

# 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Light Equipment)

## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

### SUMMARY

- 25 February 1943 constituted in the Army of the United States as the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Light Equipment Company
- 5 May 1943 activated at Camp Maxey, Texas
- 25 October 1951 allotted to the Regular Army
- 1 June 1954 reorganized and redesignated as the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company
- 15 March 1956 inactivated in Korea
- 21 June 1963 activated at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas
- 26 July 1965 ordered to Cam Rhan Bay, Vietnam
- 28 August 1971 inactivated in Vietnam
- 16 September 1980 activated in Germany
- 15 August 1988 inactivated in Germany

### CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

#### World War II – EAME

Rhineland  
Central Europe

#### Korean War

UN Offensive  
CCF Intervention  
First UN Counteroffensive  
CCF Spring Offensive  
UN Summer-Fall Offensive  
Second Korean Winter  
Korea, Summer-Fall 1952  
Third Korean Winter  
Korea, Summer 1953

#### Vietnam

Defense  
Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase II  
Counteroffensive, Phase III  
Tet Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase IV  
Counteroffensive, Phase V  
Counteroffensive, Phase VI  
Tet '69/Counteroffensive  
Summer-Fall 1969  
Winter-Spring 1970  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase VII  
Consolidation I

### DECORATIONS

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered KOREA

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, Streamer embroidered KOREA

Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medal, First Class, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1970

Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medal, First Class, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1970-1971

## **HISTORY OF THE 630<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER COMPANY (LIGHT EQUIPMENT) Republic of Vietnam**

The 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Light Equipment) was one of the most colorful, hardest working, and well known units in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Republic of Vietnam. The Company operated in direct support of the higher unit combat commands most directly and most fully committed to the Vietnam War. The 630<sup>th</sup> supported the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry Division in Pleiku, the Special Forces in II Corps and I Corps, the 1 Air Cavalry Division in northern I Corps, the 101<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (Airmobile) in the A Shau Valley, the MACV Advisory Group in the Central Highlands, the Americal Division in southern I Corps, the Marines and Navy PBR Command in northern I Corps, and the 5<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Division in northern I Corps.

[note: this synopsis takes the company up to April 1970...we would appreciate 630th Alumni help in completing this list to August 1971]

The Company consistently set records in work accomplished and received letters of commendation from every Engineer Battalion to which it was attached from its arrival in Vietnam in 1965 to its departure in 1971.

### **1965**

On 22 January 1965, the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Light Equipment), Fort Bliss, Texas, received a "Combat Ready" rating on its annual Organizational Readiness Test. The chief umpire for this test was Lt. Col. Murray from Ft. Hood. Col. Murray had been a member of the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE) when it was activated at Camp Maxey, Texas in 1943. He had accompanied the company to Europe during WWII and commanded the company upon its return to the United States in 1945.

The 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE) was alerted for overseas movement on 17 July 1965. The company was reorganized to full strength of TOE 5-54 D at Fort Bliss effective 23 July. On 26 July, the company received orders for overseas movement to Cam Rhan Bay, Vietnam.

On 1 October, the company was scheduled to fly aboard two airplanes from Ft. Bliss to Oakland, California. Flight #1 was scheduled to depart at 0230 hours; however, it was delayed until 1215 due to engine failure and rerouted to San Diego, California. Flight #2 departed at 0420 hours on 1 October from the International Airport, El Paso, Texas and arrived at Oakland Army Terminal at 0810 the same day. Personnel on Flight #2 proceeded to Oakland Army Terminal and boarded the USNS General E.D. Patrick at 0900 hours. At approximately 1615 hours 2 October, the Patrick reached San Diego where the rest of the company boarded. The Patrick departed San Diego on 3 October and proceeded via Naha, Okinawa and Da Nang, Vietnam, arriving on 22 October at Qui Nhon, Vietnam.

