

HEADQUARTERS
39TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY)
AMEICAL DIVISION
APO 96374

18 October 1967

SUBJECT: After Action Report of Operation Multnomah and Lake

TO: Commanding General
Americal Division
ATTN: G-3
APO 96374

1. General:

a. Name of Operations:

1. Multnomah (Task Force Oregon)
2. Lake (Task Force Oregon)

b. Dates of Operation: 24 May to 9 July

c. Location: Duc Pho RVN

d. Control Headquarters: 39TH ENGR BN (C) (A)

e. Reporting Officer: LTC Joseph F. Castro

2. Organization:

a. 39TH ENGR BN (C) (A)

b. 554 ENGR Co. (FB) (-)

c. Bridge Plt. Co. D, 65TH: ENGR BN (C)

d. Plt. F Troop, 17th Cav, 196th Inf Bde

3. Mission: The 39th Engr Bn and attached units were to open National Route (QL) No. 1, from Duc Pho to Quang Ngai (Multnomah) and Duc Pho to Sa Huynh (Lake), to Class 31 traffic.

4. Concept of Operations: The 39th Engr Bn and attached units with security furnished by 3rd Bde, 25th Inf Div and 1st Bde, 101st ABN Bde, construct bypasses and/or repairs, reinforces, or constructs bridges from Mo Duc (BS 773543) to Duc Pho (BS 806378) and from Duc Pho (BS 806378) to Sa Huynh (BS 923223). Along National Route (QL) No. 1. Company A, 39th Engineer Bn working from Duc Pho North, Company C, 39th Engr Bn working from Mo Duc South, **Company D**, 39th Engr Bn working from Duc Pho South, and Company B, 39th Engr Bn constructing tactical roads near Bin Son. Company C, was given the additional mission of constructing C7A airfield at Mo Duc capable of handling up to and including emergency C123's.

5. Execution:

a. 24-26 May: On 24 May "C" Company, with one platoon from F troop, 17th Cav, moved to a temporary location at BS 669685. Initial efforts were to construct defensive fortifications and clear a small mine field located just outside the perimeter. On the 20th of April work was begun on QL-1 with the completing of a bypass at BS 724569, replacing decking on a Bailey Bridge at BS 694636, and the installation of a 36" culvert at BS 673678. At 1530 hrs six local nationals entered a mine field around the perimeter resulting in one killed and five wounded.

b. 27-29 May: On 27 May, "C" Company initiated hauling of fill to raise a bypass at BS 684658 and installed a 45' dry span at this location. On 29 May "C" Company completed the installation of a 38'4" dry span at bypass BS 684658.

c. 30-31 May: "A" Company initiated its move North from Duc Pho with the installation of a 36" culvert at BS 805362. **"D" Company** continued up-

grade of the Beach Access Road and supervised "Operation Rock". This operation was the hiring of local nationals ranging from 100 450 per day, to collect rocks to be used for surfacing the Beach Access Road. Local Nationals were paid 10 P's per cubic foot of rock. At 0845 on 31 May, "C" Company sweep team received heavy sniper fire from BS 729600. When friendly fire failed to stop enemy fire, friendly elements pulled back to a borrow pit and reorganized as infantry and prepared to assault the hill. Air strikes and gunships were called in on the suspected enemy location and at 1215 two platoons moved to assault the hill. The 1st Platoon, 17th Cav was positioned along the road to provide suppressing fire. By 1400 hrs all elements were positioned on top of the hill providing cover for the dozer and demo squads clearing the ambush site. Sniper fire again erupted wounding three individuals. Medivac was requested and as the aircraft touched down it received heavy fire wounding one door gunner. With the Medivac completed all elements began to withdraw. As these elements crossed an open rice paddy leading to the road they were pinned down by heavy automatic weapons. Gunships were again requested and they provided the suppressing fire for the withdrawal. One individual fell from a vehicle as the area was cleared resulting in a broken leg. Total Casualties for the incident were five WIA, three Heat Exhaustion cases and one injured in fall.

