

765th Transportation Battalion

World War II

The 765th Railway Shop Battalion was constituted on 12 March 1943 then activated at Camp Plauche, Louisiana, on 4 May 1944.

After World War II, the battalion was redesignated as the 765th Transportation Corps Railway Shop Battalion on 8 December 1945. It was again redesignated as the Transportation Railway Shop Battalion on 28 April 1947. It was designated as a Regular Army unit in 23 February 1949.

Korean War

With the invasion of South Korea by the North Korean Army on 24 June 1950, the US Army Transportation Corps had two railroad battalions and a grand railroad division at Fort Eustis as part of the General Reserve; but due to budget cuts during the Truman administration, the battalions were wholly under-strength and untrained in rail operations. Fortunately, Korea had a developed rail infrastructure.

On 1 July, the 8059th Army Unit (AU), Transportation Railway Service (Provisional), was organized in Japan and arrived at Pusan on 9 July to assume supervision over the employees of the Korean National Railroad (KNR) and was placed under the Transportation Section of the Pusan Logistic Command. It supervised the railroad operation and maintenance, but the KNR provided the crews for the locomotives.¹

On 18 July, the 709th Transportation Railway Grand Division arrived in Korea to control operations and movements of KNR by establishing communication offices at various locations along the railroads, but control was limited primarily to expedite troop and supply movement through management of critical rolling stock, since the tactical situation and lack of storage areas prevented efficient rail control.

On 26 August, the 8059th AU and 709th Transportation Railway Grand Division were inactivated and their assets were transferred to the Transportation Section Rail Division to create the 3rd Transportation Military Railway Service (TMRS) at Pusan. That same month, the 714th Transportation Railway Operating Battalion (TROB), and the 764th and 765th Transportation Railway Shop Battalions (TRSB) were three active duty railway units sent to Korea, but were wholly under-strength and only about 20 percent of their personnel had any railroad experience. The KNR had 153 functioning steam-powered locomotives, 344 passenger cars, and 3,655 freight cars. Since the railroad men of the 712th TROB had little training in operating rail and the Koreans had a functioning rail infrastructure, the American railroad men rode the trains to ensure the Koreans adhered to schedules. The 764th TRSB from Japan ran heavy shops for major repair. The 765th TRSB supervised the KNR back shops and operated the engine houses and side tracks at Pusan, Kyongju, Taegu, Taejon, and Yongdungpo (YDP), and supervised repair of

¹ Carl R. Gray, Jr., *Railroading in Eighteen Countries*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

locomotives, passenger and freight rolling stock, put new equipment into service, operated all hospital cars in Korea, and converted buses to run on rails.²

On 15 September, the X Corps landed at Inchon threatening the North Korean line of communication, forcing them into a retreat, and the US Army followed them up the Korean Peninsula. In their retreat, the North Koreans demolished rail and bridges. On 16 September, the 3rd TMRS moved to Taegu and organized two rail reconnaissance groups for Advance Service. The 3rd TMRS and KNR repaired the track and bridges behind the advance of the Eighth Army. On 7 October, Eighth Army crossed the 38th Parallel and the 3rd TMSR moved to Seoul on 18 October. The 714th TROB established rail transportation offices from Pusan to Taegu, and on 12 October it assumed operational control of all Korean rail activities from Taegu south to the coast. It moved Sindong and began operating as a rail traffic regulating organization rather than as a railway operating unit. Eighth Army units occupied P'yongyang, the North Korean capital on 19 October; and the X Corps landed at Wonsan on the east side of the peninsula on 25 October. With the expansion of rail operations, the 3rd TMRS would turn over the back shops at Yongdungpo (YDP) to the Koreans on 11 November. By then it had 233 operational locomotives. The problem was the shortage of railcars. The 3rd TMRS estimated it needed about 8,700, but the KNR had about 7,000 and 500 were in bad shape. This caused delays in turn-around time and did not allow time to take cars off circulation for routine maintenance.³

On 1 November, however, the Chinese poured across the border driving the Eighth Army back to the 38th Parallel. The Chinese threat to Seoul forced the 3rd TMSR to relocate its headquarters back to Taegu on 18 December. The railroad was used to expedite as much material as possible south. On 1 January 1951, the 714th TROB moved back to Pusan to run rail operations of Taegu.