The company was assigned to the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade effective 24 October, 1965. The company was further attached to the 937<sup>th</sup> Engineer Group (Combat) effective the same day. The 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE) debarked on 26 October and established its bivouac area at Phu Thanh (Happy) Valley, approximately 10 miles west southwest of Qui Nhon.

Forty percent of the company's equipment was off-loaded from the African Neptune between 7 and 13 December, 1965. At this point, the ship was sent to Cam Rahn Bay to utilize their heavy lift capabilities to complete the off-loading. The African Neptune was rerouted to Manila between 15 and 23 December to take on rations prior to returning to Vietnam. As of 31 December, 60% of the company's equipment was located at Cam Rahn Bay still aboard the African Neptune.

# **18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade**

## **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade was initially formed as the 347<sup>th</sup> Engineers (General Service) in the Organized Army Reserve on 29 July 1921. The unit was inactive until the beginning of World War II. On 6 May 1942, the unit was ordered to active duty at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana and was redesignated the 347<sup>th</sup> Engineer General Service Regiment.

During World War II, the Regiment served in the campaigns of Normandy, Northern France, the Rhineland, and Central Europe. In recognition of this service, the 347<sup>th</sup> Engineer General Service Regiment was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation. Following the end of World War II, the Regiment was inactivated in Germany and was assigned to the Army Reserve.

On 25 October 1954, the 347<sup>th</sup> Engineer General Service Regiment was withdrawn from the Army Reserve and allotted to the Active Army with the concurrent redesignation as the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade. The Brigade remained in active service at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri until 26 March 1963, when it was once again inactivated.

Two years later, on 16 July 1965, the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade was reactivated at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Under the command of Colonel C. Craig Cannon, the Brigade was prepared for deployment to Vietnam. The Advance Party of the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade arrived at Tan Son Nhut, Vietnam on 3 September 1965. Three days later, Major General – then Brigadier General – Robert R. Ploger assumed command of the Brigade. Within two weeks, the Brigade Headquarters at Ton Son Nhut was fully operational and on 16 September 1965, the Brigade assumed operational control of the 35<sup>th</sup> Engineer Group (Construction) at Cam Rhan Bay. The 937<sup>th</sup> Engineer Group (Combat) at Qui Nhon was assigned to the Brigade in June 1966.

The history of the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade in the Republic of Vietnam is a continuing story of impressive accomplishments in every field of engineering. Responsible for engineering operations in I Corps and II Corps, the First and Second Military Regions in the Republic of Vietnam, among the more notable accomplishments of the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade are construction of: the ports at Cam Rhan Bay, Qui Nhon, and Vung Ro Bay; the 191,700 square foot ammunition storage area at Cam Rhan Bay; English Airfield at LZ English near Qui Nhon; a cold storage warehouse at Qui Nhon; the Tandem Switch Building at Vung Chau Mountain; Route 547 in the A Shau Valley; 27 kilometers of National Highway QL-11 known as the Good View Pass; and the 3,600-foot bridge at Tuy Hoa. Overall, the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade built more than 1,500 kilometers of roads between 1967 and 1972; over 300 concrete and steel bridges; and land clearing operations removed more than 50,000 acres of jungle and dense vegetation. In support of civic action programs 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade engineers built schools, hospitals, relocated villages, and provided medical aid to villagers throughout I Corps and II Corps.

# 1966

[Very limited records for 1966...need help from 630<sup>th</sup> Alumni]

Synopsis: August 1966, the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE) was located at Qui Nhon.

# 1967

Synopsis: Attached to the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) May 1967 to June 1968. Major Projects, June 1967 to October 1967: road construction An Khe Area. Major Projects, November 1967 to June 1968: Polei Kleng Class II Air Strip; Waterman's Quarry record production; Ban Me Thuot Special Forces Camp B 50; and Special Forces Camp B 23.

