

1966

UNIT HISTORY SUPPLEMENT TO 1966

(AVCA-TC-XB-124)

1 January 1966 to 31 December 1966

124TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (TERMINAL SERVICE)

THOMAS K. SHELDON CAPTAIN, TC COMMANDING

Incl 3,

124TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (TERMINAL SERVICE)

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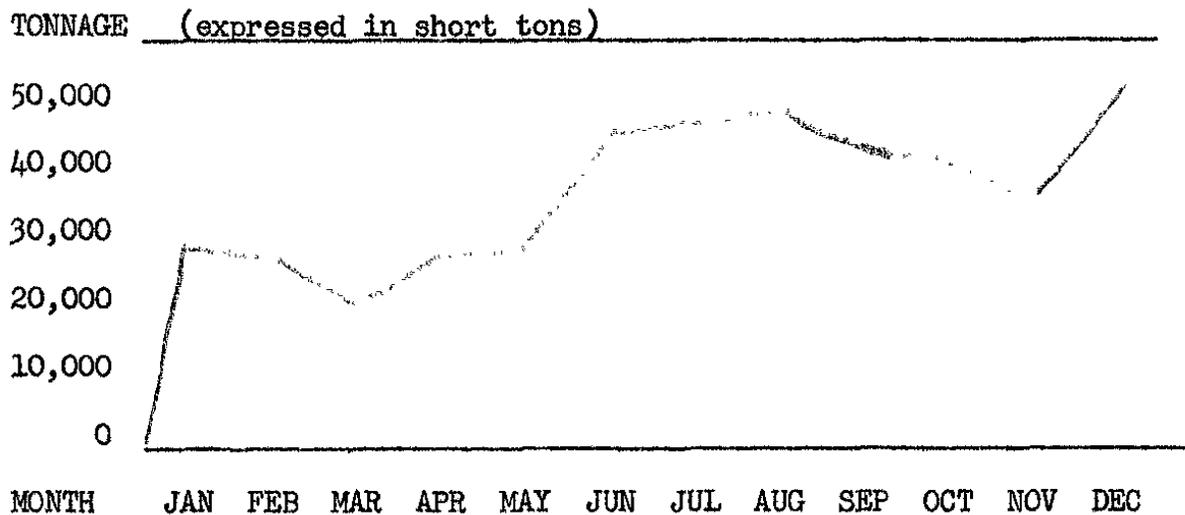
I. Operations:

A. Introduction: At the start of the year the 124th Transportation Company (Terminal Service) was tasked with the following mission:

1. Provide personnel and equipment in support of water terminal operations at Saigon Army Terminal.
2. Provide personnel for documenting (MILSTAMP) and supervising the discharging of all ammunition in the ship-to-barge operation at Nha Be.
3. Operate with assigned equipment and personnel the ammunition barge discharge sites located at Cogido, Buu Long, Cau Binh Loi, Binh Trieu, and Thanh Tuy Ha.
4. Provide personnel in support of Army air freight operations at Army Air Cargo Branch, Saigon Army Terminal, Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base.

Except for minor changes this was the mission of the 124th until December 1966 when the barge sites were turned over to the 402nd Transportation Company (Terminal Transfer), and the Army Air Cargo Mission and personnel were transferred to Saigon Support Command. The Company gained the mission of operating Area IV of Saigon Port in December 1966.

