

Jan-Jun 1972

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
58th Transportation Company (Comp)
APO Seattle 98731

7 June 1972

SUBJECT: Annual Unit History - 1972

TO: Commanding Officer
171st Infantry Brigade (S)(L)
ATTN: ARFSA
APO Seattle 98731

The year 1972 was filled with many activities and developments for the 58th Transportation Company. The unit began the year with Captain Donald W. Lamb in command, 1LT Stephen Giordano as executive officer, 1LT Larry Clemmer as second platoon leader, CW2 Hayward Lamar as maintenance officer, and Lewis E. Knecht as First Sergeant.

The month of January provided unusually cold weather, with temperatures lower than -50 in the first two weeks of the year. These weather extremes generated vehioular problems, especially in the field. The unit's field support missions remained heavy throughout the month. On 10-11 January, five M548 tracked vehicles provided support to the 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry in the Fort Wainwright maneuver area. On 12 January the unit received the USARAL MAIT team and all areas were found to be satisfactory. Also on 12 January, the unit provided M548 support for an airborne exercise by Company "C" AIRBORNE 6th Battalion, 9th Infantry. A trip to Point Barrow, Alaska on 19 January 1972 in support of Company "A" 6th Battalion, 9th Infantry, was experienced by 4 unit members and 2 M549's.

The 19th of January found the 58th Trans Co (Comp) hosting VIP's. The USARAL Command Sergeant Major, CSGM Van Aubrey, visited the unit for approximately one hour, then later in the day 2 of the unit's M548's provided transportation to Major General Getty's and Brigadier General Hall, CG and Deputy CG, USARAL, to view artillery firing across the ice bridge on the Tanana River.

The month of January concluded with two field exercises. On 24-26 January "Operation Ice-Man" was conducted at Blair Lakes with Echo Troop, 16th Cavalry and the 559th Engineer Company. Temperatures at -50 and deep snow were encountered. On 27 January, 2 M548's and 3 2½ ton trucks transported the 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry to Black Rapids Training Site for skiing and unit tactical training.

February provided a small respite for the unit as necessary maintenance was performed in preparation for Exercise Ice Card IV, to be conducted in March. On the 18th of February, the Brigade received 16 new Ski-Doo Snowmachines, and they were assigned to the 58th Transportation Company. Much time was required becoming familiar with the vehicles and training operators. The last days of February were spent whitewashing vehicles for camouflage in the snow and preparing for air movement to Exercise Ice Card IV.

March arrived and found the unit deploying by C-130 aircraft in support of the 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry Taskforce to Galena, Alaska on Ice Card IV. Vehicles utilized included tracked M58's, experimental M57L tracked vehicles, 2 1/2 ton trucks, quarter tons, and snowmachines. Truly a composite transportation company! The unit also provided support during the exercise to the Departure Airfield Control Group, 171st Support Battalion, HHC 171st Infantry Brigade, and Company "C" 75th Rangers.

During the exercise tracked vehicles were sling loaded by CH-53 helicopters to forward areas, ground support was provided extensively, and several convoys were completed. All of this in temperatures reaching -40. During the later part of the exercise, M58's were involved in recovery operations for a M551 Sheridan Tank of Echo Troop, 16th Cavalry, that had fallen through weak ice. No accidents or injuries were experienced during the joint exercise, which involved not only Army, but Air Force and Canadian Army elements. On 13 March the unit returned to Fort Wainwright.

Sgt. Anthony Harper, a M58 operator, returned to Galena with his vehicle on 16 March to assist in recovering an Air Force bulldozer that sank in soft ice during the exercise, and having successfully completed his mission returned on 28 March.

The 18th of March found the unit supporting the Alaska State Troopers in locating and recovering a light civilian aircraft that had crashed in a wooded area ten miles from Fairbanks. Two M58's provided transportation and the aircraft was located and the dead were removed from the wreckage.

The month of March closed out with the unit on skis, practicing for the 171st Infantry Brigade Ski Review. Many hours of practice were put in, and on 24 March the unit looked sharp as it passed the reviewing stand, skiing in step, dressed in winter over-white uniforms.

The month of April provided dramatic developments for the unit. Spring finally began to appear in Alaska, but winter training was still continuing. M58's supported a large exercise at Gold Bay, Alaska from 3 to 9 April with Company "B" 6th Battalion, 9th Infantry. During that same period the unit provided truck support for Black Rapids ski training to the 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry. On 3 April, the unit had its annual General Inspection and was satisfactory in all areas.

The big news of April was the announcement of the deactivation of the 171st Infantry Brigade, including the 58th Transportation Company. The 58th Transportation Company was scheduled to be the third brigade unit to deactivate. On 24 April the unit received its first disposition instructions on equipment. The majority of the unit's equipment is to be returned to the supply system.

On 1 May 1972, the unit formally stood down for deactivation. The big task of inspecting, repairing, painting, and turning in of equipment began in earnest. The co-operation and dedication of the unit's personnel enabled the biggest bulk of equipment to be turned in by the end of May. The unit's equipment was 95% turned in by the 31st of May. Especially noteworthy was the work of 1LT Giordano, the Property Book Officer.

The month of June saw the closing out of the 58th Transportation Company (Composite). The unit's last vehicles were turned in on 6 June 1972. The property book was totally cleared on 9 June 1972. Personnel from the unit were primarily reassigned to other units in Alaska, including Headquarters, Fort Wainwright, the 172nd Infantry Brigade, and other remaining units of the 171st Infantry Brigade to assist in their deactivation. Captain Lamb departed for Korea, 1LT Giordano went to the 171st Support Battalion, CW2 Lamar was assigned to the 222nd Aviation Battalion, and 1SG Knecht left for Headquarters, USARAL.


DONALD W. LAMB
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Commanding