On 1 January 1967, the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE) was spread over a 120-mile strip of Vietnam. The Company HQ, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon and ½ of the Support Platoon were attached to the 299<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) at Pleiku. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was engaged in opening up Waterman's Quarry in the jungle 5 miles north of Pleiku City. The half-element of the Support Platoon was operating a 75 TPH rock crusher at Camp Holloway. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and the rest of the Support Platoon were attached to the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) at Camp Radcliff, near An Khe. 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was operating the Hon Cong Quarry and Crusher site. The other half-element of the Support Platoon was providing equipment support to the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. The 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was attached to the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, providing equipment in support of the Qui Nhon Airfield project.

In May, the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion was given the job of building a heavy duty concrete airstrip at An Khe. For four months, the major efforts of the 630<sup>th</sup> were directed to the accomplishment of this mission. To supply the rock for the concrete surface, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon took control of the Route 19 Quarry. Operating 24 hours a day, until enemy activity required the night shift to shut down, in a little less than four months over 24,000 cubic yards of very hard granite were quarried. To crush this rock the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon took control of the An Khe crusher site. Working 24 hours a day, the crusher site crushed and washed the 24,000 cubic yards of rock produced at the Route 19 Quarry. The crusher site worked exactly 2 days longer than the quarry.

In June, the Hon Cong Quarry was working on a 24-hour per day basis. The rock was being used all over the An Khe area. In the four months between June to September, 59,000 cubic yards of rock were produced at the Hon Cong Quarry. On the night of 30 August, Sp 4 Russell Bannister, working the night shift, was killed as a result of enemy action. PFC Yelle was seriously wounded in this same action. Sp 4 Bannister was the Unit's second combat death in Vietnam and the second in the history of the 630<sup>th</sup>.

In early October, the company was alerted to move to Pleiku with the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. By 10 October all elements of the company were in Pleiku; and for the third time this year, the 630<sup>th</sup> had to build its company area from the ground up. By the end of October, Waterman's Quarry was supplying better than 180 truck loads of "D.G." daily.

In early November, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon started developing a quarry located at a cinder cone adjacent to Out Post Ten in the Pleiku defense network. In mid-November, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon moved to the village of Polei Kleng, approximately 15 miles north of Kontum. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, working with B Co., 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, was to upgrade the existing airstrip supplying the local Special Forces camp to take C-130 aircraft.

# 1968

Synopsis: Attached to the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) May 1967 to June 1968. Major Projects, November 1967 to June 1968: Polei Kleng Class II Air Strip; Waterman's Quarry record production; Ban Me Thuot Special Forces Camp B 50; and Special Forces Camp B 23.

Attached to the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) June 1968 to November 1968. Major Projects: road network at Wonder Beach; land clearing on Route 555 (Street Without Joy); LZ Nancy road network; LZ Nancy POL storage facility; LZ Nancy artillery pads; LZ Nancy aircraft revetments and facilities; LZ Nancy access road upgrade; LZ Sharon access road upgrade; LZ Jack access road upgrade; and Mai Loc Special Forces Camp.

Attached to 39<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt), November 1968 to May 1969. Major projects: constructed LZ Dottie; road construction National Highway, QL-1, Quan Ngai City area; constructed LZ Goldie; and constructed rock crusher and quarry at LZ Goldie.

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon remained with 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. Major projects: constructed Route 560 and Quang Tri City Bus Stop.

[630<sup>th</sup> Alumni are invited to fill in Company locations and activities for 1968]

After joining the 39<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) in November 1968, the company was involved in major highway construction on National Highway QL-1 in southern I Corps. The company was also tasked with the construction of two new Landing Zones – LZ Dottie and LZ Goldie – which the company would later use as bases of operation.

# 1969

Synopsis: Attached to 39<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt), November 1968 to May 1969. Major projects: constructed LZ Dottie; road construction (QL-1) Quan Ngai City area; constructed LZ Goldie; and constructed rock crusher and Quarry at LZ Goldie.

