

1968

UNIT HISTORY

545TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LT TRK) (5T)

54TH TRANSPORTATION BATTALION (TRK)

USA SUPPORT COMMAND, QUI NHON

(1 January 1968 - 31 December 1968)

prepared by

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545TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LT TRK) (5T)

11 MARCH 1969

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AFD 96316

TABLE OF CONTENTS

545TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, APO 96316

1. Subject .....	1
2. Mission Accomplishments .....	1
a. Reorganization of 545th Trans Co .....	1
b. Defense of Perimeter .....	1
c. Facilities and Equipment .....	2
3. Changes in Personnel and Organization Structure ....	2
a. Reassignment of Key Personnel .....	2
b. Reorganization of 545th Trans Co in Tuy Hoa ....	3
4. Significant Problems .....	3
5. Awards .....	4

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
545TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)  
APO SF 96316

12 March 1969

SUBJECT: Annual Unit History Report

In accordance with 1st Log Command Regulation 870-1 the following annual unit historical report is submitted from the 545th Transportation Company (Light Truck), U.S. Army for the period of 1 January to 31 December 1968.

I. Mission Accomplishments:

a. The following is a list of missions assigned and performed during the period of 1 January to 18 May 1968:

1. Daily Support of South Beach operations in Cam Ranh Bay, RVN.
2. Support of line haul operations when required.
3. Support of pier operations when required in Cam Ranh Bay, RVN.

b. The following is a list of missions assigned and performed during the period 21 May to 31 December 1968:

1. To daily support port and beach clearance operations between Vung Ro Bay and Tuy Hoa.
2. To support line haul operations when required.
3. To daily provide a roving patrol to cover approximately 10 miles along QL1.
4. To defend the Vung Ro Bay area against hostile fire.

The 545th Trans Co moved from Cam Ranh Bay to Vung Ro Bay on 20 May 1968. While in Vung Ro Bay, the company was assigned the mission of port and beach clearance supplemented by line haul operations. During this time numerous convoys operated to Nha Trang and Cam Ranh Bay, frequently completing the round trip in one day.

The unit also had the responsibility of defending itself. This latter mission was dramatically demonstrated on both 6 June and 30 November 1968. On 6 June the company was attacked by a NVA/VC sapper squad. Five men died from the 545th Trans Co and several were wounded. Those who died were SSG Albert Ishman Jr., SP5 Zack Napier, SP4 Dennis Mourgelas, SP4 Angelo Santiago and PFC Charles Clitty. In addition 18 trucks were destroyed by sachel charges.

The company was then faced with the task of constructing and reorganizing its perimeter. In the days that followed, bunkers were constructed, concertina wire was strung, perimeter lights were installed, the perimeter was cleared of vegetation and a permanent guard force was established. The long hours of preparation paid off, on 30 November at approximately 0030 hours, the company again came under attack. Mortars hit the supply building, orderly room, maintenance tent and motor pool. Five personnel were wounded. The guards performed admirably and were commended by General Heiser the day following the attack.

## II. Changes in Key Personnel and Organizational Structure:

### a. Changes in Key Personnel:

1. On 16 June 1968, 2LT David E. McWhinnie was assigned to the unit as 1st Platoon Leader.
2. On 21 August 1968, 1LT Thomas J. Paetsch assumed command. CPT Donald R. Olsen, the retiring CO, had been in command since 1 December 1967.
3. On 17 October 1968, 1LT William R. Cutler rotated back to the states.
4. On 21 November 1968, 1LT David E. McWhinnie assumed command. 1LT Thomas J. Paetsch rotated back to the states for his ETS.
5. On 8 December 1968, 1SG James H. Thompson was transferred and 1SG Elwood Johnson took over temporarily.
6. On 19 December 1968, 1LT William V.N. Requa assumed command of the reorganized 545th Trans Co from 1LT David E. McWhinnie in a change of command ceremony in Tuy Hoa, RVN.
7. Effective December 20th 1968 the following personnel were retained in the unit or transferred from the 529th Trans Co (Lt Trk) to the reorganized 545th Trans Co (Lt Trk).

