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SUBJECT: Operational Report, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 8th Transportation Group, Period Ending 31 July 1969

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 4b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT UT, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

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KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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8th Transportation Group
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AVCA QN-TO-3

10 August 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Transportation Group (Motor Transport) for the period ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSPOR-65 (S-1)

THRU: Commanding General
US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon
ATTN: AVCA QN-00-4
APO 96238

TO: Assistant C of S for Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington D.C. 20310

SECTION I
Operations: Significant activities

A. COMMAND: (U)

1. Colonel Garland A. Ludy commanded the group during the entire period. His principal staff officers were: LTC Robert A. Kervin replacing LTC Raymond L. Fermer as Deputy Commander; MAjor Thomas G. Stevens replacing MAjor Lynne D. Ouda as S-3; MAjor Glenn B. Long, Signal Officer/Assistant S-3; LT Keith Ollonogus replacing CTG Chester E. Bishop Jr as S-1; CTG Keith G. Kealey, S-2 and CTG Robert P. Coleman, S-4.

2. The 6th Transportation Group (IT) successfully performed its mission of line haul, local haul and combat operations during the 92 days of the reporting period.

3. LTC John C. Kramer resumed command of the 124th Transportation Battalion (Truck) from LTC Tom L. Bing on 27 June 1969.

4. The 6th Transportation Group received visits from the following dignitaries on the dates indicated:

   3 July 1969 = COL William Drumwright (incoming: Special Assistant for T-Day Planning) and COL John F. Kemington (outgoing: Special Assistant for T-Day Planning).

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10 August 1969


19 May 1969 - BG G.S.T. Richardson, Dir of Supply and Transport, Army Headquarters, Canberra, Australia.

9 June 1969 - BG Maurice J. Hulper, Controller, USARPAC.


7 July 1969 - COL Swenson, Commanding Officer, 8th Transportation Group.


20 July 1969 - COL Joseph G. Clemens, Commanding Officer (Designate), American Support Command.

B. PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION, MORAL AND DISCIPLINE: (U)

1. During the reporting period, the 8th Transportation Group (GT) was understrength on an average of 316 personnel.

2. There were a total of 36 Special Court actions during the reporting period (14 in May, 13 in June, and 9 in July) as opposed to 38 in the previous quarter, a reduction of 21%.

3. On 18 July 1969 the Meritorious Unit Citation 1st Ordnance Cluster was presented to the 8th Transportation Group and assigned and attached units for the period 2 September 1967 to 31 March 1968 by Brigadier General Albert E. Hunter, Commanding General, US Army Support Command, Qui Nhon.

4. Morale continued to be high throughout the 8th Transportation Group.

C. OPERATIONS: (C)

1. During this 92 day period, the 8th Transportation Group compiled 15,605,767 ton miles, traveling 3,605,380 miles, hauling 258,297 tons of cargo, 17,388,000 gallons of petroleum and 5,131 passengers. The 302,551 ton miles for 25 June 1969 set an all time daily record for the group.

2. The Command was involved in 7 major ambushes, 17 sniping incidents, and 1 mining incident during the period. The statistical results of these incidents were:

   KIA (Friendly) = 2
   WIA (Friendly) = 22
   KIA and WIA (Enemy) = Unknown
   PHN's = None = 2

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10 August 1969

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1. Enemy actions during the first part of the quarter, decreased significantly during the last two months. The enemy directed his activities against bridges, tunnels, and roads. This action proved to be more detrimental to logistic operations than to the movement of troops. Seven separate enemy operations involving damage to the highway took place during the quarter.

2. On 5 June 1969, the 666th Transportation Company (Light Truck) was detached from 6th Transportation Group and moved to Phu Loc. This move was made by both air and air. All the equipment was moved by LST while about half of the personnel went by air. The heavy lift sixteen was transferred to the 512th Transportation Company (Light Truck).

3. The Qui Nhon to An Khan pipeline was closed down from 6 June 1969 to 21 July 1969. This was due to both high rate of vibration and aerial interdiction. The 6th Group was trained with additional aerial disruption requirements. To facilitate accomplishment of this increased mission, a platoon of twenty 5,000 gallon tankers was moved from Phu Loc to An Khan. This gave greater flexibility in the movement of petroleum from Qui Nhon to Phu Loc. Depending on the status of the pipeline, 6th Transportation Group tankers could be committed from either Phu Loc or An Khan to accomplish the mission of line haul of petroleum.

