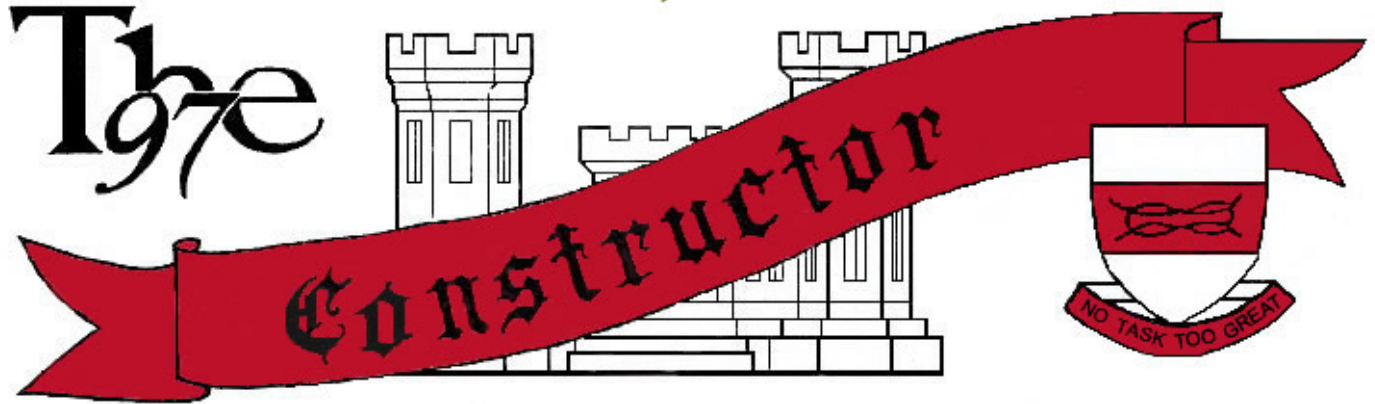
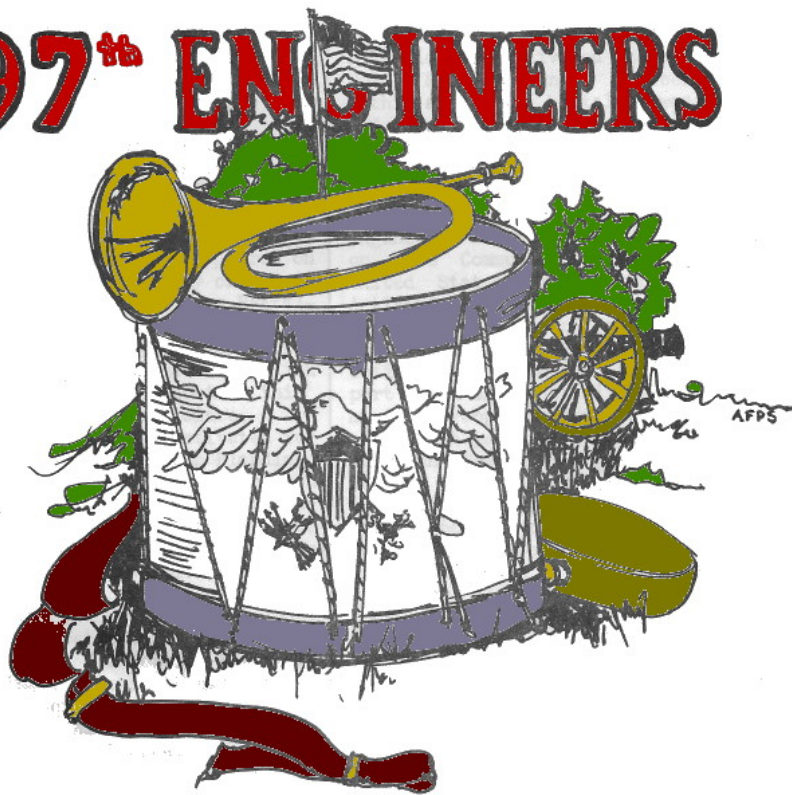


Fort Riley, Kansas



97th ENGINEERS



1933 - 1969

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

97TH CELEBRATES LONG HISTORY

The 4th of Oct will be celebrated with all the old-time fever of the 4th of Jul, as the 97th Engr Bn (Const), celebrates its 36th birthday.

Festivities will begin at 0830 with a parade and Award Ceremony at Patty-Flint Field. What follows should be eight hours of uninterrupted fun.

