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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
568TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (ACFT GS)
APO Seattle 98731

3 March 1970

SUBJECT: Annual Supplement to Unit History

THRU: ~~Commanding Officer~~
~~69th Support Battalion (PROV)~~
~~ATTN: ARSA-N~~
~~APO Seattle 98731~~ 3 MAR 70
MRS

TO: Commanding Officer
69th General Support Battalion
ATTN: ARSA
APO Seattle 98749

1. There have been no supplements submitted for the 568th Transportation Company (ACFT GS) since 1963 so the interim will be covered briefly with information that could be collected at this time followed by the annual supplement for 1969.
2. In 1964 from 13 January through 18 February the 568th Transportation Company participated in Exercise Polar Siege. The main portion of the unit remained in garrison at Fort Wainwright to provide general support for all army aircraft. A direct support field team was dispatched to Fort Greely to support elements there. The company was under the command of Major Walter J. Ganevsky at this time.
3. Exercise Polar Strike was conducted from 24 January 1965 through 19 February 1965. Again the company remained in garrison for a general support mission and dispatched a direct support team to Fort Greely.
4. From 3 January 1967 to 10 February 1967, Exercise Frontier Assault required the company to complete its general support mission at Fort Wainwright, while the direct support field team again moved to Fort Greely to conduct its mission. August of 1967 saw disaster strike

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Fort Wainwright and the Fairbanks area. The waters of the Chena River rose to a critical level. On the 13th of August the company provided post engineers with a generator and light set as they worked to remove log jams in the river. On the 14th of August the river broke from its course and began to inundate the lower areas in the Fairbanks and Fort Wainwright vicinity. Every man in the 568th Transportation Company worked long hours to move shop equipment out of the reach of the swirling waters. On 15 August, one of the company's generator crews moved to Bassett Army Hospital to provide emergency lighting and remained on the job for the next two days. Continuously during the flood stage the company used its water trailers to provide uncontaminated water to the residents on post. The personnel of the entire company worked continuously and often in the face of dangerous situations to provide relief to civilian as well as military people in this civil disaster.

5. 1969 began with one of the longest cold spells on record for Alaska weather. In the middle of this severe weather, personnel of the 568th Transportation Company participated in Exercise Acid Test I. The company functioned in its general support mission and gained much experience and knowledge in particularly severe sub-zero conditions. At this time the company was under the command of Major Henry R. Northridge. In May 1969 the first UH-1D helicopter arrived in Alaska, and the company added another aircraft to its mission for general support. New skills were learned, and new equipment was received to support these and additional UH-1D's that arrived in July. In October 1969 Major Northridge took command of the 69th Support Battalion (Provisional) and Captain Aubrey L. Baker assumed command of the company. In December a team of seven men were flown to Bethel, Alaska to perform direct support maintenance on National Guard aircraft. These men worked without any type of shelter with make-shift equipment under the most severe of weather conditions to complete their job in most superb fashion.

Marvin M. Underwood
MARVIN M. UNDERWOOD
CPT, ORD
Unit Historical Officer

UNIT HISTORY
568th TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (ACFT GS)
19th AVIATION BATTALION
APO Seattle 98731

1. The year 1970 saw several major changes for the 568th Transportation Company (ACFT GS). Three Commanding Officers and two First Sergeants took their turns at guiding the company during the past year. The company was under the leadership of Captain Aubrey L. BAKER until Major Henry R. NORTHRIDGE returned from his position as Acting Commander of the 69th Support Group 24 April 1970. On 11 October 1970, Major Herbert L. DEGNER arrived from Fort Sill, Oklahoma and assumed command on 26 October 1970. 1SG Raymond P. NELSON turned over his duties in May 1970 to SFC Ronald E. STEVENSON who had previously served with the 335th Transportation Company at Chu Lai, Viet Nam. 1SG NELSON was relocated to Hangar number six and assumed the duties of Sergeant Major "minor" under the Deputy Commander of the 19th Aviation Battalion at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

2. On 15 April 1970, the company was transferred from the 69th Support Group to the 19th Aviation Battalion. This new chain of command has proven beneficial in that we are now working with a headquarters that is more Aviation oriented. On 04 August 1970, the company began operating under its newly proposed MTO&E, 55-458GAL01. This change established the 568th as a "Fixed Base" unit and expanded its direct support and general support maintenance capabilities to include provisions for OV-1 Mohawk and the CH-47 Chinook. While relatively few man hours of General Support level maintenance have been required on the CH-47 helicopters in Alaska, the OV-1's have grown to be a familiar sight around the 568th hangars. This is primarily due to the fact that the Mohawks did not undergo an IROAN program prior to arriving in Alaska with its 60 below zero winter temperatures.

