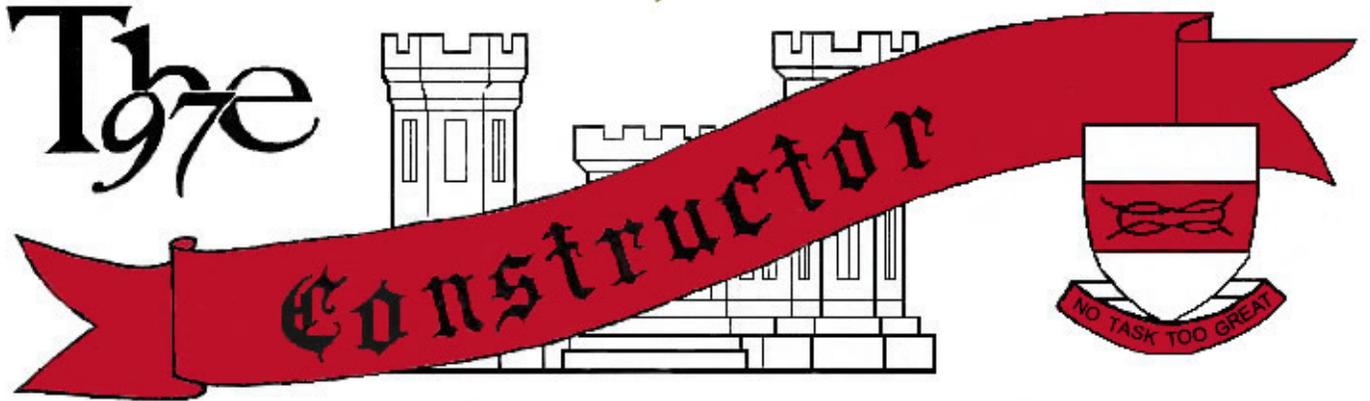


Fort Riley, Kansas



Transcribed by MAJ (Ret) Larry L. Castleman
Re-published by CPT (Ret) Donald M. Ricks, Webmaster, 97th EBC

SEASONS GREETINGS

The coming Christmas and New Year holidays are just ahead of us. It is a time for rejoicing and happiness and traditionally a time for gift giving.

Whatever material gift we choose, it will be inadequate to express our true feeling and, more important, this gift will shortly be worn out and eventually discarded.

One gift which is readily available, one which is most cherished because it is in such short supply, one which is priceless but within the reach of everyone's pocketbook and one that is not easily worn out is the gift of sincere love. This is the real gift of the Three Wise Men.

This is the real gift from the Battalion personnel who participated in Operation Snowflake. This is the real gift of the Drummer Boy to the Infant Child. This is the real gift of Christmas; Love of God, Love of Man, and Love of Country.

We are indeed fortunate in being in the U.S. this Christmas, in the greatest country on earth, in a society that acknowledges peace as more important than glory and the rights of man more important than any ideology.

The Christmas season is an expression of the hope of all people for peace and fellowship. I ask each of you this Christmas to join with my wife and I during the Holidays in spreading this gift under every Christmas tree. May we wish you a most Joyful and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

s/Albert A Dupont
LTC ALBERT A DUPONT

OPERATION SNOWFLAKE

Thanks to the enthusiastic assistance from the wives of the 97th Engr Bn, Operation Snowflake recently snowballed its way to success. "Snowflake" is a project initiated by SFC Ray Martin of HHC and organized by Chaplain William Brander to collect money for a gigantic Christmas party for the members of this Bn and their dependents.

The entire Bn, with wives, got together at the Camp Forsyth EM Club and auctioned off over 50 pies and cakes baked and donated by the wives. Warrant Officer Richard Henry acted as Master of Ceremonies with 1LT David Jernigan assisting as auctioneer.

The first cake, which sold for \$12.00 went to members of the S-1 Section. Two hours later, the last cake was sold bringing the total amount collected to \$326.00. The highest bid for any one cake was \$54.00 from the NCO's of HHC. Running second were the officers who paid \$39.00 for an angel food cake. A cake in the shape of a castle with a "97" in red frosting went to SSG Williams of D Co for \$35.00. The men of D Co finished first in the number of cakes purchased by taking home over 25 cakes. After the sale was over many of the cakes found their way to the Johnson's Retirement home at 15 SW 13th St in Junction City. There they were presented to Miss Flora Pratt, supervisor, who is sure that many of the senior citizens would be pleased. In all, the whole event was a success.

CONSTRUCTOR

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(12-2-68.jpg: A hearty meal on a day of thanks.)

(12-3-68.jpg: Guests!)

(12-4-68.jpg: We enjoyed it.)

(12-5-68.jpg: They prepared it.)

