The following history of the 519th Port Battalion during World War II was summarized from Andrew J. Brozyna, Longshore Soldiers, Longmont, Colorado: Apidae Press, 2010.

The 519th Port Battalion was activated on 23 June 1943 at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania with the 302nd, 303rd, 304th, and 305th Port Companies. On 19 July, first group of 500 recruits arrived at Indiantown Gap. The second group arrived on 2 August and brought the battalion up to strength. Training began on 20 July. They learned to operate winches and other equipment, rigging, stowing, and warehousing. They were divided into hatch and deck crews to work aboard the ships and wharf crew to work on the dock. Indiantown Gap built land ships and docks to train loading and unloading cargo. The goal was efficiency and speed in loading and unloading ships.

On 17 October, the battalion left for Boston to train on an actual port. They lived at Camp Miles Standish and trained on actual equipment at the port every day. One of the conflicts between union longshoremen and military stevedores was speed. The civilian labor did not like working during inclement weather and encouraged the soldiers to work at a slower pace.

On 23 March 1944, the battalion crowded aboard SS Edmund B. Alexander at Boston and sailed the next day. Their ship was a former German passenger liner captured during WWI. It arrived at Liverpool on 5 April. After a short stay in transit camps, they moved to Camp Sea Mills in Shirehampton, Bristol on 11 April. Many of the men were billeted with locals due to the shortage of billeting on base. They began working at the Avonmouth docks on April 13 loading ships for the upcoming Normandy invasion.

The men assumed they would continue loading cargo at Bristol until they were attached to the 1st Engineer Special Brigade along with the 490th and 518th Port Battalions in May. The Army was segregated at the time and the 490th was an African-American battalion. The battalion also picked up the 279th and 280th Port Companies attached from the 505th Port Battalion in early May. On 31 May, the battalion left Bristol by train to US Army Marshalling Area 139 at Bridgend, Wales where they drew chemically impregnated clothing, French francs, and three days of K-rations and waited for the invasion of Normandy. The 1st Engineer Special Brigade would land at Utah Beach. On 2 June, the men left their marshalling area for the embarkation areas at Newport. The 303rd left the battalion and embarked its transport at Bristol and Southampton. The battalion was divided up among several vessels. The original invasion plan was to land on 5 June, but bad weather delayed the landings until the next day. So, the men waited aboard their ships.

At 0230 hours on 6 June, the convoy went underway across the English Channel. The 4th and 90th Infantry Divisions landed that day, and the 519th went ashore over the next four days. Upon arrival, each company immediately went to work unloading ships anchored offshore. Amphibious trucks (DUKW$s) hauled the crews to the vessels where they worked 12-hour shifts. The ship crews slept aboard the ships until they were unloaded and the shore crews dug foxholes about 300 yards inland from the sea wall to sleep in. Liberty ships had five hatches each with a
separate crew. The hatch crews loaded either pallets or break bulk into cargo nets that the deck crews hoisted over the side with cranes and lowered into an awaiting DUKW, landing craft or Rhino barge for transport to land. A stevedore guided the cargo into place. Two technical 5s kept track of what left the whole operation under the supervision of a sergeant. Once full, the lighterage left for shore.

The shore party unloaded the cargo from the landing craft and barges to the awaiting trucks. Once ashore, the beach dispatch directed the DUKW to the appropriate supply dump inland. This trip inland reduced the availability to shuttle cargo back and forth from ship to shore. As more cargo trucks arrived, they could haul the cargo inland. The vessels were to arrive with the necessary cargo nets, hooks, cables and slings, but not all did. So, the 519th borrowed the gear from the Brits and set up a shop to fabricate their own.

German aircraft and artillery were a constant threat to the beach. Germany aircraft generally strafed the area at night and in the early hours of 10 June, a dive bomber hit the SS Charles Morgan, which the 304th was unloading. The sinking of the Liberty ship resulted in four men of the 304th killed and six wounded. The worst air raid on the beach took place when the Germans dropped five bombs in the battalion area on 15 June resulting in several more killed. During that first week, the battalion suffered a total of 10 killed and 12 wounded.

A major storm brought beach operations to a halt from 19 to 22 June. This provided the stevedores much needed rest. Crews trapped aboard ships soon ran out of food, and African-American DUKW drivers risked their lives to deliver rations to the ships during the rough seas. Starting 24 June, the battalion moved further inland and off the beach. The battalion discharged cargo over Utah Beach for five months.

