

29th Transportation Battalion

World War II

The 29th Quartermaster Regiment was constituted on 1 May 1936 and activated as an African-American unit with three battalions and 12 lettered truck companies at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri on 10 June 1941. Each company would have 48 2 ½-ton cargo trucks. On 7 December 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise aircraft carrier attack against the US Pacific fleet anchored in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The next day, the United States declared war against Japan and on 11 December, Congress declared war on Germany. While it was preparing for war, the truck regiment was redesignated the 29th Quartermaster Truck Regiment on 1 April 1942.

On 28 February 1942, the 29th Quartermaster Regiment received orders to move to San Francisco Port of Embarkation. On 12 March, it boarded the *Queen Elizabeth* and arrived in Australia on 7 April where it became a part of the US Army Forces in Australia (USAFIP). The 48th Quartermaster Regiment (Negro) had arrived at Sydney on 20 March. These were the first two truck regiments to arrive in General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) of the Pacific Theater of Operation. They fell under the Motor Transport Section of the recently formed Transportation Service and conducted port clearance delivering troops and their equipment to their assigned camps.

The continued aerial attacks on Darwin and nearby towns threatened sea lines of communication, which required a long haul operation in Australia. Cargo arrived at the port of Brisbane and traveled by the Central Australia Railway to the terminus at Alice Springs. There was a 636-mile gap where the narrow-gauge North Australia Railway started at Birdum. From there cargo could travel 316 miles by rail to Darwin. To bridge the gap, the US Army established a supply depot at Mount Isa and the 29th and 48th Regiments formed the Motor Transport Command No. 1. A 687-mile convoy operation began on 28 June and required 12 days of hard driving to complete a round trip. The Army established three rest camps along the route. The long haul operation ended on 30 October after the security of the sea lanes of communication to Darwin improved. Japanese bombing attacks on Darwin did not end until November 1943 though.

The United States had adopted a defeat Germany first policy and the Pacific Theater was a lower priority of resources. Having been driven out of the Philippines by the Japanese, MacArthur was anxious to get back on the offensive. The American and Philippine defenders of Bataan had bought enough time to prevent the Japanese from invading Australia as they had planned. The Australians had held onto Port Moresby on the south side of New Guinea. This would provide the initial the base of operations. They next landed at Milne Bay on 25 June and the Japanese attacked on 25 August. After the Japanese withdrew the next month, the Allies had a new base for taking the north half of the island. MacArthur adopted a campaign of leapfrogging up the coast by landing on an undefended beach and fighting inland to the port town. From there the American forces would reset for another amphibious landing outside the next port town.

The 1st Battalion, 29th Quartermaster Regiment then sailed to New Guinea on 29 May and arrived on 6 June 1943 where it conducted port clearance to the supply depots. The US Army realized that the regimental organization did not work for the truck units, since the companies often operated independent of the battalion and regiment. So the regimental headquarters were

redesignated group headquarters, each battalion headquarters and companies were given numerical designations. On 2 December 1943, the 1st Battalion was redesignated as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 29th Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile. Its companies A, B, C, and D were redesignated the 3441st through 3444th Quartermaster Truck Companies. From then on each group, battalion headquarters and company would follow its own separate lineage. This new organization adapted to the practice of task organizing for the mission.

The US Sixth Army finally landed in Leyte in the Southern Philippine Islands on 20 October 1944. MacArthur had returned to the Philippines. After the Eighth Army relieved the Sixth Army, the latter loaded up to invade main Philippine Island of Luzon. The 29th Quartermaster Battalion then deployed to the Philippine Islands on 30 December and the Sixth Army landed in Lingayen Gulf on 9 January 1945. The 29th Battalion arrived in Luzon on 20 January. It fell under the control of the provisional Transportation Highway Division. The Sixth Army would advance south to retake Manila and fight inland to defeat the Japanese in Central Luzon and then Northern Luzon. The 29th Quartermaster Battalion was one of 18 truck battalions to support combat operations in Luzon.

After the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, Japan announced its surrender on August 15. The Japanese government would officially surrender to Allied Powers aboard the *USS Missouri* on September 9. With the defeat of Japan, the transportation focus shifted from sustaining the combat forces to transporting Japanese prisoners of war to prison camps at San Jose and San Fernando and retrograding American units home or to the occupation of Japan.

The 29th Quartermaster Battalion was inactivated in Luzon on 30 April 1946. Never again would the Army reach the strength level it had during World War II. Nearly all future transportation organizations would descend from those activated during World War II, and the guardians of the lineage and honors of the branches would active units with the most battle honors and campaign credits. Consequently, these would come from the units that had the longest service in theaters of operation. In the case of the SWPA, the battalions of the 29th and 48th Quartermaster Regiments. The 29th received campaign credit for East Indies, Papua,

Effective 1 August 1946, the Quartermaster Corps transferred functions and responsibilities of truck and aviation units to the Transportation Corps. GO No 77, War Dept. 24 July 1946; and the 29th Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile was redesignated the 29th Transportation Corps Truck Battalion. It was later redesignated as the 29th Transportation Truck Battalion on 23 December 1948. The battalion remained on inactive status until the Cold War.

Cold War Germany

The United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union had agreed to occupy portions of Germany after its defeat in May 1945. Berlin was in the Soviet Sector and the Allies agreed to similarly occupy equal portions of the German capital. In 1948, the Soviet Union instead decided to blockade Berlin. The resulting airlift kept the occupants of Berlin sustained, but that incident, the defeat of the Nationalist Chinese by the Communist Chinese heralded the beginning of the Cold War between the democratic countries and communist. Germany subsequently became an ally, and the United States began building up combat divisions in West Germany.

