

Annual Supplement
to the
History of the
541ST TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (LIGHT TRUCK)
1 January 1967 - 31 December 1967

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Approved by:
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Commanding

34th Supply and Service Battalion (Direct Support)
United States Army Support Command, Qui Nhon
1st Logistical Command
United States Army, Vietnam

At the beginning of 1967 the 541st Transportation Company was still in support of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Captain Richard D. Johnson was commanding.

The 541st Trans Company's mission is direct support of the 1st Cavalry Division. It continued to provide base camp support at Camp Radcliff in An Khe, Vietnam as well as field support for the operations of outlying units.

During January the 541st provided an average of 29 trucks daily for base camp support while furnishing 16 trucks for field support of Operation Thayer II.

From 1 February until 30 April 1967 the average trucks furnished daily was 29 in support of Operation Thayer II. For these three months the 541st hauled 51,118 passengers, 15,747 tons of cargo and totaled 76,500 miles on this operation. For the same period 19 trucks were furnished daily in base camp support. These 19 trucks hauled 28,558 passengers, 7,872 tons of cargo and totaled 72,457 miles.

On 5 February 1967 Captain Johnson was appointed executive officer of the 34th Supply & Service Battalion. 1LT Dennis Brown assumed command upon Captain Johnson's departure.

On 6 June, tragedy struck the 541st for the first time since its arrival in Vietnam. On the evening of 6 June Viet Cong mortars hit the ammunition dump at LZ English. The 541st Company area was located approximately 75 meters from the ammo dump. During the explosions that followed Sergeant Heatherly was killed, 2LT Wood was seriously wounded and SP4's Gough and Pennington and PFC Vaughn received slight wounds.

2LT Wood, Sergeant Heatherly and SP4 Pennington were recommended for the Bronze Star with "V" for Valor. These men demonstrated the courage that enabled the other men of the 541st to survive without injury during the night as ammunition was exploding on all sides.

On 19 June 1967 Captain James H. Greenwood came to the 541st to assume command.

For the months of May, June and July the 541st provided 22 trucks daily in extended field support while 27 trucks were furnished daily in base camp support. These figures were attained while the 541st was undergoing a large rotational hump. In late July the company strength had dwindled to 54% of its authorized TO&E.

August was another month during which the 541st suffered from being understrength. During the entire month the company was never able to get above 65% of its authorized strength. This lack of personnel and a self-help program building a new company area greatly hindered operations.

On 26 August 1967 the 541st suffered another casualty. At 0120 hours on the 26th LZ Uplift was struck by hostile recoilless rifle and mortar fire. During the attack SP4 Cary Queen was fatally wounded while he was running from his tent to a nearby bunker. PFC Juergen Hynes was also wounded during the attack that killed Queen. PFC Hynes was recommended for the Army Commendation Medal for Valor. He had been instrumental in ensuring that the other personnel in the area were safely in bunkers at the time of the attack.

On 2 July 1967 the 541st undertook a new project. The 34th Supply and Service Battalion began its plan to have everyone in permanent buildings closer to the depot area at An Khe.

Cpt Greenwood put Sergeant Fisher in charge of approximately seven men who would build the new company area before the deadline of 31 August 1967. The new area would have seven billets (20' x 80'), an orderly room-supply room (20' x 60') and a day room (20' x 60') and a 300 man mess hall. At this time the company was fluctuating around the 65% mark of its authorized strength. Even with this shortage of personnel the company performed its mission efficiently and was able to meet the completion deadline.

The 541st was the first company in the battalion to have all its buildings completed and painted. As the deadline date approached Col. Hamlin, the An Khe Sub Area Commander, lifted the deadline. It was decided that no soldier would move in until each billet was sandbagged and adequate bunker facilities had been constructed.

On 17 August 1967 the 541st moved from the old company area near the dental clinic to its newly developed area opposite the trailer transfer point near the main gate in Camp Radcliff.

It should be noted that during the entire construction and moving phase the company remained 100% operational and continued to provide Cav support.

On 19 August 1967 the 541st was at 67% of authorized strength. It was 59 Enlisted Men short. However, they again demonstrated their ability by passing the 1st Logistical Command CMMI inspection. This inspection was conducted along CONUS standards but with everyone exerting maximum effort the unit was able to receive an overall satisfactory rating.

On 2 September 1967 at approximately 1900 hours the Viet Cong ambushed a convoy of trucks near check point 86 about 7 miles from Camp Radcliff on Highway 19. The convoy was coming from Pleiku on its return trip to Qui Nhon. It consisted of the 512th and 669th Transportation Companies.

