

70th Transportation Battalion



*70th Transportation Battalion unit crest (2 views – left) and coat of arms (r)
Mouse over each for a description*

World War II

On 1 May 1943, the 2nd Battalion, 47th Quartermaster Regiment (Truck) was constituted in the US Army. It was activated on 3 August 1942 at Ft. Ord, California. The 2nd Battalion was the parent unit of today's 70th Transportation Battalion (Terminal). On 28 February 1942, the 2nd Battalion was transferred from Ft. Lewis, Washington to Ft. Benning, Georgia and then to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma on 13 April 1942 to support of the Field Artillery School. The battalion shipped through Camp Kilmer, New Jersey to Oran, North Africa on 11 May 1943. Initially, it was assigned to the 5th Army, but was soon reassigned to the I Armored Corps.

On 4 July 1943, the 2nd Battalion, with companies E, F, G, and H, was reassigned to Headquarters, Seventh Army. The battalion left North Africa 17 July 1943 for Sicily where it participated in the Sicily Campaign. In Sicily the battalion unloaded cargo from North Africa and performed around-the-clock convoy operations from the southern coast to central Sicily—specific routes were between Pirato and Nicosia. The battalion supported the 1st and 3rd Infantry. On 20 September 1943, the 2nd Battalion was broken up, reorganized, and redesignated as the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD), 70th Quartermaster Battalion (Mobile). The battalion's Truck Companies E, F, G, and H were redesignated as the 3505th, 3506th, 3507th, and 3508th Light Truck Companies, respectively. These companies would follow separate lineages than the battalion.

The 70th Quartermaster Battalion crossed the Straits of Messina 22 November 1943 and remained in Italy until 25 July 1945. During this time the battalion worked the port of Naples and provided transportation and logistics support to the Fifth Army. The battalion operated convoys from the Naples area to Anzio, Rome, and points north of Rome.

The battalion received campaign streamers for Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Rone-Armo, North Apennines, and Po Valley campaigns.

Following Victory in Europe Day the 70th was dispatched to Manila in the Philippine Islands through Leghorn, Italy. The battalion departed 25 July 1945 and arrived 6 September 1945—Japan had surrendered on 2 September. The battalion was transferred

to Pusan, Korea on 23 January 1946 and was inactivated 22 April 1946. On 1 August 1946, it was converted and redesignated as HHD, 70th Transportation Corps Truck Battalion (Quartermaster truck units were given to the Transportation Corps after the war). On 21 April 1949, the battalion was again redesignated as HHD, 70th Transportation Truck Battalion. The battalion was activated 1 June 1949 at Yokohama, Japan. In Yokohama the 70th was attached to the Yokohama Motor Command and performed transportation duties of the occupational force.

Korea

On 25 June 1950, the North Korean Army invaded the Republic of Korea. President Harry S Truman dispatched US Forces to stop the North Korean invasion. The 70th Transportation Truck Battalion comprising of four truck companies moved from Yokohama, Japan to Pusan, Korea on 14 July 1950—one of the first units to arrive. The 70th performed many special missions in direct support of combat units in the Pusan area. During this time the battalion operated as many as fifteen attached truck companies while organizing, training, and supervising two Korean Augmentation to the US Army (KATUSA) truck companies. KATUSA were local nationals that augmented the US military and performed mostly support functions.

On 1 December 1951, the battalion was redesignated as HHD, 70th Transportation Truck Battalion. The battalion moved up the coast to the port of Sochri-Ri (Sok-Chori) where the 665th and 666th Truck (Colored) Companies cleared the port. The 513rd hauled cargo north. The battalion had also picked up the 20th Truck Company, activated at Kang Nung, on October 1951. The 20th cleared cargo from the Port of Chumujin. The truck company would back the trucks up into the LST for the stevedores to unload the cargo then deliver it to the Marine Air Base, K-18. The trucks would then drive to a depot. The United States, North Korea, and China declared a truce on 27 July 1953.

The battalion received credit for the UN Defensive, UN Offensive, CCF Intervention, First UN Counter Offensive, CCF Spring Offensive, UN Summer-Fall Offensive, Second Korean Winter Korean Summer Fall 1952, Third Korean Winter, and Korean Summer 1953 campaigns. The battalion also received the Meritorious Unit Commendations for Korea in 1950, 1952, 1953, and 1954. Additionally the battalion received Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations for the periods 1950-1952 and 1951-1953.

