

1967

UNIT HISTORY AS OF 31 DECEMBER 1967

The 57th Transportation Company was originally constituted on 1 May 1936 as Company D, 28th Quartermaster Regiment. Since that time the unit has been changed, inactivated, and activated many times. In World War II the unit participated in Campaigns listed as follows:

- Algeria - French Morocco
- Tunisia
- Anzio
- Southern France
- Rhineland

On 3 Jan 1967 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts the 57th Transportation Company was activated in it's present form as a Light Truck Company. Commanding Officer of the new unit was 1LT Dennis L. Edwards and the 1SG was James C. King. Platoon leaders were 2LT Jerry L. Todd, 2LT Albert K. Autrey and 2LT Donald L. Hall. 2LT James E. Henderson joined the unit in September 1967 as a Platoon Leader and 1LT Autrey became the Company Maintenance Officer.

From 3 January 1967 until July 1967 the 57th worked hard preparing for a move to Viet Nam.

The unit arrived in Qui Nhon, RVN, on 1 August 1967 and was assigned to the U.S. Army Support Command-Quy Nhon, 8th Transportation Group, 57th Transportation Battalion. Primary mission during this period was line-haul between Qui Nhon and An Khe, and Pleiku on Highway 19 and Tuy Hoa and Bong Son on Highway 1. While assigned to the 8th Transportation Group in Qui Nhon the 57th built the prototype guntruck which is now required protection on all convoys and also initiated the idea of a test firing drill for all convoy weapon before departure. The 57th was the first company to design additional braces to strengthen 5-ton truck fenders which were breaking because of rough road conditions, and unit also found a better and faster method for securing cab mounting bolts.

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Motor stables was a serious affair and during that daily period every man in the company was in the motor pool from the CO and the 1SG down to the newest assistant driver. The maintenance program drew praise on numerous occasions from the CO, 86th Maintenance Battalion and the Director of Maintenance Qui Nhon Support Command. This vigorous attention to vehicle maintenance also caught the attention of a technical representative from Continental Motors Corporation who predicted to the 57th Transportation Battalion Commander "if the 57th continues to maintain these trucks in the high state of readiness they are exhibiting now, their trucks will be in the finest condition of any Transportation unit in Vietnam at the completion of their tour next July (1968)".

During the first weeks in Viet Nam the company developed a unique Convoy Ambush SOP and diligently practiced counter-attack procedures. This foresight was rewarded and the truckers proved their mettle when on three separate occasions elements of the 57th repulsed enemy ambush on Highway 19. During the 4 December ambush the assistant Convoy Commander, 1LT Jerry L. Todd, from the 57th Trans Co was particularly singled out and praised for his coolness under fire and for the way he directed the helicopter gunships to the scene of the battle. Another man from the 57th, SP5 Stanley A. Runnas commanded the deadly accurate and suppressive fire of his machine-gun crew toward an element of the attacking NVA soldiers and forced them to retreat. The principles outlined in the 57th Trans Co Convoy Ambush SOP gained widespread acceptance as a result of these ambushes and many other units have proven their validity in subsequent actions. For their valorous actions during these ambushes the men of the unit earned a Bronze Star for Valor, four Army Commendation Medals for Valor plus 7 purple hearts and numerous letters of Commendation from Generals Westmoreland, Scott and McBride. Further praise of the 57th's convoy operations came when the company was chosen to send the initial 8th Group convoy into Kentum in the Central Highlands. Experience gained on this haul proved invaluable when again, a month later, the 57th trucks rolled into Dak To to help support the big offensive in that area.

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The unit's biggest challenge and finest achievement while under the Qui Nhon Support Command was when the call came for the best company in the 8th Transportation Group to lead the first test convoy to Duc Pho. The Group Commander chose the 57th Trans Company and appointed their CO, as Convoy Commander. CPT Edwards and his Officers and NCO's worked directly with the Chief of Staff and Directors of Supply and Transportation of the Support Command on this special mission. His company meticulously planned the operation from start to finish to include command briefings with the General Staff complete with march tables, written movement directives, strip maps and intelligence summaries. On the day of the convoy four Field Grade Officers from the Support Command were sent along as observers and the Directorate of Support Plans and Operations monitored the progress of the convoy by helicopter. So flawless was the planning and operation of this movement that the convoy completed the six hour haul into Duc Pho at precisely 1245 hours; the exact time to the minute specified by the movement directive.

Shortly after the immensely successful Duc Pho convoy the 57th was called upon for another special mission. The company minus one platoon was to move to Chu Lai to augment the transportation capability of the 80th General Support Group to support the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division at Hill 63, in operation Wheeler/Wallowa. While the Company's second platoon remained in Qui Nhon the first and third platoons compiled an impressive record in Chu Lai. Average tonnage for hauls to Hill 63 exceeded the TOE capability by nearly 75%. Maintenance standards continued to rise while the company was in Chu Lai while the average daily dead-line rate going down to 5 trucks per day. The Commanding Officer of the 588th Maintenance Company (DS) in Chu Lai commended the unit for having the best maintenance section in 80th General Support Group and he added that the average driver in the 57th was considerably above the average in his driving and preventive maintenance skills. One of the most valuable contributions of the 57th Trans Company while stationed in Chu Lai was the further refinement and expansion of their Convoy Ambush SOP. The Americal Division Transportation Officer and the 80th Group Operations Officer showed considerable interest in the Unit's ambush procedures and eventually much of the 57th's program was adopted by the Americal Division for all convoy travel in their AOR. Another project assigned to the 57th in Chu Lai was an extensive study of the transportation assets of the 80th General Support Group. The 57th prepared a detailed re-organization plan for the 80th Group transportation units along with an MTOE for all light truck companies currently organized under TOE 55-17F. The 57th Gun Truck idea was further refined during the Unit's stay in Chu Lai. It was found by experience that a combination of armor plating and sandbags offered the best protection for the gunners and this idea reduced the area of the gun pit by nearly 50% to provide a smaller target to the enemy. Aside from operational achievements the 57th Trans Company excelled in other company endeavors. The unit consistently received excellent ratings in the Mess Hall and was cited by the Chief of Staff of the Americal Division as having one of the three cleanest company areas on the entire Chu Lai installation.

