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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 7TH TRANSPORTATION BATTALION (TRUCK)
APO 96491

AVCA SGN AB B OP

7 November 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (7th Transportation Battalion)
for Period Ending 31 October 1969 RCS CSFOR GS (R-2)

THRU: Commanding Officer
48th Transportation Group (MT)
APO 96491

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

SECTION I

OPERATIONS: SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

1. COMMAND.

a. Lieutenant Colonel John D. Bruen continued to command the 7th Transportation Battalion (Truck) during this quarter.

b. Annual General Inspection and Command Maintenance Management Inspection data are at Inclosure #1.

2. PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION, MORALE, AND DISCIPLINE.

a. Personnel: The enlisted personnel posture continued to receive command interest throughout this quarter. The shortage of drivers hampered the 7th Transportation Battalion in the performance of its mission. Replacement personnel have been received during the later part of October and this has alleviated the driver shortage. Driver strength will continue to be a critical factor during the next quarter.

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b. Assignments: The 7th Transportation Battalion has been assigned the following officers:

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
3	CPT	(1) Asst S-3; (2) Co Commander
8	LT	Platoon Leaders
3	WO	Co Maintenance Officer

c. Reassignments:

(1) One lieutenant and one warrant officer were reassigned to the 48th Transportation Group (MT).

(2) The 7th Transportation Battalion had three Captains and three Warrant Officers complete their tours during the quarter.

d. Awards and Decorations: During the reporting period, the following awards and decorations were presented.

<u>AWARD</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Bronze Star "V" Device	2	0	5
Bronze Star	4	2	23
Army Commendation Medal "V" Device	1	0	14
Army Commendation Medal	0	0	57
Purple Heart	0	0	1
Driver Award Certificate	0	0	80
Certificate of Achievement	0	0	50

e. Casualties: During the reporting period, the following casualties were sustained:

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>EM</u>
Killed in Action	0	0
Wounded in Hostile Action	0	1
Missing in Action	0	0

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Non-Battle Casualties	0	0
Killed in Non-Hostile Action	0	0

f. Disciplinary Action: During the reporting period, the following court-martials were held:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
General Court-Martial	0
Special Court-Martial	6 EM
Summary Court-Martial	3 EM

g. Major improvements completed were the battalion ammunition supply point, battalion test fire bunker and the EM theater.

h. Projects completed during the reporting period include the construction of personnel and defensive bunkers and perimeter lighting.

3. INTELLIGENCE. None.

4. OPERATIONS.

a. Units supported by the 7th Transportation Battalion during the reporting period were: The 1st Infantry Division at Lai Khe, Di An, Phuoc Vinh, Dau Tieng, An Loc, Quan Loi; the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) at Phuoc Vinh, Tay Ninh, Quan Loi, Song Be, Bien Hoa; the 9th Infantry Division at Dong Tam, Tan An; the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi, Tay Ninh; the 82d Airborne Division at Phu Loi, Saigon; the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment at Quan Loi, Long Giao, Xuan Loc, Bien Hoa; the 199th Light Infantry Brigade at Xuan Loc, Long Giao, Long Binh; the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat and Vung Tau; Vung Tau Sub-Area Command at Vung Tau; the 164th Aviation Group at Can Tho, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Vi Thanh, Rach Gia, Long Xuyen, Chau Phu, Tri Ton; the 29th General Support Group at Can Tho, Long Binh; US Army Depot at Long Binh; the 4th Terminal Command at Saigon, Newport, and Tay Ninh, and the 8th Aerial Port at Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

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b. Operational data during the reporting period is as follows:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>TONS</u>	<u>MILES</u>	<u>TON-MILES</u>	<u>PAX</u>
August	51,150	636,904	2,329,524	17,307
September	46,485	518,355	2,001,899	0
October	53,638	678,836	2,369,100	0
TOTAL	151,273	1,834,095**	6,700,523	17,307

**Includes load miles and deadhead miles

c. Highway Operations:

(1) On 27 August 1969, the 7th Transportation Battalion provided one officer, 17 drivers and security personnel, control vehicles and twelve 5 ton tractors with ten stake and platform (S&P) trailers for the initial resupply mission from Long Binh to Song Be. This element was integrated into a larger ARVN convoy. The operation involved a two day turn-around. The convoy returned on 28 August 1969.

(2) On 28 August 1969, the 7th Transportation Battalion provided one officer, 32 drivers and security personnel with control vehicles, 20 - 2½ ton trucks, 9 - 5 ton tractors and 8 S&P trailers in direct support of the 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry move from Dong Tam to Can Giuoc.

