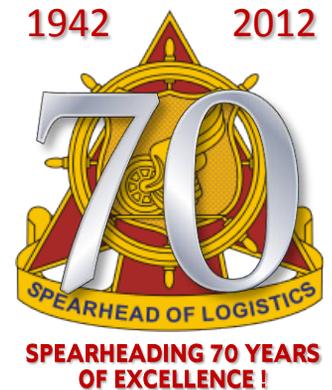
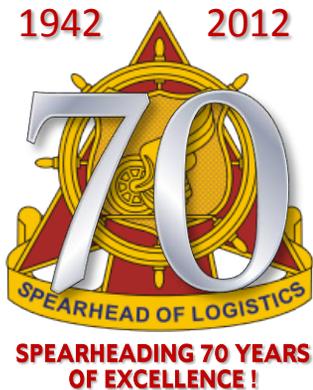


# *U.S. Army Transportation Corps 2012 Hall of Fame Inductee*



## 523<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Company (Light Truck)

In an effort to disrupt the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) buildup of supplies across the Laotian border in preparation for their 1972 Easter offensive, the US Army Vietnam and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) planned an offensive operation in early 1971, code named Lam Son 719/Dewey Canyon. Because the US Congress had passed a law forbidding any US ground troops from crossing the Vietnamese border, the US Army was only in a support role while the ARVN attacked the logistics base. The US Army reoccupied Khe Sanh as an artillery base and Highway 9 was the life line to sustain the American units there. Two light truck companies, 515<sup>th</sup> and 523<sup>rd</sup>, were tasked to deliver ammunition and supplies along that dirt road from 30 January to 4 April 1971. During that period, the NVA made a determined effort to close that supply route with ambushes. This was only the second time during the Vietnam Conflict that the enemy tried to close down the supply route. The 523<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Company (Light Truck) stationed at Cha Rang Valley in the Northern II Corps Tactical Zone had six gun trucks; Satan's Lil' Angel, Ace of Spades, Black Widow, Uncle Meat, King Kong and Eve of Destruction. Most gun trucks were 5-ton cargo trucks with double-walled steel gun boxes on the bed armed with three to four .50 caliber machineguns on pedestal mounts. King Kong was made from a M113 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) hull mounted on the bed of a 5-ton cargo truck. The gun trucks were elaborately painted and their design and tactics represented the fruition of over three years of combat. Another unique feature of the 523<sup>rd</sup> was the fact that all three of its platoon leaders were infantry officers because of a shortage of TC officers and an abundance of combat arms officers due to the drawdown of combat units in Vietnam. The 523<sup>rd</sup> was sent north to I Corps Tactical Zone and attached to the 39<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion for Lam Son 719. Although the ARVN offensive failed to disrupt the NVA buildup, the truck drivers overcame tremendous odds to deliver the cargo to the forward camps. The drivers of the 515<sup>th</sup> and 523<sup>rd</sup> lived in austere conditions at Camp Vandergrift, drove around the clock and encountered 23 ambushes. The 523<sup>rd</sup> fought through the worst ambushes losing three gun trucks yet kept supplies rolling down Route 9.

*Nothing Happens Until Something Moves!*