d. 1-3 June: On 1 June, "A" Company installed a culvert at BS 793408 and initiated the installation of a 45' dry span at BS 786423, "C" Company initiated its move to its new CP location at BS 703608. On 11 June, "A" Company discovered the dry span (BS 793408) had been destroyed during the night. Initiated a move to a temporary CP at BS 786423 and initiated sal-

vage operations and the installation of two 60" culverts. On 3 June "C" Company destroyed two 250# ???? and the entrances to 19 tunnels. "D" Company continued upgrading of the Beach Access Road and supervising "Operation Rock".

e. 4-6 June: "A" Company continued to upgrade QL-1 in sector. On 5 June "A" Company discovered a mine using two vegetable cans full of explosives, at BS 729600. One of the APC's providing security for "C" Company detonated a mine resulting in one KIA and two WIA, all from the Cav unit. About one hour later the second APC detonated a mine in the same location resulting in one KIA and eight WIA. "C" Company also discovered a bridge located at BS 724570 had been destroyed during the night. "A" Company continued to haul fill for bypass on QL-1 and "C" Company destroyed possible ambush sites and repaired the road where a bridge had been destroyed. "D" Company continued upgrading of the Beach Access Road, supervision of "Operation Rock", and the initiation of construction of an ASP.

f. 7-9 June: "A" Company hauled rubble to improve a ford site at BS 789417 and assisted the 554 (FB) Co. in the construction of a 104' of a M4T6 float bridge at BS 779443. "C" Company replaced treadway on a bridge at BS 728556. On 8 June "A" Company placed a 60" culvert at BS 771461 and filled numerous cuts along QL-1. "C" Company assisted in the installation of 133' of M4T6 float bridge at BS 728556. "D" Company continued assigned missions.

g. 10-13 June: On 10 June "A" Company moved its new CP location to BS 789417, cleared a defensive site for the PF's, at BS 789417, and a clearing operation of a village at BS 776441. "C" Company initiated con-

struction of a bypass at BS ??45466. Installed two 36" culverts at completed bypass at BS 732546. On 13 June "C" Company installed two 20" culverts at BS 771461 and completed the bypasses at BS 771461 and BS 786423. "C" Company initiated the construction of a D/S Bailey Bridge at BS 736533.

h. 14-15 June: On 14 June "A" Company assembled 30' of 60" culvert and established ambush patrols along QL-1 during the night of the 14th. "C" Company installed a 36" culvert at BS 740523 and at BS 742522. Completed entire road from Mo Duc to Duc Pho and all companies conducted ambush patrols in sector in preparation of first convoy from Chu Lai. "D" Company established ambush patrols in sector and conducted a deliberate sweep in preparation of the convoy. On 15 June a large convoy marked the opening of the National Route (QL) No. 1 when it departed Chu Lai enroute to Duc Pho and returned the same day.

i. 16-21 June: "A" Company initiated construction of a bypass at BS 778433 and continued their daily mine sweep in sector. "C" Company initiated removal of destroyed Bailey Bridge at BS 728556 and provided ambush patrols along QL-1 in sector. "D" Company initiated the construction of a causeway and culvert system at BS 811368 and continued to supervise "Operation Rock". Installed a 48" culvert at BS 858317. At 1420 hrs on 20 June received information that the ASP at Guadalcanal had exploded. Immediately work was halted on all projects, raw water point was established, four dozers and one bucket loader were dispatched to help combat the fire. At 2000 hrs this battalions elements were withdrawn to continue construction, on an around the clock basis, on the new ASP at Montezuma.

j. 22-25 June: "A" Company continued to upgrade bypasses in sector

and initiated removal of the demolished bridge at BS 758489. "C" Company drove fourteen piles for pile pier bridge at BS 724572, and initiated survey of the C7A airfield at Mo Duc. "B" Company rejoined the battalion at Chu Lai and spent this period becoming operational. "D" Company opened a pioneer road from Duc Pho to BS 821347. Installed two 48" culverts at BS 811368. Supervised "Operation Rock". Round the clock construction of new ASP was completed 23 June.