(3) On 4 September 1969, the one officer who served as the 48th Transportation Group (MT) representative for the 9th Infantry Division withdrawal operation at Dong Tam returned. The 9th Infantry Division was completely moved on 27 August 1969. A 20 trailer shuttle system was established which greatly assisted in the retrograde of supplies and equipment from Dong Tam.

(4) On 5 October 1969, the 7th Transportation Battalion was tasked again to convoy to Song Be. This was entirely a U.S. Army operation. The convoy elements consisted of one officer, 30 drivers and control personnel, 21 S&P trailers and 24 - 5 ton tractors. This convoy operation was well coordinated and adequate security was provided. The convoy returned without incident on 6 October 1969.

(5) On 30 October 1969, the 7th Transportation Battalion was again tasked to operate the Song Be convoy. This convoy was the largest element sent by the 48th Transportation Group and involved vehicles from three medium transportation companies. The convoy consisted of two officers, 90 drivers and control personnel with sixty S&P loads of Class II - IV, sixty-six 5 ton tractors and two 10 ton tractors with one lowboy trailer. The convoy was again an all U.S. Army controlled convoy. The convoy returned on 31 October 1969.

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(6) The 7th Transportation Battalion continued to send bi-weekly resupply convoys to Can Tho until the latter part of September when the convoys were discontinued.

d. Ambush Incidents:

(1) On 12 August 1969, at 1520 hours, as the Quan Loi convoy cleared a point 15 miles South of An Loc, the lead element received small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire. Two command detonated mines blew-up two culverts nearly stranding the convoy elements. The tactical escort, military police and convoy personnel immediately engaged the enemy and drove them back to the woodline. The stranded vehicles moved out of the kill zone. The convoy was supported by gunships and tactical aircraft. Casualties among escort personnel were 3 wounded and 2 killed in action. One S&P trailer and one $\frac{1}{4}$ ton truck sustained minor damage. 7th Battalion personnel received 4 awards for valor.

(2) On 14 August 1969, at 1120 hours, as the Quan Loi convoy cleared a point 3 miles North of Chan Thanh, the rear element received small arms, automatic fire, rocket propelled grenade (RPG) fire from the left side of the road. Two tankers were hit and temporarily blocked the road. Gunship, tactical air and artillery supported the convoy escort and drivers in driving off the enemy. Casualties among U.S. personnel were 3 wounded and one killed in action. 7th Battalion personnel received 14 awards for valor.

e. Rocket-Mortar Incident: On 22 August 1969, at 1145 hours, as the Dau Tieng convoy was being unloaded at the Dau Tieng Base Camp; the camp came under a two minute rocket attack. A 7th Transportation Battalion driver was slightly wounded when a rocket detonated in the ammunition supply point.

f. Sniper Incidents:

(1) On 6 September 1969, at 1310 hours, at a point 2 miles east of Trang Bang, an estimated clip of ammunition was fired upon the last two vehicles of the Tay Ninh convoy. The fire came from the brushline. No fire was returned and no injuries were sustained.

(2) On 5 October 1969, at 1130 hours, the trail party of the Quan Loi convoy received three bursts of small arms fire at a point 9 miles North of Chan Thanh. Gunships overflew the area and ground troops swept the area. No damages or injuries were sustained.

g. Mine Incidents:

(1) On 31 August 1969, at 1000 hours, a 5 ton tractor was lightly damaged when a command detonated mine was exploded at a point 30 miles South of Long Binh. The only damage was a cracked windshield.

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(2) On 13 October 1969, at 1400 hours, a 2½ ton truck detonated a contact mine 4 miles West of the Cam Tam intersection of QL 320 and QL 321. The vehicle was heavily damaged and towed back to Long Binh. The driver and 3 passengers sustained minor wounds.