On 8 September, the British and Canadian forces liberated the Belgian port of Antwerp. In November, winter rendered discharging cargo over the beach ineffective. The 1st Engineer Special Brigade dispersed its battalions inland. The 518th Port Battalion moved to Gent, Belgium. The 519th released the 279th Port Company to work Le Havre. The rest of the 519th loaded up on trucks and then trains where they headed toward Antwerp on 14 November. The battalion picked up the up the 281st Port Company the next day. The battalion arrived at Antwerp four days later. The soldiers then spent the next four days cleaning out their barracks and preparing their equipment while the engineers cleared wreckage from the wharves. On 30 November, the first Liberty ships arrived at Antwerp.

The 13th Major Port had responsibility for the operations of Antwerp port. The stevedores of the 519th operated two docking areas just west of Tampico Flats. The 280th, 281st, 302nd and 305th Port Companies worked the docks to discharge cargo and store in warehouses where they then loaded the cargo on trucks and trains. By then, the truck companies had 10-ton tractors and trailers that ran cargo along the ABC (American-British-Canadian) Route. The 708th Railway Grand Division ran the trains out of Antwerp. The 303rd and 304th Port Companies performed guard duty. The soldiers of the 304th actually road the trains to prevent pilferage.

Pilferage was a serious problem in the once Nazi occupied Belgium. The retreating Germans had stripped the country leaving the locals short of food. To provide employment, the US Army hired
The bounty at the port made pilferage tempting, and many soldiers cast a blind eye to locals taking food home to their families. Stealing goods, especially food and fuel and selling it on the black-market was a serious offense.

As the Allies drove the Germans further back into their homeland, Antwerp became a prime target for V-1 and V-2 rockets. As many as six thousand such rockets rained down on Antwerp. The worst damage was when a V-2 killed 567 soldiers and wounded 291 when it hit a movie theater on 16 December. The civilian longshoremen were paid an additional 30 Francs as hazardous duty pay for working under the risk rocket attacks, called "shiver pay." On

The war ended in Europe on 10 May 1945, and the 519th began packing up supplies and equipment for the war in the Pacific Theater. They fortunately were no longer working under the threat of rocket attacks. The dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan forced the Japanese to formally surrender on 2 September. This did not end the need for the port battalion as it then had to begin shipping soldiers home. This period also allowed for much needed down time for furloughs and sports. The military stevedores would be among the last to leave Europe.

On 20 December 1945, the 519th relocated to Luchtbal Barracks and focused totally on guard duty. The 304th was inactivated in January 1946. As veterans with the required 85 points returned to the United States, soldiers from other port units and even infantry men who did not have enough points to go home early filled their ranks. The 280th and 305th Port Companies were inactivated in June, and the 519th organized two new companies, 265th and 285th, to absorb the remnants of the 517th Port Battalion. As the need for port guards reduced, the 519th was finally inactivated on 3 October 1946.

Campaign Participation Credit: World War II (embroidered Normandy) Streamers: Normandy (with arrowhead); Northern France; Rhineland.

Decorations: Meritorious Unit Commendation (embroidered European Theatre); French Croix de Guerra with Silver Palm; Order of the Day of the Belgian Army for action at Antwerp.

The following unit histories are from official statements of services with narrative about these units during their tenure in Thailand, while assigned to the United States Army Support Command, Thailand (USARSUPTHAI). Documents and photos have been collected and placed online with The 519th Transportation Association, Thailand's website by Joseph J. Wilson, Jr. Sergeant First Class, US Army (Retired).
The 519th Transportation Battalion adopted a tiger as its symbol, based on the dominant figure on its distinctive crest. Personnel from the battalion participated in the design of the distinctive crest which was approved by the Institute of Heraldry on 31 August 1966.

![519th Transportation Battalion Crest](image)

The insignia is a gold medal and enamel device, one and one eighth inches in height. It consists of a brick-red disk edged in gold with three battlements at the top. In the center is a gold, black striped tiger's head in profile with jagged extremities.

The latter surmount a green wreath in base composed of laurel leaves on one side and palm in the other. On the base and sides of the gold rim is a tri-parted gold scroll inscribed "QUID," "QUANDO," "QUO." in black letters. The motto refers to the battalion's only query when assigned a mission:

*What is the job? When must the job be done? Where is the job?*

**World War II**

The 519th Transportation Battalion was constituted on 1 April 1943, and re-organized as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 302nd, 303rd, 304th, and 305th Port Companies. It was activated on 25 June 1943 at Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania as the 519th Port Battalion then embarked from Camp Miles Standish in Boston, Massachusetts aboard the E.P. Alexander to England. After a brief training period, the 519th Port Battalion participated in the invasion of Normandy, going ashore on 7 June 1944. It later moved from Normandy to Antwerp, Belgium on 14 November 1944, where it remained until being inactivated on 3 October 1946.

