

6th TRANSPORTATION BATTALION HISTORY

TURLEY BARRACKS



Distinguished Unit Insignia



Coat of Arms



Transportation Corps Insignia

The 6th Transportation Battalion is a transportation battalion of the United States Army first constituted in 1943. The 6th Transportation Battalion has participated in World War II, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Operation New Dawn.

The battalion's inactivation ceremony was held on 28 August 2012.

LINEAGE

Constituted 17 June 1943 in the Army of the United States as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 6th Quartermaster Troop Transport Battalion

Activated 26 August 1943 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts

Reorganized and redesignated 20 November 1943 as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 6th Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile

Converted and redesignated 1 August 1946 as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 6th Transportation Corps Truck Battalion

Redesignated 22 April 1947 as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 6th Transportation Truck Battalion

Inactivated 19 January 1949 in Germany

Redesignated 16 July 1952 as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 6th Transportation Truck Battalion, and allotted to the Regular Army

Activated 15 August 1952 at Fort Eustis, Virginia

Reorganized and redesignated 20 February 1959 as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 6th Transportation Battalion

Inactivated 14 June 1972 at Oakland Army Base, California

Activated 16 March 1979 at Fort Eustis, Virginia

CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

World War II: Northern France; Rhineland; Central Europe

WORLD WAR II

The battalion was constituted on 17 June 1943 as the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD), 6th Quartermaster Troop Transport Battalion. The battalion was activated on 26 August 1943 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. It was reorganized and redesignated as the HHD, 6th Quartermaster Battalion (Mobile) on 20 November 1943. The battalion deployed to Europe on where it supported the drive from Northern France, through the Rhineland and into Central Europe.

On 30 March 1945, the battalion was attached to the 12th Army Group and stationed at Diedrich, Germany. On 14 June 1945, the 6th Battalion was attached to the 550th Quartermaster Group for all administration and operations. On the following day the battalion was relieved from assignment to the 9th US Army and assigned to the 7th US Army. During this period the battalion was in Ledeban Kaserne, Hildersheim, State of Lower Saxony, Germany. At this time, the battalion had six operating units under its command.

On 2 July 1945, the battalion departed Hildersheim and went to Wahern, State of Hessen, Germany. There the battalion continued its mission of supporting Class I and III supply points in addition to all bakery units within the area. On 8 July the battalion was attached to the 56th Quartermaster Base Depot for administration and operations.

ARMY OF OCCUPATION:

The battalion moved again on 11 August 1945, near the Fulda Gap at Hersfeld, State of Hessen, Germany (the city was later renamed Bad Hersfeld) but the main operations for the Battalion took place in Kassel where the battalion established a forward base to service the units within the area. At Kassel the battalion commanded twelve operational units.

During 1945, the following companies were attached to the battalion for operations:

- 3011th Quartermaster Bakery Company
- 3013th Quartermaster Bakery Company
- 3035th Quartermaster Bakery Company
- 3038th Quartermaster Bakery Company
- 348th Quartermaster Depot Company
- 195th Quartermaster Gasoline Supply Company
- 197th Quartermaster Gasoline Supply Company
- 832nd Quartermaster Gasoline Supply Company
- 842nd Quartermaster Gasoline Supply Company
- 607th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company
- 608th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company
- 579th Quartermaster Laundry Company
- 87th Quartermaster Railhead Company
- 93rd Quartermaster Railhead Company
- 552nd Quartermaster Railhead Company
- 554th Quartermaster Railhead Company
- 231st Quartermaster Salvage Collecting Company
- 233rd Quartermaster Salvage Collecting Company
- 540th Quartermaster Salvage Repair Company
- 978th Quartermaster Service Company
- 1191st Quartermaster Service Company
- 3104th Quartermaster Service Company
- 3130th Quartermaster Service Company
- 3168th Quartermaster Service Company
- 3170th Quartermaster Service Company

- 3195th Quartermaster Service Company
- 3216th Quartermaster Service Company
- 3217th Quartermaster Service Company
- 3218th Quartermaster Service Company
- 3230th Quartermaster Service Company
- 3279th Quartermaster Service Company
- 4093rd Quartermaster Service Company
- 4183rd Quartermaster Service Company
- 4185th Quartermaster Service Company
- 4191st Quartermaster Service Company
- 8015th Quartermaster Service Company
- 8027th Quartermaster Service Company

REF: transportation.army.mil/History/unit.



3011TH QM BAKERY COMPANY 1944, photograph by backtonormandy.org.



CPL Harry Weber and wife Edith. 544th QM Railroad Company. Photograph by Weber family.

ANOTHER SOLDIER AND THE QUARTERMASTERS



A BIOGRAPHY OF A QUARTERMASTER AND
THE SUPPORT MISSION OF THE 231ST
QUARTERMASTER SALVAGE COLLECTION
COMPANY DURING WORLD WAR II

DENNIS G. NICHOLS

Photograph by Abebooks.com.

During the next eight months, the battalion was gradually relieved of its motley Quartermaster units. Many of the companies were inactivated or returned to the US, which kept the battalion in a constant state of flux. During one quarter, the battalion was headquarters for 25 separate Quartermaster units.

TURLEY BARRACKS:

In April 1946 when the battalion came under the command of the Third Army, it had a homogeneous command of 14 Quartermaster truck companies, 11 of which were located at Turley Barracks, Mannheim. Seven of these were provisional units manned by Polish personnel with one American officer and four enlisted men to supervise operations.

