

Project Red Horse *cont'd...*

Training equipment identified.

15 October 1965: Activation orders issued; Key personnel identified; Training directive published; T/A prepared; Equipment procurement initiated; Programming plan published.

15 November 1965: Advance Cadre in place.

1 December 1965: Training equipment in place; 80% Manning in place; Unit training initiated.

15 December 1965: 100% Manning in place.

1 January 1966: 80% Operational equipment in place.

1 February 1966: Training completed (Squadrons deployed).

The 555th called themselves the "Triple Nickel Squadron" and promptly dubbed the 554th as the "Penny Short" Squadron. The Penny Shorts accepted the challenge proudly and made it part of their unit insignia. Col Conti, Commander of the 554th, said, "I've never seen such high morale in my entire 25 years of service. These troops are honed to razor sharpness; they are as ready to go as they will ever be."

The commander of the 555th was equally enthusiastic in his praise. "It's almost unbelievable," said Col Plunkett. "When the troops began arriving individually from all points of the compass, some 200 of them converged at Dallas, Texas—a main junction point leading to Cannon AFB. Finding no pre-arranged transportation, they char-

tered buses, rented cars, and one group even chartered a plane in their eagerness to get here."

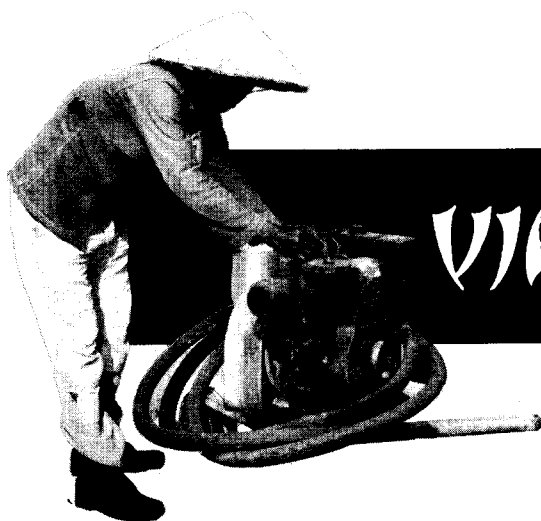
"One of my NCO's," added Col Conti, "came back from Vietnam only 30 days ago, and immediately volunteered to go with us."

"How do you account for this high *esprit de corps*?" we asked.

"It's pride—these boys are out to prove that they can do the job assigned. For the first time in the history of Air Force Civil Engineering, military engineers are being given an opportunity to do a job alone. They will have their own tools, equipment, supplies, and even their own medical doctor with them. They will work together as a team; they will maintain their own identity and their projects are clearly identified. They mean to prove that Air Force Civil Engineers "Can Do—Will Do!"

More than Air Force "eyes" will be watching the RED HORSE Squadrons in Vietnam as they write history for Civil Engineering. The Department of Defense is interested and so are the Joint Chiefs of Staff who gave approval. The Army Corps of Engineers as well as the Navy Construction Battalions will keep well posted on RED HORSE activities. Each in their own areas of interest have a stake in what Project RED HORSE accomplishes. How well Project RED HORSE succeeds remains to be seen. One thing seems pretty sure . . . there never was a more eager group of officers and men ready, willing and able to carry on the motto of the Air Force Civil Engineers —Can Do—Will Do!

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VIETNAM REPORT No. 2

Prime BEEF Team No. 2

by 1st Lt John G. Terino

In September 1965 Prime BEEF No. 2 arrived. It had only one unit, an 18-man Military Airlift Command team. This team's job was to provide a potable water system as well as sewage pipes for a major portion of the rapidly expanding base. In less than three months 11,500 feet of pipe were laid. After completing their primary assignment the team built latrines for billets and other structures.

No report of the activities of the first Prime BEEF teams would be complete without mentioning the problems they encountered and the support they received from Base CE's in Vietnam.

The first major problem was the climate. South Vietnam is a semi-tropical area, humid and hot. Daily tem-

peratures are in the 90° range. Adjusting to hard physical labor in this environment varied from several days for some of the men to two weeks for others.

Lack of materials, communicating with the Vietnamese, incompatibility of French and American hardware fittings, occasional sniper fire and lack of heavy tools and equipment were other problems.

The No. 2 team had all the above problems. The lack of front-end loaders, backhoes, water pumps, and other mechanized equipment required the use of manual labor. Working in areas where the water table was at ground level the team members and the Vietnamese laborers were often hip-deep in water and had to bail trenches by hand

before the laying of pipes could proceed.


Paper-thin French pipe that could not be threaded was another headache. In addition there was a shortage of sewer pipe. The latter problem was solved by detailing two men to Bangkok, Thailand, with purchase orders to obtain the necessary pipe. The cooperation of base procurement and legal personnel at both Don Muang AB in Bangkok and Tan Son Nhut was instrumental in the success of the operation.