(12-6-68.jpg: Thanks men.)

NEW LT – NORMAN B OBERT

On 19 November 1968, 2LT Norman B Obert was welcomed to A Co. 2LT Obert was born 6 Dec 1944 in Cincinnati, OH, Dept of Highways. In Jun 1968 he graduated from the Univ of Cincinnati and while a student at the university was a member of the Reserve Officer Training Corps. After attending ROTC summer camp at Indiantown Gap Military Reservation he was commissioned on 25 Jul 1968. On 4 Sep 1968, 2LT Obert entered the service and was assigned to Engr Officer Basic course at Ft Belvoir, VA. After completing EOBC he was assigned to Ft Riley where he presently is the Operations Officer of A Co.

[DID NOT TYPE 'JANUARY DEADLINE,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

WHAT MAKES A HERO?

By SP5 Harold D Rawlings

Whenever we are engaged in any major war or conflict, there are always those men to whom we give recognition to for performing some great task; whether it is on the battle field, or on the job site. We often consider these men as being heroes, but heroism is not a planned act of valor. It is achieved by fast and intelligent thinking. One cannot say, “I’ll go out and kill one-hundred Viet-Cong today, and tomorrow I’ll become a hero.” Generally there’s a buddy lying out there on the battlefield wounded, or maybe a platoon of men surrounded by a band of Viet Cong.

A man’s first reaction is to save his buddy or his platoon of men, no matter how great the risk may be. Many men have died, not because they set out to become heroes, but merely because they felt as though to risk their lives was worth the efforts of saving another man’s life, or the lives of many others.

28 NOVEMBER 1968

By 2LT George J Serencko

Thanksgiving day weather was pleasant and clear – a perfect holiday. The mess halls of the 97th Engr Bn were bustling with a very rare sight (for Army Mess Halls). Young children were scampering around the tables and chairs. Wives and girlfriends beautifully dressed enhanced the appearance of the chow line. The ordinarily fatigue clad soldiers were in suits, sport coats and blues. It was a rare occasion indeed.

The meal was great! Shrimp Cocktail, Roast Turkey with all the trimmings and of course Pumpkin Pie made the meal complete. The hard work of the mess sergeants and mess hall personnel was appreciated by all (especially the wives who had the day off for a change).

A moment of thankful prayer preceded the meal. After all that is what Thanksgiving is all about. We are very fortunate to be citizens of the United States. Many people go through a lifetime without even seeing a meal such as we had on Thanksgiving. Economic failure caused by both natural and insurgent reasons has taken its toll in many countries. Starving abused people are a common sight in these countries. We should be proud to be citizens of the United States.

(12-1-68.jpg: A reward for Dog-Gone Good Effort.)

We are proud to have such men assigned to the 97th Engr Bn. Here are a few of the men who have recently received citations by the direction of the President of the United States and the Secretary of the Army for their Meritorious achievements:

1. By the direction of the President, The Bronze Star Medal is awarded to SSG William L Todd, US Army for meritorious achievement in ground operations against hostile forces during the period Jun 1967 to Aug 1968, while serving with HHC Co, 35th Engr Bn.
2. By the direction of the Secretary of the Army, the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device is awarded to SP4 Cecil W Fusilier in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the RVN.
3. By the direction of the Secretary of the Army, the Army Commendation Medal is awarded to the following individuals for Meritorious Service during the periods indicated.
 - a. CWO Harold F Shields, USA, during the period Oct 1966 to Oct 1967 while serving with the USASC, RVN.
 - b. SFC Walter D Ingle, USA, during the period Oct 1966 to Mar 1968 while serving with the 1st Civil Affairs Co, 3rd Special Forces Gp (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Ft Bragg, NC.
 - c. SSG Jack Grundy, USA, during the period Sep 1966 to Feb 1968 while serving as NCO In Charge, Post Engr Activity, Ft Riley, KS.
 - d. SP5 Richard A Hodnett, USA, during the period Jun 1967 to May 1968 while serving with the 20th Engr Bde.
 - e. SP5 William J Hefner, USA, during the period May 1967 to May 1968 while serving with the 137th Engr Co, 18th Engr Bde, RVN.
 - f. SP4 James C Ferguson, Jr, USA, during the period Sep 1967 to Nov 1968 while serving with the 97th Engr Bn, Ft Riley, KS.
 - g. SP4 Leland J Neymeyer, USA, during the period Aug 1967 to Aug 1968 while serving with HQ, 70th Engr Bn, RVN.

CHOW TIME, LADIES

The morale went up and food went down as men of HQ Co, 97th Engr Bn hosted 31 attractive young ladies (yes, 18 to 21) in their unit mess hall 19 Oct 1968. The girls, from Omaha, NE, were at Ft Riley for the "Latin American Beat" festival and dance at the Custer Hill Service Club. The director of the group complimented SP6 Donald L Landrum on the very fine meal his cooks prepared for the occasion.

