



EASY DOES IT - Staff Sergeant Lanphier carefully disarms a 30-pound land mine discovered during Operation "Oregon". (USA Photo)

Do It Right the First Time There Is No Second Time

Duc Pho (USA) - Mine clearing operations are usually hazardous, never enjoyable, but always necessary to the successful completion of combat construction assignments.

One of these missions has been carried out in the Duc Pho - Chu Lai area during the past two months by Engineers of the 39th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Engineer Command Vietnam, who were participating in Task Force Oregon.

D Company of the 39th, commanded by Captain Martin Walsh, Jersey City, N.J., is credited with the initial clearing of the area around the new airstrip and battalion headquarters at Duc Pho. They are now helping clear QL-1 north to Mo Duc and are making daily checks of the roads around the air

strip and base camp.

D Company's demolition experts, Staff Sergeants A. Bryant, Philadelphia, and Arlen Lanphier, Wahiawa, Hawaii, have been finding at least two mines each day between the airstrip and the 39th Engineer Battalion headquarters. These devices range in size from large 30 pound anti-vehicular mines to small, crudely constructed anti-personnel mines.

Captain Walsh pointed out that the company's casualty rate hasn't been too high so far, but "extreme care and vigilance" must continue if injuries and deaths are to be kept minimum.

The captain explained that in mine clearing

the two methods most used are the mine detection teams and the probers. Each method must be constantly varied so that the VC don't learn a pattern and capitalize on the procedures.

Summing up the mine clearing operations, the captain added, "If you do what 'Sam' (the technical manual) says in clearing mines, you'll be square. If not, you'll be dead!"