The 712th TROB was a US Army Reserve unit sponsored by Reading Railroad Company. The 712th was alerted in late July or early August 1950 and called into active duty on 5 September 1950. At the time, the 712th was made up of 16 officers and 60 enlisted men, most from the Reading Railroad, a few from the Central Railroad of New Jersey, and a few with no railroad affiliation other than an interest in railroads. At Fort Eustis, while the cadre was training, fillers started to arrive to bring the battalion up to its authorized strength of 880. Many of these people had some railroad background and were quickly slotted into berths. Others were given "Block-Operators" training or for those who went to "C" Company, into T&E service, workouts on the Fort Eustis railroad. Upon completion of the training, the 712th TROB left Fort Eustis in early December bound for Korea by way of Japan. The 712th TROB arrived on 5 January 1951 and moved to Sindong, then Yongchon, and to Taegu, where it ran railroad operations from Taegu north to YDP and across the Han River into Seoul.⁴

² Gray, *Railroading in Eighteen Countries*.

³ 714th Transportation Battalion History in the Historical Files of the US Army Transportation Center and School.

⁴ 712th Transportation Battalion History in the Historical Files of the US Army Transportation Center and School.

On 20 February 1951, the 764th TRSB returned to Japan, less its personnel and equipment, which were consolidated into 765th TRSB. In June and July 1951, the war settled into a stalemate roughly along the 38th Parallel, and the 3rd TMRS turned over a substantial part of the Korean rail back to the Koreans. On 2 August 1951, the 714th TROB turned its functions over to the 724th TROB, which had arrived on 25 June 1951, and returned to Fort Eustis. The 724th TROB, a US Army Reserve unit sponsored by the Pennsylvania Railroad operated rail yards in and around Pusan and trains north to Taegu, then handed responsibility of rail operations over to the 712th TROB. In late 1951, diesel-electric locomotives began to arrive in Korea with trained military crews to operate them.

At Fort Eustis, the 714th Transportation Battalion, along with the 729th TROB and 756th TRSB were attached to the 702nd Transportation Railway Grand Division. The 764th TRSB was inactivated in Japan on 21 November 1951 and the 712th TROB was inactivated in Korea on 20 January 1955. The 765th TRSB was also inactivated in Korea on 1 December 1955. The 765th TRSB had earned two Meritorious Unit Commendations for 1950-1951 and 1951-1952, plus the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.

Vietnam War

On 1 March 1963, the US Army redesignated the unit as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 765th Transportation Battalion (Aircraft Maintenance and Support) then activated it at Fort Benning, Georgia, on 26 March 1963.

The 765th Trans Battalion arrived at Vung Tau, Vietnam, on 10 September 1964 and became operational a month later. It was attached to the 34th General Support Group on 24 January 1966. The 765th provided the 611th Transportation Company (Direct Support) at Vinh Long while retaining the 330th, 338th Transportation Companies and the 317th Light Equipment Maintenance Company (General Support) with the Headquarters at Vung Tau. LTC Robert J. Dillard commanded the battalion from September 1964 to May 1965. LTC John D. O'Donohue commanded the battalion.

The 765th Transportation Battalion earned two Meritorious Unit Commendations for 1964-1965, 1966-1967, 1967-1968, 1968-1970. This made it the most decorated Transportation Corps battalion.

