1967

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MISSION: To provide transportation for the movement of general cargo and personnel by motor transport. This unit is also required to provide security for convoys moving through hostile areas to include operation of five armored gun trucks.

CAPABILITIES: (In-Country)

Based on the operational situation in the Republic of Vietnam and the factors indicated below, the in-country capability of this unit is rated at 50% of its TOE line haul capability. TOE line haul capability is 540 short tons of cargo (6 tons per truck) based on 75% availability of vehicles and 2 trips daily on highway. Following are factors on which rated in-country capability is based and also which precluded this unit from reaching the rated in-country capability.

Factors encountered in moving cargo during the year are as follows:

1. Long distances cargo had to be moved made more than one trip per day impossible.

2. Due to enemy action convoy operations were restricted entirely to daylight hours.

3. The requirement for the use of hardened gun trucks (steel plated) with a crew of one NCO, two machine gunners and a driver cut into cargo movement capability.

4. The combination of enemy action, extremely poor roads and extreme weather conditions caused an increase in the number of vehicles that had to remain overnight (RON) at destination and also lowered movement capability.

5. Truck loads averaged approximately 4.5 s/tons due to the mixed classes of cargo hauled.

PERSONNEL:

From 1 January to 13 June 1967 the company was commanded by Captain John H. Heider, [redacted]. Other key personnel who were with the company at the beginning of the year are as follows: Second Lieutenant Floyd D. Herron, [redacted]; Second Lieutenant Joseph C. Lyon, [redacted]; Second Lieutenant Thomas H. Clark, [redacted]; CWO Calvin J. Myers, [redacted]; and First Sergeant Bill E. Strunk, [redacted].

Arrivals and Departure of key personnel for the year are as follows:

LT Herron departed on 18 February 1967 to the 505th Transportation Detachment (TTP), APO 96238.

LT Clark departed 17 March 1967 to HHD 88th S&S Battalion, APO 96218

CPT Roger J Hakola, [redacted], was assigned as Company Commander on 13 June 1967.

1LT Edward M Waldron, [redacted] was assigned on 19 June 1967.

CWO Myers departed on 24 June 1967 to the 58th Transportation Company (Lt Trk) APO 96238.

1LT James R. Steel, [redacted], was assigned on 13 July 1967.

CPT Hakola departed on 15 July 1967 to Headquarters, 8th Transportation Group (Motor Transport), APO 96238.

CPT Richard S Robinson, [redacted], was assigned as Company Commander on 15 July 1967.

1LT Richard J Tillotson was assigned on 19 September 1967.

CWO4 Douglas J. Allen, [redacted], was assigned on 23 September 1967.

LT Lyon departed 23 September 1967 for CONUS reassignment.

1SG Strunk departed 27 September 1967 for CONUS reassignment.

1SG John E. Rooney, [redacted] was assigned on 7 October 1967.

SFC Ralph M. Fortag, [redacted], was assigned as Company Truckmaster on 10 September 1967.

During July a number of personnel were exchanged with other transportation companies in the 8th Transportation Group in an attempt to reduce the large September rotational hump. Even so a large portion of the company departed for CONUS during September causing a critical personnel shortage that was not corrected until the last of December. Cooks, clerks, and mechanics were pressed into driving duties. Still the company had several vehicles idle each day because of lack of drivers.

During the Battle of Dak To personnel from miscellaneous companies throughout Qui Nhon Support Command were attached to the Company in order to put every available vehicle on the road to haul ammunition and other critical supplies.

On 18 October 1967, the 2nd Platoon of the 57th Transportation Company (Lt Trk) was attached to this Unit. The platoon was lead by 1LT Jerry L Todd, [redacted] assisted by SSG Calvin D. Nelson, [redacted], and consisted of 29 other personnel and 20 - 5 ton trucks. In actuality the company had four truck platoons for the remainder of the year.

VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT:

By the end of the year approximately 75 per cent of the assigned 5 ton trucks had registered over 20,000 miles. It was becoming a formidable task to hold the deadline rate to less than 20 per cent. The M54A2, 5 ton cargo truck has proven to be complicated to operate properly. Most new personnel, had to be trained on the truck and supervision had to be increased to insure adequate performance of required drivers maintenance.

