

Robert "Bob" Dalton email, planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com

Hey Michael, We were under the 262nd Quartermaster Bn, which was under the 54th General Support Group. Now I think then we were under the 124th Trans Command and finally the Cam Ranh Bay Support Command. I am not sure about the 124th Trans Command. The 54th Support Group might have been directly under Cam Ranh Bay support Command but I do not think so. The 262nd QM Bn. was made up of Hq Company, 262 QM Bn, 525th Quartermaster Company which ran the POL jettys and the tank farms, 61st Trans Company Med Truck (Petroleum), 360th Trans Med Truck (Petroleum) and I think there was some other small detachment that did some god dam thing.

The 61st Trans deployed from Fort Eustis, VA in 1965 with the 597th and 2nd Trans (S & P units). The 359th Trans and 360 Trans were formed in Fort Riley, Kansas in early 1966, they deployed to Vietnam in late 66 or early 67. The 359th joined the 27th Trans Bn. in Qui Nhon and the 360th, I guess, went to Cam Ranh Bay. I did 19 months up country with the 61st Trans. During Tet of 68 we sent a platoon to Dong Ha to support the Marines who were getting there asses kicked in Da Nang. That platoon never returned to Qui Nhon. As the guys rotated home and the platoon just petered out. The 61st Trans remained a two platoon truck company until deactivated in around November 1969. We were under 240th QM Bn in Qui Nhon, the 61st, and the 359th. Some time in 1967 they decided to put the petroleum companies under QM bn's. They thought (what I heard) that the quality of fuel suffered under the trans bn's command, that the trans bn commanders only cared about tonnage and mileage. I do believe that. They put an 8 inch "British invasion" pipeline in from Qui Nhon to Pleiku, 100 miles, 10 pump stations. Believe it or not it worked, they had to repair it every morning but those pipes came in 40 foot lengths. They could repair it before noon and pump more thru it in 4 or 5 hours than both petrol companies could haul all day. They did not need both petrol companies then so they sent the 61st to Cam Ranh Bay.

I departed Vietnam just after the Tet offensive in late march 1968, went to Germany for about 10 months, got out of the army, went back in the Army in June 1969, requested assignment to Vietnam and my old unit, when they sent me to Cam Ranh Bay I thought they had made a mistake, didn't know they had moved to Cam Ranh Bay, honestly I didn't think that god dam pipeline would work, I didn't think they could keep it operational with the VC burning it up every night. Sometime around November the personnel (with over so much time to go in country) and the newest of our truck fleet were integrated into the 360th trans. and you know the rest. Skelton, 1SG Grosseman, Buckwalter, Gallo, I think Galvez and myself all came from the 61st, and Capt. Rowland. Enough for now, later, plane old bob

From: Robert Dalton [mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2005 2:27 pm
To: mlneedles@comcast.net; Needles, Mike (YBUSA-CDR)
Subject: Capt. Rowland

Jack, Very sorry for July, a bad month for me. The 597th was the first one to deploy from Fort Eustis. Then came the 2nd Trans and the 61st Trans (petrol). The Triple Four (444) Trans came about the same time from Fort Bragg I think, (not 100% sure about that) but I am sure on about the approx. time of deployment. The 597th deployed with gas tractors (M52) with r6602 continental engines. Oil burners with no power at all and very hard to maintain. Before the 597th finally got new tractors, I saw one day the entire company could only put 6 tractors on the convoy. The arrival of the 64th Trans with their Mack Ent 673 straight diesels saved the asses of both the 1st Cav in An Khe and the newly arrived 4th Division at Camp Enari in Pleiku. The first replacement tractors the 597th Trans received were those 1800 international loadstars, single axle tractors, they weren't much good but at that time there were no more tactical tractors in the army's inventory. They had to manufacture some new. Anyway after the success of the straight diesels of the 64th Trans, the Army by 1969 quit ordering the M52A2 multi-fuel and went back to the Mack diesels (673 ent) M52A1 with some modifications on the frame and fenders.