Campaign Participation Credit: World War II (embroidered Normandy) Streamers: Normandy (with arrowhead); Northern France; Rhineland.
Decorations: Meritorious Unit Commendation (embroidered European Theatre); French Croix de Guerra with Silver Palm; Order of the Day of the Belgian Army for action at Antwerp.

**Project 572-W**

On 1 February 1956 the unit was reactivated as the 519th Transportation Battalion (Terminal Service) at Fort Eustis, Virginia. It was assigned the mission of preparing various boat companies and terminal service companies for participation in Project 572-W (the supply of material for the construction of the DEW line in the Arctic). Its mission completed, the unit was inactivated on 15 December 1957 at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

**Vietnam War**

On 20 May 1966 the unit was again activated, this time at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland as the 519th Transportation Battalion (Motor Transport). Filler personnel were assigned and began arriving in late May. The majority of officers and NCOs were returnees from Europe. The enlisted personnel, for the most part, were fresh out of basic training. By early June, there was sufficient personnel on-hand to begin POR/POM (Preparation for Overseas Movement) training in preparation for deployment to the Republic of Vietnam. During its own training phase, the battalion was assigned the responsibility of supervising the training of various Engineer, Quartermaster, Signal, and Transportation units for deployment to the Republic of Vietnam. When orders arrived the unit had been diverted to the Kingdom of Thailand.

In 1966, the 519th Transportation Battalion contained the following companies:

- Headquarters and Headquarters, 519th Transportation Battalion (20 May 1966)
- 313th Transportation Company (Refrigerated) (20 May 1966)
- *572nd Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo) (8 July 1966)
- 291st Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo) (1 October 1966)

*After loading equipment at the port in Baltimore, Maryland personnel from the 572nd Transportation Company arrived at the port of San Francisco, California where they boarded the USNS General Alexander M. Patch for the 24-day cruise to the Republic of Vietnam on 6 October 1966.

**Southeast Asia - Thailand**

On 10 December 1966 advance party elements (personnel and equipment) departed from Andrews Air Force Base aboard C130s headed for the Kingdom of Thailand. The remainder of the battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Harry Frederick Middleton and Sergeant Major James John Milele (both WWII and Korean War veterans) completed its move and closed in Thailand on 17 December 1966.

The 519th Transportation Battalion soon moved north from Sattahip, to Camp Charn Sinthope near Phanom Sarakham, southeast of Bangkok. Although the unit relocated to Camp Friendship in 1968, it soon returned to Camp Charn Sinthope where it remained until 1970 and was deactivated at Camp Samae San on 20 February 1971.

In Thailand the 519th Transportation Battalion contained the following companies:
• Headquarters and Headquarters, 519th Transportation Battalion
  (10 December 1966 Ft Meade, MD – 20 February 1971) – Camps Charn Sinthope, Friendship & Samae San
• 260th Transportation Company (Petroleum)
  (1 June 1966 Ft Riley, KS – 31 October 1975) – Camps Charn Sinthope & Samae San
• 291st Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo)
  (1 October 1966 Ft Meade, MD – 30 June 1971) – Camps Friendship & Khon Kaen
• 505th Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo)
• 313th Transportation Company (Reefer)
  (10 December 1966 Ft Meade, MD – 31 March 1972) – Bangkok and Camp Friendship
• 53rd Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo)
  (10 April 1967 Okinawa – 30 December 1970) – Camp Vayama
• 560th Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo)
  (1 May 1967 Ft Meade, MD – 1 April 1970) – Camp Khon Kaen
• 33rd Transportation Platoon (Reefer)
  (25 August 1967 Fort Lewis, WA – 1 April 1970) – Camp Friendship
• 254th Transportation Detachment (Trailer Transfer Point Operating)
  (30 November 1967 Fort Lewis, WA – 30 June 1971) – Camps Charn Sinthope, Friendship & Khon Kaen

The 260th Transportation Company (Petroleum) initially was issued M51 5-ton dump trucks and attached to the 44th Engineer Group where they assisted with highway and road construction until such time as M52 5-ton truck tractors and M131 5,000 gallon fuel trailers were available for issue. The unit was based at Camp Samae San in Sattahip.

