

The Director Says...

Prime BEEF Teams . . . "Excellent!"



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As a vital element of the Air Force team, Civil Engineering is proving it has the ability to meet a variety of challenges head-on and do the job in a most creditable fashion. Of current note is the application of our Prime BEEF concept to actual needs and our new Civil Engineering Squadrons for heavy repair. Details on these are in this JOURNAL and others will be appearing from time to time. It is, however, appropriate to summarize a bit here.

The concept of Prime BEEF has been used in several cases other than in Southeast Asia. However, the greatest concentrated use has been, and will be for some time, in SEA. The results in SEA prove out our concept of a team of highly qualified personnel specifically tailored for given tasks. At present, we have the first three revetment teams back in CONUS after their 120 days' TDY in SEA. The work achieved by these small, well-qualified and highly motivated teams has indeed been impressive. Most importantly, their accomplishments have been impressive to Air Force commanders at all levels. One such commander sums it up this way:

"The team concept wherein, team work, acknowledgment of accomplishment, esprit de corps and all other necessary ingredients for highly professional performance appears to be well founded in the establishment of these (Prime BEEF) teams."

All of us in Air Force Civil Engineering can be proud of our Prime BEEF teams and their accomplishments. On the other side of the coin, we can and should take like pride in the manner in which the Civil Engineers remaining at the CONUS home bases "tightened their belts" and kept the operation going.

In addition to the revetment teams referred to above, at present 12 teams are in South Vietnam and Thailand. These teams have been sent out specifically for POL and utilities' work as well as for priority general work. This force totals some 15 officers and over 350 airmen. The

various teams of this force are also on 120-day TDY tours.

Prime BEEF has, and is, performing excellently. There is no question that Prime BEEF is, and can continue to be, responsive to the operational needs in contingencies as well as in natural disasters. There is no question but Prime BEEF has become a way of life and will continue on an expanded basis in SEA. "Belt tightening" at home bases will be with us for some time. Our experience at both ends will be valuable in planning and programming the future of Prime BEEF.

Separate and essentially apart from Prime BEEF, we are now embarked on organizing and equipping two Civil Engineering Squadrons for SEA deployment. These squadrons (400 officers and men each) are to provide a continuing on-site and heavier capability to meet operational Civil Engineer needs of the 'combat zone.' These units are not intended to, nor do they in fact, minimize our reliance on Army Engineer Construction Battalions for initial expeditionary airfield work. Rather, these units fill an existing gap in the broad spectrum of Civil Engineering capabilities needed by the Air Force to support its operational missions. Individual replacements for these units will be provided via our Prime BEEF concept but otherwise there is no relationship between these large PCS units and our small TDY Prime BEEF teams.

Since these squadrons fill a critical gap in our capabilities to do our job as it must be done, we hope to expand the number of units for SEA. This matter will be resolved in the near future. We also hope to extend the concept of these squadrons into the long-term troop basis of the Air Force; at least in small numbers. By so doing and combining the use of the squadrons with short-term TDY Prime BEEF teams, we can respond effectively to changing needs with a minimum of precommitted resources.

We believe Civil Engineering in Prime BEEF and in its newer CE Squadrons is illustrating clearly the point we've frequently made—that we are up to the job of giving the Air Force the very best in CE support—that we can do more with what we have—and above all, that our actions underline and overscore our motto:

"CAN DO — WILL DO!"

R. H. Curtin