I spent my last year with 61st and 360th trucking out of Cam Ranh Bay to Dalat, Bay Loc, Phan Rang, and Bam Me Thuot. I might add that those first truck companies were operating even a couple of months before the arrival of the 27th Trans Bn headquarters. I don't remember exactly what month the 359th Trans came but it was somewhat after the 64th Trans some time in late 66 or early 67. I do remember that they lost two guys burning foliage within the first week they were in country. Jack, I apologize for July, I have a mountain of respect for you, I never talked with you personally in Viet Nam but talked with your drivers every day at the line up sites. Remember units always departed Qui Nhon as units but came back to Phu Tai as mixed because as I remember a march unit left every hour starting at 1pm. As trucks were unloaded they just proceeded back to line up site and waited for the next March unit to leave. Please keep in touch, Bobby Dalton, Tacoma WA cc: (Jack Horvath) was the commander of the 64th Trans in 1966 and 1967, he later was XO of the 54 Trans Bn in Cha Rang Valley, if you guys get a chance read his tale of two truck tours on the ATAV website

From: Killblane, Richard
Sent: Tuesday, September 06, 2005 12:21 PM
To: 'planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com'
Subject: FW: As I remember

Jack Horvath just sent me the history you wrote. I'm the TC Historian. I just finished writing a history of gun trucks in Vietnam and am now working on case studies of convoy ambushes in Vietnam. Below your account is the description of an ambush where a driver of a fuel tanker was killed. Do you remember any details of that ambush or the name of the driver? There was another ambush in the same pass where a driver of a medium truck was killed. Do you know of any other ambushes?

The purpose of these case studies is to get these out to the soldiers serving or getting ready to serve in Iraq to teach them to think like tacticians. Thanks, Rich Killblane

From: Robert Dalton [mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2005 2:19 pm

To: Killblane, Richard
Subject: Capt. Rowland

Richard, I was on that convoy, I don't remember the driver's name but what makes me feel like shit is that He and I had words the night before in the unloading area. I can't remember what he had done wrong but it had to have something to do with safety. That's really about the only thing I got excited about. Maybe smoking while unloading fuel, I can't remember for sure. I was never too hard on the guys because it was tough enough anyway. I have always felt guilty about this as that was our last conversation. I am haunted to this day thinking that if we hadn't had that altercation maybe he would have been thinking clearer. I will try to find out his name. plane old bob, Tacoma, WA

61st Trans, July 1966 till march 1968, 39000 miles highway 19 QL 1. was at the siege of Kontum from the last few days of Jan 68 (Tet) till the first few days Feb. 61st Trans, July 1969 till July 1970.

From: Robert Dalton [mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 10:06 AM
To: mlneedles@comcast.net; Needles, Mike (YBUSA-CDR)
Subject: Capt. Rowland

Mike, Does Richard ring a bell for Capt Rowland's first name. Maybe I'll have to get help from Buckwalter again. I thought he was from California but could be wrong. He would have been born in 1921 as he was 48 in 1969. We were on convoy with him once with the 61st coming back empty from Bay Loc. We started getting incoming small arms fire. Capt. Rowland stopped the convoy and formed an attack squad and started up the hill looking for whoever was firing on us. When we got back to Cam Ranh he was called up to 500th Group Headquarters and got his ass chewed. They reminded him that he was supposed to get the convoy out of the kill zone and leave the ground fighting to the infantry. I know that was hard for him with his combat background. We will find him if he is still living. Later, Bob

From: "Needles, Mike (YBUSA-CDR)" <Mike.Needles@Yellowbook.com>
To: <planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com>
Subject: RE: Capt. Rowland
Date: Thu, 1 Sep 2005 15:25:56 -0500

Great story...what a guy! I am calling Skelton tomm. and will fill you in after. Later.

From: Robert Dalton [mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2005 2:22 pm
To: mlneedles@comcast.net; Needles, Mike (YBUSA-CDR)
Subject: Capt. Rowland

Len, you probably remember this incident later, Bob

From: Killblane, Richard
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2005 3:54 pm
To: 'planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com'
Subject: FW: As I remember

Bob, please take a look at what I wrote about the ambush. I'm trying to recreate what happened. For example, how many trucks were in the convoy, how was it organized, how many gun trucks and where were they, who was the convoy commander, when and where did the enemy attack, what action did the convoy and gun trucks take?

Could you also describe where you were in the convoy, what you saw and did? I have only one account of that ambush. My goal is to recreate the detailed events of each ambush so that transporters today can learn from them.

