

1966

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
444TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)
APO 96238

AVCA-QN-27TC-444TC

29 March 1967

SUBJECT: Annual Historical Supplement 444th Transportation Company APO 96238

1. Significant Activities:

a. During the period 1 January 1966 through 31 December 1966 the 444th Transportation Company (Light Truck) was attached to the 27th Transportation Battalion (Truck) located approximately twelve miles west of Qui Nhon, Republic of Vietnam.

b. During the calendar year the unit conducted beach clearance operations at Qui Nhon Port, provided troop lift and support of forward task forces of various combat units and supported 27th Transportation Battalion line haul operations.

c. Operation Blue Light: On 24 December 1965, the 3rd Platoon, led by 2LT Donald W. Johnson and augmented by a mess section departed for Pleiku to provide support for the newly arriving 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. The 3rd Platoon established operations at the "New Pleiku Air Field" and moved troops from planes to their new location near Pleiku. The role Transportation Corps units played in Operation Blue Light was pointed out by the Commanding General, First Logistical Command, Brigadier General C.W. Eifler, in a letter to the Commanding Officer, 4th Transportation Command (Tml A). The letter, dated 9 February 1966, cited all units involved in the build up. The letter was indorsed to the Commanding Officer, 27th Transportation Battalion, by Colonel R.W. Aronson, Commanding Officer, 4th Transportation Command. In it, Colonel Aronson commended units of the Battalion, including the 444th Transportation Company, "The commendable manner in which you and members of your command distinguished yourselves in the accomplishment of this important mission reflects your dedication and professional ability."

d. Operation Matador: The unit transported elements of the 1st Cavalry Division to their assembly areas near Pleiku on 3 January and provided line haul support for that operation.

e. Operation Masher-White Wing: The unit provided troop lift to elements of the 1st Cavalry Division by first hauling elements North of Qui Nhon on Highway #1 to Phu Cat on 11 February 1966 and on North to the highly contested Bong Son area later in the month. This effort was cited in a letter to the Commanding General, US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon, by Brigadier General C.W. Eifler, Commanding General, First Logistical Command. This letter congratulated all units including the 444th Transportation Company. The letter further states that, "during this period, you provided the division with 500,000 rations, 7,000 tons of ammunition, and 2,000,000 gallons of fuel. At no time did combat operations have to be delayed or postponed because of a shortage of essential material." This letter was indorsed with commendation by Brigadier General Charles R. Meyer, Commanding General, US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon. During this operation the unit moved 149 tons of supplies and 350 troops a distance of 2,157 miles.

f. Operation Lincoln: Two platoons of trucks were utilized to support the 2nd Squadron, 8th Cavalry at the beginning of Operation Lincoln on 24 March 1966. Led by 2LT Lynn R. Coy, the vehicles transported men and equipment from An Khe to an area 35 miles southwest of Pleiku. Two days later a secondary mission developed when 12 of the same trucks returned to the now famous Special Forces Camp at Plei Me with additional men and equipment of the famed "First Team." These trucks remained in the Pleiku area hauling badly needed supplies to Forward Support areas during the remainder of the operation while moving 720 troops a distance of 9,331 miles.

g. Operation Round Out: On 16 April 1966, men of the 26th Infantry Regiment, ROK Capitol Division, came ashore at Qui Nhon. In a "round-robin" shuttle, two platoons of the 444th moved the fresh troops to their base camp near the Division's headquarters.

h. Beach Clearance: During the period 28 October 1965 through 18 April 1966, the 444th Trans Co participated in beach clearance operations at the Port of Qui Nhon. The period of heaviest commitment was during the period 1 January through 24 March, when an average of 25 vehicles per day were working two - twelve hour shifts. This commitment was in addition to the line haul and combat support commitments mentioned above. During this period the unit averaged between 250 and 300 short tons cleared each day. In March 1966, the 27th Transportation Battalion received a letter of commendation indorsed through 4th Transportation Command (Tral A) from Brigadier General C.W. Eifler, Commanding General First Logistical Command. In it, General Eifler cited the heavy backlogs of shipping in early January and the rapid increase in tonnages cleared. Another heavy period came between 4 May 1966 and 31 May 1966, when the unit provided an average of 27 trucks for beach clearance operations. In spite of the added strain on drivers working both beach clearance commitments and line haul, the drivers performed their duties in a superior manner. As usual, not one commitment was missed.

i. During the period 1 January through 31 March the unit moved 33,280 tons a distance of 275,529 miles on other various line haul and beach clearance commitments at the port of Qui Nhon.