Another positive factor in this first use of the Prime BEEF teams was the aid and assistance they received from Base Civil Engineer organizations in Vietnam. Though they carried some hand tools with them, the teams did not have any heavy tools or mechanized equipment. As much as possible the Base CE's gave the teams the use of equipment and tools from their own limited resources. Without this aid the job would have been much more difficult, if not impossible.

BCE Shops Lose Some Capability

It is also a credit to the Base CE shops that they were still able to handle their normal operations, leaving the BEEF teams to do the special build-up tasks. Operating in the above manner has two drawbacks. First, the Base CE shop loses some of its capability. The work of the base slows down while the tools and equipment are being used on another task by the BEEF teams.

Second, the Prime BEEF team must rely on the CE shop for the tools to do the job. If the equipment is not available from the Base CE the BEEF team is slowed or stopped in its operation. This was sometimes the case in Vietnam. Borrow, beg, and "requisition" become SOP for BEEF CE's in some instances. Many lessons should follow the full report on the operations in Vietnam when it is assembled and analyzed.

But, regardless of the changes in BEEF that may come from these experiences one thing was proved in Vietnam . . . through the professional skill, teamwork and initiative of Air Force Civil Engineers Prime BEEF is feasible and effective. 

(More on Vietnam—next page)

Indigenous labor at work with pick and shovel.



Lt Terino is an information officer in the Directorate of Information, Hq PACAF. He was on TDY at Vietnam, when he wrote this article. A former staff editor of the Air Force Civil Engineer, he served as chief of internal information for Pacific Air Forces Base Command prior to his current assignment. He is a distinguished military graduate of Air Force ROTC at Fordham University, N.Y., where he earned a BS in American Studies.



Two of the crew are neck deep in water on this project.

MAC plumbing team had problems threading foreign pipe.





VIETNAM REPORT No. 2

A New Image for the AFCE in Vietnam

by Lt Col Howard B. Arnold, Jr., PE

"Can Do—Will Do," the Air Force Civil Engineering motto, is being proven daily by AFCE personnel in the Republic of Vietnam. While accomplishing its assigned mission AFCE is creating a new image which is far divorced from its primary mission in the ZI, maintenance.

Aircraft and personnel can be deployed to any theater on very short notice. In Vietnam during 1965 the number of aircraft nearly trebled while the number of personnel increased more than seven-fold with most of these increases occurring during the last quarter of the year. Facilities to support deployments of this size are rarely available on a timely basis.

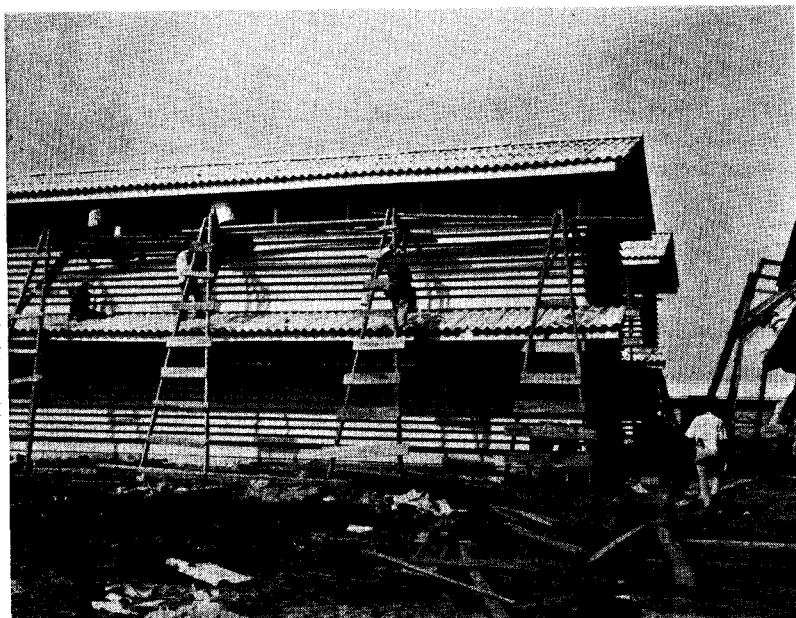
Overnight the Civil Engineers of 2nd Air Division found themselves behind the "power curve" in a country affording little in the way of equipment, materials, or skilled manpower. During 1965, despite many problems, a totally new major airfield was developed at Cam Ranh Bay and support facilities were expanded at numerous existing bases. Billets were increased from 5520 to 18,906, warehousing from 29,200 SF to 171,700, power production from 3255 to 8650 KW, fuel storage from negligible to 120,000 BBLs, and ammo storage from 65,000 SF to 170,000.