Attached to the 27<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt), May 1969 to October 1969. Major projects: Route 547, A Shau Valley (Malcolm D. Johnson Expressway); FSB Vagel; FSB Blaze; NDP Ann; FSB Cannon; and FSB Rendezvous.

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon remained with 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt). Major projects: upgraded Route 560; airfield revetment construction at Camp Evans; road and airfield revetment construction at Phu Loc.

Attached to 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) October 1969 to March 1970. Major projects: upgrading Route 560; relocate perimeter LZ Nancy; LZ Sharon access road upgrade; LZ Jack access road upgrade; LZ Sally rock and sand haul; interior road network FSB Barbara; rock haul for 5<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade at Quang Tri; land clearing and road construction from LZ Nancy to FSB Barbara, interior road network Camp Carroll; and interior road network at FSB C-2 (Con Tien) and FSB A-4.

Quarry Section attached to 27<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) for rock production at FSB Birmingham for Route 547 (A Shau Valley).

1<sup>st</sup> Platoon sent as Advanced Party to take control of 131<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company (LE). Attached to 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) on 8 September 1969 at Ban Me Thuot. Major projects: shoulder construction QL-21; Hot Rocks Quarry record production; Civic Action Road Construction and Village Improvement; disposed of 131<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company (LE).

1<sup>st</sup> Platoon rejoined 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE) and 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (CBT) on 21 December 1969.

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation for service with the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) from 1 May 1969 to 1 December 1969.

In January 1969, the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE) was split covering construction operations from the DMZ in northern I Corps to Quan Ngai City in southern I Corps. The main body of the company, minus 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, was attached to the 39<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) at Chu Lai in southern I Corps. 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was attached to the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) at LZ Nancy in northern I Corps. The company was based at LZ Goldie. The company's quarry-crusher section was operating at LZ Goldie.

While the main body of the company was in southern I Corps, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was building Route 560. Attached to the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt), 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was living at Cua Viet. The sand-cement causeway being built between Cua Viet and Dong Ha, was the first road link between the Gulf of Tonkin and the interior of Quang Tri Province. Route 560 supported the resettlement and pacification in the Province. Concurrent with the building of Route 560, a civic action project of building the Quang Tri Bus Stop was completed.

In May 1969, the main body of the company, minus second platoon, left southern I Corps to join the 27<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt), headquartered at Gia Le, near Phu Bai. The company's next major project assignment was land clearing and road construction on Route 547, the "Malcolm D. Johnson Expressway," in the A Shau Valley. 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon initially went forward to FSB Blaze to prepare gun emplacements for four artillery batteries. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Support Platoon and the company Headquarters began road construction at FSB Bastone and progressed west upgrading the road and building new fire bases as they worked their way forward to join 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon at FSB Blaze. In approximately 40 days, this mobile road crew upgraded approximately 20 miles of road; and built, occupied and vacated two fire bases – FSB Vegal and NDP Ann.

During the summer of 1969, elements of the main body of the company were spread over the entire length of Route 547; while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was spread from the Gulf of Tonkin at Cua Viet, 4 kilometers south of the DMZ, to the Phu Loc Quarry, 75 kilometers further south on QL-1. As the main body of the company worked west on Route 547 into the A Shau Valley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon completed the sand-cement causeway to Cua Viet and began the job of upgrading the road to all-weather standards back to Dong Ha from Cua Viet. As this upgrading progressed, the platoon was also tasked to support the road and airfield revetment construction at the Phu Loc Quarry Site.

In September, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon left I Corps and was attached to the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) at Camp Jerome near Ban Me Thuot in II Corps (Central Highlands). 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon assumed control of the 131<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company (LE), a National Guard unit whose personnel were returning to the U.S. During the last week of September, the main body of the company moved to LZ Nancy and was assigned to the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt).