5. ORGANIZATION.

a. On 27 August 1969, the 7th Transportation Battalion was tasked to prepare for the arrival of the 172d Transportation Company (Medium) from Cam Ranh Bay. All unit equipment arrived aboard 2 LST's on 30 August and was promptly cleared from the port. Unit personnel arrived on 31 August 1969 at Bien Hoa Air Base and were promptly quartered. The 172d Transportation Company (Medium) was transferred to the 6th Transportation Battalion on 1 September 1969.

b. On 29 August 1969, the 7th Transportation Battalion was directed to establish a Heavy Lift Unit (Provisional) from assets drawn from within Saigon Support Command. The unit was organized, trained and operational by 15 September 1969. The unit was organized by authority of Headquarters, 48th Transportation Group (MT), General Order Number 11, dated 15 September 1969. The provisional heavy lift unit provides heavy transportation support on a Line and Local haul basis to all locations within III Corps.

c. The 543d Transportation Company (Light Truck) was relieved from attachment to the 7th Transportation Battalion and attached to the 6th Transportation Battalion on 1 September 1969 by authority of Headquarters, 48th Transportation Group (MT), General Order Number 10, dated 2 September 1969.

d. On 19 September 1969, the 7th Transportation Battalion was designated to receive another medium truck company. The 563d Transportation Company (Medium) was reassigned from Pleiku by authority of Headquarters, 1st Logistical Command, General Order Number 814, dated 10 October 1969. The main body with equipment was moved by two LST's and arrived at Newport on the 29th and 30th of September. The unit was immediately integrated into the battalion organization and was operational on 1 October 1969 for convoy.

6. TRAINING.

a. Drivers Training: Battalion driver classes for newly arrived replacement drivers continue to be held on a five day cycle. A defensive driving block of instructions and weapons familiarization has been added to the course. 98 drivers were qualified during the quarter.

b. A vigorous safety program continues to be conducted by individual units in an attempt to lower the Army Motor Vehicle accident rate.

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7. LOGISTICS.

a. The battalion received nineteen 10-ton tractors as initial issue. Forty-one 5 ton tractors were received, 6 as replacements and 25 initial issue. Twenty-five reefer vans were received, 0 as replacements and 25 initial issue. Twenty-seven dropside $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks and ten $\frac{1}{4}$ ton trucks were also received.

8. COMMUNICATIONS. None.

9. MATERIEL. None.

10. OTHER. On 15 September 1969, the 7th Transportation Battalion was tasked with a security guard requirement for its assigned sub-sector. The guards man the three major access gates into the 48th Transportation Group (MP) area and one additional defensive bunker. Organization, training and implementation were accomplished without difficulty.

SECTION II

LESSONS LEARNED: COMMANDERS OBSERVATIONS, EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PERSONNEL. None.

2. INTELLIGENCE. None.

3. OPERATION. Song Be Convoys:

a. Observation - Song Be convoys are run on an irregular and on a demand basis.

b. Evaluation:

(1) Close coordination must be effected early to assure all arrangements i.e., tactical security, loading and unloading requirements have been made and finalized.

(2) The Song Be convoys have been large convoys in excess of 250 vehicles which poses a serious control problem.

(3) Tactical security elements escorting the convoy elements are insufficient for the number of convoy vehicles.

(4) The vegetation along the route affords the enemy excellent cover to launch an ambush.

(5) The contact team sent to block and brace retrograde cargo was effective.

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c. Recommendations:

(1) That the size of the convoys be reduced to 30 vehicle march units for greater control.

(2) That the ground tactical escort element be increased to provide more security for the convoy elements.

(3) That the dense vegetation along the route be cleared to prevent the possibility of a major ambush.

(4) That shippers have consigned cargo prepared ahead of the load date to insure that all cargo and documentation is ready for shipment.

(5) That the shipper continue to provide a contact team at destination if cargo is to be retrograded.

4. ORGANIZATION. None.

5. TRAINING. 12 ton stake and platform trailer classes.

a. Observation: More than 100 - 12 ton S&P trailers are deadlined because of bent or broken landing legs.

b. Evaluation: Landing legs seem to be damaged by drivers slamming into the trailers to lock their 5th wheel with the king pin.

c. Recommendation: That classes be held on a regular basis at each unit in the proper procedure for connecting and disconnecting a tractor and semi-trailer.

6. LOGISTICS.

a. Tires and Tubes:

(1) Observation: Both 900x20 tires and 1100x20 tubes have been continually in short supply.

(2) Evaluation:

(a) Valid requisitions were on-hand at each unit.

(b) Unit operations were hampered by the fact that spare tires were unavailable in the unit to readily replace flats.

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(3) Recommendations:

(a) That there be a cross-leveling of stocks at the Depot level.

(b) That an adequate supply of tires and tubes be maintained at Depot to adequately meet the demands for tires and tubes.

b. Chain and chain binders:

(1) Observations: Chain and chain binders are required to secure many loads hauled on S&P trailers to and from destinations.

(2) Evaluation:

(a) Shippers do not possess the necessary securing devices to adequately secure a load.

(b) A limited supply of chain and chain binders are available to secure retrograde cargo, unit move equipment and general cargo.

