

69th Transportation Battalion



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World War II

The 46th Quartermaster Regiment (Truck) was constituted on 1 May 1936 and activated at Camp San Luis Obispo, California on 1 April 1942, four months after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. During that time the Army was segregated and the 46th Regiment was as an all African American unit. The Regiment had three battalions and the 2nd Battalion was activated at Fort Ord, California on 1 April. In July, the regiment was redesignated as the 46th Quartermaster Truck Regiment (Negro) and then headed off for combat in Northern Africa.

The 46th Quartermaster Regiment (Negro) moved to the New York Port of Embarkation on 24 December 1942 and arrived at Fort Dix, New Jersey on 29 December. It then loaded up on the *Argentina* and shipped out on 3 February 1943. Upon arrival at Casablanca on 19 February, the 2nd Battalion and was assigned to the Atlantic Base Section of North Africa Theater of Operations (NATO). It then left Casablanca and was then stationed at Ouled Rahmoun, Algeria on 17 March where it was assigned to the Eastern Base Section. It then participated in the Tunisian Campaign to secure the deep water port of Bizerte. It arrived at Bizerte, Tunisia on 7 October 1943.

Realizing it may not need intact truck regiments for specific missions, the Army redesignated the battalions and companies so they could be task organized for each mission. On 5 December 1943, the 46th Quartermaster Regiment became Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD), 46th Quartermaster Group; the HHD, 1st Battalion became HHD, 46th Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile; the HHD, 2nd Battalion became the HHD, 69th Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile; the HHD, 3rd Battalion became the HHD, 121st Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile; and the

lettered companies A through M became redesignated 3481st through 3492nd Quartermaster Truck Companies. From then on each would follow its separate lineage.

The 69th Quartermaster Battalion next participated in the Sicily Campaign and then departed North Africa aboard the *USS George Davis* on 1 June 1944 and arrived at Naples, Italy on 5 June. The Battalion then advanced up the boot of Italy in support of the Italian Campaign.

On 15 August 1944, Allied forces landed on Southern France and the ports of Toulon and Marseille fell under Allied control on 28 August. The 69th Quartermaster Battalion then boarded the *USS Samayon* on 30 August 1944 and arrived in Southern France on 5 September. It was transferred to the European Theater of Operation (ETO) but remained under the operational control of NATO. On 26 September, the 69th Battalion moved to Marseille where it conducted port clearance until 16 March 1945.

The 69th Quartermaster Battalion arrived at Pompey, France on 20 March 1945 and then at Mannheim, Germany on 8 April. It moved to nearby Weinheim on 9 April and then Wurzburg in Northern Bavaria on 13 April. It relocated to Heilbronn on 22 April and Wurttemberg on 30 April. On 26 May, the Battalion returned to France. It relocated to Marseille on 26 October and was inactivated on 25 June 1946. It earned campaign credit for Tunisia, Sicily, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe.

The Quartermaster turned over its truck units to the Transportation Corps and the 69th Battalion was converted and redesignated the 69th Transportation Corps Truck Battalion on 1 August 1946, and redesignated the 69th Transportation Truck Battalion on 21 April 1949. It was then activated as an African-American unit at Yokohama, Honshu, Japan on 1 June 1949. The next year began the Korean War.

Korean War

On 25 June 1950, North Korean tanks rolled across the 38th Parallel and invaded the Republic of Korea. The 24th Infantry Division led the first units of the US Eighth Army into Korea on 30 June. After a series of setbacks, they bought time for the rest of Eighth Army to stabilize the Pusan Perimeter. On 15 September, X Corps landed at Inchon with the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions and the North Korean Army began to withdraw.

The 69th Transportation Battalion was assigned to Eighth Army on 4 August 1950 and arrived at Pusan, Korea on 7 August to support I Corps. It advanced to Pyongyang in November and withdrew on 3 December arriving at Pusan on 12 December. Its mission was to transport ammunition and supplies for the 335th Ordnance Battalion at Heunde Ammo Depot. It was relieved by the 167th Transportation Battalion (Colored) (PA NG) in early 1951 and moved to Taegu. The 351st Transportation Highway Transport Group arrived in Korea on 5 March 1951 and on 11 March moved to Taegu to assume control of all trucking operations in Korea. The 69th Transportation Battalion received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period of 10 August 1950 to 12 February 1951. On 1 April 1951, the 69th Battalion was released from assignment to the 351st Transportation Highway Transport Group.

On 29 October 1951, the 69th Battalion moved to Seoul and operated EA Driver Training School until 3 January 1952. It then hauled cargo for X Corps. On 1 December 1951, the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment was reorganized and redesignated a Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

In 1952, the 515th Transportation Company (Negro) was attached to the 69th Transportation Battalion at Kwandae-ri under the X Corps.

