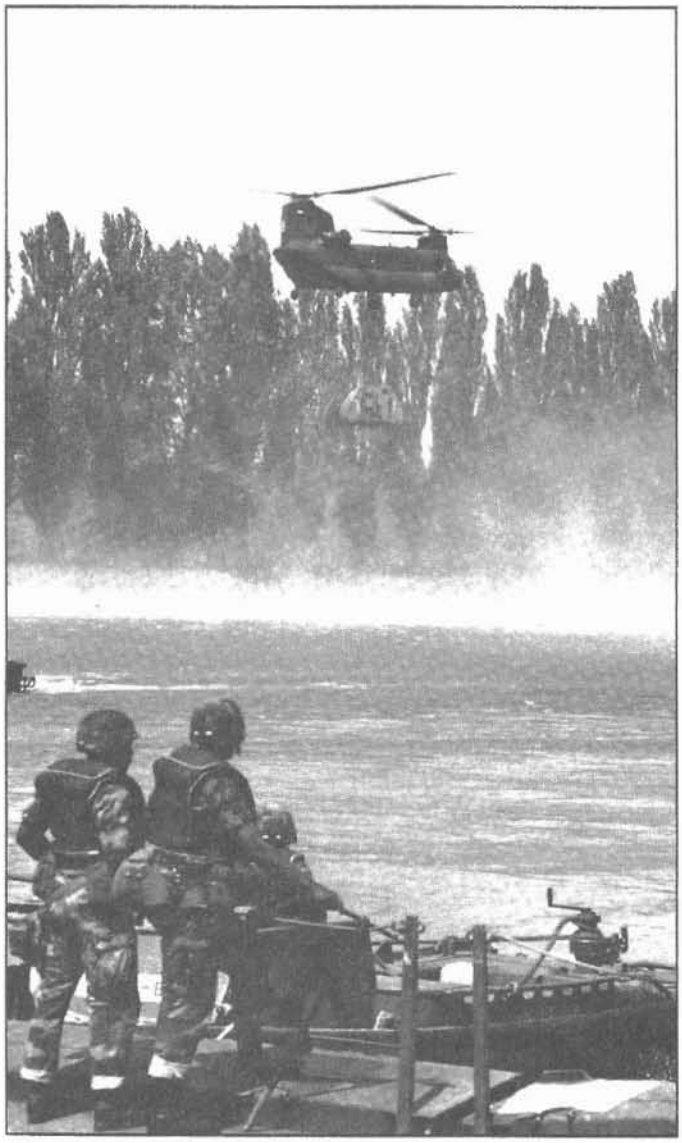
The Forward-Deployed, All-Contingency, Corps Engineer Brigade

By Lieutenant Colonel John L. Craig



CH-47D Helicopter sling-loading one ribbon bay in support of full closure of the Rhine River, vicinity Karlsruhe, Armed Forces Day, June 1992.

Introduction

The 130th Engineer Brigade is a unique brigade in the U.S. Army. It is the only engineer unit outside the U.S. Army Engineer School that encompasses the full spectrum of engineer capabilities—combat, vertical and horizontal construction, all types of bridging and topographic (Figure 1)—and the only tactical unit with capabilities in all five engineer major mission areas: mobility, countermobility, survivability, sustainment engineering, and topographic engineering. With conversion of 3rd Infantry Division and 1st Armored Division engineer battalions to divisional engineer brigades under the Engineer Restructure Initiative (ERI), the 130th is now both V Corps Engineer Brigade and the senior tactical engineer headquarters in Europe. It is one of the few engineer units above division level in NATO and one of two Corps Engineer brigades on active duty in the Army. (The other is 20th Engineer Brigade, XVIII Airborne Corps.)

In addition to V Corps, the 130th supports United States Army, Europe (USAREUR) and the European Command (EUCOM). The brigade reflects all the changes the Army is absorbing as the "New World Order" emerges. Major changes that impacted USAREUR during the past four years included winning the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification, deployments to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) drawdown. The 130th is no longer primarily General Defense Plan-oriented but focuses increasingly on missions outside Germany.

This article addresses what the 130th is doing as a key element in V Corps' role as the Army's forward-deployed, fully capable contingency corps and how it is meeting the challenge of a wide variety of missions and responsibilities.