4. One refrigeration van was sent to Phu Loc by road on 10 June 1969. This was to test how long the vehicle and the Class I perishables would stand up on the rough road. This test run was completed without problems. Ranges moved on the road completed first run round in two days, while it took an average of five days by sea. To save time and increase reliability, roads are now integrated into convoy operations to Phu Loc.

5. The Tactical Operations Center bunker was completed on 19 June 1969. With the completion of this bunker, both tactical and normal operations could be carried out during 24 hour periods of cease fire on the highways without conflict. The establishment of such a post was established allowed the Group Commander to have a complete picture of movement out of the area.

6. The 6th Transportation Company faced an additional 4 mission of hauling 500 tons of oil from Qui Nhon to the G4 airfield on 20 June 1969. The mission will continue until the Qui Nhon Air Field resumes operations.

7. A General Post Mortem of the continuity of logistical support in all areas of combat or destruction of logistical areas was held at the support base Qui Nhon Support Group on 5 July 1969. Other support operations were conducted in support of numerous operational operations. All transportation support was both on call and requested to be committed as requested. It was essential that the conduct of transportation assets to other areas would be efficiently done to increase the line haul capability in the Qui Nhon area.
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10 August 1969

10. The 545th Transportation Company (Light Truck) was relocated in Tha Kain on 15 July 1969. The move was due to removal of US troops from the area. Although the area was not nearly as good as the area they left, a large amount of work on the part of the personnel greatly improved the new facilities.

11. Helicopter support for convoy operations was received on a two week trial basis commencing 30 July 1969. The first two days saw a large improvement in convoy discipline. The convoy commanders were aware of both pros and cons of the convoys and bunching of vehicles. This information was not readily available to them on the ground. In addition, a battalion commander was able to visit a company that was located about 100 miles away. This would have been difficult and time consuming without a helicopter.

D. TRAINING: (U)

1. Training was conducted on each of the 32 days of the reporting period in accordance with the master training schedule and other applicable directives. A great deal of improvement in both the caliber of instruction and the maintenance of training records was accomplished by the battalions during this quarter. As in the past, the majority of the training was conducted in the evenings after the convoys had returned.

2. Continued emphasis on Project Skills I resulted in more efficiently trained soldiers in the MOS skills required.

3. Extensive effort was placed on suppress training during the period. The aim is to make each man familiar with suppress activities and techniques. This training is done on a continuing basis as new personnel become assigned to the battalions.

E. SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE: (C)

1. During the reporting period, the 6th Transportation Group exercised control and control of physical security for Campung Complex Bitili: a six square mile area of the Qui Nhon Defense Instulation encompassing fourteen US compounds and facilities. The 70th Medical Battalion, the 318th Field Artillery, and "A" Company, 84th Engineer Battalion operated the compound and were replaced by the 723rd Support Battalion (Airborne) and the 177th Execution Battalion. Additionally, the 15th Supply and Service Company was relocated, but remained within the 8th Group's area of responsibility.

2. Beginning on 5 May 1969, after a six day training period, patrols were conducted on a regular basis to prevent enemy sniper units from setting their positions in the proximity of friendly compounds. Consisting entirely of logistical troops, these patrols were primarily conducted on the Huon Chakoutin (BR 906 23) which abuts all the facilities in Campung Complex Bitili. Suspect compounds and suspected positions were discovered and destroyed.

3. The enemy successfully perpetrated two attempts against US compounds during the quarter. Both attacks were surprisingly similar in nature. Although the enemy attempted to penetrate to the perimeter, but rather utilized the command tower and dense foliage of the Huon Chakoutin to launch 6 to 8 8-40 rockets, primarily at troop billets. In both instances, Antiaircraft fire was
employed simultaneously with the rockets in a widely scattered pattern to confuse US personnel and hinder rapid reaction in the compound under attack. On 7 June 1969, "E" Company, USAF suffered 17 US KIA, two seriously, and on 15 July 1969, the 173rd Support Battalion (Airborne) had one US KIA and 8 US WIA.

