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Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 8th Transportation  
Group (Motor Transport)

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE (ARMY) WASHINGTON DC

10 AUG 1969

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

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IN REPLY REFER TO  
AGDA (M) (19 Nov 69)

FOR OT-UT-693218

3 December 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 8th Transportation Group, ~~Based Ending 31 July 1969~~ (15) (Mater. Transp.) [21] (15)

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1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 4b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT UT, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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8th Transportation Group

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 8TH TRANSPORTATION GROUP (Motor Transport)  
APO 96226

AVCA QM-TG-3

10 August 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 8th Transportation Group (Motor Transport)  
for the period ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R-1)

THRU: Commanding General  
US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon  
ATTN: AVCA QM-00-11  
APO 96238

TO: Assistant C of S for Force Development  
Department of the Army  
Washington D.C. 20310

SECTION I

Operations: Significant Activities

A. COMMAND: (U)

1. Colonel Garland A. Ludy commanded the group during the entire period. His principal staff officers were: LTC Robert A. Korvin replacing LTC Raymond L. Farmer as Deputy Commander; Major Thomas G. Stevens replacing Major Myron D. Cude as S-3; Major Glenn L. Long, Signal Officer/Assistant S-3; 1Lt W. Sean O'Donoghue replacing CPT Chester E. Bishop Jr as S-1; CPT Keith G. Kerley, S-2 and CPT Robert P. Coleman, S-4.

2. The 8th Transportation Group (MT) successfully performed its mission of line haul, local haul and combat operations during the 92 days of the reporting period.

3. LTC John C. Kramer resumed command of the 12th Transportation Battalion (Truck) from LTC Tom L. Ring on 27 June 1969.

4. The 8th Transportation Group received visits from the following dignitaries on the dates indicated:

3 May 1969 - COL William Drumwright (incoming Special Assistant for T-Dry Planning) and COL John S. Pennington (outgoing Special Assistant for T-Dry Planning).

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- 10 May 1969 - RADM Ammett P. Boomer, Commander of Naval Support Activities, Da Nang and EG James L. Fosley Jr, Force Logistics Command, Da Nang.
- 19 May 1969 - EG G.F.T. Richardson, Dir of Supply and Transport, Army Headquarters, Canberra, Australia.
- 9 June 1969- EG Maurice J. Halper, Comptroller, USARPAC.
- 10 June 1969- COL Warren G. Amburn, Director of Instruction, US Army Transportation School.
- 7 July 1969- COL Swenson, Commanding Officer, 48th Transportation Group
- 11 July 1969- COL George D. Styor, Deputy Commander (Designate), Da Nang Support Command.
- 20 July 1969- COL Joseph G. Clemons, Commanding Officer (Design to) Americal Support Command.

## B. PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION, MORALE AND DISCIPLINE: (U)

1. During the reporting period, the 8th Transportation Group (HT) was understrength on an average of 346 personnel.
2. There were a total of 36 Special Court Martials during the reporting period (14 in May, 13 in June and 9 in July) as opposed to 52 in the previous quarter, a reduction of 31%.
3. On 18 July 1969 the Meritorious Unit Commendation 1st Oak Leaf Cluster was presented to the 8th Transportation Group and assigned and attached units for the period 2 September 1967 to 31 March 1968 by Brigadier General Albert L. Hunter, Commanding General, US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon.
4. Morale continued to be high throughout the 8th Transportation Group.

## C. OPERATIONS: (C)

1. During this 92 day period, the 8th Transportation Group compiled 15,605,707 ton miles, traveling 3,640,020 miles, hauling 290,329 tons of cargo, 17,360,000 gallons of petroleum and 8,131 passengers. The 302,551 ton miles for 25 June 1969 set an all time daily record for the group.
2. The command was involved in 7 major ambushes, 17 sniping incidents and 1 mining incident during the period. The statistical results of these encounters were:

KIA (Friendly) - 2  
VIA (Friendly) - 22  
KIA and KIA (Enemy) - Unknown  
POW's - None

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Vehicle transport - 29

ROF due to enemy action - 670

Tonnage not moved due to enemy action - 6042 s/t

3. Enemy action during the first part of the quarter, decreased significantly during the last two months. The enemy directed his activities against bridges, cable lines and roads. This action proved to be more detrimental to line and operations than the seven separate enemy operations involving damage to the highway network during the quarter.

4. On 5 June 1969, the 66th Transportation Company (Light Truck) was detached from 8th Transportation Group and moved to Tay Hoi. The move was made by both sea and air. All the equipment was moved by LST, while about half of the personnel went by air. The heavy lift platoon was transferred to the 512th Transportation Company (Light Truck).