Brigade Capabilities

54th - Mechanized Combat Engineers: Provides the CG close battle flexibility.

94th - Reinforced Combat Heavy Engineers: Responsible for all troop construction in USAREUR.

565th - Tactical Assault Bridging: The sole corps crossing cabability.

649th - Topographic Engineer: Topographic support to V Corps and USAREUR.

6970th - CSC Battalion: Complete design and construction capability.

Figure 1

Structure And Missions

From July to December 1992, the 130th transitioned to a new "end-state" structure through activation, inactivation, redeployment, restationing, or reconfiguration of many units. Restructuring was achieved while conducting normal operations, training, force modernization, turn-in of excess equipment, recovery from Southwest Asia deployments and many short-notice deployments. The 130th now consists of four engineer battalions: 54th (Mechanized), 94th (Combat Heavy), 565th (Bridge), and 649th (Topographic) (Figure 2). The 54th and 565th are corps-level battalions; the 94th and 649th are theater-level battalions. The new 130th retains the 6970th Civilian Support Center (CSC) (Construction) and the 535th Combat Support Equipment (CSE) Company, which is attached to the 94th.

Currently, the 130th has nearly 3,000 soldiers and civilians. The brigade's present associated reserve units include nearly 8,000 soldiers and an informal association with former 7th Engineer Brigade Capstone units.

The 130th's structure focuses on warfighting and theater support, and its mission and mission essential task list (METL) reflect this. C/54 Engineer Battalion was part of the Allied Mobile Forces—Land (AMF-L), a NATO rapid-reaction force. AMF-L has unique associated missions, equipment and training; its missions will revert to the 130th early in 1994.

The brigade staff is augmented with a construction management section (normally part of theater), which coordinates and oversees all USAREUR troop construction including project development, design, and quality control. The 94th and 6970th CSC do nearly all theater troop construction. During war, the 6970th transitions to Pionier Battalion 491 as part of the German Territorial Army but continues to provide USAREUR the same high-quality construction.

As V Corps Engineer, the 130th Brigade Commander also has an Assistant Corps Engineer Office, which is a key component of the V Corps staff. This robust engineer staff is essential to synchronizing mobility, countermobility and survivability battlefield operating systems at the operational level.