The 260th Transportation Company (Petro) – Constituted in July 1923 in the Organized Reserves as the 935th Motor Transport Company. Re-designated as Company K, 513th Quartermaster Truck Regiment on 1 July 1936 then activated as D, 513th Quartermaster Truck Regiment on 1 April 1943 at Fort Custer, Michigan. Reorganized and re-designated as the 3890th Quartermaster Truck Company on 15 December 1943 and inactivated in France on 25 June 1946. On 1 August 1946, converted and re-designated as the 3890th Transportation Corps Truck Company. On 13 February 1948, re-designated as the 260th Transportation Company and activated on 1 March 1948 at Fort Myer, Virginia. On 25 March 1948, Organized Reserves re-designated as the Organized Reserve Corps, then on 9 July 1952 as the Army Reserve. On 9 August 1960 inactivated at Fort Myer, Virginia. Withdrawn on 23 March 1966 from the Army Reserve and allotted to the Regular Army; concurrently re-designated as the 260th Transportation Company and activated on 1 June 1966 at Fort Riley, Kansas, then inactivated at Camp Samae San, Thailand on 31 October 1975.

Campaign Participation Credit: World War II-EAME, Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe.
DECORATIONS: Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer (embroidered SOUTHEAST ASIA).
The 291st Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo) was based at Camp Friendship in Nakorn Ratchasima (Korat) where they transported cargo to northerly US bases. The unit also transported cargo from Camp Friendship to Ubon RTAFB.

The 291st Transportation Company – Constituted on 10 November 1942 as D, 467th Quartermaster Truck Regiment and activated at Fort Custer, Michigan on 10 December 1942. Reorganized and re-designated as the 3622nd Quartermaster Truck Company on 16 December 1943, and inactivated in France on 25 June 1946. On 1 August 1946, converted and re-designated as the 3622nd Transportation Corps Truck Company. Re-designated as the 291st Transportation Amphibious Truck Company on 13 January 1948 and allotted to the Organized Reserves. It activated on 22 January 1948 at Portland, Maine. On 25 March 1948, Organized Reserves re-designated as the Organized Reserve Corps, then on 9 July 1952 as the Army Reserve. On 1 February 1950 inactivated at Portland, Maine. Withdrawn on 1 October 1966 from the Army Reserve and allotted to the Regular Army; concurrently re-designated as the 291st Transportation Company and activated at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. On 30 June 1971 inactivated at Camp Samae San, Thailand.

Campaign Participation Credit: World War II-EAME, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe.
DECORATIONS: Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer (embroidered SOUTHEAST ASIA).

The 505th Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo) was based at Camp Vayama in Sattahip and was the initial line haul operational unit from Sattahip to Takhli RTAFB, and Camp Friendship/Korat RTAFB. One platoon operated from a rail-head at Udorn RTAFB, transporting construction and airfield supplies in the buildup of the Nakon Phanom RTAFB (NKP) near the Laotian border in early 1967.

The 505th Transportation Company – Constituted on 26 November 1943 as 3640th Quartermaster Truck Company, activated on 10 December 1943 and inactivated on 8 September 1945 in Italy. Converted and re-designated on 1 August 1946 as the 3649th Transportation Corps Truck Company concurrently activated at Fort Riley, Kansas. On 7 March 1947 re-designated as the 505th Transportation Corps Truck Company and re-designated on 15 July 1947 as the 505th Transportation Truck Company. On 5 January 1949 allotted to the Regular Army. On 1 April 1954, reorganized and re-designated as the 505th Transportation Company, then inactivated in Japan on 25 March 1956. On 23 May 1957 it activated at Fort Benning, Georgia and deployed to Thailand, arriving on 11 November 1966, then inactivated at Camp Vayama, Thailand on 30 December 1971. On 20 September 1990 it activated, then inactivated in Korea on 17 March 1991.

Campaign Participation Credit: World War II-EAME, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, North Apennines, Po Valley. Korean War: UN Offensive, CCF Intervention, First UN Counteroffensive, CCF Spring Offensive, UN Summer-Fall Offensive, Second Korean
Winter, Korea, Summer-Fall 1952, Third Korean Winter, Korea, summer 1953.

DECORATIONS: Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer (embroidered EUROPEAN THEATER); Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer (embroidered KOREA); Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer (embroidered SOUTHEAST ASIA).

It’s interesting to note that in 1990, during Operation Desert Shield, the 505th Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo) was once again activated on 20 September 1990 and inactivated in Korea on 17 March 1991.

The 313th Transportation Company (Refrigerated) was based in Bangkok where they transported all refrigerated products throughout US military units in Thailand.


Campaign Participation Credit: World War II-AP, Bismarck Archipelago, Luzon, Southern Philippines.
DECORATIONS: Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer embroidered SOUTHEAST ASIA.

The 53rd Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo) was based at Camp Vayama in Sattahip and operated port clearance operations at Camp Samae San and the deep water port at Camp Vayama.

