

The Constructor



THIS MEANS HAT WE ARE NO LONGER SHORT... WE ARE NEXT...

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

CHARLIE'S SAGA

Shortly before Christmas '67, the 97th Engr received official direction from the Dept of the Army to prepare for prepositioning of its TO&E equipment and deployment to CONUS in Jul '68. Destination: Ft Riley, KS.

Six months later, with 35 days left in Europe, 'Charlie' Co was ready to move.

On Monday morning, 3 Jun 68, all eyes were on Co C as it moved its equipment into 5th Maintenance Bn Prepo-Turnover inspection area. Two and one half days later it had completed its mission with uncanny style and ease. Months of diligence and long hours of hard work had paid off. C Co was FIRST again.

As with all memorable accomplishments, one tends to remember only the moments of success, and forgets the objects and problems that had to be overcome; the frustrations and fatigue of the daily grind of preparation; the holiday and weekend work; also the many difficult and unpleasant things, which had to be done along the road to achievement.

The rumors and speculation are over now for 'Charlie.' All of their equipment belongs to 5th Maintenance. Thanks to CWO Lou Bisette, SSG George Chavis, all mechanics and parts clerks thanks also to all the Platoon Commanders, Platoon SGTs, Squad and Section Leaders and all the men of 'Charlie' Company.

Their intelligence, skill, and devotion to duty have made the job of redeployment preparation a memorable experience for them. It also reflects the resourcefulness and flexibility with which this unit works. Needless to say there have been many decisions made, changed, reversed, and left unmade which have directly effected their work, but the esprit of 'Charging Charlie' although a little low at times was never broken.

The next month will see them involved in the final details of the movement of the 97th Engr to Ft Riley and the closing of their facilities here in Europe.

FORT RILEY OR V.R.B.?

Personnel desiring to complete an overseas tour in Europe rather than going back to CONUS with the Bn,

have the opportunity to re-enlist for the following options:

- Re-enlist for 249th EBC, Karlsruhe, Germany
- Re-enlist for 293rd EBC, Baumholder, Germany
- Re-enlist for choice of geographical location.
- Army Career Group, New MOS, (OJT) in Germany or Italy.

Personnel having any questions should contact their Co Re-enlistment NCO or see our Bn Re-enlistment SGT located in HQ Co, Rm 101 or call PM8143.

If you have the following MOS you can draw Pro Pay.

- 51B (P-1) \$50.00
- 62B (P-1) \$50.00
- 91C (P-2) \$75.00

Qualifications are:

- You must be school trained.
- You must attain a score of 70 or higher in your Pro Pay Test.
- You must be in a Career Status totaling not less than six years active service.

If the only drawback is paragraph 1c, above, I recommend you see the man who knows, YOUR BN RE-ENLISTMENT NCO.

[DID NOT TYPE 'EDITORIAL - SACRIFICE KNOWS NO HOLIDAYS,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

YOUR CONDUCT

By 1LT Wayne Holland

What is our conduct during the remainder of our time in Germany? Are you ready to hear the responsibility of representing the U.S. of America, the U.S. Army, and this unit in Germany?

We are prepared to move out of Germany in a fashion, which will present few problems to you as individuals. The question which remains are: Are you prepared not to create problems for yourself through misconduct and poor judgment? You represent all of the institutions I just mentioned by association. The most important thing you represent is yourself.

You are all young men. Most of you have just left your families and started life on your own with you enlistment or induction into the Army. If you don't realize it now, someday you will. Your years in the service of your country not only insured the existence

of a secure place for you and your family to live in the future, but it also gives you the same background as the greatest people in our country, that of; "Those WHO HAVE SERVED." I am not trying to say that success or failure in life is commensurate with serving in the Armed Forces. Service is however a period of your life, which no one will be able to dispute, when you say you worked hard, lived hard, and for some of us, fought hard. Take pride in your service. Take pride to yourself. Conduct yourself as gentlemen. Don't be duped into something, which will represent you as an undesirable individual.