The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) marked the boundary along the 38th Parallel which divided North from South Korea. Although both sides had agreed to a cease-fire, hostilities were imminent and both sides positioned combat units along the border.

In October 1953, the 70th moved to Seoul, South Korea, but its truck companies remained scattered all over the country in support of direct haul United Nations missions on the DMZ. It fell under the control of the 500th Transportation Group. The battalion took part in “Operation Re-Claim” in early 1954. This operation involved moving 14,000 Chinese Anti-Red prisoners from Muwsan-Ni to Ascom City. During this time its assigned truck

companies were the 20th, 28th, 60th, 73rd, 504th, and 726th. The battalion was reorganized and redesignated as 70th Transportation Battalion (Truck) on 1 April 1954. The battalion's primary supply hauls were from Supply Point #10 in Ascom City and K-16 air strip in the Yongdongpo area to the US 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions' supply points. The battalion moved primarily Class I, II, and IV cargo, but also performed some troop movements. The 70th moved from Seoul to Ascom City in February 1955. During this relocation it added an aircraft maintenance unit. In 1955 its truck companies consisted of the 28th and 504th at Ascom City, the 46th (Medium Truck) at Inchon, the 74th at Seoul, the 20th at Si-Hung, and 513th Yongdongpo. The 28th and 504th Companies ran the short haul mission with 2 ½-ton GMC trucks carrying cargo from the Port of Inchon to the supply depot. The 46th (Medium Truck) in Ascom delivered cargo on a long haul run from the depot to the front line divisions with M52 tractors and M127 trailers. In 1957, it moved to Inchon. The 20th (Light Truck) in Seoul had two-and-a-half ton trucks. The 513th Truck Company at Yongdongpo mostly drove north. The 513th was inactivated in 1955 and the 49th Truck Company at Anyangi was assigned to the 70th in 1956.

The 70th Battalion had two Korean drivers to nearly every American driver and was authorized two drivers to each of the 60 trucks per company. Although the Army had integrated during Korean War, the combat service support units were the last to be integrated. Integration took place through replacements. In other words, men were assigned to a company without regard to race. In the first few years, whites in black units or black in white units were minorities. For example the 504th had been a white company, but by 1956 it had 125 Koreans, 65 whites and 10 black soldiers. However, while the drivers were integrated throughout the platoons, they tended to billet by race in the barracks. Captain Richard F. Johnson, a black officer who assumed command of the 504th in July 1956, saw that the standards of the Korean barracks were far below those of the Americans. With the segregation in the barracks he did not want to command three separate companies. He forced the integration of the barracks. This improved the standard of living for the Koreans. The Koreans also had a habit of selling off their clothing on the black market since they were not paid as much as their American counterparts. So Johnson increased the number of clothing inspections and had the Koreans fall out every morning with one pair of shoe on their feet and the other around their necks. Other companies followed suit. First Lieutenant Edward Honor, a black company commander of the 46th Company also had his officers pitched in a couple of dollars each month for an incentive program for the Koreans. This improved performance and cut down on the loss of property.

In late 1956, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Johnson, a 1936 Olympic track and field athlete, assumed command of the 70th Battalion. He became the first black Transportation Corps officer to command a battalion. Johnson commanded and mentored Edward Honor, who went on to become a lieutenant general.

Starting in 1954, the Army began to downsize infantry divisions in Korea. The 25th Infantry Division returned to Hawaii in 1954 and the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Divisions were reduced to zero strength shortly thereafter leaving only the 7th and 24th Infantry Divisions

in Korea. This reduced the need for a truck battalion. The 513th Company was inactivated in November 1955. The 70th Battalion was inactivated 25 September 1958 in Korea. The 20th Company was inactivated on 25 March 1959. The 46th Company continues on active duty in Korea to present.

On 22 June 1966, the 70th was redesignated HHD, 70th Transportation Battalion (Terminal) then activated on 24 June 1960 to operate the US Army Port at Pusan, Korea. The battalion was again inactivated 21 June 1971 in Korea.

Aviation

On 20 March 1978, the battalion was reactivated and redesignated as HHD, 70th Transportation Battalion (Aviation Intermediate Maintenance) with organic elements concurrently redesignated from the 91st and 93rd Transportation Companies in Germany. The battalion has earned many awards: USAREUR's Aviation Support Unit of the Year (1979,1981), Army Aviation Association of America's Aviation Unit of the Year (1982), and the Chief of Staff Army Supply Excellence Award (1985).