

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY)  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96297

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BAN ME THUOT (70th Bn. IO)--Accustomed to drilling, cleaning and filling potholes on National Highway QL21, engineers of Company A, 70th Engineer Battalion (CBT), have had the tables turned on them with the arrival of a three man dental team from the 934th Medical Detachment (Dental Service). Now it is the engineers' turn to have a few "potholes" of their own filled.

The dental team, headed by Captain Melvin J. Weissburg, D. M. D., arrived at Co. A on 16 June. The three men broke out their sophisticated equipment and set up shop in the officers' living quarters, a twenty-by-thirty foot bunker.

"We transport all of our equipment in four large suitcase type containers and two footlocker-sized cabinets," Cpt. Weissburg explained. The dental apparatus is specifically designed for use in the field and is easily adapted to most any type of surroundings whether it be a tent, sea hut or bunker. "The only element that must be supplied by the field unit is electrical power," Cpt. Weissburg added.

The dental crew is often forced to rely on field expedients in their work. For example, a five gallon can serves as the running water supply while a .50 caliber ammo box is used as a wash basin. Despite the crude surroundings, the patients receive the same high quality dental care available in stateside clinics.

"Approximately 80 per cent of the men examined require some dental work, primarily fillings, while about one-fourth of these show a pressing need for further dental attention," according to Cpt. Weissburg. "The soldiers who require major dental work are referred to the 934th dental clinic in Nha Trang."

By making dental care available in the base camp for two weeks, the dental team is saving Co. A engineers the wasted man hours normally spent in transit to and from established dental centers. By venturing into the "boonies," they are also putting into practice the Army Dental Corps' motto: CONSERVE THE FIGHTING STRENGTH.