At about 1930 hours the 541st was called upon for assistance. The 5 ton wrecker, gun jeep and five men were dispatched to help clear the highway.

In the convoy 8 men were killed, 18 wounded and 25 trucks were disabled. The small force from the 541st worked until 0430 hours on 3 September 1967 clearing the road. They operated under constant danger of attack and sniper fire.

On 5 September 1967 members of the 541st Trans Co participated in Operation Marauder, a search and destroy mission outside the perimeter of Camp Radcliff. The 541st made up most of the second platoon of Charlie Company. They were under the command of Lt Heintz of the 541st. The company commander was Lt Van Prooyen, the CO of HHC of the 34th Supply & Service Battalion. Charlie Company was made up entirely of personnel from the 34th Supply & Service Battalion. Its mission was to sweep an area approximately 1000 meters wide and 4000 meters long, looking for any traces of the enemy and locating dud artillery and mortar rounds.

The 541st performed its mission in a superior manner despite the dense jungle terrain it encountered.

At 0100 hours on 7 October 1967 the Viet Cong again struck. This time they attacked PA&E which is located about 400 meters from the 541st Company area outside the defense perimeter. Because the 541st was located in the proximity of PA&E they were called upon to send a platoon to provide perimeter security while fire fighting equipment was moved in to extinguish the fire. In the action at PA&E one American guard was killed, three were wounded and approximately one (1) million dollars damage was caused. Seven Viet Cong were killed in the action. For the next three nights the 541st provided two guards and a gun jeep to give added security to the heavily damaged PA&E area.

On 12 October 1967 the 541st sent two squads commanded by Lt Mulshine to join with the 178th Maintenance Company in a search and destroy operation outside the defense perimeter in the area of LZ John. No enemy contact was made but the mission was successful because enemy mortar sights and automatic weapon sights were found and destroyed.

In the early part of November the Viet Cong were active in the An Khe area. PFC Bohlmann was wounded on 5 November when a bullet came through the windshield of his truck and the fragments punctured his arms. At the time he was operating his vehicle near check point 96 on Highway 19.

The enemy activity was even more extensive in the Kontum - Dak To area. Elements of the 173rd Airborne and the 4th Infantry had received heavy casualties; it was then the 1st Cavalry Division was dispatched to assist in that area. On 11 November 10 vehicles were sent from the 541st to help move the 1st Battalion 12th Cavalry from An Khe to Dak To. These vehicles remained in Dak To for three days under sustained mortar and rocket assaults.

On 13 November an additional 20 vehicles were sent to LZ English to help move the remainder of the 1st Brigade to the troubled area of Kontum. Three vehicles remained in Kontum to support the 2nd Forward Support Element of the 1st Cavalry while the remainder returned to An Khe.

On 3 December 1967 the 541st provided support for Exercise Marauder. This operation was conducted by all units in the Camp Radcliff area to find any traces of the enemy outside the base perimeter.

Once again the 541st Transportation Company was called upon to aid in support of another military operation. This one was named Operation Frostbite in which the 11th Infantry Brigade; 4,500 men strong and newly arrived from Hawaii, received they're basic load of equipment by truck from Qui Nhon.

The convoy left An Khe commanded by Lt Robert A. Heintz on 19 December 1967. They took the equipment to Duc Pho and arrived back in An Khe on 21 December 1967. The convoy hauled 50 tons of supplies and 15 personnel with 8 vehicles.

On 28 December 1967 Colonel Jack I. Hamlin, AKSAC Commander was replaced by Colonel Max Etkin. A change of command ceremony was conducted that day with the 541st Trans Co as color company. 2Lt David M. Neel, 1st platoon leader, read the Presidential Unit Citation order awarded to the 34th Supply & Service Bn (DS) for the period 23 October 1965 to 26 November 1965 and the orders awarding SP4 Juergen Hynes of the 541st with the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device and Sgt Douglas G. Bernd of A Co 1st of the 5th Cav (Attached to the 541st Trans Co) with the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device.

At the years end, the 541st Transportation Company was continually improving on the company area and supporting the 1st Cav Div (Airmobile) in an outstanding manner even though the company was nearly 45% under strength.

The unit commanders for the year included:

Cpt Richard D. Johnson - 1 Jan - 3 May 1967

1Lt Dennis A. Brown - 3 May - 19 Jun 1967

Cpt James H. Greenwood - 19 Jun - 31 Dec 1967