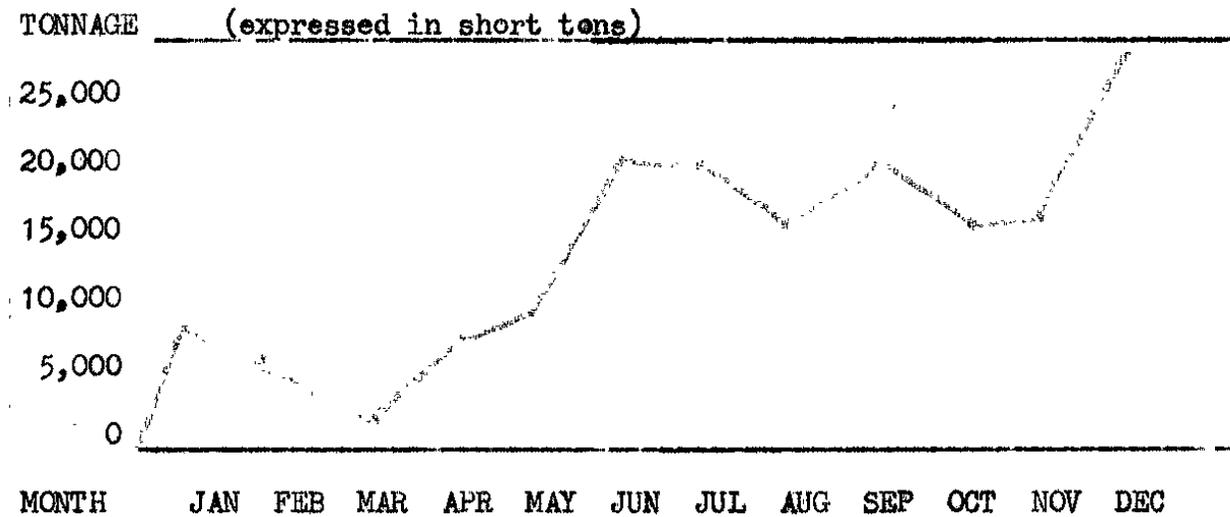
B. Nha Be: All the ammunition used in the Third Corps area was transported up river from Vung Tau to Nha Be aboard deep draft vessels. Nha Be had anchorages for three ships with buoys for three barge nests. The 124th boarded the vessels at Nha Be and discharged the ammunition to barges using civilian stevedores. The company had the responsibility for supervision and documentation, and the Ammunition Branch of the 4th Transportation Command had staff responsibility. The ships were worked on a two shift 24 hour day basis. Because of the Nha Be road being closed during the evening hours and the lack of secure shoreside facilities and the non-movement rule on the river at night, supervision was limited to the ship supercargo with no guidance during the evening hours. In September a shoreside tower was built and secured. Radios were placed on board all ships and night NCOIC was placed in the tower. He had radio and telephone communication with Ammo Branch thereby adding the supervisory and coordination capability of the night shift. Problems faced at Nha Be were lack of barge support, inability to travel from the shore to the ships at night, and the close proximity of the Nha Be POL storage area. A new location for the ammunition discharge was under study throughout the year. Following are the ammunition tonnages discharged at Nha Be for the year:



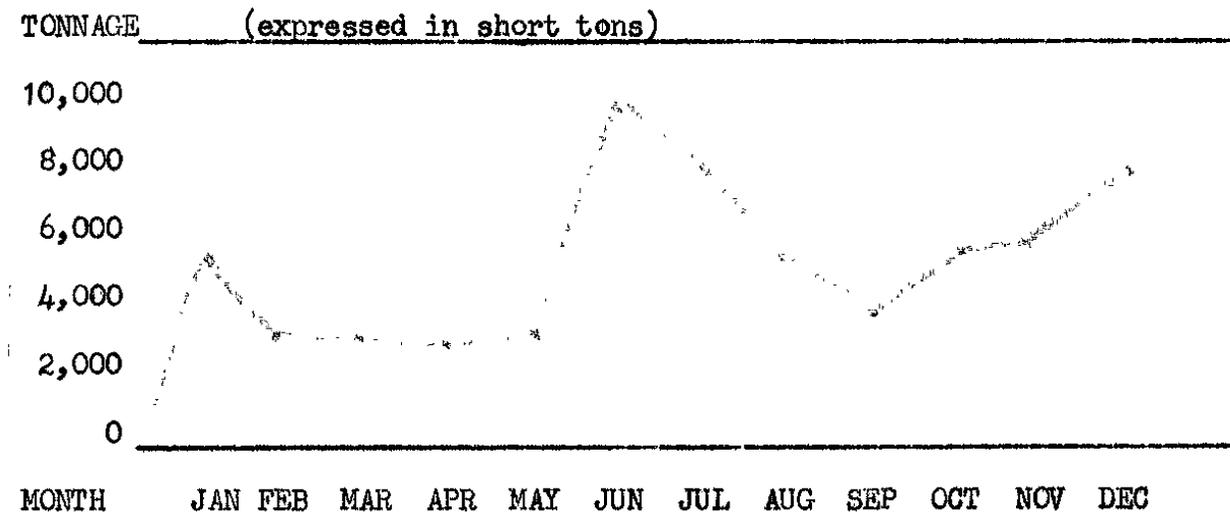
C. Barge Sites: The 124th had total ammunition discharge responsibility in the Third Corps area through the Barge Discharge Sites. The barges loaded at Nha Be were towed up river to Cogido, Buu Long, Binh Trieu, and Thanh Tuy Ha where they were off-loaded to trucks and consigned to the ammunition storage areas. Equipment at the sites consisted of TOE cranes supplemented by outdated pre World War II USAID cranes which required a large effort to keep running. These cranes lasted throughout the year largely by continuous maintenance, cannibalization, fabrication, and a local purchase program. All sites were dependent on truck availability since the ammunition could not be stored within the site area. Security and lighting was company responsibility but a shortage of personnel and equipment resulted in minimal security at all sites. Despite the lack of security and the isolated location of the sites, only one incident occurred during the year involving enemy activity. For the most part the barge sites were ignored by higher headquarters; few knew of their existence and almost no one knew where they were, nor what they looked like. The emphasis was on general cargo and the only way the sites continued to operate was through continuous direct coordination between the site personnel and the truck and ammunition units. The 402nd Transportation Company was assigned the barge sites as a single mission in December of 1966. 124th personnel remained on the sites on an advisory status for two weeks and all equipment at the sites was laterally transferred or hand-receipted to the 402nd.

1. Cogido: Cogido was the largest site in the system. It supported the 3rd Ordnance Battalion ASP in Long Binh and the ARVN ASP 532 in Long Binh. It had 2 crane pads capable of handling one barge until June when it was expanded to 5 crane pads capable of handling 2 barges. It was worked by GI stevedores from the 124th from January through April when the GI's were replaced by contract stevedores. 124th personnel continued to supervise, document, and operate all equipment at the site.

Following are the Cogido tonnages for the year:



2. Buu Long: Buu Long was a two pad one barge site on the outskirts of Bien Hoa Air Force Base, where U.S. Air Force and VNAF ammunition was off-loaded. It too was a complete GI operation until May when civilian stevedores replaced the U.S. personnel. 124th personnel were retained in supervisory, documentation and operator jobs. In October the Air Force express operation which had been trucked in convoy from Cat Lai was transferred thru the Buu Long site coming up by barge from Nha Be. It was found that this operation resulted in more timely delivery with a considerable cost reduction. Buu Long tonnage figures are as follows:

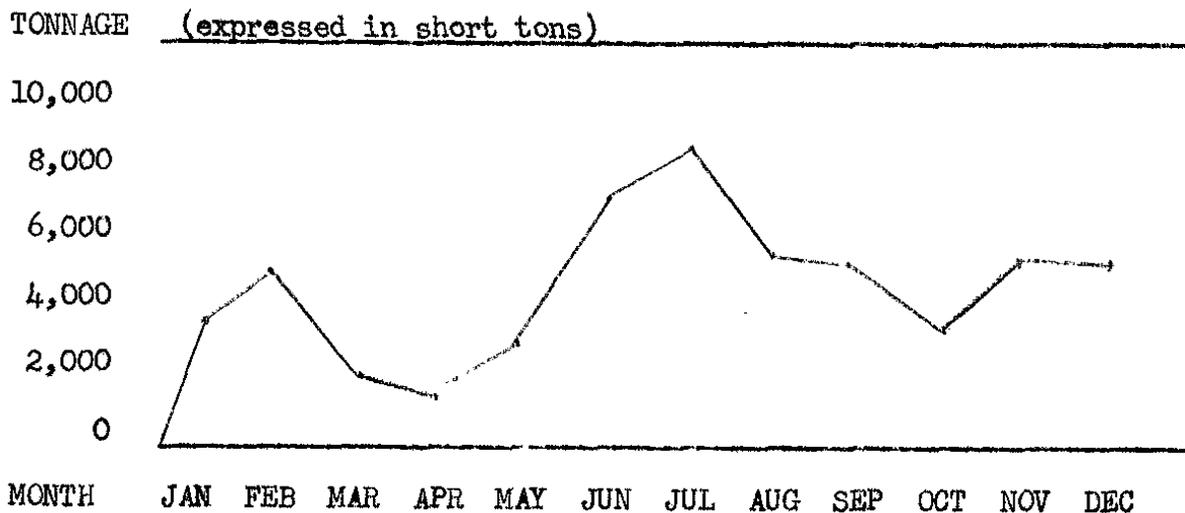


3. Binh Trieu: Binh Trieu was a two pad one barge site supporting the ARVN ASP 531, and U.S. Air Force and VNAF at Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base. Binh Trieu started as a contractor stevedore site and remained as such throughout the year. The 124th provided site supervision, documentation, and one crane with operator. The contractor provided the stevedores and one crane

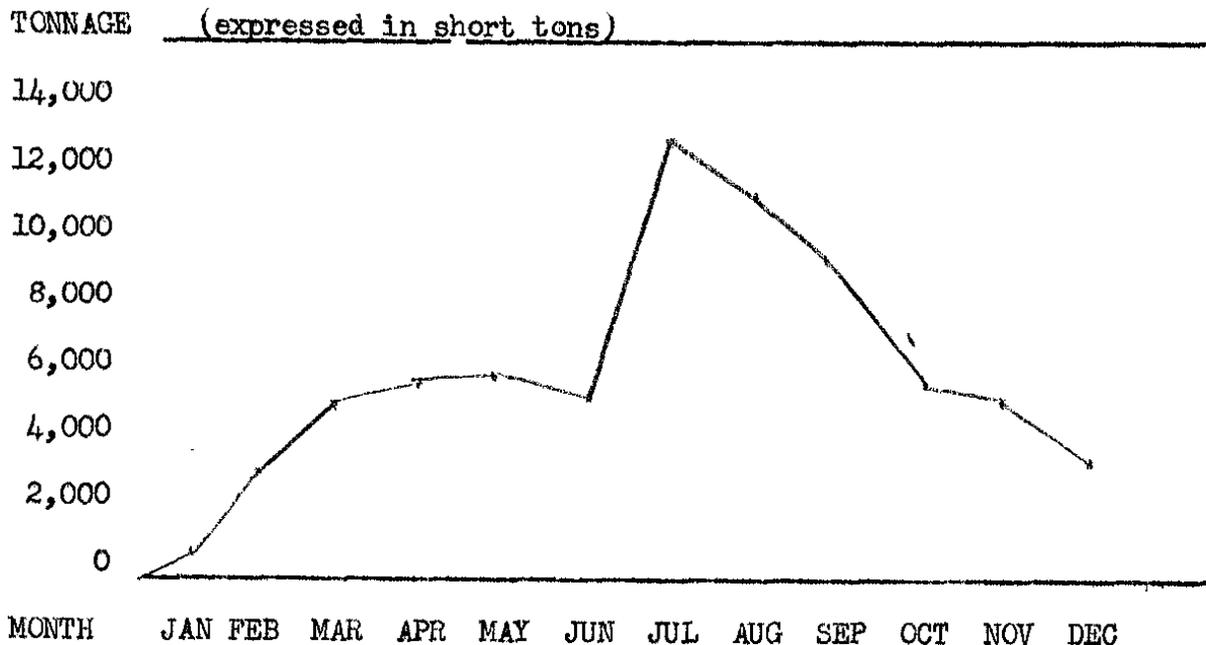
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with operator. Security was supplemented by an ARVN rifle platoon. The only terrorist activity in the Ammo System occurred at Binh Trieu in March when two loaded barges were mined and sunk. The barges contained tear gas and small arms ammunition and minimal damage occurred at the site and there were no injuries. Binh Trieu tonnage for the year was:



4. Thanh Tuy Ha: Thanh Tuy Ha discharge site supported the ARVN Thanh Tuy Ha ASP, the largest ARVN ASP in Vietnam. The 124th provided only supervisory and documentation personnel throughout the year. 124th equipment was taken to Thanh Tuy Ha on several occasions to supplement ARVN and contractor equipment. Thanh Tuy Ha tonnage for the year was:



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D. Saigon Army Terminal and Army Air Cargo: Personnel were supplied to Saigon Army Terminal and Army Air Cargo although no operational responsibility was involved. The company acted in a headquarters commandant relationship with these personnel. During July over 100 men were committed from the 124th in support of these two agencies.

E. Area IV Saigon Port: In December of 1966 the 124th received the mission of manning and operating Area IV on Saigon Port. This newly completed facility located in the Camp Davies area consisted of one deep draft berth, pier, and warehouse. The 124th had complete operational responsibility for this area. Within two weeks it was known as the "express pier" because of the rapid manner that ships were discharged.

F. Special Operational Missions:

1. During the months of May and December the 124th was called upon to operate contingency hatch gangs when the contractor stevedores went on strike in Saigon Port. On both occasions the discharge operation was smooth and all personnel performed in an outstanding manner. The lack of experience of some was made up by the long experience and training of others. A shortage of qualified winch operators was alleviated by using crane operators. It was found that a good crane operator was capable of handling a winch with very little training. Both periods resulted in average of over 15 S/T's per hour per gang, a creditable performance for any group of stevedores.

2. On 3 August 1966 the 124th provided three stevedore gangs (GI's) to work the Baton Rouge Victory which had been mined in the Saigon River. The gangs worked for 8 days before enough cargo had been off-loaded to float the ship and take it in for repairs.

II. Administration:

A. Command: Captain Ronald H. Wilbanks Jr., 092043 was in command of the 124th at the beginning of the year. On 7 July 1966 Captain Thomas K. Sheldon, 098078 assumed command of the company.

B. Billets: At the start of the year the entire company was billeted at Tent Camp "B" near Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base. It was requested that the company find a new billet area. A 90 man Detachment was sent to T.C. Hill, Long Binh on 3 January to facilitate working the discharge sites at Cogido and Buu Long. The remainder of the company was relocated to the M&M Villa area next to the Saigon Port. This area was unimproved and much clearing and fill was necessary. The company remained in this area in General Purpose Medium tents throughout the year. At year's end the company was preparing its new company area at Cat Lai. On 10 February 1966 the 124th Mess Hall was put in operation at M&M Villa. One of the few company messes in Saigon, it fed many transients as well as the company for the remainder of the year.

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C. Personnel: The company remained at full strength until September 1966 when the rotation dates of the advance party arrived. In November the main party went home and at the end of the year the company had a present for duty strength of less than 200 personnel. Incoming personnel were for the most part not stevedore trained although some of the NCO's had been through the Transportation School NCO Stevedore course which proved to be very excellent training. In July of 1966 two detachments, the 588th Transportation Detachment (MHE) and the 279th Transportation Detachment (Crane) were attached to the 124th.

D. Inspections: During the year the company very successfully passed four major inspections; an AGI in June and CMMI's in July, September, and November.

E. Awards: During the first eight months of the year the 11th Transportation Battalion (Terminal) sponsored a Unit of the Month award. The 124th won the award six out of eight times. A great number of personnel won awards ranging from the 4th Transportation Command Certificate of Achievement to the Bronze Star Medal.

III. Revolutionary Development:

The 124th Transportation Company (Terminal Service) maintained an active civic action program throughout the year. Notable projects included the building of a kindergarten and remodeling the church at the Phuoc An School. The company donated time, material, and money to make a sizeable addition to the Phuoc An facility. Thanksgiving was shared with 40 orphan girls from the St. Elizabeth Orphanage. After eating the traditional turkey dinner with the girls, playground equipment that was constructed by the company welder was brought out and donated to the orphanage. Christmas complete with Santa Claus and gifts was shared with school children from the Cat Lai School.