Various contest between the companies highlight the day with the Commanding Officers and Top SGT's taking the majority of the punishment. Refreshments will be served all day, with a large luncheon scheduled for the noon hour.

Available for the children will be an Army Personnel Carrier. For interested families and friends, an orderly room, mess hall and barracks will be open to the public.

The battalion originally appeared on the rolls of the Regular Army on 1 Oct 1933 as the 56th Engr Bn (Separate). Over four years later, on 1 Jan 1938, the unit was redesigned as the 97th Engr Bn (Separate) and it has retained this numerical designation ever since.

The battalion was first activated for full military service at Camp Blanding, FL, on 1 Jun 1941, as the nation was preparing for the war, which was soon to include the United States. Two re-designations occurred within 13 months; on 22 Feb 1942 the unit was reorganized as the 97th Engr Regiment (General Service) and on 1 Aug 1942, the official designation became the 97th Engr General Service Regiment.

At this time the regiment had been in Alaska a few months and was beginning to construct the Alaskan portion of the world famous Alcan Highway. From this tough, but successful mission, the unit redeployed to New Guinea for the duration of WWII. For these operations in the American Pacific Theater, the regiment earned the Meritorious Unit Streamer.

After the war the unit was reorganized as the 97th Engr General Service Bn in the Philippine Islands, where on 15 Mar 1948, the unit was deactivated.

With the outbreak of a new war in Korea just two years later, the newly designated 97th Engr Const Bn was activated at Ft Leonard Wood, MO on 1 Oct 1950. Within a year the Bn was notified for overseas shipment and on 23 Nov 1951, arrived in Europe.

While serving in France the Bn had HQ's at Toul and Verdun, under the First European Command,

Army Engineers and then the Advance Section on the Communication Zone (ADSEC), United States Army Europe (USAREUR). Activities of the 97th primarily supported the mission of the Theater Army Support Command (TASCOM) in forming a chain of posts linking the seaport towns of France with the main element of troops stationed in Germany.

After 14 years of continuous operations in France, the greatest duration for the 97th in any single location, official notification was received on 1 Mar 1966, to relocate under USAREUR to Pirmasens, Germany. While engaged in construction projects necessitated by French Location (FRELOC), the main body of the 97th Engr Bn (Const) arrived in Germany in Mar 1967. Later that year, on 20 Dec 1967, the order to redeploy to Ft Riley, KS was received.

In Feb 1969, LTC Thomas E Gioiosa became Commanding Officer, 97th Engineers and has headed the organization to the present.

[DID NOT TYPE 'V.A. DEADLINES,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

[DID NOT TYPE 'A NEW CREASE IN AN OLD FACE,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

[DID NOT TYPE, 'LEGAL RESIDENCE,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

CONSTRUCTOR

The Constructor is an authorized Army Newspaper published monthly by HQ, 97th Engr Bn, Ft Riley, KS 66442, under the staff supervision of the Information Officer. Contributions from readers are solicited but publication depends upon the discretion of the editor. Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Dept of the Army.

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Bn in Germany at the rank of E7. There he participated in construction projects “all over Europe.”

During the Berlin build-up of 1962, MSG Turner was once again stateside, this time with the 62nd Engr Bn at Ft Leonard Wood, MO. It was there that he reenlisted for the post engineers as Project NCO.

After a tour in Thailand with the 809th Engr Bn, he returned to the states this time at Ft Eustis, VA with the 714th Rail Bn. In Apr 66, it was back to Germany, this time with the 293rd Engr Bn.

From Apr 68, to the present, MSG Turner served in Vietnam as a construction operations sergeant. It was there that he made the rank of MSG.

Among his many awards during his time in service are the Bronze Star; Vietnam Service Medal; Vietnam Campaign Medal; Korean Service Medal; Berlin Blockade-Humane Action Medal; Occupants Medal (Germany); three Meritorious Unit Citations, President of Korea Unit Citation, and 5th Class Good Conduct Ribbon.

A family man as well as a top sergeant, he and his wife, Bridgitte, have four children. Jerry, the oldest at 20, is currently on a four year ROTC Scholarship at Kansas State. Also attending Kansas State is their daughter Ellen, 18. Their two other children are Michael, 16 and a five-year-old daughter, Sharon.