Training Battalion

On Saturday, 30 July 1988, the 765th Transportation Battalion was reactivated at Murphy Field under the command of LTC Philip E. Brou, Jr. with Gerald Kahler as the command sergeant major. The battalion was attached to the 8th Transportation Brigade. The 765th was selected for reactivation because it had 28 campaign credits, eight Meritorious Unit Commendations and three foreign decorations. This was far more than any other Transportation Corps battalion considered. Prior to the activation of the 765th, 8th Transportation Brigade only had the 1st Battalion and the 71st Transportation Battalion. The 765th picked up the following companies:

Headquarters Company, USATCFE (from 71st Transportation Battalion)

1st Staff and Faculty Company (USAALS) (from 1st Battalion)

2nd Staff and Faculty Company (T School) (from 71st Transportation Battalion)
3rd Staff and Faculty Company (USAALS) (from 1st Battalion)
Military Police Company (from 71st Transportation Battalion)

On 31 July 1990, LTC John C. Welch assumed command of the battalion from LTC Brou in time for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. During Operation Dessert Storm in 1991, 22 reservists were attached to the 1st Staff and Faculty to provide additional instructional support for USAALS. The 2nd Staff and Faculty also sent out a number of mobile training teams (MTT) to train Reserve units. The MP Company provided ten MPs to provide port security at the Newport News Marine Terminal. It also sent four NCOs and two privates with the 800th MP Brigade to Desert Storm and one NCO and four MPs to augment 555th MP Company at Fort Lee, Virginia.

In the early 60's, the office that handled international students was called the "Allied Training Office" (ATO), which was affiliated with the Secretary of the Transpiration School. It became the International Military Student Office (IMSO) in 1986 and was later activated as the F Company of the 765th Battalion on 4 June 1993. Its mission was to provide administrative support, training management and to establish an information program for all International Military Student Students undergoing training at Fort Eustis.

So in 1993, the 765th provided command and control of the following:
Headquarters Company, US Army Transportation Center, Fort Eustis
1st Staff and Faculty Company (USAALS)
2nd Staff and Faculty Company (Trans School)
3rd Staff and Faculty Company (USAALS)
F Company (International Military Student Officer)
Military Police Company

The 2nd Staff and Faculty was disbanded.

In 2001, the Training and Augmentation Detachment was redesignated the 508th Transportation Company. According to COL John Race, Chief of Staff, the detachment had been the 508th before. He had commanded the 508th before so he directed that the detachment would be reflagged as the 508th. He consequently donated a number of memorabilia to the company. The 508th Transportation Company was attached to 765th Transportation Battalion on 21 September 2001. Although a TDA training unit, it had previously been attached to 6th Transportation Battalion of 7th Transportation Group, a TOE unit. This had been done because the school did not have any funding for the company. As a TDA unit, Lineage and Honors at the Center of Military History would not grant it a numerical designation, but the company called itself the 508th anyway. The problem is that although the 508th had been a school company before, the current company was a provisional designation and therefore could not officially retain the lineage and honors of the previous unit with that designation. The Soldiers did not care and took pride in the history anyway.

11 September 2001, terrorists hijacked three airline jets and flew one into the Pentagon and the other two into the World Trade Towers. Fort Eustis immediately closed down. On 13 September, everyone returned to normal duties. This event changed the normal operations of the MP Company. Force Protection became a major issue. By 16 November, the number of personnel needed to provide guards at the front gates, airfield, QRF, Third Port and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) had reduced from 283 to 127. 94 7th Group soldiers manned the front gate at Fort Eustis to include the Quick Reaction Force (QRF). Fort Story only required six guards. The quick reaction security force was on stand by in the event of trouble that the gate guard could not handle. All gate guards wore kevlar helmets, body armor and LBE.