The introduction into Alaska of these two types of aircraft called for a major revamp of our hydraulic shop operations and the SLAR and Infrared test equipment caused the Avionics Repair Platoon to grow right out of the hangar. They are now adding the finishing touches to their own shop which will be very impressive when completed.

3. Except for a realignment of some MOS skills, the total of authorized personnel remained basically unchanged under the new MTO&E. Being an aircraft maintenance company, test flights made up a considerable portion of the flight hours logged for the year. However, the pilots and crewmembers of the 568th must participate in operational missions with sister units to meet annual and semi-annual flight minimums. During the year the units' organic aircraft, one U-1A Otter and one UH-1D Huey flew a total of over 350 hours in support missions.

4. The apparent attractiveness of converting to "Fixed Base" and not having to live in tents and maintain aircraft outside during the cold Arctic winters were soon forgotten by the men of the 568th during ACID TEST III conducted in early December. Also, the 40 hour work week drifted into immediate oblivion as a maximum effort was initiated in early November to provide as many aircraft as possible to the operating units to fly during ACID TEST.

5. As 01 December rolled around, the twelve to fourteen hour work days soon stretched into twenty-four hour work days and sleep was something one grabbed a few hours of between crisis. All members of the 568th were on twenty-four call at home, if not working, and very few ever engaged a full nights' sleep during the field exercise. Despite temperatures that stayed around -43° at Fort Wainwright during early December, many hours were spent attempting to rig the U-21 aircraft engines outside the comforts of a warm hangar.

6. Several recovery operations were performed by members of this unit during the year. One of the more notable achievements involved the retrieving of a U-1A which went down in the Glenallen area of the Alaskan Range. A recovery team was sent out to dismantle the aircraft and bring it back on two flatbed trailers. All went well until the return trip was underway. Upon approaching the Isabelle Pass area, high winds and snow conditions made it almost impossible to see. SFC Alvin R. MOIST, leading the convoy in his own automobile, relates how he had to lean out the door and follow the highway line markings to make any progress. Two members of the team, SP5 James C. DICKERSON and SP5 Rickey I. STROTHERS, received Letters of Appreciation for their contributions to the success of the mission. A second incident involved the recovery of another Otter at Tuluksak, Alaska. Before it could be flown, the aircraft required repairs and an engine change involving nearly two weeks of on-site work. At times the temperatures fell well into the minus one hundred degree range. These events typify what is generally considered routine missions by the seasoned "Sourdoughs" of the 568th.

a. Due to the adverse weather conditions during winter months in Alaska, numerous problems have arisen concerning cold weather operations. A program has been initiated to study the effects of sub-zero temperatures on flight personnel and equipment. The 568th has discovered rigging problems on both engines and propellers of the U-21 aircraft in temperatures below minus thirty-five degrees. Problems have also developed with the complex hydraulic systems of both the CH-47 and the OV-1. The skilled personnel of the 568th have combined their efforts with the efforts of other units and those of civilian technical representatives to help resolve these problems. Many extra man hours have been devoted in an attempt to develop techniques, doctrines, and equipment to operate successfully and continually at temperatures in excess of 60 below.

b. The 568th has several second tour Alaska personnel among whom is SSG Bruce I. NELLES. SSG NELLES was the first recipient of the Purple Heart Award in the Viet Nam conflict. He received a leg wound on 12 January 1962 while flying as gunner on a CH-21 helicopter. An article appeared in LIFE magazine covering the incident which brought it to President John F. KENNEDY's attention. The President then initiated the award for the military personnel in Viet Nam. SSG NELLES served with this unit in 1964 and 1965 and has been with the company this tour since August of 1969.

c. Several members of the 568th earned Post Soldier of the Month Awards during 1970 at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. They include SP5 Lee A. DYKEMA for the month of August, SP5 William P. RUTLEDGE for September, SP4 David R. CARTER for October, and SP4 Howell G. RICHARDSON for the month of November. Two enlisted personnel received the Battalion Soldier of the Month Award. They were SP4 John J. POPEK in January and for June, SP5 Allison FISH was the recipient.

d. Turning to sports the summer season for the 568th was highlighted with a championship softball team. Under the pitching ability of SFC John J. JUSTICE, the team swept the Ranger Softball League with a sixteen win-one loss record. They emerged as the 1970 USARAL Softball champions by winning the annual tourney held at Fort Wainwright. The success of this year's team has everyone in eager anticipation for the beginning of a new season next summer.


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Unit Historian