

1968

UNIT HISTORY

541ST TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)

124TH TRANSPORTATION BATTALION (TRUCK)

USA SUPPORT COMMAND, Qui Nhon

January 1968 thru December 1968

Prepared By

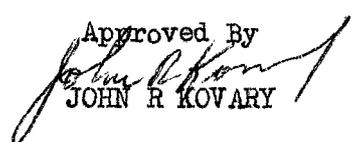
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541st Transportation Company (Light Truck)

Date Prepared

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1 Incl
Unit History

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

1. INTRODUCTION.....1

2. MISSION AND RESOURCES.....1

 a. Mission.....1

 b. Capabilities.....1

 c. Organization.....1

 d. Personnel.....1

 e. Vehicles and Equipment.....2

 f. Facilities.....2

3. OPERATIONS AND TRAINING.....2

 a. Training Exercises.....2

 b. Mandatory Subject Training.....2

 c. Combat Service Support Operations.....2

 d. Combat Actions.....3

4. PERSONNEL.....4

5. LOGISTICS.....4

6. SPECIAL EVENTS.....4

 a. Annual Inspector General Inspection.....4

 b. Command Management Maintenance Inspection (CMMI).....5

ANNEXES

 Annex A - Lineage and Honors.....6

 Annex B - Organizational Chart.....7

 Annex C - Training Program.....8

 Annex D - General Orders.....9

I. INTRODUCTION:

At the beginning of January 1968, the 541st Transportation Company was stationed in An Khe under the 34th Supply and Service Battalion at Camp Radcliff. At the present the unit is assigned to the 124th Transportation Battalion which is located at Camp Wilson in Pleiku.

II. MISSION AND RESOURCES:

a. To provide transportation for the movement of general cargo and personnel by motor transport.

b. Capabilities:

(1) For Local Hauls: 720 short tons of cargo (4 tons per truck) based on 75 percent availability of vehicles and 4 trips daily on highway, or 3,600 passengers (20 passengers per truck) on or off highway.

(2) For Line Hauls: 360 short tons of cargo (4 tons per truck) based on 75 percent availability of vehicles and 2 trips daily on highway, or 1,440 passengers (16 passengers per truck) on or off highway.

(3) 112.5 short tons of cargo ($2\frac{1}{2}$ tons per truck) in one lift off highway.

c. Organization:

Organization consists of a Company Headquarters, three (3) truck platoons, and a maintenance section. Each platoon consists of two (2) truck squads.

d. Personnel:

(1) Company Headquarters is authorized twenty (20) personnel to include Company Commander, First Sergeant, Truckmaster, Assistant Truckmaster, Company Clerk, Mess Personnel, Supply Personnel, Armorer, and Dispatcher.

(2) The three (3) truck platoons consist of Platoon Leaders, Platoon

Sergeants, Assistant Platoon Sergeants, Squad Leaders, and Light Truck Drivers for a total of one hundred thirty eight (138) personnel.

(3) The Maintenance Section consists of a Maintenance Technician, Motor Maintenance Sergeant, Shop Clerk, Mechanics, Mechanics Helpers, Maintenance Data Specialists, and a Wrecker Operator for a total of seventeen (17) personnel.

The company is authorized a total of one hundred seventy (170) enlisted men and five (5) officers.

e. The vehicles the unit is authorized are sixty six (66) $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks, five (5) $\frac{1}{4}$ ton trucks, one (1) wrecker, twenty two (22) $1\frac{1}{2}$ ton trailers, and five (5) $\frac{1}{4}$ ton trailers.

f. The company has mess, bathing, and recreational facilities available. The men are billeted in standard type army barracks. A chapel, theater, library, and photo lab are available on the compound for the use of all personnel.

III. OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

a. Each month the company has a practice alert exercise.

b. Mandatory subject training consists of Character Guidance, CBR, Safety, Physical Training, Command Information, Military Justice, Code of Conduct, Prevention of Heat Injury, Weapons Qualification and Familiarization, Psychological Warfare, Armed Forces Censorship, Safeguarding Defense Information, and Survival Escape and Evasion. In addition personnel of this unit are constantly undergoing driver and maintenance retraining.

c. Combat Service Support Operations consisted of supporting the operations of the 34th S&S Battalion in An Khe for the first three (3) months of the year. Commitments were made running from An Khe to Qui Nhon.