While attached to the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) in II Corps, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was involved in road construction, civic action, and quarry-crusher production. Operating the Hot Rocks Quarry at Camp Swampy, augmented by the quarry-crushers section of the 517<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE), 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon set 35<sup>th</sup> Engineer Group (Const) and 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade quarry-crusher production records. In addition to the primary road construction and quarry-crusher operations, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon took on civic action work building approximately 20 miles of new roads linking previously inaccessible resettlement villages with QL-21, along with a school in one of the villages.

In late-October, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was ordered to dispose of all equipment belonging to the 131<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company (LE) and return to its company headquarters in I Corps. Some of the equipment was reassigned to various other engineering units and the remaining equipment was shipped north and assigned to the 630<sup>th</sup>. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon personnel rejoined the main body of the company in late-December.

# 1970

Synopsis: Attached to the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt). Major projects: Route 560; pioneer road trace from FSB Nancy to FSB Barbara; Mai Loc Airfield (3 KIA, 630<sup>th</sup> and 1 KIA, HHC 14<sup>th</sup> EBC, 5 WIA).

January 1970, the 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE) was attached to the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion at FSB Nancy. The company's Quarry Section was attached to the 27<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Cbt) at FSB Birmingham. With the return of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon from II Corps in December 1969, the company was reunited and working as an almost fully unified command for the first time in 18 months. Work was continuing on the construction of the interior road network at FSB Barbara and land clearing and upgrading the access road to FSB Barbara. The Barbara Road process was a slow difficult task. The company's efforts were hampered by the winter monsoons, equipment shortages and mechanical problems, and frequent harassment by NVA/VC elements in the area.

In early-January, a work party comprised of 630<sup>th</sup> personnel and equipment was ambushed on the Barbara Road near Hill 81. The company's rear element reorganized as infantry and went to assist the work party. Results of the action were one US KIA, a 14<sup>th</sup> EBC HHC medic and 13 US WIA, the majority of whom were from 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, 630<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE). Two days later 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon took over the project and on their first day on the road was ambushed at nearly the same location. Results of this action were one ARVN KIA and no US casualties. The Barbara Road project was ultimately completed in early-March, utilizing the combined efforts of elements from the 630<sup>th</sup> and C Company, 14<sup>th</sup> EBC.

In early-March, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon moved to Camp Carroll to upgrade the interior road network at the artillery fire base. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon moved to FSB C-2 to begin work on the interior road networks on FSB C-2 (Con Tien) and FSB A-4.

On 4 April, the company moved north to Quang Tri. Shortly after this move, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon moved to Mai Loc Special Forces Camp to upgrade and resurface the Type I C-123 class airfield. In the early morning hours of 10 April, the compound was overrun by a company-sized force of NVA regulars; three 630<sup>th</sup> and one 14<sup>th</sup> EBC HHC personnel were killed and five 630<sup>th</sup> personnel were WIA. A week later 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon moved to Mai Loc and completed the airfield upgrade and resurfacing in a record setting 14 days.

[630<sup>th</sup> Alumni who were in-country from April to December 1970 are invited to help complete the unit's history for this year.]

# 1971

[630<sup>th</sup> Alumni who were in-country in 1971 are invited to help complete the unit's history for this year.]

## **ROSTER OF COMPANY COMMANDERS**

[630<sup>TH</sup> Alumni who were in-country during times not shown below are invited to help complete this "Roster"]

Captain Carl M. Stroud, Jr.	23 July 1965 to _____
Lieutenant John C. Calhoun	12 May 1967 to 11 Feb 1968
Captain John D. Knowles	12 Feb 1968 to 30 Apr 1968
Lieutenant Kenneth R. Moser	1 May 1968 to 11 Oct 1968
Captain Richard E. Way	12 Oct 1968 to 22 Jan 1969
Captain Torrence H. Wilson	23 Jan 1969 to 13 Mar 1969
Captain James E. Hamilton	14 Mar 1969 to 26 Sept 1969
Captain David R. Brown	27 Sept 1969 to 27 Feb 1970
Captain Charles E. Olson	28 Feb 1970 to _____