Remember to take care of your fellow soldier. We all have periods of over-indulgence, depression or involvement in a bad situation, through no fault of your own. This is the time to jump in with both feet and get our buddy back home. Police your own ranks. Cooperate and rotate. We want all of us to leave here with a continued outstanding record of conduct and efficiency.

OLE U.S. OF A

On 27 Jun 68, one Officer and 25 Enlisted Men from 'Charging Charlie Co' of the 97th Engr departed Germany as a contingent of the 97th Engr's Advance Control Gp. This contingent departed Rhein-Main Air Base in Frankfurt for the good ole U.S. of A, namely Ft Riley, KS.

Prior to reporting to Ft Riley, KS, this contingent will have 15 days delay en route to Ft Riley. All personnel who departed on 27 Jun 68 as members of the Advance Control Gp will arrive at Ft Riley no later than 2400 hrs, 13 Jul 68, two days prior to the arrival of the main body of the 97th Engr's from Pirmasens, Germany.

The Advance Control Gp idea was formulated in the 97th Engr's Operation Reforger planning committee to enable a certain percentage of enlisted and officer personnel of the 97th Engr's to take leave prior to the arrival of the Main Body, thus hopefully eliminating the possibilities of a personnel drainage due to leave once the unit returns to the States or of having to refuse certain personnel their accrued leave time due to shortage of required manpower at the new duty station.

Personnel of Charlie Co participating in the Advance Control Gp are: 2LT Hubert M Nance, Jr, SGT Walters C Hopkins, SGT Boyd H Havener, SP5 Garland W Platz, SP4 Adelbert L Morrow, SP4 Billy D Leach, SP4 Melvin G Frady, SP4 Danny L Hecht, SP4 William R Hill, SP4 Allan N Hickey, SP4 Robert W Zollinger, SP4 James R Gunning, SP4 Thomas Parslow, SP5 Jerry Lively, SP4 John W Willson III, SP5 Daniel Vela, SP4 Steven Briskar, SP4 Ralph Brandon, SP4 Billy W Cathey, SP4 Archie Lamb, SP4 Richard Cole, SP4 Larry Little, SP4 Calvin King, SP4 Keith Weed, SP4 Rufus D Martinez, and SP4 Larry Wallace.

CONSTRUCTOR

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EDDIE’S PLACE

(06-68-1.jpg: Now I know why some guys say, “Hey Cruitt, I’ve got more time in the Chow Line that you’ve got in the Army.”

(06-68-2.jpg: CANNOT READ THE CAPTION. PHOTO OF A CHOW LINE.)

(06-68.3.jpg: CANNOT READ THE CAPTION. PHOTO OF A CHOW LINE.)

OPERATION BASIC (HISTORY OF THE 97TH ENG BN)

The Korean War broke out on 25 Jun 1950. With this development came the rebirth of many former units. On 11 Sep 1950, the Bn was designated the 97th Engineer Construction Battalion. Official reactivation came on 1 Oct 1950 at Ft Leonard Wood, MO. The Bn was part of the 5th Army’s 20th Engr Brigade.

Three units located at Ft Belvoir, VA, the 94th Engr Const Bn, the 9829th Army Service Unit and the 7071st Army Service Unit provided the cadre for the new 97th. The first group assigned arrived at Ft Leonard Wood on 15 Sep 1950. On 3 Oct 1950 the remainder of the cadre and the balance of the assigned recruits arrived, and the 97th had attained its authorized strength of 638 enlisted men.

Early in Oct, under COL McDaniel’s close supervision, the unit cadre began its training. Upon their arrival at this post, located high up in the Ozarks some 130 miles southwest of St Louis, the cadre was put through a refresher course in the basic fundamentals of Engr training.

A new experience was in store for the new recruits from all over the country. 16 Oct 1950 was the first day of ‘Operation Basic,’ the name given to the nine-week basic training cycle to be conducted by the 97th. Draftees and RA’s alike were subjected to the booming voice of the 1SG, KP and other common duties, and the daily chaotic awakening at reveille.