Invitations were extended for the girls to dine with the unit again on their next visit. Here's hoping they accept.

ASSUMES COMMAND

At a ceremony in King Field House, COL Frank A LaBoon turned his command of the 138th Engr Gp (Const) to LTC Albert A Dupont, Commanding Officer of the 97th Engr Bn. COL LaBoon is being assigned as the Assistant Chief of Staff, 1st Logistical Command, Republic of Vietnam.

To officiate the duties of the Commanding General, COL H. D. Balliett, Deputy Post Cmdr & Chief of Staff, accepted the Group's colors from COL LaBoon and presented them to LTC Dupont.

Among the distinguished guests attending the ceremony was BG John A Seitz (Ret), the former Commanding General of Ft Riley.

MESS HALL AWARD

Through the able leadership of SFC Blankenship, and his assistant SP6 Peterson, the mess hall of Co A, 97th Engr Bn won the award for the best mess hall on post and in addition, has been nominated for the best mess hall in the 5th Army.

As the members of Co A can attest, the food at the mess hall is always well prepared. Besides having well prepared and nourishing food, the mess hall is always clean and neatly arranged.

SP5 Schmidt, SP5 Uber, SP4 Olson, PFC Alexander, PVT Rich, and PVT Bonilla are the rest of the members of SFC Blankenship's crew that prepared the exquisite delicacies to which members of A Co have become accustomed.

“TO BE SERGEANT FIRST CLASS”

BRIAN M HILL

It was a crisp Kansas afternoon, 13 Nov 1968, when LTC Dupont took over the work call formation of Co A. At the head of one of the platoons in the formation stood an unsuspecting SSG, his appearance was the standard of working maintenance man who is doing his job. And this was the reason the boss was here.

The Assistant Adjutant read, “To be Sergeant First Class, Hill, Brian M...” The smiles on everyone’s faces, although not proper according to FM 22-5, told the story in a nutshell of men under SFC Hill who respected his ability and leadership, of peers who admired his geniality and cooperativeness, and of seniors who have more than once relied on his knowledge and capabilities.

SFC Hill was born in Murchison, TX. In 1956, he graduated from High School, Memphis, TN. He worked in various jobs after High School, such as in the Forestry Commission at Little Rock, AR, as a metal worker in Memphis, and in the warehouse business for Ben Franklin stores. In 1957, SFC Hill joined the Reserves and even found time to marry Sandra, who now resides in Memphis with the rest of SFC Hill’s clan, a son and a daughter.

In 1960, SFC Hill went on active duty. He had his basic training at Ft Jackson, SC, and then joined the 64th Maint Co at Ft Bragg, NC. In 1961, Karlsruhe, Germany was his home as the 620th Maint Co first used his welding skill, but then found a better job for him as a Platoon Sergeant. He was SGT Hill already. In 1964, the 178th Engr Co in Ft Lewis, WA obtained the talents of SFC Hill. Here he held many jobs, from Assistant Platoon Sergeant to Bn Material Readiness NCO for the 63rd Ord Bn. In this unit, the grade of SSG was awarded.

The year 1967 found SFC Hill moving to Long Binh, RVN, with his unit. Within three months, however, his unit deactivated. It was then that SFC Hill and his platoon formed the nucleus of the activated 94th Maint Co.

March 1967 found our subject in Ft Bliss, TX. And finally, in Feb 1968, Brian H Hill stepped from the plane in Rhine Main, bound for Pirmasens and the 97th. SFC Hill has held the post since.

It is obvious from this brief resume that our hero has not let grass grow under his feet, but from this writer’s point of view, and from that of many, many others, the 97th has been a better place to live with this man around. It is this kind of man that makes working, yes, even living, worthwhile.

COL LABOON “HONORED”

If at all startled, the Commanding Officer of the 138th Engr Group did not make the condition apparent as he stepped from his home 4 Dec 68 and found a 5-ton dump truck waiting to transport him to the Ft Riley Officer’s Club. Braving the chill, COL Frank A LaBoon mounted the vehicle via a red and white stairway and was whisked away with a royal entourage of military police sedans and jeeps carrying the COL’s Bn Cmdr’s. Upon arrival at the Officer’s Club, the honored guest was “DUMPED” before 20 feet high engineer castle, which decorated the entrance. Joined by his wife Bonnie, the departing Commander made a grand entrance, cheered by the officers of the 138th Gp and their ladies. Yellow engineer hard hats had been placed on their heads; Mrs LaBoon’s decorated with flowers.