j. Operation Longfellow: On 11 April two platoons of the unit deployed to Pleiku where they trans-shipped cargo from stake and platform trailers to a Task Force at Dak To located approximately 70 miles North of Pleiku on Highway 14. The convoy to Dak To on 12 April, led by 2LT Lynn R. Coy, marked what was understood to be the first US Army Convoy to that location in two years. Other elements provided troop lift to the First Cavalry Division during the same operation.

k. Operation Davy Crockett: One platoon of the unit, led by 2LT Lynn R. Coy, moved to An Khe where it picked up Troops of the 1st Cavalry Division. This element joined the remainder of the convoy at Qui Nhon and departed for Bong Son at 0200 hours, 3 May on what was the first night convoy in this area of operations.

l. Paul Revere I: On 27 May the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division began an extensive operation near Pleiku. One platoon deployed to Pleiku and provided local haul support to units of that organization.

m. Operation Hawthorne: The operation of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division expanded into a major conflict early in June 1966. On 10 June 1966, the main body of the 444th deployed to Pleiku to provide combat service support to the 101st. The first major effort came on 13 June 1966, when 47 trucks of the unit participated in a 107 vehicle convoy to Dak To. This operation was supported by line haul until 1 August 1966. Convoys to Dak To were led by unit Platoons Leaders on a daily basis. Turn-around times were reduced because of the dedicated efforts of NCO's and drivers during this critical period.

n. Operation Henry Clay: On 11 July 1966, the entire company led by CPT James M. Turley, participated in an armored convoy to Bon Blech in support of Operation Henry Clay. The unit hauled a major portion of Task Force Barron's three day stockage of supplies. At this time, the road to Bon Blech was unsecured, except for the nobile security element on the road. Throughout the month of July 1966, the unit provided line haul and troop lift service to Task Force Barron and the First Cavalry Division at Bon Blech, Task Force Stinson at Dak To, and to the Third Brigade, 25th Infantry Division 14 miles South of Pleiku. In addition, the 444th hauled 500 gallon fuel bladders to the air strip at Cheo Reo in support of Hooker II. Drivers of the unit distinguished themselves on these treacherous routes by their professionalism and attention to duty.

o. Operation Hawthorne: During the period 1-7 July direct combat support was provided to Plei Me Special Forces camp located in the Central highlands southwest of Pleiku. A total of 576 tons were hauled a distance of 17,012 miles.

p. Operation Bauregard: During the period 8 July - 8 August the unit provided direct combat support to Ban Blech Special Forces Camp located 70 miles South of Pleiku on Route 14. A total of 6,312 tons were hauled a distance of 127,088 miles. In addition 575 troops were transported to Bon Blech.

q. Operation Paul Rovere II: On 2 August 1966 a major battle began developing West of Pleiku. Elements of the Third Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and the First Cavalry Division were committed. During this period of logistical strain, the 444th was committed to its maximum capability, supporting the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and Task Force Barron, now located at the Oasis, 21 miles South of Pleiku. Drivers of the 444th hauled a maximum number of tons to these locations in spite of treacherous roads. The drivers and leaders of the unit again displayed superior devotion to duty while negotiating the one-lane road pocked by holes and ruts. During this same period, the unit supported ROK operations at Duc Co, using armored elements from the 1st Battalion, 69th Armor. One 2½ ton truck was damaged by a mine, but the driver coaxed it to Duc Co, off-loaded and returned the vehicle to Pleiku under its own power.

r. Operation Henry Clay: On 30 August the unit transported 90 tons a distance of 5,280 miles from Pleiku in support of Operation Henry Clay.

s. Operation Thayer I: After having returned to Qui Nhon from Pleiku on 31 August the unit conducted support of Operation Thayer I during the period 13-30 September. Elements of the 1st Cavalry Division located at Bong Son were provided with 3,876 tons of supplies which were moved a total of 119,519 miles. In addition line haul to An Khe and Pleiku during the period 1-7 Sep

delivered a total of 2,444 tons with 213 additional tons being moved on local hauls. Support of Operations Thayer I and II continued through 31 October. The unit was commended in a letter from Major General C.H. Dunn, Asst. Chief of Staff, MACV, in a letter dated 25 October 1966 in which he wrote, "The prompt, efficient, and dedicated support in which you and the members of your command responded to the emergency requirement for moving AM-2 matting during the period 21 September 1966 to 4 October 1966 is noteworthy and appreciated. Despite your very heavy workload, your command quickly responded in a highly efficient manner to move this critically needed material by all transport means available to its destination at Khe Sanh and Dong Ha. Your prompt action enhanced the tactical support capability in the I Corps tactical zone at a most critical period." This letter was indorsed by Major General C.W. Eifler, Commanding General, 1st Logistical Command.