CWO Allen assisted by his Maintenance Sergeant, SSG Lonnie C Elliott, [redacted] and Assistant Maintenance Sergeant, SSG Ross Alexander, [redacted], made the construction of a grease rack one of their first projects. They then repaired the company's portable lube machine. Later on in December a temporary vehicle washrack was set up by use of a salvaged 5,000 gallon POL Tanker. These two actions assisted considerably in holding the deadline rate down.

FACILITIES:

All Company billets consisted of the original General Prupose Medium Tents placed on wood frames. During September action was taken to expand and improve the company Mess Hall. New shower and latrine facilities were built. Gradual improvements were also made in the maintenance shop.

During December action was initiated by Battalion to construct tropical billets (100' by 20' 2 story wood frame buildings) for all companies. Construction is expected to be completed around 1 June 1968 with the completion of Orderly Room and Supply Room facilities for each company in the battalion.

OPERATIONS:

The 669th Transportation Company transported cargo from Qui Nhon to several destinations throughout Central South Vietnam during the year.

On Highway 19 to An Khe, Pleiku, Kontum and Dak To.

On Highway 1 North to Landing Zone Uplift, Landing Zone English (Bong Son) and Duc Pho.

On Highway 1 South to Song Cau.

Cargo was also shuttled between Qui Nhon and Phu Cat Air Force Base. (The company hauled cement from the beach in Qui Nhon to Phu Cat for runway construction during January. Other cargo shuttled was priority Air Cargo.) The company moved cargo in support of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, 4th Infantry Division, Americal Division, 3rd Brigade 25th Infantry Division, 101st Airborne Division, Republic of Korea Tiger Division and 173rd Airborne Brigade and the US Air Force Bases, Pleiku and Phu Cat.

Although cargo was hauled in support of many operations, the battles on the Bong Son Plain and the Battle for Bak To were probably the most outstanding.

During December Officers and NCOs of the company commanded and controlled 11th Light Infantry Brigade convoys from Qui Nhon to Duc Pho during that units move to Duc Pho. For successful accomplishment of the mission a letter of appreciation was received by the 8th Transportation Group from Major General S.W. Koster, Commanding General of the Americial Division. The letter was forwarded, with comments, to this unit.

Tons of cargo hauled and mileage driven by company drivers for calendar year 1967 are as follows:

MONTH	SHORT TONS (includes retrograde)	MILES (includes Retrograde and deadhead miles)
JAN	5686	129916
FEB	2846	129958
MAR	4062	152694
APR	3793	149345
MAY	4100	159067
JUN	3906	136871
JUL	5346	201643
AUG	5602	195638
SEP	5239	147179
OCT	4221	126442
NOV	4354	161833
DEC	4200	168890
	53,355	1,859,476

The tons moved and mileage driven are attributed to long hours of hard driving by company drivers over rough and virtually unimproved roads under extreme tropical climatic conditions.

The road from Qui Nhon to Pleiku, Highway 19, was extremely rough and bumpy except for patches of rapidly deteriorating pavement. During the dry season the thick dust was almost unbearable; during the monsoon season the roads became extremely muddy and as slippery as ice. Some places, expecially bypasses for blown up bridges, were almost impassable at times and required continuous rebuilding by engineers. By July engineer contractors started paving highway 19 from Camp Addison West. At the end of the year the road was completely paved to the top of An Khe Pass. An Khe Pass and Mang Gaing Pass were the most critical and treacherous parts of the road to negotiate.

Highway 1 to Bon Song and Duc Pho was not unlike Highway 19 at the beginning of the year. It was a narrow extremely rough road with a few gradual inclines 5 - 10 miles south of Bong Son. Projects were initiated to widen and pave highway 1 from Qui Nhon to Bong Son. Much of this had been completed by the end of the year.

