

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 1ST ENGINEER BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96345

AVDB-CE-2

12 September 1966

SUBJECT: Combat Operation After Action Report

THRU: Commanding General
1st Infantry Division
ATTN: AVDB-T
APO 96345

TO: Commander
US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
ATTN: J321
APO 96307

1. Name of Operation: Operation Amarillo.
2. Date of Operation: 230705 August 1966 to 011700 September 1966.

3. General: The command headquarters for the engineer portion of Operation Amarillo was Headquarters 1st Engineer Battalion, acting in accordance with 1st Engineer Frag Order 14-66 dated 19 August 1966. The battalion provided combat support to the 1st Brigade 1st Infantry Division during the clearing and securing of Route 13 from XT 922434 to XT 913295 and accomplished road repairs from Phuoc Vinh to Tan Uyen necessary to move resupply convoys from Di An to Phuoc Vinh. Company A worked in the sector from Phuoc Vinh to XT 898358 and Company C worked from XT 898358 to Tan Uyen.

- a. Reporting Officer: LTC J. M. KIERNAN, JR.
Commanding Officer
1st Engineer Battalion

b. Task Organization:

Headquarters 1st Engr Bn _ LTC KIERNAN
(1) Company A _ Cpt Wayne M Lucas
(2) Company C(-2d Plt) _ Cpt Larry A Blair
 2nd Plt Company B
 2nd Plt Company E (28 Aug 66 to 1 Sep 66)
(3) Company E Cpt Robert R Olson
 Equipment Plt, Headquarters Company

4. Intelligence:

a. Intelligence prior to Operation:

- (1) During the two weeks prior to the operation VC activity steadily increased.
- (2) The surface of Route 16 was in very poor condition from XT 922434 to Tan Uyen. The culverts at XT 883404 and XT 889369 were blown.
- (3) Laterite pits were located at XT 900424 and XT 909308.

b. Enemy Situation During Operation:

- (1) No new laterite pits were located.
- (2) The battalion cleared 7 command mines and about 40 booby traps during the operation. There were no casualties.
- (3) One Claymore mine was encountered at XT 889369 on 26 August 1966 resulting in six WIA.
- (4) Six engineers attached to the Infantry WIA.

5. Mission: 1st Engineers provide combat support to the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division engaged in securing Route 16 and repairs Route 16 to pass resupply convoys.

6. Concept of Operation: A Company supports northern battalion of 1st Brigade and Phu Giao Regional and Popular Forces of 1st Brigade and C Company supports southern battalion of 1st Brigade and the 48th ARVN Regiment north of Tan Uyen.

7. Execution:

a. 23 August: A Company moved south from Phuoc Vinh and rapidly repaired the culverts at XT 883404 and XT 889369 and started repairing and reshaping the road in their sector. Company A set up a perimeter with 1/2 Infantry and the night passed without incident.

b. 24 August: Battalion Headquarters and C Company with 2nd and 3rd platoons detached and the 2nd platoon, B Company attached moved north from Di An into their sector and set up a perimeter with B Company, 1/26 Infantry. Co A continued repairing the road in their sector. The night passed without incident.

c. 25 August: In the early morning a 1/2 Infantry long range patrol located an estimated reinforced VC battalion about eight kilometers west of Route 16 in a dense jungle area. The 1/2 Infantry and 1/26 Infantry were committed in the action to destroy the VC battalion. By this time the north bound convoy was about half way to Phuoc Vinh and the 1st Engineer Battalion was given the mission of securing Route 16 to permit passage of the convoy.

The battalion was reorganized as infantry and the noon the battalion had secured Route 16 with six platoon strong points (one platoon was made up from C Company headquarters with attached equipment operators) in the former sectors of the two infantry battalions.

The battalion commander called forward Company E with the equipment platoon of Headquarters Company attached and the 3rd Plt C Company to assist in securing the road. The convoy was passed without incident and in the early afternoon the battalion (minus A Company) coiled into a defensive perimeter. Company A formed a defensive perimeter with 1st Brigade Headquarters and D Battery 1/5 Field Artillery. During the night the VC probed both perimeters.

A Company killed two VC with small arms fire during the probe of their position. Co C listening post discovered an unknown number of VC in a tunnel near their position. A grenade was thrown into the tunnel which stopped all further activity. A mortar section from B Company 1/26 Infantry provided excellent fire support to the battalion perimeter.

d. 26 August: The battle with the VC battalion continued and the convoy was cancelled.

The battalion moved to the 1st Brigade command post and assumed the mission of securing the command post, the Artillery Battery and the rear detachments of the infantry units engaged in the battle. During this move a VC Clammore destroyed a Headquarters Company 2½ ton truck and wounded six men.

The Commanding General directed the 1st Engineer to destroy tunnel complexes discovered by infantry units in the battle area. An A Company platoon was air landed in the dense jungle at 1500 hours and completed their mission by 1700 hours. The platoon used 2000 pounds of cratering charges in destroying these tunnels.

In the late afternoon the battalion started preparations to reassume its primary mission of road repair. The infantry continued mop up operations and A Company deployed a demolition team to assist in the removal of booby trapped US bodies.

During the night E Company received probing attacks. The VC were driven off by mortar and small arms fire.

e. 27 August: The 1st Engineers continued to secure the 1st Brigade command post perimeter until the late afternoon. At this time the battalion returned to its location on the night of 24 August and reoccupied the perimeter with B Company 1/26 Inf. A Company remained with the Brigade command post.