t. On 1 November the unit was alerted to move to Pleiku and loaded and moved with only 21 hours notice, arriving at Pleiku at 1300 hours 2 November. Within four hours after arrival vehicles were being dispatched in support of elements of the 1st Cavalry Division operating from the "Oasis" located twenty miles southwest of Pleiku. During the period 2 Nov-31 Dec the unit continued support at the Oasis of Operation San Houston and in addition backhauled ammunition from a Special Forces CIDG camp located at Dak To. The 4th Infantry Division on Operation Paul Revere IV, at a location 37 miles west of Pleiku, was also supported at two Task Forces, one located at Plei Docchi and the other at a Special Forces CIDG camp at Plei Djereng. During the period 26-31 Dec, 40 task vehicles were dispatched to Plei Djereng with 90 men under the command of 2LT Robert E. McIlvain. These 90 men loaded most of the task force supplies by hand and moved the entire Task Force operation to Plei Docchi. During the period 26 Nov - 25 Dec the unit supported the First Brigade 101st Airborne Division on Operation Pickett in an area West of Kontum moving on one occasion to a location less than 15 Kilometers from the Cambodian Border. The mileage and ton figures for the operations are as follows:

- (1) Task Force located at the Oasis and Operation San Houston: 2,720 tons.
- (2) Task Force located at Plei Docchi and Operation Paul Revere IV: 3,203 tons
- (3) Task force located at Dak To Special Forces CIDG camp: 513 tons
- (4) Operation Pickett: 964 tons
- (5) 26 - 31 Dec move of Task Force from Plei Djereng to Plei Docchi: 564 tons.
- (6) Total mileage 2 Nov - 31 Dec: 115,258

2. Civil Affairs: During the period Dec 65 through Dec 66 the 444th Transportation Company (Light Truck) participated in the following Civil Affairs projects:

- (1) Trucks of the 444th led by 2LT Lynn R. Coy assisted the Qui Nhon Support Command Civil Affairs Officer by hauling toys and food to outlying villages north of Qui Nhon. This operation, known as "Toys for Tots," took place in late December 1965.

(2) In May 1966, the men of the 444th contributed over 7000\$VN to the holy Family Hospital, Qui Nhon, to have a lip operation performed on an eleven year old Vietnamese girl, Das Thi Ie. The girl had become a familiar sight around the compound, acting as laundress and house girl. The operation was a success and won many friends in the village of Phu Tai.

(3) During May 1966, twelve trucks of the 444th worked day and night for a week to move rice and flour from the Vietnamese dock at Qui Nhon to warehouses at the Catholic Cathedral in Qui Nhon. The rice and flour was donated from the Bishops Relief Fund and was used to feed refugees in the large refugee camp near the Cathedral.

(4) The unit also contributed food to needy villagers, hired members of a needy family, and assisted in the construction of a home for a family whose hut had burned to the ground.

3. Other Projects:

(1) In April 1966, the 444th Transportation Company became the first unit of the 27th Transportation Battalion, to achieve 100% participation in the Savings Bond Program. This goal was attained through the joint efforts of officers and non-commissioned officers. The Unit First Sergeant, Donald L. Rees, placed special emphasis on savings at all entrance briefings for new personnel. The unit has continued to have well above 90% participation throughout the year.

(2) In May 1966, the men of the 444th Trans Co achieved another first when they contributed over one dollar per man to the American Red Cross. No active Red Cross campaign took place in the Republic of Vietnam, but the men of the unit wanted to contribute because of the many benefits already received from the Red Cross since the unit's arrival in the Republic of Vietnam.

(3) CMMI Inspections: The "Triple Four" also successfully passed three Command Maintenance Management Inspections during this period, on 30 Jan 66, 1 Apr 66, and 9 Dec 66. The unit was commended by Brigadier General Charles R. Meyer for its success in passing a large number of roadside spot check inspections conducted by the US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon.

(4) The unit successfully completed the Annual General Inspection in March 1966. The inspection was conducted by Headquarters, US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon.

4. Command Changes:

(1) On 11 Sep 66, 1SG Donald L. Rees departed the unit for assignment to Europe with SFC E7 George F. Willhite taking over the duties of company 1SG.

(2) After being in command of the unit since 7 August 1964, Captain James M. Turley completed twenty-five months outstanding leadership of the unit when he rotated to CONUS.

(3) Captain Charles H.R. Kramer assumed Command on 24 September 1966.