

1968

UNIT HISTORY

523RD TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LT TRK)

54TH TRANSPORTATION BATTALION (TRK)

8TH TRANSPORTATION GROUP (MT)

USA SUPPORT COMMAND, QUI NHON

1 JANUARY 1968 TO 31 DECEMBER 1968

PREPARED BY:

HARRIS T JOHNSON III

523RD TRANSPORTATION COMPANY

31 JANUARY 1968

APPROVED BY:



ROBERT P MAULDIN

1LT, TC

COMMANDING

APO 96492

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 31 December 1968, the 523rd Transportation Company (Lt Trk) completed its second full year in Vietnam. During that year it continued to furnish transportation support as part of the 8th Transportation Group (Motor Transport), to the Qui Nhon Support Command.

2. MISSION AND RESOURCES

a. Mission - Like all light truck companies, by TO&E 55-17F, the mission of the 523rd Transportation Company is to provide Transportation for the movement of general cargo and personnel by motor transport. Specifically, this company's mission was the line-haul movements of supplies and personnel from the Qui Nhon area to the terminals at An Khe, Pleiku, Kontum, Dak To, Phu Cat, Bong Song, Duc Pho, Song Cau, and Tuy Hoa and various locations in the vicinity of these towns.

b. Capabilities - The 523rd Transportation Company fails to conform to the 55-17F TO&E regarding its capability. The figure of 540 short tone of cargo as a daily capability should be divided by two. The reasons for this are the lack of good roads and the distances to our destinations. For example, Pleiku our main convoy destination is 93 miles away. The road between our compound and Pleiku is open approximately 12 hours daily. The quality of the road presents a one-way travel time of between $4\frac{1}{2}$ and 5 hours. This leaves 2 to 3 hours to complete a turn around which includes traveling from the assembly area to the unloading sites and vice versa and the actual unloading. Therefore only one trip can be made daily. In addition, it should be noted that on the average one-third of the convoy failed to make the daily turn-around at Pleiku in 1968. Slow unloading was the main cause. These vehicles returned the next day.

c. Organization and Utilization of Resources - Convoys were necessarily from our compound to all of destinations. Independent company convoys were not used. Instead the various companies of the battalion pooled their task vehicles. The daily convoys were accordingly were battalion convoys. The individuals companies were assigned to provide the necessary control and maintenance personnel and vehicles for a diagram of the organization of the 523rd Transportation Company see Annex "B".

d. Personnel

(1) Commanding Officer - From the period of 1 January 1968 to 15 January 1968, Captain Charles W. Bevard was the Company Commander. Captain Harris R. Wheeler then assumed command for three days at which time 1LT David J. Spearly held the command until 27 January. On 27 January 1LT David Palm assumed command. 1LT Palm was company commander until 21 February when Captain Wheeler again took command. 1LT David J. Spearly took command of the company on 19 June 1968 and remained until 2LT Roger E. Hester took command on 28 June 1968.

Captain Wheller took command for the third time on 30 June 1968 and remained until 5 September 1968 when 1LT Edward H Pool took command. On 6 September 1968 1LT Pool departed on RFR and in his absence 1LT Isackson took command until 17 September 1968 when 1LT Pool returned - 1LT Pool then remained in command until the end of the year.

(2) Platoon Leaders - The following Officers were assigned as platoon leaders during the year:

1LT Harolds T. Johnson III
1LT David R. Spearly
1LT Rodger E Hester
1LT Stephen P Voorhies
1LT David R Palm
1LT Frederick Percival
1LT William Jackson
1LT John Isackson
1LT William Hammel

Rotation and reassignment accounts for the lengthy list.

(3) Maintenance Officer - From the period 1 January 1968 to 18 September 1968 S01 Michael Dilbeck was assigned as Maintenance Officer of the Company. CW2 Donald W. Widman served as Maintenance Officer from 23 September 1968 to the end of 1968.

(4) First Sergeant - Boryl W. Harvey, 1SG E8, performed the duties of 1SG from 1 January 1968 to 7 June 1968 when he was promoted and transferred to HHD 27th Trans Bn. 1SG E8 George S. Marshall was assigned as 1SG from 29 June 1968 to 18 Oct 1968 when 1SG E8 Elwood Johnson took over and served until the end of the year.

(5) Truckmaster - SSG E6 Ewald Timpa directed operations as truckmaster from 1 Jan 1968 to 16 May 1968 when SFC E7 Jose Romero took over. SFC E7 Edwin Fuller was Truckmaster from 12 September to the end of the year.

