

## 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion



*58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion unit crest (l) and coat of arms (r)  
Mouseover each for a description*

On 1 May 1936, the 27<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Regiment (Truck) was constituted in the Regular Army and activated at Camp Shelby, Mississippi on 25 July 1942 in response to the US entry into World War II. The Army at this time segregated African-Americans into their own units and the 27<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Regiment was a Black regiment. On 24 October 1942, the Regiment moved to Camp Forrest, Tennessee for further training. The Regiment consisted of three truck battalions, but the Army made the decision to reorganize the truck units so that the companies and battalions could be task organized for any mission and on 28 October, the subordinate units were redesignated. Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion became the 58<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile. The four lettered companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, E through H, became the 3405 to 3408<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Truck Companies. From this time on the regiment, battalions and companies maintained separate lineage and honors.

On 3 May 1943, the 58<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Battalion moved to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia near the Hampton Port of Embarkation and on 10 May 1943, the Battalion set sail on SHIP 1298-F *HRPE Dickman* and arrived at Oran, Algiers on 2 June. On 9 September, Fifth Army landed at Salerno, Italy and opened up the port of Naples. The 58<sup>th</sup> Battalion sailed from Africa and landed at Naples on 19 October. Truck units were either designated to clear the port to the railhead or go forward and clear the railhead to the front line corps. The 58<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Battalion cleared the port and fell under the Peninsular Base Section, US North Africa Theater of Operations (NATOUSA) as Fifth Army advanced. The 58<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Battalion participated in the Italian Campaigns of Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, and North Apennines. The Battalion was inactivated in Italy on 1 October 1945.

While on inactive status, the Quartermaster Corps transferred responsibility of all truck units to the Transportation Corps and the 58<sup>th</sup> was converted and redesignated as the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Corps Truck Battalion.

With the escalation of the ground war in Vietnam, HHD, 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion (Aircraft Maintenance and Supply) (General Support) was reactivated at Fort Benning, Georgia. It deployed to Vietnam in March 1966 under the command of LTC John

Standfield and arrived in April. Upon its deployment, the 34<sup>th</sup> General Support Group elected to hold the 58<sup>th</sup> at Tan Son Nhut where the battalion was attached to the Aircraft Materiel Management Command (AMMC). The Battalion assumed control over the following:

- 110<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company (Depot)
- 241<sup>st</sup> Transportation Company (Depot)
- Aviation Materiel Management Center (Provisional)

The 58<sup>th</sup> Battalion had the unique mission to serve as a centralized inventory control center for all aviation, avionics and air armament materiel in Vietnam. It was unique in that it combined supply and stock control with maintenance management and operated its own storage facilities. The battalion employed around 300 Vietnamese civilian employees. Since the battalion did not have any aircraft of its own, the sixteen aviators managed to log in their flying hours with some nearby combat aviation units. The battalion like all other tenets on Tan Son Nhut had to provide their share of perimeter guards. The battalion also adopted the Vietnamese motto, “*Chung Ta Hay Quyet Thang*,” which meant “We Hasten Victory.”

MACV anticipated that the NVA had planned an offensive early the next year. What they did not anticipate was when. The offensive, which began on 31 January 1968 during the agreed cease fire in celebration of the Lunar New Year or Tet, caught the Americans completely by surprise. General William Westmoreland, in anticipation of trouble, wanted to reinforce the Marines with Army forces in I Corps Tactical Zone. I Corps belonged to the US Navy and Marines since there were no deep draft ports to sustain military operations. The area required cargo discharged over beach ramps by landing craft which was a traditional Navy/Marine relationship. Westmoreland ordered the creation of the Americal Division at Chu Lai in September 1967 and also brought the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division north to Bien Hoa/Phu Bai in November 1967. He also sent the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division furthest north into I Corps in January 1968. The build-up of Army combat forces in the zone required a reciprocal buildup of Army support units and the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (Air Assault) needed aviation support. In late 1967, MACV also decided to move the 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion to Red Beach, Da Nang. The operational aircraft maintenance and supply battalion began the move on 21 February 1968 and was fully operational on 2 March 1968.

