

HEADQUARTERS
39TH ENGINEER BATTALION (C)(A)
APO 96316

23 November 1966

SUBJECT: After action report on Operation Seward

400
~~TOP SECRET~~
VII-115F

TO: Commanding Officer
45th Engr Gp (Const)
APO 96238

1. GENERAL:

- a. Name of Operation: Seward
- b. Date Of Operation: 5 September - 26 October 1966
- c. Location: TUY HOA, RVN
- d. Control Headquarters: 39th Engineer Battalion (C)
- e. Reporting Officer: LTC T R FULTON

2. ORGANIZATION:

- a. Company A, 39th Engineer Battalion
- b. Company B, 39th Engineer Battalion
- c. Company C, 39th Engineer Battalion
- d. 553rd Engineer Company (FB)
- e. 572nd Engineer Company (LE)

3. SUPPORTING FORCES:

10th Aviation Battalion (21-23 October)

4. MISSION:

Battalion initiates construction of C-130 capable airfield at DUNG TRE and repair of existing runway at CUNG SON, continues to support Free World Forces vicinity TUY HOA, executes construction projects as directed by 45th Engr Gp, continues base development planning of TUY HOA US and ROK Army areas.

5. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

1st Bde, 101st Abn seizes key terrain along routes 6 and 7 to secure movements of convoys to CUNG SON and DUNG TRE. One platoon (+), C Co, moved to CUNG SON for airfield repair. Co B (-) moves to DUNG TRE for construction of C-130 airstrip. Co C (-) moves to VUNG RO assuming responsibility of Phase II construction at PORT LANE. Co A returns to base camp assuming responsibility of contention construction.

6. EXECUTION:

The following is a chronological resume of engineer support in Operation Seward.

- a. 5 September: One platoon from "B" Co was in support of 1/327 in road clearing operations from CQ 174429 with one mine damaging a 5T dump truck at the borrow pit,

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vicinity CQ 045370. Platoon CP established at CQ 122100. One platoon from "C" Co conducted an ambush patrol from CQ 280320 to CQ 240357. No enemy contact.

b. 6 September: One platoon from "B" Co continued clearing operations from CQ 174429 to CQ 079344. No mines found. Hauled fill to repair road from CQ 045370 to CQ 065378. Installed a 48" culvert at CQ 079344.

c. 7 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Hauled fill material to culvert located at CQ 079344. Platoon from "C" Co joined 2/327 to begin combat support from TUY HOA NORTH to LAI HAI Platoon CP at CQ 247378.

d. 8 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Hauled fill to complete road repair from CQ 096373 to CQ 079344 and CQ 096373 to CQ 015356. Platoon from "C" Co filled 11 cuts and 3 tunnels on route 6B. Also breached one roadblock and destroyed one mine in place at CQ 036724. Received sniper fire in bivovac area during night. No casualties.

e. 9 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing operations with negative results. Fill hauled to repair road between CQ 079344 to CQ 089337. One squad from "B" Co moved to vicinity CQ 145495 in support of 101st at base camp. Squad repaired 100 feet of runway at TUY HOA NORTH. Platoon from "C" Co opened route 6B to vicinity BQ 955797 by removing 26 obstacles and filling 48 cuts.

f. 10 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Continued road repair between CQ 079344 and CQ 089337. Squad from "C" Co filled 11 cuts on Route 1 working North from 6B to vicinity CQ 072734. The "C" Co platoon received sniper fire from an estimated 1 Viet Cong at CQ 050718. No casualties.

g. 11 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results and road repair between CQ 079344 and CQ 089337. Squad from "B" Co repaired 1600 sq ft of runway at TUY HOA NORTH. Platoon from "C" Co cleared route 6B from intersection with route 1 to vicinity BQ 955797.

h. 12 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Hauled fill between CQ 079344 and CQ 069337. Squad from "B" Co repaired 5000 feet of road net at TUY HOA NORTH. Platoon from "C" Co cleared route 6B from CQ 072712 to BQ 955800. Removed one obstacle at BQ 980778. Installed an LTR at CQ 065735. Platoon was ambushed at obstacle site with no casualties. Three grenades were thrown into bivovac area with no casualties.

i. 13 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Hauled fill for road repair between CQ 015356 and CQ 007353. Squad from "B" Co terminated support of 101st base camp 131200 sept and returned to battalion area. Platoon from "C" Co cleared route 6B from CQ 072712 to BQ 955800 and operated an LTR at CQ 065735. Platoon from "C" Co supported 1/22 Inf in an assault river crossing at CQ 280230. Utilizing 8 assault boats, the platoon crossed and extracted approximately 80 men.