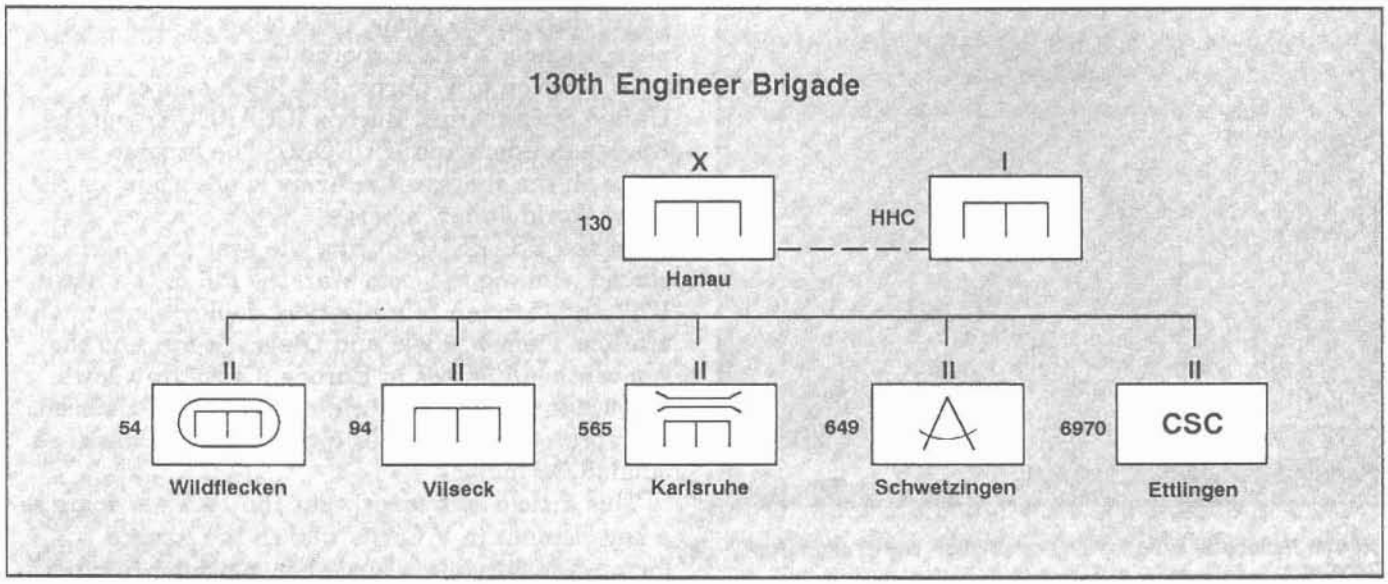


Figure 2

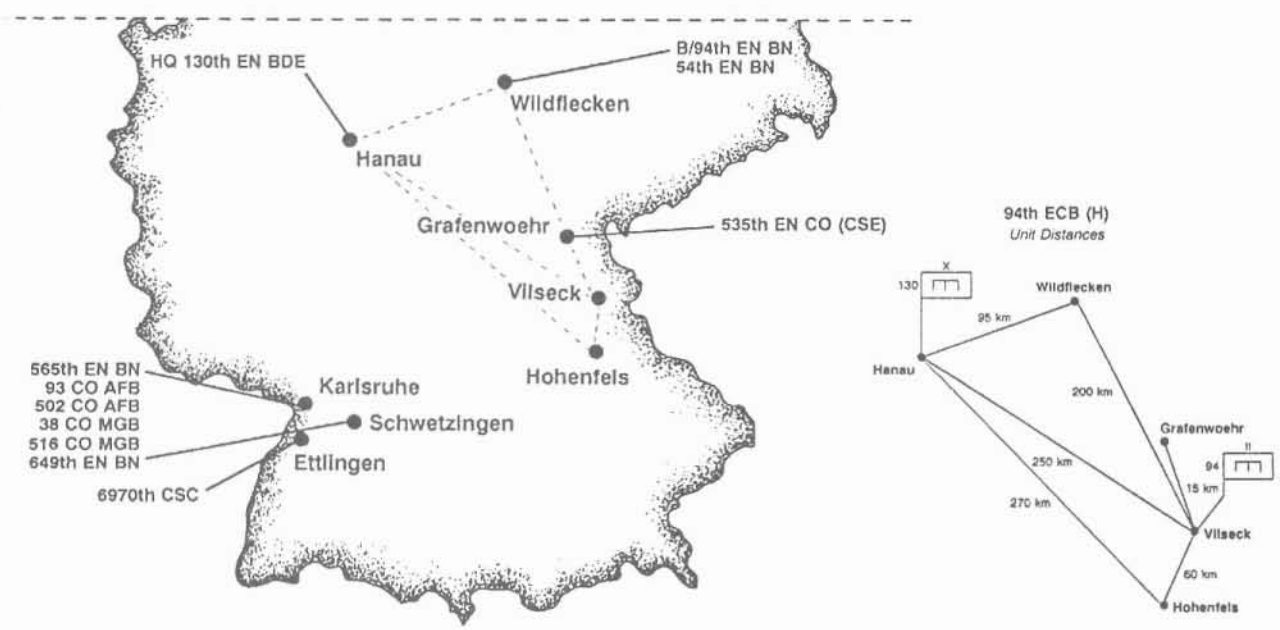


Figure 3

The 130th's new structure presents some challenges. Distances units must travel daily (Figure 3) impact significantly on support and on command and control, making coordination and synchronization at various levels more difficult. Leaders work hard to overcome these distances and the uncertainty of drawdown. Like all engineer units, the 130th is challenged by low-density military occupational specialties and equipment.

Drawdown Challenges

While conversions under ERI are nearly complete for divisional engineer brigades, the 54th has only recently converted to a smaller corps combat engineer battalion under ERI. The 54th; Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD), 565th Engineer Battalion; 93rd Engineer Company (Assault Float Bridge) (AFB); and 516th Engineer Company (Medium Girder Bridge) (MGB) have been notified of inactivation during winter 1993-94. The 54th, with B/94 attached, is part of Wildflecken's inactivation and turnover to German control. B/94's inactivation is also part of an Army-wide plan to inactivate the third line company in all engineer combat-heavy battalions. The 38th Engineer Company (MGB) and 502nd Engineer Company (AFB) are moving from Karlsruhe to Hanau. 16th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division is moving from Erlangen to Bamberg and will resubordinate under the 130th in January 1994.