There are many drivers that will not forget the "mud rivers," trucks sliding off the road into rice paddies, the almost impassable bypasses and then the opposite; dry heat, soaring temperatures and choking dust.

The climates at Pleiku and Qui Nhon are opposites concerning the monsoon and dry seasons for a good part of the year. Heat and dust east of An Khe and mud and rain west of An Khe and then the reverse.

The normal convoy starting time for Pleiku bound convoys was 0600 hours. That meant drivers and convoy control personnel had to be up about 0400 hours to prepare for the days operation. Until the 2nd of September ambush restricted usage of the road to daylight hours convoys would arrive back at Camp Addison between 2000 and 2200 hours. After 2 September the normal return time was no later than 1900 hours. Upon return motor stables, cleaning of weapons and preparation for the work days operation awaited the driver.

North bound convoys (Bong Son and Duc Pho) start times were normally around 0800 hours. Return time from Bong Son was 1500 to 1700 hours. The Duc Pho run took two days.

Convoys consisted of a mixture of trucks from all companies in the Battalion.Commitments were handled by S-3 and the companies, (669th, 523rd, 512th and 666th) took turns in providing convoy control.

COMBAT ACTIONS: (AMBUSHES)

2 September 1967

A convoy commanded by 1LT James R Steel, 3rd Platoon Leader, 669th Trans Co (Lt Trk) was ambushed at about 1900 hours on Highway 19, east of Mang Gaing Pass (GC - BR355455) while returning from Pleiku. The terrain consisted of rolling hills, and winding road. The edge of the road was covered with tall grass and a thick growth of trees and bushes was only a few meters (20-30) off the road. The enemy force consisted of a Viet Cong Company (minus) using mines, small arms and automatic weapons. The kill zone was about 500 meters long and contact with the convoy lasted about 20 minutes. A 1st Cav Div reaction force was rushed to the scene. The company suffered 2 KIA and 6 WIA. Two vehicles were destroyed, 9 damaged and 2 M-14 rifles were destroyed. The Battalion suffered a total of 7 KIA and 16 WIA in this ambush. Only one man from the company was returned to duty. (see Incl 1 for list of KIAs and WIAs). This was the first time a 54th Trans Bn convoy had been hit since arrival in country in October 1966. Convoy personnel were not expecting an ambush based on previous experience and were caught entirely by suprise. Indications are that the enemy force took great pains to set up a successful ambush. Several drivers made it through the kill zone taking rounds in their vehicles, but picking up wounded and stranded drivers on the way. A short time after the action began the reaction force arrived on the scene and routed the enemy force. As a result of this ambush engineers began clearing trees and grass in 100 yard strips on each side of the road.

24 November 1967

A 54th Trans Bn convoy commanded by 1LT James Purvis, 666th Transportation Company (Lt Trk), was ambushed at 1005 hours on Highway 19 east of Pleiku (GC O AS973493) while going from Qui Nhon to Pleiku. The terrain consisted of long rolling hills with high banks on the side of the road in part of the kill zone. The edge of the road leading into the wood line 50 - 100 meters from the road was covered with tall grass. The enemy consisted of a North Vietnamese Army Company size force using mines, rockets, mortors, small arms, machine guns and other automatic weapons. The kill zone was about 1/2 mile long and contact lasted about 20 minutes. A reaction force of gun ships, tanks, and APCs was rushed to the scene. The 669th Trans Co suffered 2 personnel WIA (see Incl 1). Convoy personnel reacted quickly and effectively and although the Battalion suffered a total of 3 KIA and 17 WIA, they took their toll on the enemy force. Armored plated gun trucks carrying two machine gunners and a Non-commissioned Officer (construted after the 2 Sep ambush) placed very effective fire on the enemy positions. The gun trucks coupled with the quick reaction on the part of convoy personnel held the enemy off until the reaction force arrived.

The aggressive action on the part of convoy personnel was lauded by Major General W.R. Peers , Commanding General of the 4th Infantry Division (see Incl 2).