(6) Platoon Sergeants - During the year 1967 the following Sergeants served as platoon sergeants in the 523rd Transportation Company:

SSG E6 Freezon, Balzer R.
SSG E6 Drewniak, Waldomar A.
SFC E7 Walls, Edward G.
SGT E5 Lynch, James R.
SSG E6 Davis, William C
SSG E6 Sanford, Willie J.
SSG E6 Ware, Oscar
SSG E6 Rogers, James A
SSG E6 Rogers, Joseph W.
SSG E6 Ogburn, Carl D.
SFC E7 Romero, Jose

e. Vehicles - The following is a listing of the companies vehicles:

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CLASS</u>
55	5 Ton, Truck Cargo M54A2	Task
5	5 Ton, Truck Cargo M54A2	Convoy Escort
6	2½ Ton, Truck Cargo M35A2	Administration
3	¼ Ton, Truck Utility M151A1	Convoy Escort
2	¼ Ton, Truck Utility M151A1	Administration
1	5 Ton, Truck, Wrecker M543A2	Administration

f. Facilities - The 523rd Transportation Company is located in Cha Rang Valley as a part of the 54th Transportation Battalion compound. The company motor pool is located in the southeast corner of the compound. The billets, orderly room, mess hall and supply room are all located in the south central section of the compound. During the first part of 1968 the men were involved in the construction and occupation of permanent wooden billets. By the end of May the troops were all in wooden billets and by the end of December the "Winged Wheel Club" A consolidated EM-NCO club had been constructed.

3. OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

a. Training Exercises - The only training exercise that the 523rd Transportation Company participated in during the year 1968, was a gas chamber exercise conducted by the 54th Transportation Battalion in Mid-December.

b. Mandatory Subject Training - Daily from 1630 to 1800 hours motor stables was held by the 523rd in its motor pool. In addition daily classes were conducted by the Officers and Senior NCO'S of the 523rd in conjunction with the battalion training schedule.

c. Combat Service Support Operations - During 1968 the 523rd supported the 4th Division, the 25th Division, the 1st Cavalry Division, The Americal Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the Tiger, Capital, and White Horse Divisions of the Republic of Korea Army.

d. Combat Activities - The 523rd Transportation Company (Lt Trk) was involved in twelve ambushes in 1968. The ambushes occurred on the following dates: 15, 25, 30 January, 7 February, 4, 8 March, 5, 12, 21 May, 5 June, 14 August, and 13 November. The personnel of the ambushed convoys in their defense killed over 12 of the attackers by body count not counting the results of six ambushed whose results are unknown.

e. Marksmanship - The 523rd stresses marksmanship. The individual is helped in all ways possible to gain a good sense of marksmanship. All machine guns are test fired daily before going on convoy.

f. Weapons Training - All incoming personnel to the 523rd Transportation Company receive a refresher course on the M-16 rifle. During 1968 this was the company's primary weapon. Individuals also receives familiarization with the M-60 machine gun and M-79 grenade launcher, the other weapons of the company.

g. Mission Accomplishments - During the year 1968 the 523rd Transportation Company dispatched 19,265 vehicles which traveled 1,898,423 miles. These vehicles consumed 337,576 gallons of fuel and moved a total of 52,078 tons of cargo.

4. PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES

During June 1968, there was a severe rotational hump which was somewhat remedied by the transferring and shuffling of troops within the Transportation Group. This hampered operations to a certain degree in that experienced drivers were often replaced with inexperienced drivers. A morale problem was encountered by some troops being transferred with only a short time left in country. At the latter part of November and early December saw an extreme shortage of personnel.

5. SECURITY ACTIVITIES

a. Compound Security - The 54th Transportation Battalion provides its own perimeter security forces. A provisional guard unit was established for the purpose the companies of the battalion have been leveled to form this unit. Throughout 1968, the 523rd provided men for this purpose. In addition an NCO was also furnished.

b. Convoy Security - With the number and seriousness of the enemy activity in the Central Highlands, especially along QL 19 the 523rd constructed and maintained 5 gun trucks for convoy security. These trucks were hardened by sandbags and armor plating. Each such vehicle had a four men crew consisting of a driver, two machine gunners, and a grandier. The immense firepower plus protection for the crew combined with the personal bravery and fighting spirit of each crew has proved invaluable several times.

6. LOGISTICAL ACTIVITIES

a. Logistical problems - None existed that worthy of note.

b. Supply Activities - During 1968 the 523rd operated its own supply room and armorer in adjoining annex. In addition to its supply functions, the supply room also acted as the collecting agency for the Quartermaster and Charity laundries.

c. Maintenance Activities - During 1968 the maintenance section of the 523rd was to have approximately 90% of the company's vehicles available for daily dispatch.

d. Food Service Activities - In addition to providing food for the 523rd the company mess hall also feeds the personnel of the 54th Transportation Battalion HHD, and the 505th Transportation Detachment.

7. SPECIAL EVENTS

a. Annual Inspector General Inspection - On 15 April 1968 the 523rd Transportation Company received its annual Inspector General Inspection. The company received a "Satisfactory" rating.

b. Command Maintenance Management Inspection - On 15 August 1968, the 523rd Transportation Company received a CMMI from the United States Army Support Command, Qui Nhon. It was rated as "Satisfactory".

c. In December 1968, the 523rd received a safety certificate for 300,000 accident free miles.