On 20 January 1949, the 111th Transportation Truck Battalion at Munich Military Post was redesignated as the 29th Transportation Truck Battalion under the European Command. It provided control over the following truck companies at Boeblingen, Germany:

5th Transportation Company (Light) Boeblingen, Germany

12th Transportation Company (Light)

34th Transportation Company

96th Transportation Company (Light) Nellingen Kaserne, Esslingen, Germany

547th Transportation Company

By 1955, the 24th and 29th Transportation Battalions were attached to the 10th Transportation Group at Flak Kaserne, Ludwigsburg. In 1955, the 96th Transportation Company relocated to Boeblingen and was converted to a heavy truck company to haul tanks. The 29th Transportation Truck Battalion was shipped back to Continental United States on the *Upshur* on 22 March 1957 and arrived on 31 March as part of the Gyroscope program.

The HHD, 29th Transportation Battalion packed up and traveled to McGuire Air Force Base on 9 November 1959 and flew back to Germany on 11 November as part of Gyroscope program where it was stationed at Boeblingen, Germany. Gyroscope program would replace one unit with another in Europe. The battalion essentially replaced the battalion headquarters that had replaced it two years before. The Gyroscope program ended after that rotation.

In 1968, the HHD, 29th Transportation Battalion returned to the United States where it was stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky in support of the 101st Airborne Division. In 1984, the Army reorganized along the corps structure. All logistical units were placed under the Corps Support Command (COSCOM) of the Corps. Each COSCOM was supposed to only have one movement control battalion and one truck battalion, but the 1st COSCOM had two, the 7th and 29th Transportation Battalions (Motor).

Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm

After having fought an eight-year war with Iran, Iraq needed more revenue to pay for its costly war. On 2 August 1990, the Iraqi Army invaded neighboring Kuwait and gained control of its oil fields. The army then massed on the Saudi Arabian border. President Bush's National Security Council notified the Joint Chiefs who then turned to the Unified Command to develop a contingency plan. Two days later, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), met with President Bush at Camp David to outline his plan. He deployed the XVIII Airborne Corps with the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), 82nd Airborne Division, and 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) to deter the Iraqi Army from invading Saudi Arabia. The 1st COSCOM would provide logistical support to the XVIII Airborne Corps.

The 29th Transportation Battalion at Fort Campbell, Kentucky deployed to Saudi Arabia on 14 October 1990 and assigned to the 101st Corps Support Group, which provided direct support to the 101st Airborne Division. The division was stationed at Camp Eagle II during Operation Desert Shield. One of its brigades provided the covering force against a possible Iraqi attack. The 1st Cavalry Division followed as the theater reserve.

The battalion provided control for the following companies:
372nd TC Company (Light/Medium Truck), Fort Campbell, KY
494th TC Company (Light/Medium Truck), Fort Campbell, KY
594th TC Company (Medium Truck), Fort Campbell, KY
372nd TC Company (Cargo Transfer),

With four divisions on the ground, Schwarzkopf felt confident that he had sufficient forces to defend Saudi Arabia. He asked for a heavy corps with two tank and one mechanized infantry division in order to drive the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait. VII Corps deployed from Germany with the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions, and the 1st Infantry Division from Fort Riley, Kansas. On 29 November, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 678 that required Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991, otherwise Schwarzkopf could drive them out with force. This offensive operation would be named Operation Desert Storm.

Since the Iraqi Army had constructed layered defense of berms and mine fields along the Kuwait border and the elite Republican Guard divisions further behind the conscript divisions, Schwarzkopf's plan was to shift two entire corps west of the border and conduct a flank attack through Iraq. He called this his "Hail Mary" attack. To do this required 21 days to build up the two additional logistical bases, Log Bases Charlie and Delta, and move the XVIII Airborne Corps to the left. The ground attack would have XVIII Airborne Corps on the left and VII Corps on the right.

By D-Day, the continuous delivery of supplies had built up 29 days of supply of food and water, 5.2 days of supply for fuel, and 45 days of supply of ammunition at Logistical Bases Charlie and Echo along the Iraqi border. The units would cross with five days of supply and theater trucks would push additional supplies to the new Logistical Bases Golf, November and Oscar inside Kuwait and Iraq. If the Marines could not take the seaports in Kuwait City intact then the Army would conduct a JLOTS operation there to reduce the line of communication from Saudi Arabia.

The ground war began on 15 February, and the 101st Airborne Division conducted several air assaults as the left flank of the XVIII Airborne Corps attack. It penetrated 155 miles in Iraq, the longest air assault to date. The division cut the Iraqi supply route, Highway 8, and blocked the enemy retreat. The 29th Transportation Battalion followed with vital supplies, and the Iraqis agreed to a cease fire on 22 February. The divisions moved back to Saudi Arabia and prepared for retrograde back to their home station. The 29th Transportation Battalion redeployed on 3 May 1991.

After Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida in August 1992, President George H. W. Bush deployed 22,000 military personnel as part of Joint Task Force Andrew to Homestead Air Force Base, Florida to provide relief to victims of the hurricane. The 29th Transportation Battalion deployed to Homestead Air Force Base, Florida to support the relief operation.

With the end of the Cold War, the Army began to downsize and reorganize. On 16 October 1992, HHD, 29th Transportation Battalion was redesignated as HHD, 129th Support Battalion as part of the 101st Corps Support Group. The new battalion retained the lineage and honors of the previous transportation battalion.

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