4 December 1967

On this date a 54th Trans Bn Convoy commanded by 1LT Richard J Tillotson, 2nd Platoon Leader, this company, (assisted by 1LT James R Steel, 3rd Platoon Leader and 1LT Jerry Todd, Platoon Leader, 2nd Platoon, 57th Trans Co (Lt Trk) attached to the 669th Trans Co.) was involved in an ambush east of Mang Giang Pass (GC - BR334461) while going from Qui Nhon to Pleiku. The terrain consisted of rolling hills; the road was winding and hilly. The lead of the convoy was caught in a defile when the attack began. There was grass, 2 feet high, and dirt mounds 100 yards on each side of the road. The grassy area broke into a dense wood line. The enemy force was a company size North Vietnamese Army Force using mines, rockets, grenade launchers, small arms and automatic weapons. The kill zone was about 400 meters long and contact lasted about 20 minutes. A reaction force of tanks, APCs, helicopter gun ships and infantry was rushed to the scene of the ambush.

The portion of the convoy hardest hit consisted almost intirely of 669th Trans Co personnel and vehicles and personnel and vehicles from the attached 2nd Platoon, 57th Trans Co (Lt Trk). The lead armored gun truck from the 669th Trans Co took a rocket hit which killed the driver upon initiation of the ambush. Machine gunners in the truck under the command of SGT Dennis J Belcastro, [redacted], reacted immediately placing extremely effective machine gun and M-79 grenade fire on the enemy force. All drivers and control personnel were alert and prepared for such a contengency. Through their quick reaction and extremely effective suppressive fire they repulsed three enemy assaults on the convoy.

The 669th Transportation company took the brunt of the ambush suffering 1 KIA and 8 WIA. (WIA's consisted of assigned and attached personnel) (See Incl 1).

Convoy pe sonnel killed 19 NVA soldiers in the action. In a letter, LTC Robert L Runkle, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile), commended the officers and men of the 669th Trans Co for the outstanding part they played in the ambush. (see Incl 3).

After this particular ambush, morale, which had been continually high, raised to an unpresidented high throughout the company.

ADMINISTRATION:

Throughout the year company administration requirements gradually increased. Additional operation and personnel reports were required, training with its accompanying paperwork had to be accomplished and procedures initiated and updated. It was revealed that company administration could not be accomplished using only TOE authorized personnel.

Disciplinary action taken during the year consisted of 4 Special Court-Martials given in January and February. An average of 14 Article 15's were issued each month. In actuality the company had only a small number of disciplinary problems. The companies good record is attributed to effective supervision at the lowest levels, hard work and long work hours, and high morale.

AWARDS:

During the year 1 Bronze Star for valor, 4 Army Commendation Medals for valor and 2 Army Commendation Medals for meritorious service were awarded to members of this unit. Two attached personnel were awarded Army Commendation Medals for valor. Following is a list of recipiants and awards received:

NAME	RANK		AWARD RECEIVED
BELCASTRO, Dennis	SGT E5	[redacted]	Bronze Star V
CUMMINGS, Harold	PFC E3	[redacted]	KIA - Recommended for Bronze Star V (pndg)
STEEL, James R	1LT	[redacted]	Army Commendation Medal V
TILLOTSON, Richard J	1LT	[redacted]	Army Commendation Medal V
FOSTER, Joseph	SP4 E4	[redacted]	Army Commendation Medal V
GIREAUX, Frank W II	SP4 E4	[redacted]	Army Commendation Medal V
TODD, Jerry L (Attached)	1LT	[redacted]	Army Commendation Medal V

NAME	RANK		AWARD RECEIVED
HAFERKAMP, Gerald (Attached)	SP5 E5		Army Commendation Medal V
LYON, Joseph C	1LT		Army Commendation Medal for M. S.
STRUNK, Bill E	1SG E8		Army Commendation Medal for M. S.