The first six weeks of training covered the Basic Infantry subjects, with the remaining three weeks devoted to an introduction to the Basic Engr Training. Numerous obstacles, many unusual even to the Army, were encountered, in these first nine weeks. Training facilities were sorely needed; sites were practically non-existent. This could be attributed to the fact that the post itself had been reactivated only a short time before the units had been assigned to Ft Leonard Wood.

The rifle qualification records of the troops provided an excellent example of the extent to which the post was unprepared for its training mission. During the record firing only about forty percent of the Bn qualified. The balance of the troops had to return at a later date to re-fire. Advance detachments were sent to the range each time to repair and improve the firing range.

The men of the new 97th got their first taste of field duty when subfreezing temperatures were recorded during the first all night bivouac. The next several days of the exercise saw steady daytime rains followed by freezing nights. “Operation Mud Ball” was in full swing by the time the toughened engineer soldiers were given the opportunity to swim, wade, and crawl through the infiltration course while machine gun rounds whizzed over their heads.

The Infantry training cycle was thus brought to a close. It is interesting to note that 17 years later to the month, the 97th would undergo a similar “Operation Mud Ball” at bridge training on the Rhine River. A job well done, COL McDaniel arranged a weekend excursion to St Louis.

The next job in line was to extend the training to the engineering skills. This phase included practice on construction of Bailey bridge, roads and airfields; as well as training in mine warfare techniques. After initial screening and classification, some men were awarded their MOS numbers while others were sent to the Engr School at Ft Belvoir for training in special skills. Still others were sent to Ft Riley, KS.

The biggest problem encountered during this engineer training cycle was the lack of transportation at Ft Leonard Wood. The Bn had one two-ton truck and a one-quarter ton jeep available, so the private automobiles of the Officers and NCO’s were used extensively. The fact that personnel of HQ Co were engaged fully in this training cycle prevented these

men from learning and performing their normal staff functions.

The New Year saw a drain on experience as many NCO's were placed in other newly organized units. The first quarter of 1951 saw a tremendous influx of recruits. By Apr, the morning report showed 37 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 2,015 enlisted men of the 97th Engr. At his time many brigade size units were providing replacements for overseas units and the 97th was busy training such men.

Having commanded the 97th since its rebirth, COL McDaniel was relieved Jun 1951 and was succeeded by LTC John A Crawford just as bivouac and field-testing season began. The first bivouac was another two weeks of mud training, but the weather the rest of the summer was favorable. By the end of Aug the battalion was performing in peak form, and on 6 Sep 1951 the alert for overseas shipment was received. The 97th was attached to the 950th Engr Aviation Gp on 10 Sep 1951 as the men prepared to take their final stateside leave. Thus the yearlong training had been terminated, and the 97th Engineers set out eagerly to write the new European chapter of their proud history.

FINAL TOUCHES

(06-68-4.jpg: What do ya mean, "Where's the spark plugs?"

(06-68-5.jpg: OD Can, OD Can, holder of all, who is the best painter of us all?)

(06-68-6.jpg: What do ya mean it's wound backwards!)

(06-68-7.jpg: OK, give it the gas! This toothache is killin' me!)

BREAK TIME

(06-68-8.jpg: One part gasoline, two parts oil, and one part cleaning solvent, why?)

(06-68-9.jpg: Hey Pop, how about slippin' a shot of Scotch in that!)

(06-68-10.jpg: Smile guys, I think were being watched!)

[DID NOT TYPE 'TOO HOT FOR COMFORT,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

HELP WANTED – MALE OR FEMALE

Anyone desiring a good job in the field of Journalism; or having an interest in publishing newspapers?

We have an opening on our 'Constructor' staff. The only promises are lots of work. But to the right person promotions may come a little faster.

If you are interested, come to the 97th EBC, S-3 Section, or call for more information. The number to call in the Pirmasens area is PM 7473. Ask for SP5 Fullman. For those in the Ft Riley area, the address to write to is: 'Constructor,' ATTN: SP5 Fullman, HQ & HQ Co, 97th EBC, APO NY 09189

HOMeward BOUND

(06-68-11.jpg: Scene of happiness and envy as the Advance Control Gp departs for Rhein Main Airport.)