[DID NOT TYPE ‘IT’S UP TO YOU,’ AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

[DID NOT TYPE ‘ARMY ROTC OFFERED AT 283 COLLEGES THIS FALL,’ AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

[DID NOT TYPE ‘WAC CPT RIVALS ANNIE OAKLEY,’ AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

NEW SERGEANT MAJOR FOR 97TH ENGR BN

MSG William B Turner became the acting SGM of the 97th Engr Bn, 1 Sep 69, after SGM Joseph A Shehan retired.

Entering the Army Air Corps in 1946, MSG Turner took his “Basic Tng” at Keelser Field, MS. In Oct of the same year he was attached to the 850th Aviation Engr Bn until the unit was deactivated in 1947. He also participated in the famous Berlin Airlift in 1948 with the 61st Installation Squadron. Shortly after this, he was discharged and returned to his civilian life of farming near Swainsboro, GA.

With the opening of the Korean War, MSG Turner was called back to active duty and promoted to SFC. He spent the majority of the conflict at the Replacement Depot at Puson, Korea.

In 1954, MSG Turner got his first taste of the Corps of Engr’s when he went to Ft Belvoir, VA with the 575th Engr Bn. It was there that he completed a 15-week course at a construction supervisory school. After the 575th was deactivated in 1957 he was assigned to the 588th Engr Bn where he was battalion operations sergeant.

A promotion and change of scenery was a welcome relief in Aug 1958 as he was placed with the 94th Engr

[DID NOT TYPE ‘DOMESTIC ACTION – CAN YOU HELP?’ AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

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NEW PROJECT DUE B COMPANY

In addition to the tank trails project, B Co has recently taken charge of building an Ammunition Supply Point (ASP). Circular in construction, the ASP will have to provide an adequate surface to stockpile heavy ammo. The project should only take about a month, because shelter will not be built.

For the month of Oct, B Co can expect a new project – construction of concrete tank targets. According to CPT Walter Ferguson, Jr, the new CO, B Co, there will be about 30 targets built.

WORKING AT ROCK QUARRY

Sculptors are few and far between in A Co, yet the rock quarry is the most likely place to find the platoons at work. Located near Moon Lake, the quarry is one of the noisier places around. Here, the rock is cut out of the ground with frontend loaders, hauled and stock piled for future battalion operations.

In addition to the quarry operations, A Co has been assisting Delta with the tank trails. Here field maintenance is a consistent problem due to inclement weather, flat tires and just plain rust.

Steps in area beautification for Alpha has lead to a little imagination – turquoise doors – that’s right, turquoise!!! To date this is at least one unique feature scratched up for A Co.

[DID NOT TYPE ‘A PRIVILEGE AND AN HONOR,’ AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

[DID NOT TYPE ‘MEDICAL ENLISTEES MAY GAIN E-4-E5 RANK,’ AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

[DID NOT TYPE ‘THE LAST STRAW,’ AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

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[DID NOT TYPE ‘TOP GUN STILL IN ARMY,’ AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

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CPT FERGUSON TAKES COMMAND OF B COMPANY

CPT Walter Ferguson, Jr assumed command of B Co in ceremonies 8 Sep 68. He replaces the previous CO, 1LT Erling J Varland, who is to soon ETS.

CPT Ferguson received his Basic Tng at Ft Benning, GA, his AIT at Ft Ord, CA, and graduated through OCS from the Corps of Engr School at Ft Belvoir, VA in 1967.

While serving in Vietnam between Jul 68 and Aug 69, he acquired the Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medal

The officers and men of the 97th welcome him to our battalion as a worthy addition.

PRE-FAB SHELTERS CONTINUE

C Co continues to work on the tank trails, though completion is now in sight. Heading up the project is SSG Todd’s Earthmoving Platoon.

Various other projects have been taking up C Co’s time, not the least of which are the many pre-fabricated shelters being built at Custer Hill. The construction there is under the supervision of SSG Bolton. The shelters are designed to be bolted together with simple tools and are covered with a galvanized surface. They should be ideal for giving maximum coverage with a minimum of construction time.

D COMPANY CHOSEN “BEST” FOR JULY-AUGUST

[DID NOT TYPE THE ARTICLE AS IT IS TOO FADED TO READ.]

97TH PRAISED FOR ROTC SUPPORT

The 138th Engr Gp and 97th Engr Bn were praised for their work during the 1969 Ft Riley ROTC summer camp in a letter from the Deputy Camp Cmdr, COL John M Frassrand.

