

...to the 554th's service ...urge arises."

Road rebuilt near My Lai

Field Correspondent

CHU LAI RVN (39th Engr Bn) -- Despite the inclement weather and the reports on increased activity, elements of the 18th Engineer Brigade's 39th Engineer Battalion moved back to Route HL-521, a secondary road located in the infamous My Lai area of the Batangan Peninsula. The first and third platoons of Company C have been tasked with upgrading 521 to a single-lane, all-weather road.

However, before the engineers begin work on the road, they have to build a new night defensive position (NDP). The NDP will be the home of the first and third platoons until their construction efforts have been completed. NDP Wrong Hole, which housed these engineers last construction season, has been turned over to the Regional and Popular Forces of Quang Tri Province.

The new NDP is presently taking shape on one of the few mountains close to Route 521. Starting with avid determination to establish a new home, Company C dozers leveled the site, but not without some quite noticeable problems; namely, large jeep-sized boulders which made the work much harder than anticipated. Since the new NDP will be "home" for several months, timber bunkers must also be constructed to provide maximum protection and comfort for the engineers.

Most of the local Vietnamese remember the men of Company C from the last construction season and are quick to give a friendly smile. Daily the Vietnamese populace, particularly the children, bring in or point out mines, booby traps, and explosives they have found, thus making life safer both for themselves and the engineers. Now, with a little cooperation from nature, Company C will complete the rewarding job of helping the Vietnamese in getting their produce to market over a permanent all-weather Route 521.