

East POL at Cu Chi

By [Bobbie G. Pedigo](#), LTC AR (Ret)

I was commander of the 341st Airfield Operations Detachment at Cu Chi from 16 Feb 67-14 Feb 68. I built the East POL across the road from the Muleskinners. The four 500 barrel JP4 storage tanks, the refueling facility with the 4" line across the field with 24 nozzles, the three or four helipads of East Resupply with two nozzles each to fuel CH 47s, and the single point refueling pad for the CH-54 Flying Crane. We pumped an average of 40,000 gallons of fuel per day and I built the pump house that later burned after my departure. I also built the VIP helipad for the CG, the Airfield Operations office down in the corner for PAX. I got the aircraft control tower started before my departure and I built the ammunition storage/rearm point at the south end of the refueling area. The 54th Engineers were supposed to build all this stuff but could never get to it so I got them to scrape the pads for the tanks and we bolted them together ourselves. I could store 200K gallons of JP4 and the greatest amount dispensed in one day was 80K. I received eight tankers every day from the resupply convoy when all four were built.

I found the tanks at 1st Log Cmd in Saigon and got them one at a time. I went to Cam Rahn Bay to get the first pump, a 6" single stage Gorman Rupp booster pump and then found the Vitaulic tubing, couplings, elbows, reducers, gate valves, etc to lay the pipe for the fuel line. The final reducers were 4" to 2" plumbing fixtures with a 2" tee on top. To this I had to find an adapter that would accept the OPW coupling of the hoses. I discovered that the valve coupling elbow of the 500 gallon collapsible tanks fit perfectly with the female end of the 2" tee and provided the OPW fitting for the hoses. I needed thirty valve coupler elbows so I turned to the 1st Log Cmd POL division and traded C Rats for the couplers. My next problem was finding thirty nozzles and sixty lengths of rubber hoses to complete the refueling point. I did this by going to the Saigon Docks at the Fishmarket and searching the supply areas until I found what I wanted and then took the NSN, nomenclature, location, and quantity to the Inventory Control Point. (They had no clue what was in the yard). After getting this far I prepared a requisition right on the spot and submitted a priority 5 request. It was approved and I then took my paperwork and vehicle to the yard and obtained the objects I was looking for. (An interesting point here: my supply channel was through the 25th Avn Bn [to whom I was attached although I was a 1st AVN BDE detachment], then through the 25th Div and then through their LNO at the Supply Center. I had my own property book and somehow managed to establish a direct account on my own with USARV and could requisition up to Priority 5 material. Division was in fits because I could get stuff in one day and it took them months).

I built my own company area and hootches across from the 25 Avn Bn NCO club and my personal hootch was just west of the blue 25th Avn A Frame EM Club. We painted our hootches and buildings yellow with brown gables.

I built an arc of pipeline in front of the pumphouse with three connection points and I could off load a 5,000 gallon tanker in four minutes using the 1200 GPM pump I had. It

took longer to hook up than to offload. The pony pump of the tanker pumped only 75 GPM and the drivers had time to eat their lunch atop the tanker but we changed that with the 4" lines and big pumps. Later I also obtained a 2000 GPM pump that was a 6" two stage but we had to reduce it to 4" to mate with the three filters of 350 GPM each. I figured out the manifold configuration so that I could offload the trucks and keep the pipeline charged at the same time by a system of gate valves and reducing the flow into the storage tanks when a flight came in to refuel.

I had a total of 21 personnel, including myself, and we did all the work I've mentioned above ourselves. None of us were engineers but we figured it out. It worked and I helped get construction started on similar projects at Tay Ninh and Dau Teng by helping them lay out the setup and obtain equipment.

After Cu Chi I went to FT Rucker where I was a flight commander in the Fixed Wing Branch with the 0-1 low level navigation branch, Feb 68-Apr 69, then to Ft Knox for Adv Crs 69-Feb70, and back to Bien Hoa in June 70 to take command of 68th AHC when I stood it down and served as XO of 145th CAB (Old Warrior 5). The 145th and 269th traded flags in 70 (trying to keep the 145 in country as the first in and last out CAB) and I brought the 269 colors and a small amount of equipment back to Ft Bragg in Apr 70. I was enroute to Bootstrap at Omaha and I stayed 90 days at Bragg as XO of 269th with my good friend Herschel Stephens. I was in Omaha for six months and snowbird at Creighton University with the ROTC for six months while I worked on my MA at Omaha and waited for the next CGSC class in 72. In 73 I returned to Rucker as ACS Officer and departed for PMS at Univ of KY in 76 then to Ft Knox in 78 as Director of the Senior Officer Courses in the Armor School. I retired in Dec 80 and started working as an Army employee until Jan 2003 when I retired again.