In his letter of appreciation, indorsed by MG Linton S Boatwright, COL Frassrand commended the officers and men of the 138th Engr Gp “for the outstanding manner” in which the support was carried out.

“This camp could not have received better support,” COL Frassrand said, “than that rendered by your units.”

“All personnel; cooks, administrative officers, supply sergeants, mail clerks, duty soldiers; no matter who or what their task, projected the same can-do, eager to please attitude.”

COL Frassrand headed up the massive ROTC Summer Camp at Camp Forsyth, which saw over 2,500 Cadets, complete their summer training.

D COMPANY FINISHES TANK TRAILS

Starting dead last in the tank trails race, D Co was a surprise winner. With most of the other companies only 94% finished, D Co completed the last of their allotted stretch on 18 Sep 69.

In an interview with 2LT Daniel L Wiggins, CO, D Co, he explained some of the difficulties involved. “The trails had to be cut through, ditches and culverts made for proper drainage, with the whole thing requiring packing and rolling.” “In addition to that,” he said, “about two miles had to be covered with

gravel. That combined with our usual support details such as post parades and CMMI Inspections, held us back considerably.”

In addition to the completion of the tank trails, D Co took over the Junior High School project from B Co. Asked to comment on the subject, LT Wiggins felt that perhaps “B Co wasn’t up to it.”

Area beautification continues in D Co with the building of headwalls on the drainage ditch. LT Wiggins was quick to point out that in an Engr Bn, it was surprising “the rest of the companies failed to have the same feature.”

Despite D Co’s poor showing in Jun, (last place) they were the top company for Jul-Aug (see article on page 14). For this and other reasons, LT Wiggins feels that Delta has seen the last of its “Dog Days” and is justified for putting their name on the hill.

NEW PERSONNEL

2LT David Schulz	B Co
MSG William B Turner	HHC
SFC John T McHargue	D Co
SSG John Lambertini	A Co
SSG Louis J Lawyer	D Co
SP6 Kenneth Nunamaker	HHC
SGT Carl D Krantz	B Co
SGT Albert C Ansel	HHC
SP5 George A Johnston	A Co
SP5 Lonnie C Stone	D Co
SP5 LeRoy H Lisk	HHC
SP5 David M Sellman	A Co
SP5 Richard W Cilley	HHC
SP5 Robert J Portrex	C Co
SP5 Robert L Giem	A Co
SP5 James R Lavalie	B Co
SP5 Richard L Leitner	A Co
SP5 Kenneth Brooks	HHC
SP4 Kendall H Westra	HHC
SP4 Robert McNeice	A Co
SP4 Pablo J Jacquez	C Co
SP4 Laverne H Lawrence	C Co
SP4 Martin D Grover	HHC
SP4 Patrick N Short	HHC
SP4 Mark E Smith	HHC
PFC Leonard Hutchinson	B Co
PFC John L Houston	HHC

PFC Floyd H Carr	B Co
PVT Dennis Griffith	C Co
PVT Donald J Rich	HHC
PVT Floyd D Gunsel	A Co
PVT David J Schultz	A Co
PVT Newton O Gish	B Co
PVT Frank A Cieslak, Jr.	C Co
PVT Millard L Isaac	C Co

PROMOTIONS

TO PFC

Thomas F O’Connor	A Co
-------------------	------

TO SP4

Dennis Thompson	A Co
Roy I Rutter	B Co
Authur J Boulis	B Co
Vincent Bonura	HHC
James E Achard	C Co

RE-UP RATE

SSG James DeMarcus reports that four men from the 97th Engr Bn reenlisted for the month of Sep. If you have any questions concerning reenlistment and your derived benefits, contact SSG DeMarcus at Bn HQ. The following men re-uped in Sep.

SP4 Carl E Krebs of B Co reenlisted for four years and chose Germany as his duty assignment.

SP4 Thomas O Clayton chose to reenlist for six years, with Vietnam as his duty assignment. SP4 Clayton is from C Co.

SP4 Darwin L Langley of D Co also reenlisted for six years, but chose his Present Duty Assignment (PDA) for the majority of the duration.

SP4 Henry B Robinson of HQ Co reenlisted 9 Sep for six years. As his choice of duty assignment, he chose Vietnam.

