

May-Dec
1966

HISTORY OF THE
545TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)

18 May 1966 - 31 December 1966

APPROVED BY

WALLACE D. COMPTON

CPT., TRANSPORTATION CORPS

545TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY
CAM RANH BAY, REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

The 545th Transportation Company (Lt Trk) (5-Ton) was activated on 18 May 1966, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. (1.)

The unit was further attached to the 500th Transportation Group (MT). (2.) An intensive basic unit and advanced unit training phase commenced on 20 June 1966, based on a master training schedule published by the 500th Transportation Group. This master schedule also included all the required POM/POB subjects required by CONARC and TUSA. To accomplish all the training requirements this unit trained eight (8) hours daily and four (4) hours on Saturdays.

Included in this training was a special orientation class, of twenty (20) hours duration, on military requirements in Southeast Asia. This period of instruction covered, among other things, an excellent indoctrination on escape and evasion.

During the training cycle all personnel were qualified with their basic weapon plus familiarized with all crew serve weapons.

In conjunction with other training, an intensive driver training program was conducted. Classes were scheduled in the field, and maximum utilization of motor marches to and from the classroom site proved beneficial.

The unit, while undergoing training, continued with the normal procedures of organization. During the last week in June of 1966 the unit received a warning order to be prepared for overseas movement to USARPAC. The equipment

readiness date was 1 September 1966 and the personnel readiness date was 16 September 1966.

The basic unit and advanced unit training cycle ended on 5 August 1966. To test the validity of the training phase the 500th Transportation Group conducted an Organizational Readiness Test for the 545th Transportation Company and its sister units during the period 8-12 August 1966. This test encompassed all the requirements of ATT 55-11 with emphasis on convoy operations, basic infantry tactics and CBR. This unit was awarded a rating of combat ready at the conclusion of the test.

On the 23rd day of August, two (2) officers and fifty (50) drivers of this unit departed Fort Campbell, Kentucky, destined for South Bend, Indiana and the Kaiser Manufacturing Corporation. (3.) Upon arrival at South Bend the unit started taking delivery of forty (40) M54A2 5-Ton Cargo Trucks. This unit received its vehicles and departed for Fort Campbell on 25 August 1966. The convoy closed at Fort Campbell on 26 August 1966 with forty (40) vehicles, giving the unit ninety (90%) percent of authorized TOE task vehicles.

The 545th Transportation Company then turned to the task of preparing all unit equipment for overseas shipment. Upon completion of packing and rail-loading, all equipment moved from Fort Campbell on 8 September 1966. Two outports were used for transshipping this equipment, Mobile Outport in Alabama, and Long Beach Docks in California. The unit was informed later that the equipment had been transshipped aboard three (3) vessels, the American Victory, the President Taylor and the Thunderhead.

POM leaves ended on 14 September 1966 and the unit was ready for departure by the personnel readiness date of 16 September 1966.

In accordance with a movement directive issued by Headquarters, Fort Campbell on the 23rd June 1966 and a port call from CINSTRIKE for the 28th of September 1966, the unit prepared for departure overseas.

On the 27th of September 1966, the main body departed Fort Campbell Kentucky by commercial air. The unit arrived at Oakland, California on the same day and boarded the USNS General William Weigel for the voyage to USARPAC.

The advanced party/rear detachment departed Fort Campbell on 2 October 1966 aboard a US Air Force C-130 cargo aircraft. They arrived in Saigon, South Vietnam on 5 October 1966. It was at this time that the advance party learned that the 545th Transportation Company was to be assigned at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. The advance party arrived at Cam Ranh Bay on 8 October 1966.

The main body arrived at Cam Ranh Bay on the 18th of October 1966 and immediately started construction of the company area. Building materials were furnished to the unit and all personnel assisted in the construction of a mess hall, billets, orderly room, showers, latrine and all other items necessary for company operation.

On the 24th of October 1966, the 545th Transportation Company was assigned to the 1st Logistical Command^(4.) and further assigned to United States Army Support Command, Cam Ranh Bay.^(5.) The unit was then attached to the 500th Transportation Group (MT)^(6.) and the 57th Transportation Battalion (Trk).^(7.)

While waiting for the equipment to arrive the unit was engaged in drive away operations to Nha Trang and Phan Rang. With the arrival of the final ship the unit became fully operational and was assigned the responsibility of beach clearance, local haul to the beach for outloading of intracoastal vessels, aerial port clearance, local haul to the aerial port and occasional convoy operations to in-country destinations.

The 545th Transportation Company (Lt Trk) (5-Ton) between 18 October 1966 and 31 December 1966 traveled 146,559 miles, and hauled 42,940 short tons of all types of cargo.

FOOTNOTES

(1.) Third United States Army General Order 156 dated 29 April 1966 as amended by Third United States Army General Order 195 dated 18 May 1966.

(2.) 101st Airborne Division and Fort Campbell General Order 168 dated 20 June 1966.

(3.) When the training cycle ended it was apparent that this unit and its sister companies would not meet the equipment readiness date due to the fact that each unit had received only fourteen (14) of its task vehicles. Through the efforts of the 500th Transportation Group, arrangements were made to receive, directly from the manufacture, the remainder of the task vehicles.

(4.) USARV General Order 6122.

(5.) 1st Logistical Command General Order 506.

(6.) United States Army Support Command, Cam Ranh Bay General Order 134.

(7.) 500th Transportation Group General Order 1.