao Loc Airfield, the construction of a 20' x 50' ammunition bunker at Camp Smith. Also (2) 60 foot revetments were constructed for aircraft protection.

C company has been attached to the 864th Engineer Battalion since 19 November 1969.

D company has been concerned with project "Spirited Bayonet", the construction of a Special Forces Camp. The 3rd Platoon pre-cut lumber for the construction of 63 living-fighting bunkers. The 2nd Platoon was airlifted to the worksite on 2 Feb 1970. While waiting for equipment to arrive, they strung wire, and dug fox-holes and machinegun positions for their initial defense. By the end of February, each platoon was putting in a bunker and a half per day, being limited only by a lack of materials and the speed which holes were dug by the dozers. Due to a lack of air support, work slowed during March, Also, a backlog of needed materials was created at Cam Ranh Bay.

The 572nd (LE) continued its support of the 19th with the restoration of QL-20 consisting of quarrying and crushed rock production, support for paving efforts, major equipment support to A/19 and minor equipment support to B/19 The Chi Cong quarry has undergone an extensive face lifting. The working area had been expanded to include the entire available working face of rock. Total production for the period was 19,380 c.y. of blast rock. A second quarry had been opened at Di Linh to produce additional fines for the asphalt plant.

The number of direct hire personnel working for the 19th and attached units had increased. There were a total of 74 persons employed within the battalion. The total number of housegirls was 68, with the remainder of personnel employed as crusher and asphalt plant workers.

Several ARVN Affiliation programs were continued. The joint program with ARVN Engineers involved Bridge 5 was completed at the end of April, as the ARVN's finished work on the bridge itself. In another affiliation program, ARVN forces supported, when necessary, the sandstone haul from Di Linh to the industrial site at Camp Smith. This support was rendered in the form of trucks. Finally, ARVN forces provided continuous security along QL-20, thus enabling more U.S. troop effort to be put to use on LOC construction.

During the previous quarter, the 19th's authorized newspaper , the Seahorse News was published on a monthly basis by the Public Information Office. The issues were distributed on 28 Feb 70, 31 Mar 70, and 30 Apr 70. The newspaper was distributed to all companies in the battalion on a basis of one for every three men.

Source:
19th Operations Reports
LTC Morris L. Gardner, CE. Commanding