

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

of

863D TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LT TRK)
APO San Francisco 96337

1 October 1965 - 31 December 1967

Written by:

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80th General Support Group
USASUPCOM, Qui Nhon
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Approved by:

12 FEB 68

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REVISED UNIT HISTORY, 863D TRANS CO (LT TRK)

The 863d Transportation Company (Lt Trk) was organized at Fort Devens, Massachusetts on 1 October 1965 by GO 285, Headquarters, First United States Army, Governors Island, New York, New York, under TOE 55-17F. Authorized strength of the unit was: 4 Officers, 1 Warrant Officer, 167 Enlisted Men. Operational control of the unit initially was assigned to the Fort Devens Installation Transportation Officer but was transferred to Headquarters, U. S. Army Garrison in March 1966.

The mission of the unit, as stated in TOE 55-17F, was 'to provide transportation for the movement of general cargo and personnel by motor transport. As an additional mission requirement, the unit acted as a Rotational Base Unit, responsible for training personnel in the MOSs authorized in the unit. A further additional mission was to provide logistical and transportation support to ROTC and Reserve Unit weekend training at Fort Devens. Many letters of commendation and appreciation attest to the fact that the unit consistently performed each mission with distinction.

During the tenure of the 863d Trans Co at Fort Devens, several units were supported in various ways. The 595th Signal Company and the 531st Engineer Detachment were attached for rations and administration. The 181st Chemical Company, 531st Engineer Detachment, 382d Admin Company, Post Signal Section and the 14th Ordnance Detachment were attached for vehicular maintenance, to include the maintenance of PLLs, parts and supplies.

History (Cont'd)

First Lieutenant Paul F. Haas was assigned as commanding officer of the 863d Trans Co upon its activation. He was succeeded by 1Lt James J. Sova on 31 Jan 66.

The year 1966 was a busy year for the 863d but the unit acquitted itself in an excellent manner throughout all phases of its activities.

One officer and 40 men, with 30 vehicles, provided transportation support for the 196th Light Infantry Brigade's field training at Camp Drum, N. Y. during the period 21 Mar - 16 May 66.

The 863d Trans Co received its AGI on 19 Apr 66 and passed it with a satisfactory rating. It was in April, too, that the unit was alerted for deployment to a restricted overseas area.

The First Army CMMI team inspected the unit from 5-8 Jul 66 and recognized the unit as being outstanding.

During the 1966 ROTC Summer Camp in June and July, the 863d provided transportation for 1500 ROTC cadets and their cadre.

General Order 81, Headquarters, Fort Devens, Massachusetts, reorganized the 863d Trans Co under TOE 55-17F LESS para 2, 3 Trk Plat Hq, Para 3, 2 Trk Squads, reducing the authorized strength to One officer, 1 Warrant Officer, 116 enlisted men.

The unit embarked on the USNS ROSE and departed for Vietnam on 12 Sep 66 and arrived at Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam on 12 Oct. Upon arrival, the unit was required to be self-sustaining even though its equipment did not arrive until 27 Oct 66.

History (Cont'd)

There were only 16 personnel located at the Da Nang Sub Area Command facility when the 863d ~~Trans~~ Trans Co arrived. Within one month, a messhall was built, tents were replaced with buildings and the Da Nang Sub Area Command became firmly established. The 863d, the nucleus of DSAC, quickly established a supply activity, an EM Club, special service activity, chapel services, personnel services, security, and all other activities necessary to the installation.

On 8 Nov 66, the 560th G. S. Co arrived and assumed the supply function but the 863d retained the responsibility of logistical support to task force personnel at Chu Lai, Phu Bai, and Dong Ha, plus acting as DSAC S-4.

By January 1967, a consolidated motor pool was established. The 863d was given the responsibility of dispatching all vehicles and supervision of DSAC maintenance operations. Included in the responsibility was the testing and licensing of drivers. In Oct 67 the consolidated motor pool was deactivated in favor of the more practical individual unit maintenance operations.

As the first company size unit at DSAC, the 863d Trans Co was designated to act as the Headquarters Company for DSAC. All functions normally assigned to a headquarters commandant were performed by the 863d commanding officer until the arrival of the 80th G. S. Gp Headquarters Company in November 1967.