The interior of the club was elaborately decorated with the crests and colors of the organizations represented. Clever cartoons characterizing COL LaBoon decorated the walls of the Gold Room, and a cocktail bar in another part of the club was flanked by two castle like towers. Mrs LaBoon was then presented with a gift of a silver service tray from the officers of the group. A second gift of an ornate exterior decorator lamp was presented by representatives of the Post Engr’s. COL LaBoon was presented a brass engineer castle with the crests of all Bn’s within the group affixed.

After the excellent dinner, LTC Delmas V Lippard (541st), Master of Ceremonies, introduced the guests at the head table. COL Howard D Balliet set in for the Commanding General, who was unable to attend. A light dissertation on COL LaBoon’s efficiency report, which included remarks such as, “able to leap tall buildings at a single bound.” Was included in COL Balliet’s address.

Gracious appreciation and the relating of experiences that highlighted his tour of duty at Ft Riley, were included in COL LaBoon's address.

A pleasurable evening was had by all. The tremendous success of the evening was due to cooperation and enthusiastic assistance from all units within the 138th Engr Gp.

BASKETBALL

C Co again proved its superiority on the basketball court by taking first place and losing only one game in the recently completed 97th Engr Bn Basketball League.

Last year Chargin' Charlie was far and away the class of the 97th in basketball. However, this year Charlie's margin of excellence was quite slim. The only blemish on their record was a 42-32 loss to the HQ's five. Charlie jumped off to a quick 10-0 lead, as they were paced by SP5 Pincock, but the Head Shed came back to trail by only 16-15 at halftime. As the second half began, HQ's opened up a torrid fast break, led by SP4 Tolton and SP5 Prichard; HQ's built up a commanding lead.

In other League action; A Co, of football fame, got off to a good start by beating HQ Co 43-42 in the first game of the year. However, A Co, with the loss of SSG Green, failed to live up to expectations and soon lost three games. D Co, although winning only two games, was never out of the games until the final minutes. The Delta Devils were headed by SP5 Rutledge and PFC Christmas. The biggest disappointment of the recent season was the failure of B Co to even field a team. B Co ended up forfeiting all eight games. Are they the "Best?"

C Co, winner of the league champion, will now advance to the Post Co level Tourney. Charlie opens up on 4 Dec 68 at 1800 hrs at the Custer Hill Gym.

The league standings are:

<u>TEAM</u>	<u>WON</u>	<u>LOST</u>	<u>GB</u>
C Co	7	1	-
HQ	6	2	1
A Co	5	3	2
D Co	2	6	5
B Co	0	0	7

SERVING WELL

Every American has the responsibility of contributing to the defense of our great country. The amount of service given varies from individual to individual, and from family to family. The family of CW3 Charles Campbell is certainly serving well. Chief and Mrs Campbell were recently visited at Ft Riley by two sons who are both officers in the Army.

1LT Charles Edward Campbell was on leave enroute from Vietnam to his new assignment at Ft Leonard Wood, MO. Ed (the name used by his family) served in the 169th Engr Bn (Const) in RVN as a Platoon Leader of a construction platoon. During his 18 months in RVN, Ed received the Army Commendation Medal for his contribution to a road project. His new assignment at Ft Leonard Wood is Co Cmdr, C Co, 4th Bn, 4th Tng Bde. Ed is single and a graduate of Verdun High School, Verdun, France. He will be 22 in Feb.

Ed's younger (but bigger) brother, Mark Campbell, was home at the same time. Mark received his warrant officer appointment and wings as a helicopter pilot on 5 Oct 68. Mark is also single and will be 20 in Feb. His first assignment is with the 3rd Inf Div in Kitzingen, Germany making scouting and patrolling flights.

Both young men were welcomed to Ft Riley by COL Frank A LaBoon, 138th Engr Gp Cmdr and LTC Albert A Dupont, 97th Engr Bn Cmdr. The two commanders were nearly as proud of the three Campbell men as their mother and wife, Louise Campbell, who thoroughly enjoyed the gathering.

NEW PROJECT

Presently C Co is supporting the POR School. The Earth Moving Platoon's new project consists of maintaining the unpaved roads in Camp Forsyth, which are used by the POR School for field problems. Some of the roads are in rather poor condition. One road is quite narrow and has very sharp curves. There is mud several feet deep in some spots. There will be drainage problems to be dealt with. Earth fill will have to be brought in. It is hoped that gravel may be obtained in order that a good road surface may be constructed. As much equipment as possible will be used on the project, mainly because projects on which equipment such as graders, dozers and scrapers can be

used are few and far between. It is hoped the men will enjoy the chance to operate their equipment for a change. [DID NOT TYPE 'DESERVICE - THE PRICE,' AS NO HISTORICAL VALUE.] AS NO 97TH

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