On 15 October, the Chief of Transportation directed the organization of the USATC Military Police Battalion (Provisional) “to provide Law and Order and Force Protection for the US Army Transportation Center, Fort Eustis, Virginia.” On 3 October, thirty-five soldiers from the 2174th Garrison Support Unit (MP) out of Salem, Virginia, and on 8 October, 96 soldiers from the 367th Military Police Company from Horsham, Pennsylvania, were assigned to the Provisional MP Battalion (Provisional). LTC Scott Kerr became the provisional battalion commander. On 8 November, the 221st Military Police Detachment was attached from the 765th Transportation Battalion to the MP Battalion. BG Robert Dail’s intent was that the MP has a greater presence at the front gate and relieves the burden of force protection from the soldiers of 7th Transportation Group. Thirty soldiers of the 367th MP Battalion, which had arrived on 8 October, did not complete its on-the-job-training (OJT) at Fort Monroe until Saturday, 17 November. The MP Battalion (Provisional) held its activation ceremony at 1100 on 14 December adjacent to Bldg 812.

On Tuesday, 6 November, an interesting incident occurred. A suspicious white powder was discovered inside two elevators at the Deployment Support Command Military Traffic Management building. With a growing fear of anthrax letters, someone called the MP station at 0902. Investigators Regan Lipinski and Tavio Peace determined that the situation was serious enough to call CID. MPI with the help of supervisors quarantined the building. Meanwhile two firefighters in dressed in chemical suits and breathing apparatus searched the building. The occupants evacuated to Jacobs Theater where a medic took the vital signs of four personnel. The HAZMAT decontamination trailer had all the equipment to scrub the MPs and firefighters who cleared the building. As it turned out the white substance was not anthrax, but the incident provided a rehearsal for such a discovery.

On 18 December, BG (P) Dail directed the implementation of a barrier plan for buildings 210, Post Headquarters, and 233, the EOC. The barriers blocked designated access roads and restricted parking from within 25 meters of the buildings. This was to eliminate the opportunity of a terrorist bomb attack on critical command centers on post. All the doors in Building 210 were locked restricting entrance to one facing the parking lot. The 7th Group would provide two guards for access control and to provide shuttle service to Building 210 from the Overflow parking lot during the hours 0600 to 1900. Once implemented, it was determined that the shuttle was not needed until 0700 since ample

parking spaces were available for early arrivals. Visitors complained of waiting too long for the shuttle. Vendors and UPS delivery van had the biggest complaints since the new parking increased the time of their deliveries. In anticipation of a possible traffic problem with cars exiting onto Lee Boulevard, the MPs posted an MP at the intersection for traffic control. Only one section was identified for designated and handicap parking. Once implemented, it was determined that there was not enough handicap parking spaces.

The 2174th MP Detachment and 367th MP Company completed their one-year tour on active duty and began their demobilization on 23 September 2002. The 3d Battalion, 115th Field Artillery (Tennessee National Guard) took its place as part of NOBLE EAGLE II. One battery augmented the MPs at Fort Story, another battery to Fort Monroe and the remainder stayed at Fort Eustis. LTC Scott Kerr remained on active duty to command the MP (Provisional) Battalion.

In 2002, 8th Transportation Brigade realigned companies among the battalions. F Company moved from the 765th Transportation Battalion to the 71st Transportation Battalion on 2 January. The lettered Companies A through D would be in the 1/222nd Aviation and E through H in the 71st Transportation Battalion. Essentially the 71st Transportation Battalion had all the non-aviation school companies and the 765th was a “catch-all” battalion for garrison units. LTC Randall T. Arnold assumed command of the 765th Transportation Battalion from LTC Kenneth S. Lundgren on 12 June 2002 and the battalion provided command of the following:

Headquarters Company, US Army Transportation Center, Fort Eustis

1st Staff and Faculty Company (USAALS)

3rd Staff and Faculty Company (USAALS)

F Company (International Military Student Officer)

The 8th Brigade also worked with TRADOC to adequately resource the 508th Transportation Company to increase its ability to support tough, challenging and realistic training for OES, BNCOC and AIT soldiers during their integrated, multi-echelon field training exercises. A personnel survey was completed with the end of the equipment survey on 11 November 2002. Adjustments to the TDA would go into effect in FY05.⁵