5. The Qui Phong to An Khe pipeline was closed down from 6 June 1969 to 24 July 1969. This was due to both a high rate of pilferage and enemy interdiction. The 8th Group was tasked with additional petroleum hauling requirements. To facilitate accomplishment of this increased mission, a platoon of twenty 5,000 gallon tankers was moved from Pleiku to An Khe. This gave greater flexibility in the movement of petrol units from Qui Phong to Pleiku. Depending on the status of the pipeline, 8th Transportation Group tankers could be committed from either Pleiku, An Khe or Tay Hoi to accomplish the mission of line haul of petroleum.

6. One refrigeration van was moved to Tay Hoi by road on 10 June 1969. This was a test to see how both the vehicle and the Class I perishables would stand up on the rough road. This test run was completed without problems. Reapers moved on the road completed a turn around in two days, while it took an average of five days by sea. To save time and increase availability, reapers are now integrated into convoy operations to Tay Hoi.

7. The Tactical Operations Center bunker was completed on 19 June 1969. With the completion of this bunker, both tactical and normal operations could be carried on during periods and periods of enemy contact on the highways without conflict. The communications network that was established allowed the Group Commander to talk with his command at least a part of the time of operations.

8. The 8th Transportation Group received an additional mission of hauling mail between Qui Phong and Phu Cat Air Base on 20 June 1969. This mission will continue until the Qui Phong Air Field resumes operations.

9. A Command Post Exercise on the continuity of logistical support in case of disaster or destruction of logistical areas was held at the Qui Phong Support Command on 6 July 1969. 8th Transportation Group was tasked for transportation assets in support of numerous hypothetical operations. All transportation support was both available and committed as requested. It was pointed out that the commitment of transportation assets to other areas would proportionately decrease the line haul capability in the Qui Phong area.

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10. The 545th Transportation Company (Light Truck) was relocated in Thu Muoi on 15 July 1969. The move was due to removal of US troops from the area. While the area was not nearly as good as the area they left, a large amount of work on the part of the personnel greatly improved the new facilities.

11. Helicopter support for convoy operations was received on a two week trial basis commencing 30 July 1969. The first two days saw a large improvement in convoy discipline. The convoy commanders were made aware of both gaps in the convoys and bunching of vehicles. This information was not readily available to them on the ground. In addition, a battalion commander was able to visit a company that was located about 100 miles away. This would have been difficult and time consuming without a helicopter.

## D. TRAINING: (U)

1. Training was conducted on each of the 22 days of the reporting period in accordance with the master training schedule and other applicable directives. A great deal of improvement in both the caliber of instruction and the maintenance of training records was accomplished by the battalions during this quarter. As in the past, the majority of the training was conducted in the evenings after the convoys had returned.

2. Continued emphasis on Project Skills I resulted in more efficiently trained soldiers in the MOS skills required.

3. Extensive effort was placed on sapper training during the period. The aim is to make each man familiar with sapper activities and techniques. This training is done on a continuing basis as new personnel become assigned to the battalions.

## E. SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE: (C)

1. During the reporting period, the 8th Transportation Group exercised command and control of physical security for Compound Complex Charlie: a six square mile area of the Qui Nhon Defense Installation encompassing fourteen US compounds and facilities. The 70th Medical Battalion, the 311th Field Hospital, and "A" Company, 84th Engineer Battalion departed the compound and were replaced by the 173rd Support Battalion (Airborne) and the 17th Evacuation Hospital. Additionally, the 19th Supply and Service Company was relocated, but remained within the 8th Group's area of responsibility.

2. Beginning on 5 May 1969, after a six day training period, patrols were conducted on a regular basis to prevent enemy sapper units from establishing positions in the proximity of friendly compounds. Consisting entirely of logistical troops, these patrols were primarily conducted on the Qui Nhon Chien Mountain (BR 906 239) which abuts all the facilities in Compound Complex Charlie. The routes and reported positions were discovered and destroyed.

3. The enemy successfully perpetrated two attacks against US compounds during the quarter. Both attacks were remarkably similar in nature. In neither case did the enemy attempt to penetrate to the perimeter, but rather utilized the command terrain and dense foliage of the Qui Nhon Chien Mountain to launch 6 to 8 B-40 rockets, primarily at troop billets. In both instances, A1-47 fire was

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employed simultaneously with the rockets in a widely scattered pattern to confuse US personnel and hinder rapid reaction in the compound under attack. On 7 June 1969, "E" Company, USAD suffered 17 US WIA, two seriously, and on 15 July 1969, the 173rd Support Battalion (Airborne) had one US KIA and 8 US WIA.

