

5 Apr - 31 Dec 1966

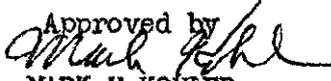
HISTORY OF THE
TWENTY-FOURTH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY
(LIGHT TRUCK)

5 April 1966 - 31 December 1966

HISTORY OF THE
24TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)
5 April 1966 - 31 December 1966

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PREFACE

In realization that a history of the past can be critical to decisions relating to the future, the 24th Transportation Company's history has been traced from its alert and activation to 31 December 1966.

Because background material was non-existent and a complete turnover of personnel had occurred in the last year, the author found it necessary to limit the time frame of this history to the inclusive dates of 5 April 1966 to 31 December 1966.

ALERT

The 24th Transportation Company (Light Truck) received its warning order for deployment to South-East Asia on 5 April 1966¹ and was reorganized by General Order 128, Third United States Army, 8 April 1966 under TO&E 55-17F².

COMMAND

On 8 April 1966 the 24th was commanded by Captain Walter B. Shaw with a chain of command as follows: Lt. Colonel Ross, 36th Trans Bn (Trk); Col. Loop, 12th Support Brigade; Lt. General Palmer, 18th Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg.

During the unit's four months of POM, command changed from CPT Shaw to Lt. Michael E Fitch on 10 June 1966³, and from the latter to the present commander, Captain Mark H Kohler (then First Lt) on 6 July 1966⁴.

DEPLOYMENT

On 10 August 1966, the unit sailed from Oakland Army Terminal on the USNS William S. Wiegel and landed at Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam, its new home, on 31 August 1966.

1. Confidential TWX from TUSA to CONARC with info copy to 24th Trans Co: WARNING ORDER: Deployment to SEA, dtd 051528Z.
2. FOUO Order: GO 128, TUSA, dtd 8 Apr 66.
3. 24th Trans Co (Lt Trk), Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28307, Unit Order #40, dtd 10 June 1966.
4. CPT Kohler Cmd, 24th Trans Co, Ft Bragg, N.C. 28307, Unit Order #47, dtd 6 Jul 66.

Upon receipt of its Organizational Equipment off the Tuscon Victory Ship on 14 September 1966, the 24th prepared for operation, under the 39th Transportation Battalion (Truck) commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas E. Benson.

MISSIONS

On 17 September 1966, the 24th performed its first mission in South Vietnam by transporting a Battalion of ROK Marines from the My Ca Ferry, near Dong Ba Thin to their awaiting troop ship at Cam Ranh.

Starting 19 September 1966, this unit concentrated on port and beach clearance operations in the immediate Cam Ranh Bay Area, until 23 September 1966 at which time two (2) platoons and a maintenance detachment, under the command of Lieutenant Fitch became a part of the Transportation Task Force of Operation Robin the mission of which was to move the First Brigade of the Fourth Infantry Division and its organic equipment from Vung Ro Bay to its base camp at South Tuy Hoa. The unit performance was termed outstanding by Major Richard Horton, Project Officer, in his Letter of Commendation to the 24th for their part in the Operation⁵.

On 20 October the remaining company personnel and equipment departed Cam Ranh Bay aboard an LST and arrived at Vung Ro Bay 21 October to begin operation as a complete unit again with the mission of supporting the 1st Brigade, Fourth Infantry Division; the 1st Brigade, 101st

5. HQ, 36th Trans Bn (Trk) APO US Forces 96312, AVCA CRM-MT-36-XO, Subj: Letter of Commendation, THRU: CO, 500th Trans Gp (Motor Transport), APO 96312, TO: 1LT Michael E Fitch, 05 710 326, 24th Trans Co (Lt Trk), APO 96316, dtd Nov 66.

Airborne Division; the Air Force; and the 39th Engineer Battalion (Combat) in line hauls from Tuy Hoa to Cung Son and Tuy An and port clearance from Vung Ro to Tuy Hoa.

