

Co. A, 70th Engr. BN (Cbt), received a long-awaited shipment of M-16 rifles during the second week of August. The combat engineer unit stationed in the Central Highlands has been relying on the heavier M-14 as their basic individual weapon since coming in to Vietnam in 1965 from Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

With the acquisition of the hard-hitting weapons the members of Co A will undoubtedly feel more secure while working on the ambush-plagued QL21.

SGT William Dinsmore, Supply Sergeant of Co A, explains, "The M-16 is lighter and has less recoil making it less of a burden to carry and fire. The smaller and lighter magazine and ammunition also allow the individual to carry more loaded magazines without an increase in weight."

The newly acquired ^{Colt M-16} weapon will remain in the hands of the Supply Sgt until each can be checked for possible deficiencies. Once tested M-14 bearing Co A engineers will start trading them in for the 5.56mm model.

The Colt AR-15 (designated the M-16 by the military design improvements over previous military rifles. Its stock-line design reduces the tendency to "climb" found in other rifles by directing the force of the recoil straight into the shoulder instead of along a line above the shoulder. The gas piston, prevalent in other autoloading rifles is entirely eliminated. The M-16 carries its gas pressure directly onto the bolt carrier thus beginning the rearward motion of the cycle. A third design change is the use of a ^{reciprocating} non-rotating charging handle. Unlike the M-14, the M-16 has no moving operating rod moving back and forth during firing and breaking any fingers in its path. And finally an automatically opening dust cover reduces the chances of a malfunction due to a dusty bolt as long as the individual soldier is careful to keep it closed at all times.

A Co.'s combat engineers will soon be experiencing the relative ease of operation of their M-16s as the bulky M-14s are retired.