NVA forces reportedly ambushed 8th Group convoys at the base of the Mang Giang Pass (BR 230 506). On three separate occasions, an enemy force, estimated to be a reinforced company, launched simultaneous mortar, B-40 rocket, and automatic weapons fire at passing convoys. In all cases, swift reaction by the convoy commanders and close coordination with the tactical elements prevented major disasters. On 24 June 1969, a convoy from the 12th Transportation Battalion reached the besieged garrison at Ben Hoa in a maneuver more resembling a tactical assault than an ambush. Knowing that there were three enemy regiments in the proximity of the road between Dak To and Ben Hoa, the convoy was nevertheless able to run a 6000 meter kill zone and deliver the much needed 175mm ammunition to the firesite.

F. LOGISTICS: (U) Since the last reporting period, the on hand total of 5 ton cargo trucks, H6 series, has improved only slightly. At present, only 31.2% of the total authorized 5 ton cargo trucks are on hand. Semitrailers, 12 ton S6P, and H127 series are becoming critically short. The group has only 76.5% of its authorized trailers.
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LESSONS LEARNED: Commanders' Observations, A. Actions and Recommendations.

A. PERSONAL: (U) None.

B. OPERATIONS: (C)

1. ITEM: Hay Books for Convoy Commanders.

(a) OBSERVATION: Early in May a convoy commander was unable to record all
pin points his position during contact with the enemy. While he did have maps
with him, they were not organized and lacked reference points on them.

(b) EVALUATION: Convoy commanders and other convoy control personal
now carry maps arranged in loose leaf books. These maps have coordinates of
such reference points as bridges, storing points, and pump stations printed on
the maps. This enables the convoy commander to quickly locate his position on
the ground either in the case of an attack or in case resistance is required to
receive a breakdown.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That other commanders adopt the map book for their
convoy commanders utilization.

2. ITEM: Dedication of Tractors and Trailers in Out of the Line Locations.

(a) OBSERVATION: Twenty six (26) 12 ton 5x5 trailers became stranded
in Ban Hot during a period of high enemy activity. These trailers were moved
in and left for unloading. An increase in enemy activity in the area precluded
return to pick up the trailers for several weeks. These transportation assets
were lost to the line level operations for several weeks.

(b) EVALUATION: Transportation assets such as 5x5 trailers should not
be left for unloading in an area that is not normally serviced by convoys. The
convoy should move to the area, unload, and return with all assets. By utili-
ing a dedicated tractor trailer system in a little used area, a large number
of assets will not be lost to operations.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That the dedicated tractor trailer system be used
for little used areas in a combat zone.

C. TRAINING: (U) None.

D. ENFORCEMENT AND SECURITY: (C)

ITEM: Patrol Security

OBSERVATION: During the quarter, patrolling was initiated on the Hau
Hun Chir Mountain adjacent to Company Co. Hilides. The terrain is so rocky
and the foliage so dense that the patrols were lost from view when only 50 meters
beyond the perimeter.

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EVALUATION: Patrolling of this area is critical to the defense of US installations and details it: efforts have proven relatively futile. However every effort must be made to provide security for the patrols.

RECOMMENDATION: That the policy initiated in this command be considered for implementation in other areas where applicable. An armed patrol can be given that it is paralleled by a gun truck inside the perimeter equipped with machine guns and in radio contact with the patrol. If contact is made, the patrol marks their position with smoke and the gun truck covers the withdrawal by firing on the mountain above the smoke.

E. LOGISTICS: (c)

1. ITEM: Vehicle Assets

   (a) OBSERVATION: The 6th Transportation Group has 260 5 ton cargo trucks authorized and 75 on hand. Nineteen 5 ton cargo "drop side" were received since the last reporting period. Of the 640 semitrailers authorized, 490 were on hand.

   (b) EVALUATION: The critical shortage of 5 ton cargo trucks and 12 ton semitrailers continues to hinder our load carrying capability in performing our line haul mission.

   (c) RECOMMENDATION: That 5 ton cargo trucks and 12 ton semitrailers be made available so the 6th Transportation Group can better perform its mission.

2. ITEM: Modified 5 Ton Tractors.

   (c) OBSERVATION: Due to the temporary closing of Qui Nhon Airfield, the 6th Transportation Group was assigned the mission of moving mail from Phu Cat AFB to Qui Nhon. Since suitable secure vans weren't a part of 6th Group's assets, two 7 ton shop vans were hand received from Property Disposal and rehabilitated into usable condition by interchanging parts from other trailers at 6th Group's Centralized Trailer Maintenance Facility (CTMF).