At 1130 hours 28 October, this unit suffered its first combat casualty when the 2½ ton truck driven by Pfc Gary E. Hering, as a part of a convoy headed by Captain Kohler, detonated an enemy-placed mine approximately five (5) miles West of Tuy Hoa on Vietnamese Highway 7B leading to Cung Son. Pfc Hering suffered only slight injury to his right leg and, upon his own request, continued on the mission even though three (3) passengers in his vehicle had to be evacuated via Dust Off. The vehicle had to be written off as a combat loss.

On 5 November 1966 at 1210 hours the units' second combat casualty was recorded. Pfc Travis N. Johnston's 2½ ton truck struck a mine approximately seven (7) miles west of Tuy Hoa on the road to Cung Son and Pfc Johnston received mine fragments on his entire left side. The men of the 24th were deeply sorry to learn that PFC Johnston, after being evacuated to Japan, lost his left eye, had operations to give use to his left leg and arm, and, regrettably, he will not be returning to us.

It was gratifying to receive, along with the 151st Transportation Company (Light Truck), on 6 December 1966 a Letter of Commendation from Major Moon, USAF representative of Air Force Logistics Command for Project Bitterwine in which he commended "the convoy commanders and drivers of the 24th Transportation Company and the 151st Transportation Company, who under the most severe road and weather conditions performed in an outstanding manner to insure the prompt delivery of Air Force

equipment⁶".

As an indication of the kind of action men of the 24th encounter, the following report has been extracted from unit files: "At 1000 hours on 14 December 1966, eight (8) 2½ ton trucks under command of Sergeant E-5 Andray Jones of the 24th Transportation Company and ten (10) 2½ ton trucks from 1st Brigade of the 4th Division were stopped on QL1 at approximately fifteen (15) miles north of Tuy Hoa for about ten (10) minutes. At this time the lead trucks began receiving automatic weapons fire from about 150 meters west of QL1. Approximately two (2) minutes later the rear trucks of the convoy began receiving automatic weapons fire from about 200 meters east of QL1. Approximately ten (10) minutes after firing began, lead elements were able to move north. Three (3) men from 1st Brigade were wounded but there were no casualties among men of the 24th. However, one 24th truck had been hit in both front tires and left at the ambush sight. Sgt Jones later returned with some 1st Brigade armored vehicles and recovered the downed vehicle⁷".

As of 31 December 1966, the 24th still has as its mission, port clearance from Vung Ro Bay (now named Port Lane) to the greater Tuy Hoa area; logistical line hauls between Cam Ranh Bay, Nha Trang, and Tuy Hoa; and forward support line hauls from Tuy Hoa to the north and the west.

6. Dept of the Air Force, HQ Air Force Logistic Command, APO 96316, Rass Team/Maj Moon, Subj: Letter of Commendation, TO: Commander, 39th Trans Bn (Trk), APO 96316, dtd 6 Dec 66.

7. 24th Trans Co (Lt Trk), APO 96316, AVCA CRB-TH-TW, TO: CO, 39th Trans Bn, APO 96316, Subj: Hostile Fire Upon Convoy, dtd 15 Dec 66.

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GLOSSARY

TUSA - Third United States Army

POM - Preparation for Oversea Movement

USNS - United States Naval Ship

ROK - Republic of Korea

DUST OFF - Medical Evacuation Helicopter

USAF - United States Air Force

PROJECT BITTERWINE - Movement of Class II & IV supplies from Vung Ro Bay to Tuy Hoa Air Force Base.

LINE HAULS - Hauls which are characterized by high running time in relation to loading and unloading time.

PORT AND BEACH CLEARANCE - The clearing of cargo from the immediate vicinity of the port (beach) to permit continuous unloading of ships that would otherwise be hampered by backlogs of supplies within the port (beach) area.

QL1 - Highway 1, running north and south along the coast of Vietnam.