(3) Recommendations: That Depot maintain a supply on hand to meet the demand for chain and chain binders.

7. COMMUNICATION: Radio Parts.

a. Observation: Many unit radios are deadlined for lack of parts.

b. Evaluation:

(1) Radios used on convoy support missions develop problems because of constant exposure to weather, dust, high humidity and rough road conditions.

(2) The lack of repair parts can deadline a critically needed radio for 30 days or more.

(3) Valid requisitions on many critical items such as matching units, matching unit cables, RF cables and short range antenna are usually due out or have to be ordered from CONUS.

c. Recommendations:

(1) That the DSU maintain an adequate PLL stock of repair parts.

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(2) That the communication supply unit maintain an adequate supply of critical items required by units to adequately maintain their assigned equipment.

8. MATERIEL: None.

9. OTHER. Unit Move: On 19 September 1969, the 563d Transportation Company (Medium Truck) began preparing for their unit move from Pleiku to Long Binh to join the battalion. The relocation resulted in a number of lessons learned by this headquarters as well as the sending command.

a. The 563d Transportation Company was not provided with packing and crating materiel prior to its move. Unit impedimenta, repair parts and hold baggage require conex inserts and crating to arrive in good condition.

b. Unit personnel records were inaccurate and caused many changes as the unit prepared to move. These rosters must be validated continually.

c. The 7th Battalion immediately sent a liaison officer to Pleiku on notification of the unit move. His presence facilitated the coordination of details between the company and the gaining battalion.

d. A maintenance stand down was provided for the unit prior to departure from Pleiku. Only 1 of 69 vehicles was thus nonoperational when the company arrived at destination.

e. Maximum effort was expended by this headquarters to support the new company on arrival. The company was operational within 24 hours of its discharge from LST's at Newport.

f. The advance party of the unit was limited to one officer and four EM. This was an insufficient number to properly prepare quarters, establish an orderly room and prepare for operations. The size of the advance party should be coordinated between the gaining battalion and the relocating unit.

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as
Incl wd HQ, DA

John D. Bruen
JOHN D. BRUEN
LTC, TC
Commanding

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AVCA SGN GO S (7 Nov 69) 2d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 7th Transportation
Battalion (Truck), Period Ending 31 October 1969, (RCS
CSFOR 65) (R2)

HQ, US Army Support Command, Saigon, APO 96491 28 NOV 1969

TO: Commanding General, 1st Logistical Command, ATTN: AVCA GO MH
APO 96384

1. Reference Section II, paragraphs 3c (2) and 3c(3), page 8. CONCUR. This headquarters has forwarded a message to Hqs, 1st Cavalry Division requesting security improvement for Song Be convoys and requesting land clearing operations along the route. Actions recommended in this message are being implemented. The number of convoys to Song Be have been scaled down to approximately four per month.
2. Reference 1st Indorsement, paragraph 2b. CONCUR, except this headquarters recommended to Hqs, 1st Cavalry Division that emphasis should be placed on integrating into the convoy at least one armored personnel carrier or tank for every five or six task vehicles.
3. Reference Section II, paragraph 3c(4), page 8. CONCUR. Emphasis will be placed on the shippers through 3d Transportation Center (MC) to insure the cargo is prepared for shipment ahead of the load date and that the cargo and documentation is ready for shipment.
4. Reference Section II, paragraph 5, page 8. CONCUR. Classes have been conducted to show proper procedures in the techniques used to connect Tractors to 12 Ton S&P Trailers. To date 90% of the drivers have received the training.
5. Reference Section II, paragraph 6a, page 8. CONCUR. Recently the command has developed a critical shortage of 5 ton tires and tubes. This shortage has been brought to the attention of the IECV. A policy has been instituted to retrograde vehicles with only unserviceable tires and for units to retain serviceable tires. This should tend to alleviate the shortage.
6. Reference Section II, paragraph 6b, page 9. CONCUR. Chain binders have been an item in continual short supply. Recent receipts have somewhat alleviated this situation. The use of strapping and banding material has proven a satisfactory substitute.
7. Reference Section II, paragraph 7, page 9. CONCUR. Under paragraph 7c(1), "PLL Stock" should read "ASL Stock".

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CSFOR 65) (R2)

8. Lessons Learned, observations and recommendations are concurred
in by this command as modified above. A copy of this indorsement
has been provided the orginating headquarters.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

TEL: LBN 2604

Michael D. Huston
MICHAEL D. HUSTON
CPT AGC
ASST AG

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