On 14 March 1968, the company received orders transferring it to the 8th Transportation Group in Qui Nhon. The company remained in An Khe and continued to support operations between An Khe and Qui Nhon. Commitments were also started to the Pleiku area.

The entire company moved to the Pleiku area on 3 July 1968. Commitments were changed to provide local support to the Pleiku area and line haul North to Kontum and Dakto.

d. Combat Actions began with a Viet Cong mortar attack on the motor pool in An Khe during February with five (5) trucks destroyed and twenty (20) damaged. The company participated in several search and destroy missions within the perimeter of Camp Radcliff searching for Viet Cong who had penetrated the perimeter.

During the month of April SP4 Gerald Maus was wounded by hostile sniper fire. His wounds were not serious.

On the 26th of May there was an ambush in the vicinity of Painted Rock. PFC O'Neil was wounded and one of the vehicles was destroyed in the ambush.

On the 14th of August "Cold Sweat", one of the gun trucks, hit a mine north of Kontum. SP4 Larry Portnoff received injuries but was returned to duty. The truck was salvaged due to the heavy damage but the armor plating was saved to construct another gun truck.

On the 16th of August the worst ambush of the year took place about 13 miles north of Pleiku. The action lasted about one (1) hour. Staff Sergeant Charles Robinson and SP4 Bobby Spikes were wounded in the action. One (1) truck was lost due to damages. Crews of the gun trucks "Duce is Wild" and "Kings of the Road" displayed heroism in the face of

the enemy when they remained in the kill zone of the ambush to defend the convoy. Crews of these vehicles were recognized and later decorated for their bravery. There were an estimated three (3) Battalions of the North Vietnamese Army in the area.

SP4 Larry Portnoff was wounded in a small ambush on the 29th of August and was evacuated. No vehicles were damaged or lost.

This marked the end of combat actions for the year 1968.

IV. PERSONNEL:

During the year the unit was normally not assigned sufficient personnel to bring it to its authorized strength. The most critical shortage was the lack of Squad Leaders, Sergeant E5's. It was not unusual to have Specialist Fifth Class or Specialist Fourth Class as Squad Leaders. Experienced personnel for supply and orderly room activities were rarity. There were never sufficient men available as assistant drivers, which would have been very advantageous for convoy security.

V. LOGISTICS:

There was much difficulty in obtaining sufficient $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks to keep the company at its authorized levels. Many times the unit operated with only one-half or two-thirds of its authorized level. Because of this one hundred percent of all available vehicles were dispatched daily and consequently command emphasis was constantly on maintenance. C-U boots were perhaps the most difficult repair item to obtain.

VI. SPECIAL EVENTS:

a. The company had its annual Inspector General Inspection by the US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon, on 25 June 1968, and received a satisfactory rating.

b. On 13 October 1968, the unit was rated as unsatisfactory by the 1st Logistical Command after conducting its CMI. The major deficiency was in the area of Maintenance Management. A reinspection was conducted on 21 December 1968, the score at this time was 90% for an overall rating of satisfactory.

ANNEX A

LINEAGE AND HONORS
541ST TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)

Constituted 1 May 1936 in the Regular Army as Company E, 48th Quartermaster Regiment

Activated 15 October 1939 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Redesignated 1 August 1942 as Company E, 48th Quartermaster Truck Regiment

Reorganized and redesignated 2 December 1943 as 3525th Quartermaster Truck Company

Converted and redesignated 1 August 1946 as 3535th Transportation Corps Truck Company

Redesignated 30 June 1947 as 541st Transportation Truck Company (Troop)

Reorganized and redesignated 1 April 1954 as 541st Transportation Company (Light Truck)

CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

World War II - AP

East Indies

Papua

New Guinea

Luzon

Korean War

UN defensive

UN offensive

CCF intervention

First UN counteroffensive

CCF spring offensive

UN summer-fall offensive

Second Korean winter

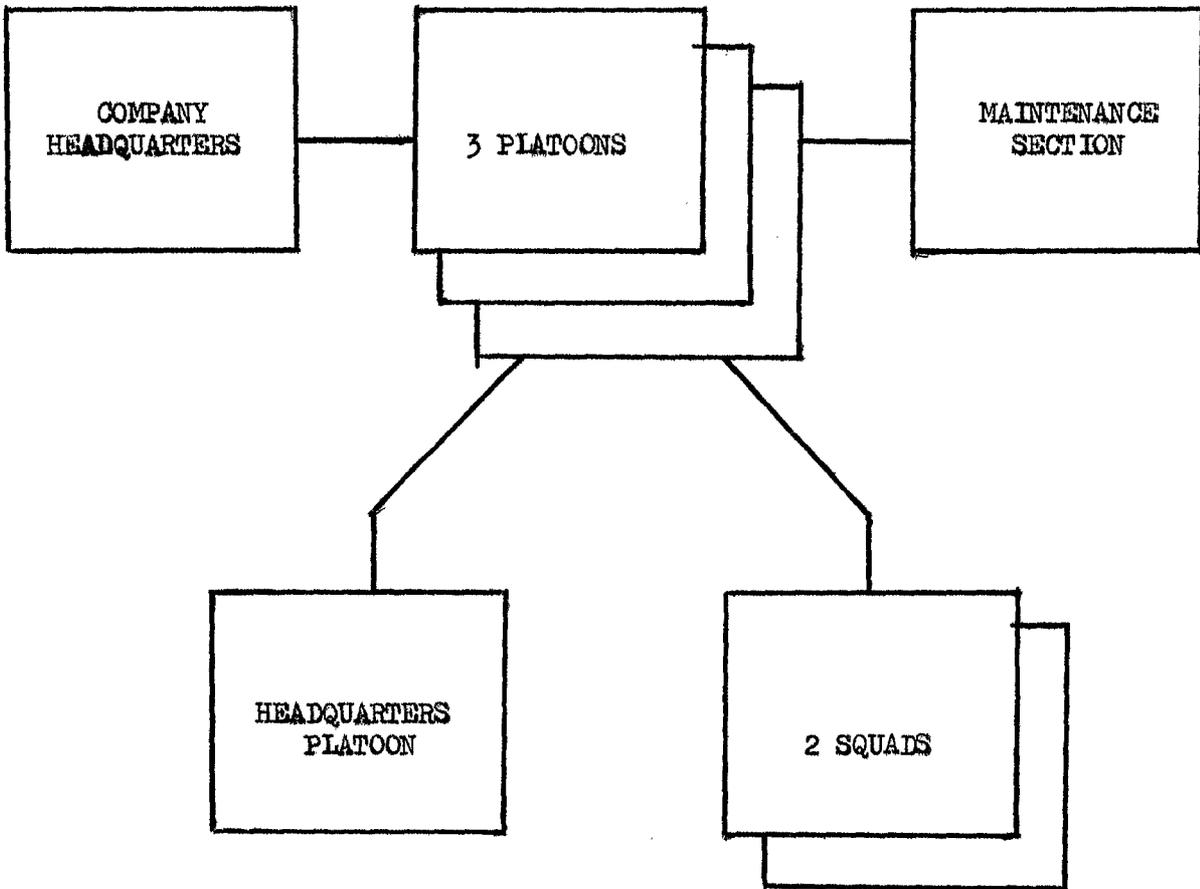
Korea, summer-fall 1952

Third Korean winter

Korea, summer 1953

ANNEX B

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
541ST TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)



ANNEX C

TRAINING PROGRAM
541ST TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)

New personnel arriving at the unit are sent for a five (5) day In-Country Orientation at 4th Division. The men are further trained when they return to the unit in a Driver Training Program designed to orient the new driver to conditions peculiar to the areas in which the unit is operating as well as helping instill confidence necessary to master the roads of Vietnam. Each man receives weapons training on the M-16 Rifle, M-60 Machine Gun and the .50 Caliber Machine Gun if appropriate.

ANNEX D

GENERAL ORDERS
541ST TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)

The unit was attached for all purposes to the 124th Transportation Battalion (Truck), in accordance with General Orders Number 10 Paragraph 1, dated 18 March 1968, 8th Transportation Group (MT).