1LT William V.N. Requa  
1LT William D. Donald  
1LT Richard J. Kehoe  
WO2 Andrew J. Leyes  
SFC Wilhelmsen  
SFC Funkhouser  
SFC Byrd  
SFC Pearce  
SSG Barnthouse  
SSG Mills  
SGT Ross  
SGT Pelt  
SGT Kelly

Effective also on December 20th 1968 the below listed personnel were reassigned from the 545th Trans Co (Lt Trk) to other units in the 8th Transportation Group.

1LT David E. McWhinnie  
1LT William Hammel  
SFC Williams  
SSG Stroup  
SSG Minner  
SSG Southard  
SSG Corley  
SSG Munoz

b. Changes in Organizational Structure:

1. On 27 January 1968, the 545th Trans Co was released from the 57th Trans Bn, APO 96312.

2. On 27 January 1968 the 545th Trans Co was reassigned to the 39th Trans Bn, APO 96312.

3. On 26 April 1968 the 545th Trans Co was reassigned to the 24th Trans Bn (Term), APO 96312.

4. On 5 May 1968 a platoon from the 545th Trans Co was sent TDY for ten days to Vung Ro Bay Outport Command. Its mission was port and beach clearance from Vung Ro Bay to Tuy Hoa.

5. On 20 May 1968 the 545th Trans Co, along with the 24th Trans Bn, had a PCS from Cam Ranh Bay to Vung Ro Bay.

6. On 1 December 1968, the 545th Trans Co came under the 54th Trans Bn (Trk), Qui Nhon Support Command.

7. On 19 December 1968 the 529th Transportation Company was inactivated pursuant to General Order # 1001. Personnel and equipment were transferred to the 545th Trans Co (Lt Trk) which relocated from Vung Ro Bay to the Army installation at Phu Hiep and reorganized under a modified TO&E. The unit was assisted by one platoon of S&P's detached from the 88th Transportation Company. 1LT William V.N. Requa, commander of the 529th Trans Co (Lt Trk) assumed command of the reorganized 545th Trans Co on 20 December.

III. Problems Encountered:

1. The 545th Trans Co motor pool at Vung Ro Bay was inadequate in that there was not enough working space. Being on a berm made extending the working area that much more difficult.

2. The mess hall, PX, EM, and NCO clubs were all located approximately two miles away. With no mess hall of its own the company had to transport personnel over a rough road three times a day. This proved to be very time consuming.

3. Due to the mass rotation of personnel in September and October the company was left critically under strengthened, especially in experienced personnel.

4. The roads between Vung Ro Bay, Tuy Hoa, and Cam Ranh Bay were extremely rough, continually taxing both trucks and drivers.

**IV: Awards**

a. The following personnel in the 545th Trans Co received the purple heart for wounds received in action on 6 June 1968.

Kenneth E. Gaylon	[REDACTED]	SP4 E4
Raymond Steverson	[REDACTED]	SSG E6
Bobby G. Brown	[REDACTED]	SP5 E5
Van W. Skeen	[REDACTED]	SP5 E5
Robert D. Hollowack	[REDACTED]	SP5 E5
William Hall	[REDACTED]	SP4 E4
Troy Trindall	[REDACTED]	SP4 E4
Norman K. Nolden	[REDACTED]	SP4 E4
Charles G. Clitty	[REDACTED]	PFC E3
Gary M Brien	[REDACTED]	PFC E3

b. The following personnel in the 545th Trans Co received the purple heart for wounds recieved in action on 30 November 1968:

Andrew J. Leyes	[REDACTED]	CWO W2
Hugh E. Woodard	[REDACTED]	SP5 E5
Robert A. Ussery	[REDACTED]	SP4 E4
Gregory Owings	[REDACTED]	SP4 E4
William Borkenhagen	[REDACTED]	PFC E3

*William V.N. Requa*  
WILLIAM V.N. REQUA  
1LT, TC  
Commanding