The 53rd Transportation Company – The parent unit organized March 1943 as 2638th Quartermaster Truck Battalion (Provisional) in North Africa. The 54th Quartermaster Truck Battalion constituted on 28 May 1943 in the Army of the United States. On 7 July 1943 was re-designated as 54th Quartermaster Truck Battalion. Company C reorganized and re-designated on 3 November 1943 as 3355th Quartermaster Truck Company. Concurrently, the remainder of the battalion reorganized and re-designated as follows: Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 54th Quartermaster Battalion (Mobile). Companies A, B, & D as 3353rd, 3354th, & 3356th Quartermaster Truck Companies, respectively with separate lineages. On 12 April 1946 the 3355th Quartermaster Truck Company inactivated at Camp Kilmer,
New Jersey. On 1 August 1946 converted and re-designated as the 3355th Transportation Corps Truck Company. Re-designated as the 103rd Transportation Truck Company and allotted to the Regular Army on 1 September 1948. First activated on 10 September 1948, then inactivated on 15 December 1948 at Fort Lewis, Washington. On 1 June 1949 activated at Fort McKinley in the Philippine Islands, then inactivated on 22 July 1949 at Fort Stotensburg in the Philippine Islands. Re-designated as the 53rd Transportation Heavy Truck Company on 12 September 1952, and activated on 25 October 1952 at Camp Roberts, California. It participated in Operation Desert Rock in Nevada. On 20 June 1953, re-designated 53rd Transportation Company and participated in Operation Fort Irwin in California on 30 June 1953. It participated in Operation Fort Irwin in California on 1 August 1961. Assigned to Okinawa on 24 September 1965, then reassigned to the 519th Transportation Battalion on 10 April 1967 serving at Camp Vayama until being inactivated on 30 December 1970 in Thailand.

Campaign Participation Credit: World War II-EAME, North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, Belgium, Antwerp "St Albans Victory".
DECORATIONS: Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer embroidered SOUTHEAST ASIA.

The 569th Transportation Company (Medium Truck Cargo) was based at Camp Khon Kaen where they replaced the platoon of the 291st Transportation Company in the delivery of cargo to Udorn RTAFB, Ubon RTAFB, NKP RTAFB, and Camp Rum Chit Chi in Sakon Nakon. It was the only class B unit in the 519th Transportation Battalion, with all US military drivers.


DECORATIONS: Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer (embroidered SOUTHEAST ASIA).

The 33rd Transportation Platoon (Refer) was based at Camp Friendship in Nakorn Ratchasima (Korat) where they augmented with the 313th Transportation Company in the delivery of refrigerated cargo to all US military units throughout Thailand.
The 33rd Transportation Platoon (Reefer) – Constituted 10 May 1967 and activated on 25 August 1967 at Fort Lewis, Washington. Serving as a valuable element of the 519th Transportation Battalion operating from the Bangkok cold storage facility until the unit was inactivated on 1 April 1970.

DECORATED: Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) Streamer (embroidered SOUTHEAST ASIA).

The 254th Transportation Detachment (Trailer Transfer Point Operating) was split into three teams based at Camp Charn Sinthope near Phanom Sarakham where they were attached to the 519th Transportation Battalion, Camp Friendship in Korat where they were attached to the 291st Transportation Company, and Camp Khon Kaen where they were attached to the 569th Transportation Company. The 254th Transportation Detachment was responsible for operating the Trailer Transfer Points along the 519th Transportation Battalions line haul operating area.

Units of the 519th Transportation Battalion had the unique mission of transporting cargo classified as 972 from December 1966 until December 1969 in support of US air operations in Laos and Vietnam. Operation 972 was sensitive explosives and listening devices commonly called Igloo White or known as the "McNamara Line of Defense" and was instrumental in detecting enemy troop movement along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and especially around the troops besieged at Khe Sanh.

Another unique mission of the 519th Transportation Battalion was the timely distribution of dairy products to US forces throughout Thailand. Employing a tactic of General Patton during the Second World War, the 313th Transportation Company dubbed it "Red Ball Revived" thereby ensuring that sensitive dairy products were expedited and delivered fresh each day.

Although these companies came together under the 519th Transportation Battalion in Thailand, each of them has a distinctive and honored background, in some cases dating back prior to the Second World War. Many of these units served with honor in Europe or in Asia, under combat conditions.

A special survey disclosed that the "Tiger Battalion" has the longest line of communication and largest mission of any battalion of its type in the world.

For service in Thailand, 519th Transportation Battalion and its subordinate units were awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army) 16 December 1966 – 31 December 1969 - GO 308 dated 14 July 1970, and although the documentation became lost over time, Department of the Army issued GO 29 on 30 December 2001 officially recognizing the accomplishments of this great transportation unit and the Meritorious Unit Commendation.