On 6 Feb 67, the 863d Trans Co was given the mission of building a contonement area for the task force located at Dong Ha. Three drivers and one NCO, working day and night, constructed and

History (Cont'd)

electrically wired 11 buildings in 39 days, an achievement which still defies belief.

As the mission of the task force increased, the need for transportation support grew. Starting with two trucks on 10 Feb 67, the 863d gradually increased truck support to a full squad of ten 2½ ton trucks by 23 Mar 67. That number has been maintained throughout 1967. Men and vehicles are rotated each 45-60 days from Da Nang.

During the course of 1967, no fewer than 12 detachments were attached to the 863d Trans Co, some for rations and quarters only but most for rations, quarters, administration and vehicular maintenance support. All detachments were transferred to HHG, 80th GS Gp in Nov 67.

The 863d Trans Co earned the Minuteman Award for 100% participation in the Savings Bond Program during April, May and June 1967. Participation in the program has remained at over 90%.

The 863d Trans Co ran convoys to Phu Bai and Dong Ha on 19 Feb, 21 Mar, 5 May and 8 Aug 67. During that time, the unit received three letters of appreciation from General Officers, with indorsements from each subordinate commander. Two letters were initiated by LT GEN Lewis Walt, CG, III MAF and one by Gen Lam, CG, I Corps, RVN. Over and over again, the 863d continued to demonstrate its ability to earn the "Well Done" comment from supported commanders.

CPT James J. Sova commanded the 863d until his departure on 7 Sep 67. CWO-3 Richard N. Norton, the only other officer of the unit, left on 7 Sep 67, too, leaving the unit without an officer.

History (Cont'd)

Lt Carl Birchum was transferred from the 560th GS Co to assume command until the arrival of the new commander, CPT Jack S.

McMichael. CPT McMichael assumed command on 16 Sep 67.

On 22 Sep 67, the unit received its CMMI and failed to pass the Maintenance Management and Communications Equipment phases. Both were readily passed at the re-inspection on 23 Nov 67.

Rotation of men of the unit decimated the officer strength and reduced EM strength from 207 in Aug 67 to 115 in Sep 67 and to a low of 63 in Dec 67. NCO strength was reduced to three. Despite the shortage of men, those remaining continued to perform the unit mission, driving more than 30,000 miles per month. To do that naturally required that drivers habitually drive more than the normal 10 hours per day. That they did voluntarily and without complaint, reflecting the professional attitude that has always prevailed in the 863d.

Warrant Officer Izener arrived on 25 Sep 67. From that day the quality and the quantity of maintenance steadily improved, resulting in nearly 90% availability of vehicles at all times.

On 3 Nov 67, the unit participated in the ceremony when Col James R. Pierce Jr, DSAC commander, accepted the 80th G. S. Gp colors for DSAC.

On 8 Nov 67, the 863d Trans Co was reassigned to the 80th G. S. Gp.

History (Cont'd)

The 863d Trans Co relinquished their billet area to HHC, 80th G. S. Gp, on 8 Nov 67 and moved into new quarters. All commandant functions were assumed by the CO of HHC, 80th GS Gp on 10 Nov 67.

On 17 Nov 67, USASUPCOM conducted a courtesy CMMI for the unit in preparation for the re-CMMI on 23 Nov 67.

Due to the shortage of drivers in the unit during Nov-Dec 67, ten task vehicles were hand receipted to other units so that their missions could be accomplished. Driver strength at Task Force Dong Ha was reduced to eight.

The 863d was again reorganized by GO 228, Hq, USARPAC under MTOE 55-17F, with effective date of 15 Nov 67. Strength remained unchanged but some equipment was dropped as a result of the MTOE re-organization. The crippling shortage of $\frac{1}{2}$ ton vehicles was continued in the MTOE.

The UIC was changed from WFLI-AA to WFLI-TO on 20 Dec 67.

On 20, 21, and 22 Dec 67, members of this unit assisted in conducting Christmas parties for a total of 1640 Vietnamese. TV movie coverage of the parties were shown on Da Nang TV and on CBS TV in the United States. Twenty-four trucks, most of them belonging to the 863d, provided transportation for 1000 children on 20 Dec 67.

Statistics for the year 1967 include: Reportable accidents - 18; personal injuries - 9; total mileage driven - 385,946. On 31 Dec 67, strength of the unit was: One officer, 1 WO, 63 EM. CPT Jack S. McMichael was still commander.

Prognosis for 1968: More and more of the same.