k. 26-30 June: "A" Company continued upgrading of bypasses and roadway in sector. Removed damaged piers at BS 778443 and prepared site at BS 771461 for installation of culverts. "B" Company dismantled a damaged Bailey Bridge at BT 431109 and initiated construction of a guard tower for Chu Lai Defense Command. "C" Company relocated CP to BS 730523 and initiated construction of a bridge at BS 728556. "D" Company continued drainage work in ASP at LZ Montezuma and continued to supervise "Operation Rock".

1. 1-5 July: "A" Company continued upgrading of bypasses and roadway on QL-1. "B" Company initiated construction of "Market Road" BT 469078, and "Robertson Road" BS 970970. At 0840 hrs on 2 July "B" Company discovered two individuals installing a mine at BS 667953. Took individuals under fire with one V. C. KIA. At 1440 hrs "B" Company again came under sniper fire resulting in one U. S. WIA. "C" Company initiated construction of Mo Duc airstrip, continued upgrading of QL-1 bypasses and culverts. At 1700 hrs 2 July one platoon of "C" Company came under automatic weapons and small arms fire at BS 726564 resulting in one KIA and two WIA. "D" Company continued to supervise "Operation Rock" and construct the ASP. On the morning of 2 July one 5-ton dump truck and one 3/4-ton truck, both from "D" Company detonated mines on the Beach Access Road resulting in a

total of six WIA.

m. 6-9 July: "A" Company installed culvert at BS 758489 and continued a upgrade roadway and bypasses. "B" Company continued construction of "Market and Robertson Roads". "C" Company continued construction of the airstrip and installed culverts at BS 915245 and BS 726564. "D" Company moved out to support "Operation Lake" on 6 July emplacing bypasses at BS 889273, BS 897268, and BS 915245. Installed culverts at BS 915245. National Route (QL) No. 1 was opened to traffic at 1600 hrs 9 July. This effectively opened the road from Sa Huynh to Chu Lai.

6. Summary of Operations:

a. The 39th Engr Bn opens and upgrades National Route QL-1 from Mo Duc to Sa Huynh.

b. "A" Company relocated from LZ Montezuma to BS 764773 and initiated construction of bypasses and bridges North along QL-1.

c. "B" Company relocated from Qui Nhon to Chu Lai and initiated the construction of two tactical roads (Robertson and Market) in the Chu Lai area.

d. "C" Company relocated from Chu Lai to BS 572528 and initiated construction of a TYPE II C7A airstrip at Mo Duc capable of handling up to and including emergency C123's.

e. "D" Company initiated construction of a pioneer road from Duc Pho to Sa Huynh. Supervised a local national, G-5 supported, rock gathering operation known as "Operation Rock".

7. Communications:

a. Communications with higher, lower, and attached units by the Battalion NCS was accomplished with two AN/VRC 46 radios and two RC 292 antennas. The net control stations of the organic line companies used the AN/VRC 47 radio with an RC 292 antenna. Communications between company NCS and subordinate elements was accomplished by utilizing AN/VRC 46's mounted in 1/4 ton vehicles and AN/VRC 25.

8. Supporting Elements:

a. During the period of this report all Class I, II, III, IV, and V items were supplied by Task Force Gallagher in the Duc Pho area and by elements of the 15th Inf Bde Gen Support Group in the Chu Lai area.

b. Problems that slowed construction effort:

1. Lack of tactical security near work sites.
2. Lack of security on bridges or other structures during the hours of darkness.
3. Lack of lifting devices to load heavy construction material.
4. No supporting unit to maintain Class II & IV yard which had to be run by engineer elements from the 39th Engr Bn.

9. Conclusion: This unit has successfully completed assigned tasks during this period. All project specifications have been met and in most cases exceeded.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

RICHARD H. SCHALLENBERG
1LT, CE
Adjutant