The 58<sup>th</sup> Battalion, under the command of LTC Franklin Goode, provided command and control over the following:

- 142<sup>nd</sup> Transportation Company (Aviation Direct Support)
- 263<sup>rd</sup> Maintenance Company (LE) (GS)
- 610<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company (Aviation Maintenance) (General Support)
- Transportation Company (direct Support) Far North (Provisional)

The 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion participated in fourteen campaigns and earned five Meritorious Unit Commendations for each year it was in Vietnam, one Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for 1970-72 and the Vietnamese Civilian Action Medal for 1971. It was inactivated at Oakland Army Base, California, on April 1972.

In 1982, the Chief of Staff of the Army approved the use of TOE designations for training units in order to retain the designations of organizations not being retained under the US Army Regimental System. The USARS only applied to combat arms units, but once they were given to combat arms units, it was a matter of time before the same was done for non-combat arms TRADOC units as well. In 1986, the Army decided to create a greater emphasis on Regimental affiliation and the Transportation Corps Regiment was activated in July 1986. Likewise several training battalions prepared to trade in their colors for Transportation Battalions with long distinguished histories.

On 15 July 1986, the 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion, under the command of LTC Robert A. Miles, Jr., was reactivated at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, to assume the advanced individual training (AIT) missions of the retired 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Training Brigade, which supervised the truck driver training for the Army Transportation School. It was the first training battalion on Fort Leonard Wood to be reflagged under the new Army Regimental System and BG Fred Elam, the Chief of Transportation, was on hand for the ceremony at Gammon Field. The Regimental System was created to foster a spirit of pride, unity, camaraderie, cohesion and cooperation among Transportation Corps soldiers. Instead of the AIT students belonging to a training unit such as D-5-4, they could identify with a Transportation Corps unit with a long history and battle honors that dated back to the Second World War.

The 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion provided command and control for four lettered training companies. Since reactivation, the battalion lived its motto, "We Set the Standard," by providing quality training to over 40,000 truck drivers, mechanics, recovery specialists and seven different engineer occupational specialties. The 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion trained drivers in the operation of the 5-ton cargo truck, HEMTT-Load Handling System (LHS), Palletized Loading System (PLS) and M915 tractor.

In 1999, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chemical Brigade was activated to provide command and control for the training battalions at Fort Leonard Wood, which included the 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion.

The 58th Transportation Battalion won the Chief of Staff, Army (CSA) Combined Logistics Excellence Awards (CLEA) Award For Maintenance Excellence (AAME) in the Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) for an active duty intermediary category in FY 1999 and 2003.

The Army began to integrate the same computer game technology used in video games and amusement rides to train drivers and by 2004, the 58<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion had become the main training base for driver simulation with 16 simulators on site. In June 2004, the Army's Tank-automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) Program Manager funded an additional 13 simulators based on proposals developed by the Transportation School to be delivered in December 2004. These 29 simulators could train the driver in higher risk scenarios with greater safety, such as operating the vehicle on

secondary roads and under adverse conditions, and backing the vehicle with a semi-trailer.<sup>1</sup>

The end goal was for 45 tactical wheeled-vehicle simulators distributed to the training bases, with 42 at Fort Leonard Wood, two at Fort Bliss, Texas, and one at Fort Eustis. 35 simulators were also projected for distribution to active and reserve component field sites.<sup>2</sup>

The wheeled vehicle driver program of instruction required 42 simulators to train 40 hours of tactical wheeled-vehicle simulator instruction to standard. 24 hours were devoted to 5-ton tactical vehicle operations where basic vehicle control is learned. 16 hours of simulator training are divided into more advanced training tasks, including M915 vehicle operations, operating the M915 tractor with loaded semi-trailer, PLS/HEMTT operations and operating the load-handling system.

Based upon the needs identified in the war in Iraq, TRADOC added more classes to the curriculum increasing the driver's course from six weeks to seven, then eight.

The 58th Transportation Battalion won the Chief of Staff, Army (CSA) Combined Logistics Excellence Awards (CLEA) Award For Maintenance Excellence (AAME) in the Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) category for an active duty medium unit in FY 2006 and 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> CPT Sonia Williams, "Simulating Transportation," Military Training Technology Online Edition, [http://www.military-training-technology.com/print\\_article.cfm?DocID=729](http://www.military-training-technology.com/print_article.cfm?DocID=729)

<sup>2</sup> Williams, "Simulating Transportation."