On 10 June 1952, the US Army began integrating units by assigning replacements without regard to race, therefore, the 69th would remain predominately African-American for several years. The 69th moved to Oeng-ni on 10 October and received its second Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period 1 April 1951 to 1952. On 13 May 1953, the 69th Transportation Battalion fell under the 2nd Infantry Division to test the concept of truck battalions providing direct support divisions instead of regimental service companies and truck platoons.

After two years of negotiations, the belligerents agreed to an armistice on 27 July 1953, and established the 38th Parallel as the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). This ended hostilities and from then on both sides of the DMZ. The 69th Battalion received its third Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period 1 July 1952 through 1953. The Battalion earned the Korean Presidential Unit Citation for its participation in the war. It earned campaign credit for all ten campaigns of the Korean War.

On 1 April 1954, the 69th Transportation Truck Battalion was redesignated as the 69th Transportation Battalion (Truck). On 10 May 1959, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company was reorganized and redesignated as a Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment. Truck companies in Korea received the new M52 5-ton tractor and M127 trailer, and M54 5-ton cargo trucks. The tractors and trailers then made up medium truck companies while the 2 ½-ton and 5-ton cargo trucks made up light truck companies.

The 3rd and 24th Infantry Divisions left for Germany earlier 1958, leaving only the 2nd and 7th Infantry Divisions in Korea. This reduced the need from two to one truck battalion; and in October 1958, HHD, 69th Transportation Battalion moved from Uijongbu to Ascom City where it assumed the mission of the 70th Transportation Battalion that had inactivated on 25 September 1958. The new mission required the Battalion to haul Class I, II, and IV to the 2nd and 7th Infantry Division supply points along the DMZ. It then fell under the control of the Eighth Field Army Support Command.

Four Republic of Korea Truck Companies were attached to the Battalion by General Orders published by the office of the Korea Ministry of Defense in October and November 1960. The 69th had ten truck companies under its control, six were US and four were Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) companies. Three of the ROKA companies were light/medium and one a medium truck company. The 28th, 43rd, 74th, and 514th had signed over their trucks to form the four ROKA companies and the US personnel served as cadre to train and advise the Korean drivers.

On 23 March 1970, following a major reorganization of support activities within Korea, the 69th Transportation Battalion became an integral part of the 2nd Transportation Group.¹

By 1970, the 69th Transportation Battalion (Truck) provided command and control for the following:

- 28th Transportation Company
- 43rd Transportation Company
- 46th Transportation Company
- 60th Transportation Company
- 74th Transportation Company

The 7th Infantry Division left for Fort Lewis, Washington in April 1971 (where it was inactivated) leaving only the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea. The 74th Transportation Company was inactivated on 30 June 1971. In March 1973, the Battalion relocated to Camp Eiler.

In 1974, the 69th Transportation Battalion (Truck) at Camp Eiler provided command and control for the following:

- 28th Transportation Company at Waegwan
- 43rd Transportation Company at Camp Eiler
- 46th Transportation Company at Pusan
- 60th Transportation Company at Camp Eiler
- 702nd Transportation Company (KATUSA) at Pusan
- 881st Transportation Company (KATUSA) at Camp Eiler

The 43rd Transportation Company was inactivated on 31 May 1978, and the 28th Transportation Company inactivated on 30 June 1978 leaving on the two US truck companies under the Battalion. On 15 November 1978, HHD, 69th Transportation Battalion transferred from Camp Eiler to Camp Carrol, Waegwan and assigned to the 19th Support Command.

In 1985, the 46th Transportation Company won the National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA) Award for its daily support to US Forces of all classes of supply (less bulk Class III) throughout Korea. The Company was comprised of 65 American and 182 Korean Soldiers and provided less than 24-hour delivery of cargo arriving at various airports throughout Korea and maintained an operational readiness rate of 90 percent. It was assigned a special “Red Ball Express” mission to expedite delivery of military clothing and tools throughout Korea. It supported Joint Exercise Team Spirit 84 by transporting over 15,000 tons of cargo and commuting their tractors up to 100 percent of availability rate. The Company was a runner up for the Chief of Staff’s Army Award for Maintenance Excellence, Light Density Category for 1983 and won for 1984.²

With the Cold War officially over in 1991, the United States cashed in on its “Peace Dividend” and reduced the Army. The 60th Transportation Company inactivated on 20 September 1991

¹ “69th Transportation Battalion,” Korean War Educator, http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/topics/branch_accounts/army/p_69th_transp_batt.htm.

² “Military Units Receive NDTA Award,” *Translog*, November 1985.

leaving the 69th Transportation Battalion with only the 46th Transportation Company, so the Battalion was inactivated in Korea on 16 February 1992. The 498th Corps Support Battalion was activated in Korea in 2005 to provide command and control for the remaining two maintenance companies, two supply companies and the 46th Transportation Company (Medium Truck), as part of the 501st Corps Support Group.

The 46th Transportation Company (PLS) moved to Camp Stanley in 2010 and remains as the only US Army Transportation truck company in Korea to support the 2nd Infantry Division.