NEW ARRIVAL

If you were one of the lucky ones around Bn HQ 10 Sep, you probably got a free cigar from CPT Ronald M Wells, the Bn Executive Officer.

CPT Wells and his wife, Erica were the happy parents of a new baby girl, Kelly Marie, who weighed in at 7 pounds, 11 ½ ounces.

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

ACE'S HOLE

By SP5 Norm Viens

The Camp Forsyth Flag Football Tourney began on 8 Sep 69, with HHC, 97th Engr Bn putting the lid on HHC, 138th Gp with a 6-0 victory. Although the score was close, HHC, 97th blew many an opportunity to score. Terry McMahon of the 97th scored the only TD of the game, going all the way on the first play from scrimmage.

In the second game of the night, Mike Lucas and Otis West led A Co, 97th Engr to a victory over hapless D Co, 20-6. Lucas and West both took kickoffs all the way for touchdowns.

The very next evening, HHC, 97TH continued their winning ways by downing D Co by 20-6. William Craig from D Co threw a scare into HHC by returning the opening kickoff for a touchdown. HHC then came back and drove for a go-ahead TD, early in the first half, and kept the lead for the remainder of the game.

Then the showdown came on 15 Sep, HHC and A Co squared off. It turned out to be a real offensive battle. HHC took an early 14-0 lead, but A Co battled back to take a surprising 33-26 advantage with just seconds remaining. HHC proved worthy to the task by scoring as Terry McMahon took a pass in the end zone as time ran out. This set the stage, with the score 33-32 in favor of A Co, HHC went for the conversion, however, they were stopped on a very controversial call and the victory went to A Co.

These same two teams met again on 18 Sep in what was to be a carbon copy of the first game. This time A Co took the early lead 6-0 and held on. With just 35 seconds left in the game, Alpha scored, which made it 18-14 in their favor. Using their time to advantage, HHC beat the clock when Richard Jackson made a final outstanding catch in the end zone to make the score 21-18.

It appears as if A Co and HHC will advance to both the Camp Forsyth Championship and the Post Co Level Tourney. It was noted, with great

disappointment that B Co and C Co, of the 97th failed to enter a team in the league. Also, HHC, 138th Engr Gp dropped out of competition after losing their first two games. I am hereby-nominating Group's football team for the Flying Pickle Finger award for displaying the trait of outstanding sportsmanship. It may be wise for the 138th football team to read paragraph 43, Article 99, UCMJ, dated 1969.

The standings as of 22 Sep:

	<u>WINS</u>	<u>LOSS</u>
HHC, 97 th Engr Bn	3	1
A Co, 97 th Engr Bn	3	1
D Co, 97 th Engr Bn	1	3
HHC, 138 TH Gp *	0	2
HHC, 541 st Maint Bn *	-	-

* - Dropped out of league

[DID NOT TYPE 'OUTLOOK GOOD FOR OCT,' AS NO 97TH HISTORICAL VALUE.]

WHAT'S ON TAP

By Miss Elain Kneeus

With all the exciting and fun-filled things going on in Kansas, you wouldn't think that an article like this is necessary. Just the other day, Don Stillings of B Co amused his barracks for hours by rolling his sleeves up and down. Why, the possibilities for cheap thrills are unlimited. Think of the fun you could have between companies with simple contest – say, for instance, the company with the most belly-button lint for Oct.

There really are a few things to do for the troop willing to take a little initiative. One of these is to take advantage of Kansas State Univ in Manhattan. The Union Little Theater (The Magic Lantern Co) offers movies on the weekends that are not particularly outstanding, but the audience certainly is. The females usually out-number the males, which is more than can be said for the local Camp Forsyth facility.

Admittedly, the theater is for KSU students only, but unless you wear your fatigues or molest 30 or 40 co-eds, no one will know. The following are the shows coming up for Oct.

- Thur, 7:00 Admission .50 cents
- Oct 2 – Never Give a Sucker an Even Break (W. C. Fields)
- Oct 9 – The Cranes Are Flying (Russian)

Oct 16 – China-1/4 of Humanity
 Oct 23 – Weekend
 Oct 30 – Hunchback of Notre Dame

Fri and Sat at 7:00 and 9:30
 Oct 3-4 – The Great Race *
 Oct 10-11 – Harper
 Oct 17-18 – Two for the Road

Oct 24-25 – The Group *
 Oct 30-Nov 1 – The Grand Prix *

- - Time Change: 6:30 and 9:30

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