

ANNUAL HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT

63rd Transportation Company (Light Truck)

1 January 1966 - 31 December 1966

Prepared by Michael R Corpuz Jr, Captain, TC

Approved by



MICHAEL R CORPUZ JR
Captain, TC
Commanding

36th Transportation Battalion (Truck)

500th Transportation Group (Motor Transport)

1st Logistics Command

United States Army Vietnam

No information relative to this units actions and or accomplishments are available from 1 January 1966 to 27 April 1966. A search of the historical files and a canvass of personnel assigned produced negative results. All that can be said is that during that period the 63rd Transportation Company had the mission to provide transportation support for port and beach clearance in the Nha Trang area. Additionally the 63rd was called on often to support the ROK combat forces and the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne (Screaming Eagles) on their operational missions. Within this period line haul convoys from Nha Trang south to Cam Ranh Bay and still further south to Phan Rang were common missions given to the 63rd truckers, as was limited administrative support to the Nha Trang area. Occasionally the 63rd was called upon to augment the trucking capabilities at Cam Ranh Bay.

On 28 April 1966, the 63rd Transportation Company was released from the US Army Depot, with duty in Nha Trang, and assigned to the 10th Transportation Battalion (Tml) with headquarters at Cam Ranh Bay. At this time the unit left Camp McDermott, Nha Trang and convoyed to Cam Ranh Bay, its new home. At Cam Ranh the mission was essentially the same, that of port and beach clearance at Cam Ranh Bay with line hauls and convoy operations to Phan Rang and Nha Trang. At Cam Ranh Bay, the men found themselves in the land of sand dunes. The bivouac area was in the main cantonment area which at that time was largely undeveloped except for concrete floor pads upon which the tents were erected.

In March 1966, one platoon of the 63rd packed up and moved north through Nha Trang to Tuy Hoa, where the 101st Airborne was actively engaged in trying to clear "Charlie" out of this important rice-producing section of Vietnam. Their mission was combat support of the Screaming Eagles in addition to port and beach clearance.

On 22 June 1966, Captain Harmon B Chapman assumed command of the company from Captain John J Bitgood.

July marked a rash of new key arrivals. Lt's Matthew V Jablonka and John P Morris arrived on 16 July and assumed duties as 2nd and 1st Platoon Leaders respectively. Lt Carl F Fonash, after having been delayed in Saigon, arrived on 19 July to take over the 3rd Platoon.

At long last, the day came, 28 July 1966 when the 63rd Transportation Company was released from the 10th Transportation Battalion (Tml) and assigned to the 36th Transportation Battalion (Trk) with the same mission. The arrival of the truck battalion marked the beginning of more efficient and effective utilization of the trucking assets in Cam Ranh Bay.

On 31 July 1966, the 63rd welcomed back to their fold, the drivers who had admirably supported the 101st Airborne operations in Tuy Hoa.

First Sergeant Ferrell Van Housen assumed the "top-kick" slot on 2 August 1966.

On 3 August, WO Wl Brian D Newman arrived to take charge of the motor pool and take charge he did, reorganizing and setting new standards of maintenance that kept this company operational with its dilapidated 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton cargo trucks.

August and September saw the 63rd make repeated line hauls to Nha Trang. Additionally the 63rd supported the ROKA move to their field location in the I Field Force, Vietnam, sector from their debark site of Nha Trang.

In September the hutment program was started in the company area where tents were being replaced by prefabricated hutments. The supply tent was taken down and a quonset started to take shape.

In early October Lt Carl Fonash, the 3rd Platoon Leader along with Sgt Benjamin Pruitt and several drivers moved to Nha Trang to support the debark operations of the Ivy division, the 4th Infantry Division from Ft Lewis, Washington.

On 10 October 1966, Captain Michael R Corpuz Jr assumed command. The hutment program was completed and the unit started to receive the new 5-ton multi-fuel cargo trucks as replacements. The 63rd started to move more cargo and closed the month with over 14,000 tons of cargo moved, the second highest total amassed by this company since its arrival in Vietnam. Day by day, through hustling and determination on the truckers part the 63rd was slowly establishing itself as "tonnage movers."

Beautification of the area under the "green thumbed" guidance of 1st Sgt Van Housen continued with local palms and plumeria bushes.

On 26 October, the 63rd Transportation Company was relieved from Cam Ranh Bay Port (Prov) and placed under 500th Transportation Group (MT).

November saw Lt Fonash take one of the first convoys over the newly cleared Route 1 to Vung Ro Bay near Tuy Hoa.

This convoy of over 100 vehicles encountered many difficulties on this trip - but the one that is closest to the convoy personnel was the moment when Lt Fonash led the convoy across the ford before Vung Ro - and sitting chest deep in water, he watched some gear float out of the jeep and down the stream. November also brought an increase in tonnage with the 16,000 ton mark reached. Additionally, due to splendid "scrounging," efficient programming of scheduled maintenance, and the adoption of a 24 hour maintenance program by working two shifts, the deadline rate was negligible and the state of maintenance high. The truckmaster, Ssg Calvin Deeds, must be mentioned also for his fine work in the relocation of the motor pools. Capability and tonnage results did not drop during the trying and arduous days the motor pool was being moved. As finally established, the 63rd Transportation Company Motor Pool is a model for all others in the Cam Ranh Area to follow.

December saw the 18,000 ton mark reached. More convoys to Tuy Hoa were conducted giving the unit cadre personnel the much needed convoy experience. Beautification of the area continued and the unit area stands as one of the finest in the area. Christmas saw the truckers play host to 25 children from the hamlet of Xuan Ninh. Each child was given a present to remember their day with the GI's of the 63rd.

Thus ends the year 1966 for the 63rd Transportation Company in Vietnam.