4. NVA forces reportedly ambushed 8th Group convoys at the base of the Mang Giang Pass (BR 230 506). On three separate occasions, an enemy force, estimated to be a reinforced company, launched simultaneous mortar, B-40 rockets, and automatic weapons fire at passing convoys. In all cases, swift reaction by the convoy commanders and close coordination with the tactical elements prevented major disasters. On 24 June 1969, a convoy from the 124th Transportation Battalion reached the besieged garrison at Ben Het in a maneuver more resembling a tactical assault than an ambush. Knowing that there were three enemy regiments in the proximity of the road between Dak To and Ben Het, the convoy was nevertheless able to run a 6000 meter kill zone and deliver the much needed 175mm ammunition to the firebase.

F. LOGISTICS: (U) Since the last reporting period, the on hand total of 5 ton cargo trucks, 154 series, has improved only slightly. At present, only 31.2% of the total authorized 5 ton cargo trucks are on hand. Semitrailers, 12 ton S&P, and M127 series are becoming critically short. The group has only 76.5% of its authorized trailers.

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SECTION II

Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations.

A. PERSONNEL: (U) None.

B. OPERATIONS: (C)

1. ITEM: Map Books for Convoy Commanders.

(a) OBSERVATION: Early in May a convoy commander was unable to accurately pinpoint his position during contact with the enemy. While he did have maps with him, they were not organized and had no reference points on them.

(b) EVALUATION: Convoy commanders and other convoy control personnel now carry maps arranged in loose leaf books. These maps have coordinates of such reference points as bridges, storage points and pump stations printed on the maps. This enables the convoy commander to quickly locate his position on the ground either in the case of an attack or in case assistance is required to recover a breakdown.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That other commands adopt the map book for their convoy commanders utilization.

2. ITEM: Dedication of Tractors and Trailers in Out of the Way Locations.

(a) OBSERVATION: Twenty six (26) 12 ton SIF trailers became stranded in Ben Het during a period of high enemy activity. These trailers were moved in and left for unloading. An increase in enemy activity in the area precluded return to pick up the trailers for several weeks. These transportation assets were lost to the line haul operations for several weeks.

(b) EVALUATION: Transportation assets such as semitrailers should not be left for unloading in an area that is not normally serviced by convoys. The convoys should move to the area, unload and return with all assets. By utilizing a dedicated tractor trailer system in a little used area, a large number of assets will not be lost to operations.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That the dedicated tractor trailer system be used for little used areas in combat zones.

C. TRAINING: (U) None.

D. INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY: (C)

ITEM: Patrol Security

OBSERVATION: During the quarter, patrolling was initiated on the Ben Het Mountain adjacent to Communist Campsite Gamma. The terrain is so rocky and the foliage so dense that the patrols were lost from view when only 50 meters beyond the perimeter.

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**EVALUATION:** Patrolling of this area is critical to the defense of US installations and defensible efforts have proven relatively futile. However every effort must be made to provide security for the patrols.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the policy initiated in this command be considered for implementation in other areas where applicable. As each patrol sweeps a given area, it is paralleled by a gun truck inside the perimeter equipped with machine guns and in radio contact with the patrol. If contact is made, the patrol marks their position with smoke and the gun truck covers the withdrawal by firing on the mountain above the smoke.

**E. LOGISTICS: (U)**

**1. ITEM: Vehicle Assets**

(a) **OBSERVATION:** The 8th Transportation Group has 240 5 ton cargo trucks authorized and 75 on hand. Nineteen 5 ton cargo "drop side" were received since the last reporting period. Of the 640 semitrailers authorized, 490 are on hand.

(b) **EVALUATION:** The critical shortage of 5 ton cargo trucks and 12 ton semitrailers continues to hinder our load carrying capability in performing our line haul mission.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** That 5 ton cargo trucks and 12 ton semitrailers be made available so the 8th Transportation Group can better perform its mission.

**2. ITEM: Modified 5 Ton Tractors.**

(a) **OBSERVATION:** Due to the temporary closing of Qui Nhon Airfield, the 8th Transportation Group was assigned the mission of hauling mail from Phu Cat AFB to Qui Nhon. Since suitable secure vans weren't a part of 8th Group's assets, two 7 ton shop vans were hand received from Property Disposal and rehabilitated into usable condition by interchanging parts from other trailers at 8th Group's Centralized Trailer Maintenance Facility (CTMF).