Thanks, Rich

From: Robert Dalton [mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2005 11:17 pm
To: killblaner@eustis.army.mil
Subject:

Jack, hope you had a good visit with the "chief of smoke", I feel bad, he told me he is on the way out and he won't live much longer. What a jewel of a man. A superb NCO. Jack, I guess my mind is getting foggy, I could have sworn I was on that convoy that guy got killed on. But that could not have been. I have no recollection of the site or the body. I am sending you a report that Ronald Smith gave Richard Killblane (the Transportation historian) I had to have been still in country because I knew Smith had some significant things wrong although he is right about the attack happening. I am going to email Richard Killblane and have talk directly with you as you were certainly on the scene.

From: Robert Dalton [mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2005 11:59 pm
To: killblaner@eustis.army.mil
Subject:

Rich, Blow my mind, I knew some things in Smith's report didn't make 100% sense, but I couldn't put myself in the kill zone and also couldn't picture the burned truck or body. I called my very good friend Retired Army Sergeant Jack Buckwalter and he told me that I wasn't on that convoy, evidently the years and trauma made me think I was. Jack was running trail gun jeep on that day for the tanker march unit. He remembers the guy's name, Charles Pedigo, I checked and he is on the Viet Nam wall killed on June 26th, 1970. Khanh Hoa Province. If you contact Jack Buckwalter at XXXXXXXXX he can tell you everything. Jack lives in Virginia and works for the post office. He gets off around

4pm I think. He will help you, he is a great guy with a good memory. Jack and I were up country in Qui Nhon in 1966 before we ever got to Cam Ranh Bay. Jack just installed a new computer and you can email him at jackbuckwalter5@yahoo.com I haven't figured out who the convoy commander was that day but it almost had to be one of the company commanders from the 442nd, 566th or the 670th. I will search that a little further.

Differences from Smith's story after conferring with Buckwalter. 1. The convoy was west bound going toward Bam Me Thuot (loaded). 2. The tanker company was the 360th not the 670th. 3. I agree the reefers were probably in front as they were hauling foodstuffs. The reefers and the S&P's usually made up the first march unit. There wouldn't have been trucks from the 442nd and the 670th in the same convoy unless the 670th were pulling a few reefers. The 32nd Trans Platoon (reefer trucks was attached to the 670th and pulled reefers once in while when the 32nd didn't have enough tractor power. Other than that when one company from the 36th Trans Bn (566, 442 or 670) was going to Bam Me Thuot while the other companies were going south to Dalat, Bay Loc, or Phan Rang. Rich, Jack is new at computers but he is a smart guy and this will get him started. I think he is quite a ways from you but it would be nice for you to meet him. Mike Needles, a platoon leader from the 360th lives near Detroit and he might be able to shed some light on who the CC was that day. One thing that pisses me off is the lack of after action reports that were done by transportation units during the war. There would be a hell of a lot more Bronze Stars with V device and Silver Stars if there had been better records kept. These forgotten men have gone unrewarded. mike.needles@yellowbook.com If I can help you on anything let me know.

Planeoldbob dalton, tacoma, wa

From: Robert Dalton [<mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2005 8:49 am
To: jctool@cablone.net
Cc: Jackbuckwalter5@yahoo.com

Jerry/Joanna, Jack Buckwalter finally got an email address, can you please send him a copy of that sign that says "you name it we have been there". Thanks, Bobby Dalton, Tacoma, WA, Also Richard Killblane, the TC Historian from Fort Eustis is researching Charles Petigo's KIA, so you might want to touch base with him. address on (cc:)

From: Robert Dalton [<mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2005 6:42 am
To: killblaner@eustis.army.mil
Subject:

Rich, In the period 1969 till 1970 the convoys trucking out of Cam Ranh were very organized. The evening prior to departing Cam Ranh there was a formal convoy briefing at 500th Trans Group Hq. at (1900 hrs I think). The convoy commander (CC), usually a company commander or a senior Lieutenant, the march unit leaders (lieutenants), march unit trail gun jeep NCOs, trail unit usually an experienced Lt. and the trail unit (usually experienced NCO. They had a large flip chart that had the convoy makeup written with a magic marker or grease pencil. It had radio frequencies, primary and alternate, and dust