During the night the battalion received probing attacks from west. A listening post from E Company killed one VC with a hand grenade and mortar fire was brought in on the attackers. Two VC were killed by the initial mortar fire and three more were killed when they attempted to withdraw through the mortar fire with the bodies. A total of six VC were killed during the night.

f. 28 August: The battalion reassumed its engineer mission of repairing the road and supporting infantry units in securing and clearing the road. E Company, minus its 2nd Plt, and the Equipment Platoon returned to Di An. The 2nd Plt, E Company was attached to C Company and given the mission of securing the engineer work parties.

The battalion also started clearing the jungle to a distance of 100 meters from the road in areas of high mine incidents.

g. 29 August: The remainder of the Battalion continued work repairing and maintaining route 16 and clearing jungle. One 13 wheel roller was damaged by a pressure mine. In the late morning the 50 meter combination Eiffel and timber trestle bridge began to fail under the heavy convoy traffic. Company E moved from Di An and made emergency repairs to the decking to permit passage of the remainder of the convoy.

Company B (minus 2nd Plt) received the mission to repair the bridge to pass the convoys during the remainder of the operation. They arrived at the bridge at 1730 hours and started work at 1800 hours. The company replaced the two abutments, two bents, approximately 30 meters of decking and placed treadway on the entire bridge. They completed work at 200330 Aug 66.

Company C (-) 2/28 Inf and one Plt from 1/4 Cav secured the bridge site.

h. 30 August: B Company departed the bridge site at 0900. One squad remained to maintain the bridge during passage of the convoy. The remainder of the battalion continued their previous day's mission.

i. 31 August: A Company moved north to the Song Be Bridge XT 925442 and constructed two helicopter landing zones. They closed into Phuoc Vinh in the late afternoon. The remainder of the battalion continued road repair and jungle clearing.

j. 1 September: The battalion (minus) departed the operational area in the early morning and closed into Di An Base Camp in the early afternoon. This terminated another successful operation for the 1st Engr Bn.

8. Supporting Forces: 1st Brigade, 1st Inf Div secured the road from XT 922434 to XT 913295 for most of the operation. Phu Giao Regional and Popular Forces secured the road from XT 922434 to Phuoc Vinh. The 48th ARVN Inf Regiment secured the road from XT 913295 to Tan Uyen.

9. Results:

a. Personnel: 1st Engr Bn sustained twelve WHA during Operation Amarillo.

b. Equipment:

(1) One 2½ ton cargo truck was destroyed by a command claymore mine.

(2) One 13 wheel roller was damaged by a pressure mine.

c. Enemy Losses: Eight VC were killed. Unknown number VC were wounded.

d. Construction:

- (1) Roads and bridges.
 - (a) Improved 30 km of road.
 - (b) Repaired one 50 meter bridge.
 - (c) Installed one culvert and repaired one culvert.
- (2) Field Fortifications: Individual and command protective emplacements only.
- (3) River crossing: None
- (4) Airfields: None
- (5) Reduction of enemy obstacles:
 - (a) Captured 1 Chinese communist claymore and one homemade command mine which are being evacuated through technical channels.
 - (b) Cleared seven mines.
 - (c) Cleared about 40 booby traps.
 - (d) Repaired numerous mine craters.
- (6) Denial Activities: Cleared 33 acres of jungle along Route 16.
- (7) General Construction: None
- (8) Engineer Reconnaissance:
 - (a) 6 ground recons
 - (b) 14 aerial recons
 - (c) reconned 45 km of road
 - (d) reconned 4 bridges
 - (e) located four water points

(9) Water Supply: Operated one water point at two different locations during the exercise.

10. Administrative:

a. Personnel:

- (1) Strength in field at beginning of operation 280.
- (2) Maximum strength in field during operation 412.
- (3) Strength in field at end of exercise 294.

b. Supply: Normal supply channels were utilized. Usual method was aerial resupply from Di An.

c. Maintenance: Company maintenance personnel maintained and repaired vehicles and equipment in the field. A portion of the battalion maintenance section was in the field to advise on maintenance problems and assist in obtaining repair parts.

d. Transportation: Organic transportation was used except for resupply which was by air.

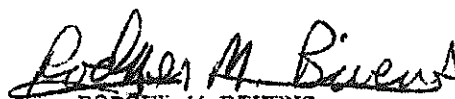
e. Communications: TOE FM radio was the principle means of communications.

f. Medical: The battalion aid station was operational in the field. One seriously wounded man in the claymore incident was saved only by having the Battalion Doctor and Aid Station immediately available.

11. Special Equipment and Techniques: Tractor drawn single tooth roter was used to cut command mine wires.

12. Commanders Analysis: During this operation the 1st Engr Bn performed practically all the missions that can be assigned to a divisional engineer battalion in combat including road improvements, bridge repair, mine clearing, and tunnel demolitions in enemy territory. The battalion entered combat as infantry and was credited with a VC body count of eight. Our own casualties were 12 wounded, six from the claymore mine on Route 16 and six from demolition teams working directly with the infantry battalions. Each mission assigned to the battalion was carried out in an outstanding manner.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



RODGER M BIVENS

Cpt, CE
Adjutant