As the drawdown progresses, there is a corresponding increase in the work needed to prepare facilities for turnover and in work requirements for Department of Defense schools. The 6970th CSC has assumed many of these additional tasks.

Training And Exercises

Since July 1992, the 130th has conducted or participated in a wide range of corps, brigade and lower-level exercises to upgrade and enhance skills and capabilities. Some examples follow.

In-Country Exercises:

- *Central Fortress, July 1992.* Corps train-up for Return of Forces to Germany (REFORGER). Repeated March 1993 as train-up for April-May 1993 REFORGER.

- *REFORGER 1992/Certain Caravan*, September October 1992. A corps Battle Command Training Program (BCTP). (Read this as a corps external evaluation (EXEVAL).) Included four reserve Capstone engineer groups from U.S. Part of the largest computer-simulated wargame to date. All battalions deployed, playing varied roles such as liaison officers, simulation center personnel, and hosts to reserve groups.

- *Sapper Lightning, August 1992.* A complex exercise involving over 1,500 soldiers, a river crossing with 150 vehicles including M1 tanks and M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, and military police and signal assets.

- *Sapper Lightning, June 1993.* This combined field exercise (CFX) integrated internal battalion training, a brigade-driven command post exercise (CPX), and EXEVALs for the 94th, 535th CSE, HHD 565th, and Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) Brigade. This CFX challenged command and control of units spread over a 7,000 square kilometer area with missions they might have to perform in various contingency scenarios. The exercise included air assets, a simulated river crossing and attachment of a combat heavy company as part of a combat maneuver training center rotation. Locations included Kitzingen, Wildflecken, Grafenwoehr, Schweinfurt, Hohenfels and Vilseck. An augmented Brigade Headquarters simultaneously operated an evaluator cell and its normal Tactical Operations Center/Administration and Logistics Operations Center. The Exercise Control Cell simulated Allied Command, Europe; USAREUR; 412 Engineer Command and V Corps.

Out-of-country exercises:

- *Noble Shirley, Middle East, June 1993.* Provided observers. This exercise generated interoperability training with a Marine Expeditionary Unit.

- *Intrinsic Action, August-October 1993.* Provided support to Task Force 2-37 Armor, Kuwait.

- *Silent Endeavor and Roaring Lion, 1993.* Sent terrain teams to United Kingdom, supporting Special Operations Command, Europe.

Missions And Nation Assistance

As part of its responsibility for all USAREUR troop construction, the 130th has completed numerous design and construction projects at the major training areas: Hohenfels, Grafenwoehr, Wildflecken. The George C. Marshall Center for International Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, dedicated 5 June 1993, is a high-visibility project. Construction projects are ongoing throughout Germany.

During the past year the 130th has supported V Corps by deployments within USAREUR, to former Eastern-Bloc countries and the former Soviet Union, and to Africa and Southwest Asia as part of nation assistance. Operations the 130th supported by deploying and helping other units deploy include:

- *Provide Comfort I,II,III.* Sent two bridge engineers from 565th as technical supervisors for construction of a double-double Bailey bridge to replace the Gulf War-damaged bridge over the Habur River, Zakho, Iraq, April-May 1993. Provided two combat-heavy engineers as technical supervisors for erection of two clamshell tents, Incirlik, Turkey, April-May 1993. Sent two topographic engineers to support Joint Task Force Provide Comfort, Incirlik, June-December 1992.

- *Provide Hope II and III.* Sent technical advisors and assistance in conjunction with 7th Medical Command to upgrade existing facilities and install medical equipment in hospitals in Tiblisi, Georgia (August-September 1992); Bishkek, Kyrgystan (March-April 1993) and Moscow, Russia (ongoing).

- *Provide Promise.* Furnished technical assistance in constructing Harvest Falcon tents and providing utilities to 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital and U.S. Air Force as part of UN forces, Zagreb, Croatia, October-November 1992. Furnished two terrain analysts to Joint Task Force Provide Promise, Naples, Italy (ongoing).