off frequencies. Line up time and SP (start point Time). The basic make up of the convoy to include how many bobtail tractors each unit would bring, how many hard trucks (HT) (gun trucks), who would provide the tire truck, wreckers, water tanker and mechanics. This briefing was given by the CC and monitored by 500th Trans Group muckety mucks (rear area support personnel). I'm not using the muckety mucks in a bad way, they did a good job, that was just a term we used for the people that didn't go on the line hauls. We took with us a (SSB) single side band radio (jeep mounted) manned by a jeep driver and RTO from 500th Group. They called in all check points directly to 500th Trans Group Hq. in Cam Ranh. I don't know the range of this SSB but I heard it was 3 to 4 hundred miles. The SSB guys were also under the command of the CC and needed to be told that occasionally, because being assigned to the 500 Trans Group Hq went to their heads once in awhile. Cam Ranh knew the exact location of the convoys at all times. This briefing was a dam good idea because you could put a real person with the voice you were hearing on the radio the next day. You were told what time to be on the radio net the next morning. It was a matter of pride to be up on the net on time and ready to go the next morning. I made many of these briefings as did Sergeant Buckwalter and Lt. Needles. I might add that most Lieutenants did not pull convoy commander duty, you had to be a senior Lt. and "have your shit together" *a Viet Nam term) to be approved for convoy commander duty. I can make you a replica of a briefing chart, scan it, and email it to you if you want. You might know all of this, I don't know. What is your background??? Keep in touch, plane old bob dalton

From: <richard.e.killblane@us.army.mil>
To: planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com
Subject: Re: Convoy control
Date: Thu, 08 Sep 2005 09:34:12 -0400

Bob, There is a lot I know and even more I don't know. I know that LTC Ed Honor had one of his staff officers find the SSBs for the convoys. I wrote a book on him. Send me your address and I'll mail it to you. The SOPs were different every year. That is why I want to know how you guys did things and what you had. That way I can track changes.

I called Jack last night. Great conversation. He told me that you sent him my interview of SFC Hurd. I was surprised to know that both of you had meet on your first tour and both of you served in the 61st TC. I have only one interview of someone who deployed over in the first year of the war and you guys served in that unit with him.

Jack informed me that both of you did multiple tours and mostly in the same company. I guess I could write the whole history of the 61st just from interviewing you guys. Tell me about your first tour. Rich

From: Robert Dalton [mailto:planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, September 9, 2005 9:11 am
To: killblaner@eustis.army.mil
Subject: Re: Convoy control

Rich, I would love to have that book written by Col. Honor, I served with him in Germany also, When I was in the 598th trans in Mannheim, He was 37th Trans Group Commander. A great commander and also a good person.

Jack Buckwalter and I did not deploy with the 61st Trans, Jack was among the first replacements assigned to the 61st, I think in Jan. 1966, you can ask him. I joined the 61st in July 1966, Jack knew all of the original company and I knew a lot of them. Sfc Hurd was still there when I got in country. As for Hurd's interview, my opinion is that he is full of shit on at least two items. 1. deployed without tents, that's bullshit, the army sure as hell wasn't short tents to deploy with in 1965. The tents might have gotten lost in shipment and the story of going down to the docks and stealing tents might be true, but the company sure as hell didn't deploy without tents. By the way when I got there in 1966 July those tents were rotting from the rain and heat. Within a couple of months we had jungle hooches, 2x4 frames, weaved bamboo bottoms, screen upper, corrugated metal roof, and sand bagged up 3 feet on the outsides. 2. Hurd's story about getting kotex from the nurses is bullshit that was a standing joke, true we could not get filters, but we sure as hell didn't use kotex from the nurses. Hurd was the original truck master and held over because he did not receive his reassignment orders on schedule. Catp. Gibson, the CO who started the second year for the 61st was thinking about pressing charges against Hurd for refusing to take a convoy to Dak To. Gibson was promoted to major and went 27th Bn S3, he was a good officer. I read everything on the net about Jack Horvath and I can personally account and attest to the validity of his recollections. More later, bob dalton

----- Original Message -----

From: Robert Dalton <planeoldbob1941@hotmail.com>

Date: Friday, September 9, 2005 2:48 pm

Subject: address

Bob Dalton

xxxxxxxxxxxxx, WA xxxxxx, tel. XXXXXXXXX thanks, bob dalton