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ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE UNIT HISTORY

561ST TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (TS)

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For the 561st Transportation Company (Terminal Service), 1967 was a year of considerable change both where it worked at its site just north of the city of Saigon at U.S. Army Terminal in Newport, and where it was stationed on Long Binh Post. Even though the company experienced three changes of command; first, when CPT Jewell succeeded CPT Haines in March, then when CPT Hendrix took over in August, and finally in November when CPT DeVitto assumed command, still the unit as a whole remained closely knit and accomplished many significant projects and goals, as well as carrying out its basic mission.

The beginning of 1967 saw the company, along with the rest of the Battalion, bivouacked in the mud of Camp Camelot in tents. With less than three months in country there was much to be done. The end of the year made it obvious that a great deal had been done. The tents were gone and there were concrete floors to support the latest in military housing, the Adams Hut. This aluminum structure, while not the most luxurious, was certainly a vast improvement over the tent. It was now possible to keep reasonably dry and clean. A semi-permanent shower facility had been installed earlier, but the addition of a hot water capability toward the end of the year greatly increased its effectiveness as well as its comfort.

Again in the latter part of the year, under new Battalion administration, the company was assigned and completed several special projects. The most popular of these was the Battalion Theater which can accommodate several hundred people, and with both a stage and screen it can be used for almost any kind of entertainment. Movies have been shown about five times

a week and live shows have been frequent. With a full roof, the theater should be a blessing even during the monsoons.

Another of the company projects was the construction of playground equipment for the children of a local orphanage. This was done with enthusiasm and was well received by the orphanage.

Probably the most noticeable aspect of change during the year was the worksite itself on the Saigon River. In 1967 the worksite was transformed from a stream operation to a full-fledged port operation. Although the Newport Army Terminal is capable of handling several types of vessels, the 561st worked only deep-draft ships. Our first pier site was Deep Draft #2, the first to be completed. After some moving around among the several deep draft sites, the company finally resettled on DD #2. Always enthusiastic and hard-working when it came to the company's mission of discharging cargo, the stevedores of the 561st always stood out when measured by the quantity of tonnage handled. The men earned the nickname of "Tonnage Tigers" and are proud of it. They were recognized several times by the monthly "Outstanding Company of the Battalion" award which was presented to the company showing the best performance in all areas.

The quality and the spirit of the company was most obvious during the months of September and October when the company had to work under the hardship of being grievously understrengthened. At one point in October, we were down to 35% strength due to normal rotations and few replacements. This situation was only temporary, but in the meantime it was hard work for eighteen men to discharge five hatches simultaneously. But this they did, and they did it well.

Toward the end of the year, Deep Draft #2 was designated as an exclusively backload site, where retrograde cargo would be loaded aboard empty ships. In practice, we were not kept busy at all times with backloading, but did do some discharging as well. We were, however, responsible for a large percentage of the backload operation at the Newport Terminal.

Thus, the exact status of our mission for the year of 1968 is not as well-defined as it might be, but considering what we were called upon to do in 1967 and the way in which we did it, there is no doubt that whatever we are assigned to do, we will do in a superior manner.

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