

Jun-Dec
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523D TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)
APO 96238

21 July 1967

SUBJECT: Unit History for the Period 1 June 1966 through 31 December 1966

The 523d Transportation Company (Light Truck) was reactivated 18 May 1966 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky by Third USA General Order 156 and later amended by Third USA General Order 195. The unit had been inactive since 19 Feb 62.

Upon activation of the unit, the personnel present at Fort Campbell, Ky. were attached to the 2d Bn, 319th Artillery (Airborne) pending arrival of their higher headquarters, the 500th Trans Gp (MT) which was activated 1 June 1966. During the period 18 May - 1 June 1966, the unit began receiving personnel and by 1 June 1966, there were two officers and 93 EM present for duty.

The Unit was assigned a D-1 status and commenced on a concentrated program of training and obtaining supplies. The unit training period commenced on 14 Jun 66 and was programmed for seven weeks. Training was conducted six days per week for the seven week period and required maximum effort by all personnel in meeting a complicated schedule of POM training, specialized training for RVN, and the normal training required by the ATP 55 series. A portion of the training was conducted by members of the 101st Airborne Division who had recently returned from RVN and this training proved to be most interesting and useful.

The unit also received TOE equipment during this period and the normal hardware needed to equip a company flooded the organization. Rifles, desks, tools, TA 50-901, trailers, and other equipment flowed through the unit supply all during the months of June, July, August and into September. The most important piece of equipment the unit required, however, was not available - 5 ton cargo trucks. Finally in late August, the members of the company made two trips to South Bend, Indiana, drew the task vehicles off the assembly line, and drove them to the rail sites at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. This was accomplished without accident or incident and speaks highly of the unit's personnel, most of whom had not driven a 5 ton vehicle more than fifteen or twenty miles.

The unit then split its personnel, 50% departing for POM leave and the remaining 50% beginning the back breaking task of packing and loading unit equipment. This involved detailed loading diagrams, listing of contents, strapping, banding and marking of conex containers and container inserts. The task was completed on schedule and when the unit began outloading on 1 Sep 66, the personnel returning from leave picked up the task while the "packing" crew went on a well deserved 15 day leave.

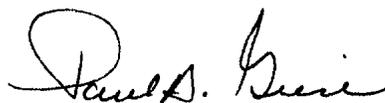
The 523d Trans Co (Lt Trk) then slowed its pace and began cleaning up last minute details prior to the departure of the main body. The men of the unit departed Fort Campbell, Kentucky by aircraft on 27 Sep 66 and arrived at Oakland, California the same day. They were then loaded aboard the USNS General William Weigel for the 26 day trip to Qui Nhon, Republic of South Vietnam. The initial stage of the voyage was complicated by the usual cases of "seasickness" however, spirits improved after three or four days when the men finally became used to the

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rock and roll of the ship. The USNS Weigel stopped enroute at Okinawa, Vung Tao, Cam Rahn Bay and Vung Ro Bay before dropping anchor at Qui Nhon on 23 Oct 66.

The company disembarked and was moved by bus to a piece of bare real estate in the Cha Rang Valley where it found the 54th Transportation Battalion (Truck), their new parent unit. The task then began of erecting and building a contonment area that was to be a new home. The unit spent seven days in a concentrated effort to build flooring in tents, a latrine facility, mess hall, shower house and other necessary structures for the company. The OJT carpenters and plumbers managed to put together the start of a unit area before the arrival of the unit's equipment.

On 3 Nov 66, the ship carrying the unit vehicles arrived in Qui Nhon and began discharging its load. Vehicles were immediately removed from the beach and brought to the unit for servicing and made ready for the road. The unit began operation on 6 Nov 66 and was operating at full capacity one week later. The committments came heavy in an attempt to relieve the burden on the one other Transportation Battalion and cargo was moved over QL Route 19 and QL Route 1 to the 1st Cavalry Division at An Khe, the 4th Infantry Division and to the 25th Infantry Division at Pleiku. Operation Thayer II commenced along with the monsoon season and the 523d Trans Co (Lt Trk) soon found themselves hauling cargo to Phu Cat and Bong Son north on QL Route 1. The pace set was demanding and the driver found that an 18 hour turn around trip to Pleiku was an exhausting experience. The roads were deteriorated, due to lack of repair and nearly all bridges were destroyed and spanned by "Bailey" bridging. QL Route 1 north was extremely trecherous and difficult and frequently washed out by the monsoon rains. One platoon of the unit remained stranded in Bong Son for 15 days with a Combat Engineer Company due to washed out bridges on QL Route 1. From the period 5 Nov 66 to 31 Dec 66, the 523d Trans Co (Lt Trk) hauled 6,839 tons of cargo over 246,000 miles supporting the combat elements in the Republic of South Vietnam.



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