Accomplishing this expansion required the combined efforts of all engineering resources available—OICC (Navy officer in charge of construction) and the prime contractors, the AFRCE-Saigon, all Civil Engineers of 2nd Air Division, local contractor forces, and Prime BEEF teams

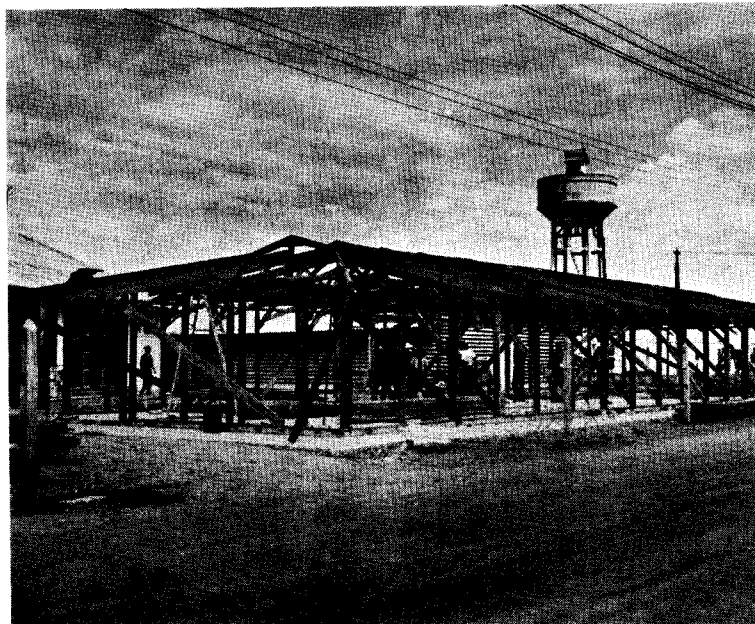


Pipe-laying operation at Tan Son Nhut.

Two-story dormitory goes up at Tan Son Nhut.



A future post office being erected at Da Nang.



deployed from the ZI for 4 months' TDY. The Prime BEEF teams were deployed primarily to complete urgently needed projects that could not be completed in time by contractors or by the undermanned BCE "in-house" forces.

Prime BEEF I was deployed in August 1965 for the erection of aircraft revetments. The three teams, of 25 men each, erected over 12,000 LF of steel revetments at a savings of approximately \$200,000 (PACAF estimate of contract versus in-house). The teams spent approximately 60% of their TDY on revetment erection, the remainder being spent on other projects. The value of the revetments was proven last November when an armed F-100 was demolished by fire on a crowded ramp with the loss of only the one aircraft.

Prime BEEF II, an 18-man plumbing team, arrived at Tan Son Nhut in September 1965. The team laid over 12,000 LF of water mains, plumbed 9 latrines, installed 450 LF of sewer mains, installed 5 septic tanks and 1350 LF of leaching fields. Many other additions to the water and sewage system were also completed.


Prime BEEF III, 225 men on 6 teams from as many Commands, was deployed to Vietnam in October 1965. Assisting in the bed-down of the large numbers of personnel arriving daily, the teams erected "hootches" (temporary dormitories) and framed tents to accommodate 4,900 airmen, constructed 14 latrines, constructed over 54,000 SF of support facilities, placed over 3000 cu. yds. of concrete, and prepared a base and placed 96,200 sq. yds. of PSP (pierced steel plank). The teams worked in conjunction with the Base Civil Engineers on many other projects. Due to the lack of skilled labor, security problems, etc., indigenous labor supplemented the teams only to a minor degree.

Prime BEEF IV, a 4-man POL assistance team, also arrived in October. The team was attached to the AFRCE-Saigon to help plan, program, and assist in the installation of the mushrooming POL requirements.

Prime BEEF VI, a revetment team of 29 men from MAC, arrived in RVN in Jan 1966. As of 4 February 1600 LF of revetments had been erected.

In his welcoming address to incoming teams, Colonel W. F. Dolby, Civil Engineer, 2nd A.D., stated "We are living off Prime BEEF." The accomplishments of the teams in helping keep Civil Engineering abreast of the build-up conclusively proves his statement. And to continue abreast of the situation 271 personnel on 10 additional teams for construction and revetment erection were being deployed or had been requested in February 1966.

Another first occurred in early February with the deployment of the 554th and 555th Civil Engineering (Heavy Repair) Squadrons to Phan Rang and Cam Ranh Bay. These 400-man squadrons, almost doubling the total number of civil engineering personnel in-country, will upgrade facilities at several airfields. (See Project RED HORSE on pg 2 this issue—Ed.)

The Prime BEEF Teams and Civil Engineering (HR) squadrons are rapidly creating a new image for Air Force Civil Engineering. Their quick reaction time, skills, and authorization to complete MCP, P-341, and O&M projects are providing Commanders in Vietnam vital facilities on a timely basis and proving we "Can Do--Will Do." 

Lt Col Arnold, Head of the Department of Engineering Orientation, Civil Engineering Center, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, was assigned to Vietnam on TDY for 4 months as Chief of eight Prime BEEF teams. A 1947 USMA graduate, he has an MSCE from Texas A&M University and is a Registered PE in Louisiana. He enlisted in the Air Corps in 1943. Prior to 1954 he flew fighters with a combat team in Korea. Later service included the USMA; Lincoln, Nebr. SATAF, and King Salmon, Alaska.