The Provisional MP Battalion, commanded by LTC Scott Kerr (USAR), was inactivated on 30 September. This coincided with the loss of the 2174th MP Detachment, from Salem, Virginia, and the 367th MP Company, from Horsham, Pennsylvania, whose tours on active duty ended. These units were activated for the purpose of force protection as a result of the terrorist attacks on 9/11. The 221st MP Detachment was returned to the control of the 71st Battalion on 24 September. LTC Kerr remained on active duty working in DPTMSEC responsible for force protection. The Provisional Battalion received the Army Meritorious Unit Award for its service.⁶

HHD, 8th Brigade completed its move from Building 705 to Building 1012 on 20 February 2003. This move resulted from the separation of the Assistant School

⁵ Chief of Transportation, “Significant Activities Report,” October 2002.

⁶ SPC Charles Siler, “MP Battalion Inactivation,” *The Wheel*, Sep 26, 2002.

Commandant duties from that of the 8th Brigade Commander. The 8th Brigade Commander could then focus his attention on the soldierization process. To effectively supervise this process, the 8th Brigade Headquarters had to move to the vicinity of its subordinate battalion headquarters. The 8th Brigade became fully operational in its new headquarters, previously the 765th Battalion Headquarters. The 765th Battalion Headquarters moved to Building 1011. MG Dail directed that Garrison Region spend a half million dollars on renovating the building so it would be every bit representative of the first rate Brigade leadership and soldiers who train there.⁷

On 16 March 2004, the 202nd Military Police Company was activated at Fort Eustis under the command of CPT William Neal. The first sergeant was 1SG Michael Hawkins. The company was attached to the 765th Transportation Battalion. The company had three platoons and a headquarters. CPT Neal had arrived in January 2003 to organize the company. The MP company was the first current Regular Army designated with an enemy prisoner of war (EPW) mission. All the others were in the Reserve and Guard component. His NCOs began arriving throughout the year. SSG Terry Dunlap and about four other MPs had actual experience in EPW. SSG Dunlap served at Guantanamo Bay. He would provide the subject matter expertise for training and organization of the company. The first increment of personnel arrived in November 2003 and were temporarily assigned to the 221st MP Detachment and were used for law enforcement. The lieutenants did not arrive until the summer of 2004.

The 202nd Military Police Company trained at Fort A. P. Hill culminated with an ARTEP. From then on the company began preparing for mobilization for overseas deployment. The company completed its 72-hour Detainee Operation Validation in November. The 6632nd Military Police Company (USAR), from California, played the role of the detainees and the 716th MP Battalion from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, provided the evaluation. Upon completion of the validation, the 202nd MP Company was ready to deploy.⁸ On 29 December, the 202nd MP Company deployed out of Langley Air Force Base for a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

The 221st MP Detachment was also attached to the 765th and received its first three dogs of its K9 section on 27 February 2004. The first three dogs were trained for patrolling and explosive detection. The next three were trained in sniffing narcotics.⁹

By 2005, the 8th Transportation Brigade (Training) comprised of three training battalions: the 71st Transportation Battalion, 1/222nd Aviation, and the 765th Transportation Battalion. The 765th consisted of the following:

Headquarters Company, US Army Transportation Center, Fort Eustis

1st Staff and Faculty Company (USAALS)

3rd Staff and Faculty Company (USAALS)

508th Transportation Company (Provisional)

221st Military Police Company

⁷ Chief of Transportation's Significant Activities Report (SIGACTS), 29 May 2003.

⁸ Pvt Steven Cooke, "202 MP Co. confident, ready to deploy," *The Wheel*, November 24, 2004.

⁹ Interview with 1SG Brent Bacon by Richard Killblane, 4 March 2004.