- *Able Sentry, Skopje, Macedonia, June-July 1993.* Conducted recon to determine requirements for upgrading facilities for U.S. forces as part of UN forces. Provided topographic support to Macedonia, October 1993.

- *Southern Watch, Saudi Arabia.* Provided individual fillers to 6-43 Air Defense Battalion, July 1993-January 1994.

- *Restore Hope.* Installed clamshell tents, Livorno, Italy to support deployment to Somalia, December 1992. Provided individual fillers in specific MOSs, Somalia, December 1992-ongoing.

- *Shared Endeavor, March 1993.* Range facility upgrade project design for joint U.S.-Botswana defense forces.

- *Cyprus, July-August 1993.* Provided construction support for a State Department air bridge mission to Beirut, Lebanon.

- *Romania and Bulgaria, May 1993, repeated September 1993.* Sent technical advisors on float bridging to relieve congestion at exit points from former Yugoslavia.

- *Uganda.* Assessment of Ugandan Army engineer capabilities, July 1992.

- *Liberia.* Assessment team for implementing Liberian peace plan, August 1993.

The 649th continues to provide hundreds of thousands of maps and other terrain analysis products for operations in NATO, EUCOM and USAREUR.

The 130th is heavily in demand because it has the only corps combat, construction, bridge and topographic engineers in USAREUR. Continued out-of-sector deployments to numerous "hot spots" and nation-assistance missions are anticipated.

Our "Lessons Learned"

This is only an interim report. What we have learned so far is not unique to the 130th Engineer Brigade. The biggest lesson learned is "Stick to the Basics" (physical fitness; weapons



Photo by John Craig

93rd Engineer Company (AFB) rafts an M1 main battle tank across the Main River, Eltman, Germany, in May 1993.

proficiency; well-trained, disciplined, deployable soldiers; solid family support groups; developing a brigade team). We have relearned the importance of supply accountability, maintenance and challenging training programs keyed to missions. Tasks must be performance-oriented and trained to standard, with compliance checked by EXEVALs and command inspections.

As a result of recent out-of-sector missions' focus on upgrading and developing facilities, technical bridging advice and assistance and topographic support such as terrain analysis, surveying and map production, the 130th has developed routines including a "playbook" of deployment packages across the spectrum of engineer capabilities. This playbook allows the brigade to respond quickly with standard packages to short-notice deployments. Packages are developed based on real-world contingencies. Squad battle drills provide the same focus for quick response to events at that level. Battle drills have been established for combat, combat-heavy, bridge and topographic engineers to help provide uniform training on primary tasks.

For all missions, the importance of on-the-ground reconnaissance cannot be overstated. Knowledgeable soldiers must be placed on the ground and given sufficient resources and guidance so they can provide a concise, cogent report. The main body can then be tailored and trained to accomplish the assigned mission.

Emerging lessons learned include increasing support to the UN, sustainment and mobility support, short-notice deployments, local national labor and construction standards, real estate management, foreign languages, legitimate mission taskings through operational channels, mine warfare and the versatility of and need for Bailey bridges.

Summary

The 130th's proud history and tradition began when its founding father unit, the 1303rd Engineer General Service Regiment, was activated at Camp Ellis, Illinois, 15 July 1943. The 1303rd played an important part in World War II, with campaign credits for Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes-Alsace, the Rhineland, Central Europe and the Asian-Pacific Theater. Today that history is taking on exciting new dimensions. The brigade has been tasked with unique responsibilities borne by no other tactical unit in the U.S. Army. Engineer officers who desire "dirty-boot" experience and exposure to the full spectrum of engineer missions cannot find a better, more challenging assignment than with the 130th. Here, in addition to the normal stimulus of service in Germany, the high probability of deployments throughout the NATO and EUCOM areas of responsibility and beyond provides officers, warrant officers and NCOs with extraordinary opportunities for professional development.

Lieutenant Colonel Craig is S3 of the 130th Engineer Brigade, USAREUR. Previous assignments in the U.S. and Korea include battalion S1, S3 and XO; command of four engineer companies; chief of a readiness group combat arms division; research engineer and resource management officer. A graduate of the Command and General Staff College, LTC Craig holds Master of Science degrees from Central Missouri State University and the University of Alaska.