Refer to inclosure 1 for list of personnel given Purple Heart Awards.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
669TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK) (5T)
APO 96238

Combat Casualties
Calendar Year 1967

2 September 1967

RANK	NAME		TYPE CASUALTY	REMARKS
PFC	Roy L Greensage	[redacted]	KIA	None
PFC	Lloyd R Hughey	[redacted]	KIA	None
SP4	Billie R Ingram	[redacted]	WIA	Evacuated CONUS
PFC	Alfred E Collins	[redacted]	WIA	Evacuated CONUS
PFC	Lynn W Kent	[redacted]	WIA	Evacuated CONUS
PFC	John J Petrik	[redacted]	WIA	Evacuated CONUS
PFC	Henry T Taylor	[redacted]	WIA	Evacuated CONUS
PFC	Hernam Edwards Jr.	[redacted]	WIA	Returned to Duty

24 November 1967

SP4	Michael Prickett	[redacted]	WIA	Evacuated CONUS
PFC	Donald E Harned	[redacted]	WIA	Attached from 184 Ord Bn

4 December 1967

669th Trans Co Personnel

PFC	Harold W Cummings Jr.	[redacted]	KIA	None
SP4	Joseph Foster	[redacted]	WIA	Returned to Duty
SGT	Dennis J Belcastro	[redacted]	WIA	Returned to Duty

4 December 1967 -- 669th Trans Co Personnel (Cont'd)

RANK	NAME		TYPE CASUALTY	REMARKS
SP4	Frank W. Giroux II		WIA	Returned to Duty
SP4	Dennis Cappolloni		WIA	Returned to Duty
SP5	Robert Dillahay		WIA	Returned to Duty
ATTACHED PERSONNEL:				
PFC	Gerald T. Hyatt		WIA	Returned to Duty
PFC	Ray E. Gordon		WIA	Returned to Duty
PFC	Terrance N Maddox		WIA	Returned to Duty

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 4TH INFANTRY (IVY) DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96262

27 November 1967

Dear General McBride:

I would like to commend the elements of your command who reacted so aggressively during the ambush on Highway 19E on 24 November 1967.

Due to the rapid return of fire by the soldiers in the convoy which fixed the enemy in position, the effectiveness of the ambush was curtailed, friendly casualties were reduced, and the reaction force was able to flank and engage the enemy. Also, the armored 2 1/2 ton trucks in the convoy provided rapid return fire that afforded the convoy covering fire until the reaction force could relieve the column. Without this aggressive reaction on the part of the soldiers in the convoy, the casualties undoubtly would have been much higher and the effectiveness of the reaction force would have been greatly reduced.

Please convey to the soldiers who participated in this action my commendation for their outstanding conduct while under fire.

/s/ W. R. Peers
/t/ W. R. PEERS
Major General, USA
Commanding

Brigadier General George H. McBride, USA
US Army Support Command Qui Nhon
APO 96238

"TRUE COPY"

RICHARD S. ROBINSON
CPT, TC
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
1ST BATTALION, 5TH CAVALRY
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
APO San Francisco, California 96490

AVDAIA

6 December 1967

SUBJECT: Letter of Commendation

THRU: Commanding Officer
54th Transportation Battalion
APO 96238

TO: Commanding Officer
669th Transportation Company
APO 96238

1. I wish to take this opportunity to commend the officers and men of the convoy from your unit that was ambushed 4 December 1967, west of AN KHE on highway 19.

2. The ambush was sprung by an estimated company size unit of NVA. Immediately after the lead vehicle was fired upon, the men at the head of the convoy returned determined and accurate suppressive fire at the enemy . Five minutes later the enemy made a strike near the center of the convoy with a charging assault. Alert and prepared to defend and protect the convoy, the men in this area met the NVA with a heavy volume of fire which broke up the assault. Still a third assault occured three minutes later that too was repulsed because of the determination and bravery of each individual to stand and fight.

3. To each phase of the ambush a timely, courageous and forceful reaction was taken. The men displayed a coolness under fire equal to that of seasoned combat soldiers and their quick reactions precluded serious losses to the unit.

4. Again, I wish to commend all the men in the convoy for a professional job well done.

/s/ Robert L Runkle
/t/ ROBERT L RUNKLE
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

"TRUE COPY"

RICHARD S ROBINSON
CPT, TC
Commanding