(b) **EVALUATION:** After being returned to a usable condition these trailers were hooked up to 5 ton tractors. A problem resulted in turning when the trailer landing legs came in contact with the rear axle of the 5 ton tractor, since the van wasn't originally designed to be pulled by a 5 ton. This problem was resolved by removing the outside rear axle wheels on the 5 ton tractors. To date no adverse effects have been noticed.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** That units faced with similar problems be made aware of this workable modification.

*W. L. LUDY*  
WILLIAM L. LUDY,  
Colonel, TC  
Commanding

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AVCA QN-GO-H (10 Aug 69) 1st Ind  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 8th Transportation Group (MT) for the  
Period Ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R-1)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon, APO 96238 1 SEP 1969

TO: Commanding General, 1st Logistical Command, ATTN: AVCA GO-O,  
APO 96384

1. (U) The Operational Report, Lessons Learned of the 8th Transportation Group for the quarterly period ending 31 July 1969 has been reviewed by this headquarters and the following comments are submitted:

a. SECTION II, paragraph B 1: Concur. The evaluation illustrates the validity of the recommendation.

b. SECTION II, paragraph B 2: Concur. The policy recommended would be valuable in obtaining maximum use of transportation assets.

c. SECTION II, paragraph D: Concur. The Special Assistant for Combat Security, this headquarters, is in the process of publishing periodic defense circulars dealing with various subjects of interest to commanders in the Qui Nhon area. The recommendation by the 8th Trans Gp will be incorporated into this program.

d. SECTION II, paragraph E 1: Concur. Vehicle shortages in both semitrailers and 5 ton cargo trucks exist command wide. Relief with regard to the 5 ton trucks is expected by early September.

e. SECTION II, paragraph E 2: Concur. The evaluation illustrates the validity of the recommendation.

2. (U) The report is considered adequate as modified by the above comments.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

REL: QN 2161

*Robert J. Flouzat, CPT*  
per: RICHARD A. DANIELS  
CPT, AGC  
Asst Adjutant General

AVCA GO-MH (10 Aug 69) 2nd Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 8th Transportation  
Battalion for Period Ending 31 July 1969 RCS CSPCR-65 (U)

DA, Headquarters, 1st Logistical Command, APO 96384 16 OCT 1969

TO: Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST,  
APO 96375

1. The Operational Report - Lessons Learned submitted by headquarters,  
8th Transportation Battalion for the quarterly period ending 31 July 1969  
is forwarded.

2. Pertinent comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning dedication of tractors and trailers, page  
6, paragraph B2. Concur with evaluation in paragraph B2(b); however, not  
concur with recommendation as stated. Recommend that in truck operations  
supporting little used areas, the tractor wait for cargo to be off loaded  
from the trailer so that the trailer can be returned to the CUILT system.

b. Reference item concerning modified 5-Ton tractors, page 7, para-  
graph E(2). Nonconcur. Removal of the outside rear dual wheels on 5-Ton  
tractors constitutes a definite troop safety hazard. Specifically, this  
unauthorized "field expedient" reduces the effective width of the tractor  
from 8 feet to 6 feet thus limiting road contact and reducing tractor  
stability. Recommend the 8th Trans Bn submit a suggestion or EIR thru  
channels describing proposed modification of 5-Ton tractors to Tank-Automot-  
ive Command (TACOM). TACOM engineering personnel must thoroughly evaluate  
the proposal prior to adoption and application by any unit. If the sugges-  
tion or EIR is declared valid by TACOM an MWO will be published authorizing  
removal of outside rear dual wheels.

3. Concur with the basic report as modified by this and previous endorsement.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

TEL: LBN 4839

CF:  
USASUPCOM GMR  
8th Trans Bn

  
C. D. STAFFORD  
1Lt, AGC  
Asst Adjutant General

AVHGC-DST (10 Aug 69) 3d Ind  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 8th Transportation Group (Motor  
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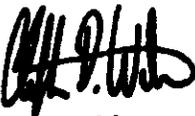
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 24 OCT 1969

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOF-DT,  
APO 96558

This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 31 July 1969 from Headquarters, 8th Transportation Group (Motor Transport) and concurs with the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Cy furn:  
8th Trans Gp.  
1st Log Comd.

  
C. B. WILSON  
1LT. AC  
Assistant Adjutant General

GPOP-DT (10 Aug 69) 4th Ind (U)  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 8th Trans Gp (MT) for Period Ending  
31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 **30 OCT 69**

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters concurs in subject report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

  
**D. A. TUCKER**  
CPT, AGC  
Asst AG

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