202nd Military Police Company
838th Military Police Company

In 2005, a TRADOC manpower survey team had come down, looked at the 765th Transportation Battalion and recommended the Transportation Center and School inactivate it, otherwise they would. The Battalion's mission was no longer valid since it was a "catch-all" unit. Over the last three years with the application of manpower reduction initiatives such as TAA-09 Enlisted Authorization Reduction, SL-10 Authorization Reduction, TAA-11 Requirements Reduction, and 71L Elimination, Fort Eustis saw significant reductions in critical support elements, specifically within the 508th Transportation Company in driver support. TAA-11 also eliminated the commander position of the 508th. The Transportation School researched alternatives for sources of authorizations to provide training support, but TRADOC provided no additional resources. Instead manpower trends projected further decreases in authorizations.¹⁰

MG Brian Geehan made the decision to inactivate the 765th Transportation Battalion based on the changing environment in the 8th Transportation Brigade. Initial Entry Training (IET) student population in the 8th Brigade had declined in the past five years. This decline in student population reduced span of control requirements and thus reduced justification for a third battalion headquarters. Simultaneously, authorizations for critical positions in the Brigade were significantly reduced. Reductions in critical support positions were made at significantly higher rates than the reduction in student population. At that time the 8th Brigade provided direct support to training for the US Army Transportation Center and School. Current and projected TDAs did not document sufficient authorizations in key staff and Direct Support to Training Event (DSTE) positions.¹¹

While the inactivation of the 765th Transportation Battalion was not an ideal solution, some benefits existed. The companies of the 765th would be attached to both the 71st Battalion and 1/222nd. Span of control of the two remaining battalion headquarters would increase to eight companies per battalion – supportable because of the co-location with the Brigade headquarters. The 18 authorizations recovered from HHD, 765th Transportation Battalion would remain in the 8th Transportation Brigade and be programmed against valid, critical requirements particularly against DSTE positions in the 508th Transportation Company at a loss of ten military requirements. Similarly, the office spaces within the building currently occupied by 765th Battalion would be redistributed within 8th Brigade as well as the equipment and furnishings. The 765th Transportation Battalion was scheduled for inactivation on 11 June 2006.¹²

On 13 May 2005, the Secretary of Defense published his BRAC recommendations, which required the consolidation of similar branch centers and schools to single posts for better

¹⁰ COL Donald D. Drummer, Memorandum for Chief of Staff Resource Management (Mr. Scully), United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, Bldg 5G, Fort Monroe, 76251-5000, Subject: AR5-10, Stationing Summary – 765th Transportation Battalion," 30 August 2005 and telephone conversation with Craig DeFronzo, DRM, with Richard Killblane, 4 October 2005.

¹¹ "Stationing Summary for the Inactivation of the 765th Transportation Battalion" n.d.

¹² "Stationing Summary for the Inactivation of the 765th Transportation Battalion" n.d.

efficiency in training. The Ordnance and Transportation Centers and Schools would move to Fort Lee, Virginia and consolidate with the Quartermaster Center and School to become a part of the Sustainment Center of Excellence. The 765th was finally inactivated under the command of LTC Earl Freeman Kennedy on 11 June 2006. After the inactivation, the 71st Battalion picked up the 508th Transportation Company, the 202nd MP Company and the 221st MP Detachment. F Company was inactivated.

TRADOC established the staffing standard, which stated there must be an average daily school load of 300 students for a company, and there must be between three and seven companies in a school battalion, with five the optimum number. TRADOC also took the staff and faculty companies out of the SCOE structure and placed the personnel to the Brigade HHCs.¹³

With the loss of the staff and faculty, the Transportation School had something less than 300 personnel not even enough to fill the company requirement, so COL Davis recommended inactivating the 8th Transportation Brigade, 71st Transportation Battalion and realigning the 1/222nd Aviation Regiment under USAALS. So the 765th Transportation Battalion would not even have survived the BRAC decision.¹⁴

¹³ COL Jimmie Davis telephone interview by Richard Killblane, November 26, 2007.

¹⁴ Keir Sterling email to Richard Killblane, Monday, November 26, 2007.