LIST OF TASKS PERFORMED AND OPERATIONS SUPPORTED

Time Period: 1 August 1967 - 2 October 1967

Location: Qui Nhon, RVN

Mission: Unit was assigned to 54th Transportation Bn, 8th Trans Gp. Primary mission was line-haul between Qui Nhon, An Khe, and Pleiku on Highway 19; Tuy Hoa and Bong Son on Highway 1; and Pleiku, Kontum, and Dak To on Highway 14. While in Qui Nhon the Company ran the first test convoy to Duc Pho and the first regular convoy to Dak To. The second platoon of the 57th Trans Company remained in Qui Nhon until - - - - - while the rest of the company minus the second platoon moved on to Chu Lai on 3 October 1967.

Operations Supported:

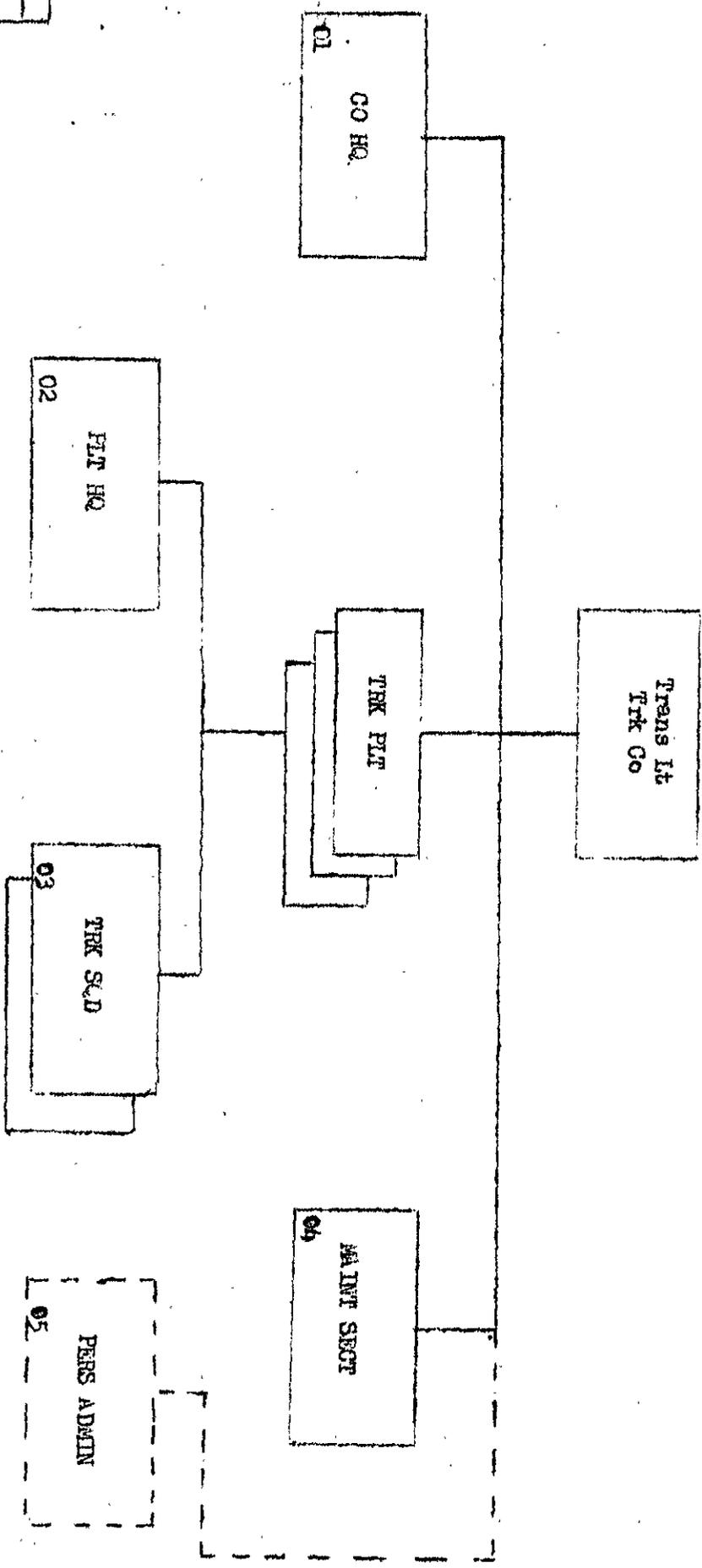
- a. An Khe Base Defense - Operation Dazzlem (Oct 66 -)
- b. Bong Son Plain - Operation Pershing (11 Feb 67 -)
- c. Dak To - Operation Mac Arthur (12 Nov 67 - 26 Nov 67)

Time Period: 3 October 1967 -)

Location: Chu Lai, RVN

Mission: Unit was assigned to 80th General Support Group. Primary mission was to support 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division on Hill 63 and 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Duc Pho. Also provided beach clearance and air-freight clearance along with local haul within Chu Lai Compound

TRANSPORTATION LIGHT TRUCK COMPANY



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EM	17A
OFF	A
MO	1