j. 14 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Hauled fill for road repair between CQ 079344 and CQ 089377, and started construction of headwalls for culvert at CQ 079344. "C" Co support of 2/327 was reduced to one squad. The squad secured and operated the LTR at CQ 065735. Squad CP at CQ 072713.

k. 17 September: Platoon from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Haul fill to complete road repair from CQ 096373 to CQ 079344 and CQ 096373 to CQ 091319 and completed headwalls at CQ 079344. Squad from "C" Co secured and operated LTR at CQ 065735. Platoon from "B" Co supported road movement of convoy from PHU BONG.

l. 18-19 September: "B" Co support of 1/327 reduced to one squad. Squad continued road clearing with negative results. Squad from "C" Co secured and operated LTR at CQ 065735. Platoon from "C" Co began support of 101st. Platoon CP remained in battalion area. Platoon repaired bridges at CQ 144546, CQ 141569, CQ 133592, and CQ 133597.

m. 20 September: Squad from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Squad from "C" Co continued securing and operating the LTR at CQ 065735. Platoon from "C" Co completed repairs of bridge at CQ 144546 and repaired bridge at CQ 139573 to 50% completion.

n. 21 September: Squad from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Squad from "C" Co continued securing and operating LTR at CQ 065735. Platoon from "C" Co completed repairs of bridge at CQ 139573. Convoy returning from bridge repairing mission on Route #1 North of TUY HOA came under heavy fire at CQ 1266155. During exchange of fire one EM wounded; enemy losses unknown.

o. 22-23 September: Squad from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Squad from "C" Co terminated support of 2/327 and returned to battalion area with the LTR. Platoon from "C" Co installed an M4T6 dry span at CQ 083701.

p. 24-26 September: Squad from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Platoon from "C" Co prefabricating pier and culvert for use on Hwy #1. One squad from "C" Co and survey team located at DUNG TRE, BQ 910707, conduct preliminary survey for new airfield.

q. 27 Sept - 6 Oct: Squad from "B" Co continued road clearing with negative results. Platoon from "C" Co prefabricated pier and culvert for use on highway one. Squad from "C" Co and survey team returned from DONG TRE.

r. 7 October: Support of 1/327 by squad of "B" Co terminated 071100 October.

s. 8-9 October: Platoon of "C" Co began move to CUNG SON. Platoon advanced to site of first ford, vicinity BQ 953415, and installed a 4 float raft with assistance from 553rd Engr Co.

t. 10-11 October: Platoon of "C" Co arrived at CUNG SON and set up CP, vicinity BQ 808422. Bridge unit returned to battalion area.

u. 12 October: Platoon from "C" Co placed 90 yards of gravel on airstrip. One platoon from "A" Co began support of 101st in repairing bridges on Hwy #1 North of TUY HOA.

v. 13 October: Platoon from "C" Co placed 110 yards of gravel on airstrip. Bridge repair by platoon from "A" Co delayed because road had not been cleared. Two platoons from "A" Co traveled South of WUNG RO and linked with a unit of 20th Engr Bn. Platoon from "B" Co prepared a by-pass at bridge #6 CQ 232194 South of WUNG RO.

w. 14 October: Platoon from "C" Co placed 100

yards of gravel on airstrip. Platoon from "A" Co still delayed on bridge work. "B" Co (-) completed by-passes on bridges #9, 10, and 11 as it began its move North to DUNG TRE.

x. 15-16 October: Platoon from "C" Co placed 75 yards of gravel on airstrip. Airfield 35% completed with gravel surfacing. Platoon from "A" Co further delayed. "B" Co (-) improved by-pass on bridge #13 and moved to vicinity CQ 109608.

y. 17-18 October: Platoon from "C" Co completed 42% of airstrip. 75 yards of gravel were placed. "B" Co (-) completed by-pass at CQ 048719 and CQ 038741. A platoon from "B" Co began salvaging operations of bridge #6, CQ 232194 South of VUNG RO. "A" Co (-) moved CP to vicinity of TUY HOA NORTH.

z. 19-20 October: "A" Co (-) removed the existing Eiffel bridge from bridge #9, CQ 116644 and bridge #11, CQ 113651. "B" Co (-) began moving to DUNG TRE on route 6B. A platoon from "B" Co continued salvaging operations at bridge #6. The platoon from "C" Co completed 50% of the gravel surfacing of the airstrip. Work on strip delayed by muddy conditions caused by excessive rainfall.