   (b) EVALUATION: After being returned to a usable condition those trailers were hooked up to 5 ton tractors. A problem resulted in turning when the trailer landing legs arms in contact with the rear dually of the 5 ton tractor, since the van wasn't originally designed to be pulled by a 5 ton. This problem was resolved by removing the outside rear dual wheels on the 5 ton tractors. To date no adverse effects have been noticed.

   (c) RECOMMENDATION: That units faced with similar problems be made aware of this variable modification.
SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 8th Transportation Group (MT) for the Period Ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R-I)

TO: Commanding General, :st Logistical Command, ATTN: AVCA GQ-O, APO 96384

1. (U) The Operational Report, Lessons Learned of the 8th Transportation Group for the quarterly period ending 31 July 1969 has been reviewed by this headquarters and the following comments are submitted:

a. SECTION II, paragraph B 1: Concur. The evaluation illustrates the validity of the recommendation.

b. SECTION II, paragraph B 2: Concur. The policy recommended would be valuable in obtaining maximum use of transportation assets.

c. SECTION II, paragraph D: Concur. The Special Assistant for Combat Security, this headquarters, is in the process of publishing periodic defense circulars dealing with various subjects of interest to commanders in the Qui Nhon area. The recommendation by the 8th Trans Gp will be incorporated into this program.

d. SECTION II, paragraph E 1: Concur. Vehicle shortages in both semitrailers and 5 ton cargo trucks exist command wide. Relief with regard to the 5 ton trucks is expected by early September.

e. SECTION II, paragraph E 2: Concur. The evaluation illustrates the validity of the recommendation.

2. (U) The report is considered adequate as modified by the above comments.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

[Signature]

ADM: ON 2161

For: RICHARD A. DANIELS
CPT, AGC
Asst Adjutant General
1. The Operational Report - Lessons Learned submitted by headquarters, 8th Transportation Battalion for the quarterly period ending 31 July 1969 is forwarded.

2. Pertinent comments follow:

   a. Reference item concerning dedication of tractors and trailers, page 6, paragraph B2. Concur with evaluation in paragraph B2(b); however, non-concur with recommendation as stated. Recommend that in truck operations supporting little used areas, the tractor wait for cargo to be off loading from the trailer so that the trailer can be returned to the CULT system.

   b. Reference item concerning modified 5-Ton tractors, page 7, paragraph E(2). Nonconcur. Removal of the outside rear dual wheels on 5-Ton tractors constitutes a definite troop safety hazard. Specifically, this unauthorized "field expedient" reduces the effective width of the tractor from 8 feet to 6 feet thus limiting road contact and reducing tractor stability. Recommend the 8th Trans Bn submit a suggestion or KIR thru channels describing proposed modification of 5-Ton tractors to Tank-Automotive Command (TACOM). TACOM engineering personnel must thoroughly evaluate the proposal prior to adoption and application by any unit. If the suggestion or KIR is declared valid by TACOM an MWO will be published authorizing removal of outside rear dual wheels.

3. Concur with the basic report as modified by this and previous indorsement.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

C. D. STAFFORD
C. D. Stafford
1st, AGC
Asst Adjutant General
AVHGC-DST (10 Aug 69) 3d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 8th Transportation Group (Motor Transport) for the Period Ending 31 July 1969 RCS CSPOR-65 (61)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 24 OCT 1969

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT, APO 96558

This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 31 July 1969 from Headquarters, 8th Transportation Group (Motor Transport) and concurs with the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Cy furn:
8th Trans Gp.
1st Log Cmd.

C. B. WILSON
1LT. AF
Assistant Adjutant General

10
GPOP-DT (10 Aug 69) 4th Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 8th Trans Gp (MT) for Period Ending
31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) (U)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 30 OCT 69

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters concurs in subject report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

[Signature]

D. A. TUCKER
CPT, AGC
Asst AG
Operational Report - Lessons Learned, HQ, 8th Transportation Group

Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations, 1 May 69 to 31 July 69.

CO, 8th Transportation Group

10 August 1969

N/A

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N/A

OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310

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