(06-68-12.jpg: Don't look now, but I think you're supposed to play that thing!)

(06-68-13.jpg: This is one line I don't mind waiting in.)

(06-68-14.jpg: And by the way, your only authorized one bottle of champagne!)

FLIGHT K-740

(06-68-15.jpg: Gee, I wonder if this thing fly's?)

(06-68-16.jpg: OK guys, act nonchalant!)

(06-68-17.jpg: Hey you quit hoggin' the stewardess!)

(06-68-18.jpg: Hey it does fly!)

CLASSMATES? (NEW PERSONNEL IN THE 97TH EBC)

SP4 Morris, Victor E	Webb City, MO
SP5 Landrum, Donald	Louisville, KY
PFC Ingle, Stanley G	Thornton, IA
SSG McComb, Charles B	Big Timber, MT
SSG Metzler, Harry E	Newport, RI
PFC Skinner, David W	Calamut City, IL
SFC Martin, Ray F Sr	Liberty, SC
SFC Ingle, Walter D	Vale, NC
SGT Clark, Bruce	Cortez, CO
SGT Cole, John S	Seattle, WA
SSG Lamie, Charles R	Bay Springs, VA

SP4 Epley, Charles I Short Timer, Germany

[DID NOT TYPE 'CHAPLAINS CORNER,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

97TH EBC PROMOTION

TO NAME

HQ Co

CPT Hemsley, James M
 1LT Keppel, Keith W
 SP4 Brown, Richard C
 SP4 Velez, Sol A
 SP4 Van Sickle, James R
 SP4 Wilson, Kirk D
 SP4 Zurawski, William A

[DID NOT TYPE 'LAST WISH,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

[DID NOT TYPE 'TRAFFIC SIGNS ARE CHANGING,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

SPORTS IN THE BATTALION

SOFTBALL NEWS

Charging Charlie Co seems to be at it again in softball and bowling as they have in other sports – on top. In softball, Charlie has had eight exhibition games, winning seven. Due to the REFORGER movement, Charlie has only played four scheduled games so far. On the 17th of June, Charlie defeated HQ by a score of 11 to 3 and 17 to 9. HQ then challenged Charlie to another game the same day. With Charlie winning by a score of 11 to 3 the first game and the second game was called at the bottom of the 7th inning with Charlie leading by a score of 11 to 7. Since HQ lost to Charlie four straight games, they decided not to challenge Charlie again for there is no hope of HQ winning over Charlie.

Among the seven exhibition games, was a double victory over the 59th Ordnance by scores of 19 to 11 and 11 to 6.

BOWLING NEWS

Charlie Co's bowling team is doing very well. Now they are tied for 1st place with Delta Co. As of 24 Jun, the bowling averages for Charlie's team are:

SP4 Weldon L Dodson Jr	173
SP4 Frank Pittz	170
SP4 Dale E Chase	133
PFC Keith E Weed	147
PFC Gary P Fuchs	115

[DID NOT TYPE 'UNCLE SHORT,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

A Co

SP5 Causemaker, James R
 SP5 Nelson, David C
 SP4 Lee, David J
 SP4 Olson, Raymond B
 SP4 Ramirez-Yorro, Pedro

B Co

SP5 Leach, Randall W
 SP4 Adamski, Marvin
 SP4 Cervantez, Benny E
 SP4 Cook, Jimmy A
 SP4 Dickel, George L
 SP4 Jones, Kenneth G

C Co

CW2 Bissette, Louis
 SP5 Saunders, George R
 SP4 Dodson, Weldon L
 SP4 Dollins, Randy M
 SP4 King, Vernon L
 SP4 Means, Earlie

D Co

SP4 Bradley, Charles R
 SP4 Carroll, William E
 SP4 Castillo, Andrew A
 SP4 Kenworthy, George J
 SP4 McGrath, William J
 SP4 Perry, Michael J

[DID NOT TYPE 'RESPECT LAWS,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

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