aa. 21-22 October: "A" Co (-) completed installation of M4T6 dry span at bridge #9, and installed two additional 36" culverts at bridge #10, CQ 115647. "B" Co (-) diverted from DUNG TRE. Units which had traveled to DUNG TRE could not return to Co Hq vicinity TUY AN because stream and by-pass were not fordable. An LTR was airlifted utilizing two CH-47 helicopters from 10th Aviation. The platoon from "C" Co was still delayed by muddy conditions on the airstrip.

bb. 23 October: "A" Co (-) placed class 60 panels at the approaches of bridge #10 in order to use the existing bridge and replaced a Bailey Bridge pier at bridge #11. "B" Co (-) was reunited, began moving South to TUY HOA NORTH. The LTR was airlifted back to battalion. Platoon from "C" Co placed 125 yards of gravel on the airstrip and 55 yards on access roads. Bad weather was still hampering operations.

cc. 24 October: "A" Co (-) began replacing class 60 dry span at bridge #10 and dry spans at bridge #11. The M4T6 dry span at bridge #6 was retrieved and a class 50 timber bridge constructed. "B" Co (-) closed at TUY HOA NORTH and began preparation for move to CUNG SON. Platoon from "C" Co placed 50 yards of gravel on airstrip and 50 yards of gravel on haul roads.

dd. 25 October: "A" Co continued working on improving LOC's Hwy #1 and Route 7. One platoon working on by-pass via CQ 055394. "B" Co began move to CUNG SON. Installed LTR vicinity CQ 160462. Platoon from "C" Co placed 20 yards of gravel on access road and 80 yards on airstrip.

ee. 26 October: "A" Co continued working on two 45' dry spans and 120' span at CQ 055394, assumed project of building M4T6 float bridge at BQ 954414 and finished bridges #10 and 11 on Hwy #1. "B" Co continued movement to CUNG SON. Platoon from "C" Co continued work on CUNG SON, airstrip.

7. SUMMARY OF STATISTICS:

a. One platoon of "B" Co supported the 1/327. Support consisted of clearing road daily and improving roads in area of operations.

b. Platoon from "C" Co supported the 2/327. Support consisted of opening road net on Hwy #1 and Route 6B from TUY HOA to LAI HAI.

c. One platoon from "B" Co supported the 1st Brigade, 101st Abn Div by repairing the PSP runway and the road net at TUY HOA NORTH.

d. Construction of tactical bridging on Hwy #1 was initiated by a platoon from "C" Co. Completion of tactical bridging and installation of permanent bridges was accomplished by "A" Co.

e. Platoon from "C" Co moved to CUNG SON and began improvement of existing runway. Project continued after completion of the operation.

8. COMMUNICATIONS:

a. Communications with the platoon from "C" Co which opened Route 6B were erratic.

b. Communications with platoon from "C" Co at CUNG SON were poor.

9. SUPPLY AND ADMINISTRATION:

During this reporting period, support was received from the following organizations:

a. TUY HOA SUB-AREA COMMAND-ALL Class I, Class III, and Class IV, supplies. Limited Class II and IV support including field fortifications and barrier material.

b. CAM RANH BAY DEPOT - Remaining Class II and IV support.

Shortages occurring during this operation were:

c. Class I: A, B, and C Rations

d. Class III: specifically OE-30, OE-50, MOGAS and Diesel

e. Class IV: construction materials, all types

f. Class V: demolitions

Difficulty was experienced in moving supplies from CAM RANH BAY DEPOT to TUY HOA. Lack of adequate air & sea transportation was the major contributing factor to the shortage of all classes of supply during this operation. Now that PORT LANE is open this problem area should be somewhat alleviated. Further problems were encountered in the lack of air & surface transportation from TUY HOA to the out lying units. This situation was improved considerable due to the 24th transportation Co arriving in this area.

10. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

a. Lack of good communications when units were deployed out of range of platoon Commo equipment.

b. Adequate bridging material to provide proper decking on permanent bridges was not available. Substitute material had to be obtained on a loan basis.

c. Excessive rain made travel on Route 7 very difficult, and construction of the airfield at CUNG SON was delayed.

11. LESSONS LEARNED:

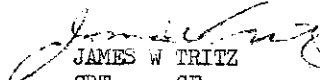
a. When moving a company out of immediate area of

battalion, every attempt should be made to reduce the amount of equipment carried to the amount necessary to perform the mission. Non TOE, "creative comfort" items should be left behind at base camp whenever possible.

b. The lack of construction materials for pioneer and bridge construction continues. Units must make use of natural timber in the area for this purpose.

c. During support combat operations adequate support and time must be allotted by the supported unit for engineer reconnaissance by air as a minimum and preferably by ground observation, in order to determine sources of materials and facilitates accurate work estimates.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


JAMES W TRITZ
CPT, CE
Adjutant