In addition to the above units, the battalion had one unit in Darmstadt supplying the community with necessary commodities, and another unit at Hanau supporting the transportation needs for the Hanau Air Depot. The remaining units were in Asperg, State of Baden- Wurttemberg where driver and maintenance personnel were drawn from a waiting list of German civilians. This unit supported the transportation needs of the entire Ludwigsburg area. The major problem encountered during this period was maintenance of combat worn vehicles and the shortage of qualified officers and enlisted.

In June 1946, the battalion was placed under the Continental Base Section, however, the headquarters remained at Turley Barracks, Mannheim. From July to September 1946, the mission of the battalion became the restoration of combat worn vehicles and the transport of supplies and equipment varied within the different areas.

On 1 August 1946, the battalion was converted and redesignated as the HHD, 6th Transportation Corps Truck Battalion. Quartermaster truck units were given to the Transportation Corps following World War II.

In the latter part of October 1946, there was a critical shortage of food in the German consumer markets, which was aggravated by the fact that the German transportation infrastructure at the time was inadequate to transport recently harvested produce from the farms to the cities. A request for additional vehicles for the transportation of this produce was approved and a program was drafted and immediately put into effect. The original plan was conceived as a program to aid the ill-conditioned and insufficient number of commercial German trucks in hauling the autumn harvest to market. However, due to the lack of heating fuel, a need especially acute in the cities, the initial plan was altered to include the movement of fuels. The need for this fuel had become so imperative that if this movement were not put into effect as expeditiously as possible, coal shipments from the United States would not have been forwarded directly. Operation SPUD called for local community commanders to assemble the hauling requirements for the area under their jurisdiction.

The 6th Transportation Battalion, immediately set his forces into action by sending half of the operative companies into the Pforzheim, Goppingen, and Karlsruhe areas and the remainder proceeded full time operations. The cargo hauled included potatoes, firewood, grain, and several other foodstuffs. During the operation several difficulties arose. Foremost among these

was the heartfelt manpower shortage which increased under the stresses of a major operation. The vacancies, due mainly to the rapid redeployment of military personnel, were filled for the most part of German civilians' drivers. As these drivers were, in general, poorly trained and lacked the necessary experience, their knowledge of vehicle maintenance was limited. An operational slowdown was the inevitable outcome of this policy of civilian vehicle driving. Also, many vehicles were still combat worn, had not yet been replaced and had only undergone the most urgent repairs. Nevertheless, approximately 189,826 tons of supplies were carried and a total of 1,583,900 miles were driven during these three months of the operation.

This assistance furnished transportation for all critical farm products and sufficient fuels to enable the German agencies to provide for their needs before the winter had set in. The 6th Transportation Battalion, as did many other transportation organizations completed its mission with the great success and Operations SPUD ended on 31 December 1946.

As a credit to this battalion and to the other units which participated in the operation, which was of such great assistance to the German economy, the following words from the Bamberg Newspaper, Fraenkischer Tag, may be quoted with pride: "In order to comprehend the generosity with which the victors are treating us one should ask oneself if the German in Poland would have placed trucks at the disposal of the Polish population to save the harvest." This is both a complement to our American way of life and to the drivers who toiled the many hours, carrying their cargo to the centers of need.

On 22 April 1947, the Battalion was redesignated the HHD, 6th Transportation Truck Battalion and participated in the Berlin Airlift. Prior to the end of World War II, the Allies had agreed to divide the responsibility for occupation of Germany among them. Similarly, the German capitol of Berlin, which was in Soviet sector, was divided by the occupying powers. On 30 November 1945, the Allied Control Council officially approved in writing an air corridor between the western zone and Berlin.

In 1948, Russia decided to roll its occupied countries into the Soviet Union. The first challenge after the war came when the Soviet Union closed off freight traffic of its former Allies into Berlin hoping that they would turn their portion of the capitol over. The blockade of Berlin was imposed by the Russians on 21 June 1948. The US Army and Air Force responded by delivering supplies to Berlin through the air corridor. Operation Vittles had its airborne birth on 26 June 1948. Rhein-Main and Wiesbaden became the Airports of Embarkation (APOE) with TC Airhead Tempelhof in Berlin the Airport of Debarkation (APOD). The 67th Transportation Truck Company and the 6th Transportation Battalion hauled the cargo to the Airport of Embarkation at Rhein-Main Air Base. The 2nd Traffic Control Group opened another APOE at Wiesbaden Air Base on 29 June. The airlift delivered an average of 8,000 tons per day. 4 May 1949, Western Allies and the Soviet Union agreed to lift the blockade. The Allies continued airlift for three more months to build up reserve stocks. The US Army proved that it could support a massive operation by air.

The 6th Battalion remained in Germany until its inactivation on 19 January 1949, and the 28th Transportation Battalion was activated the next day. On 29 January 1949, its colors were returned to the United States.

The U.S. Army either provided or hired and supervised the truckers, transporters, loaders, and unloaders for the Berlin Airlift. European Command furnished and handled all cargo destined for Berlin. Its personnel supervised the "The 66th Transportation Truck Company (Heavy) brought fifty-four trucks and eighty-four trailers to Wiesbaden.

Transport from ports, depots, and other sources in the Western zones to terminal points at Rhein-Main and Wiesbaden; transported the cargo from the terminal points to the airplanes; and, once it reached Berlin, transported it from the airplanes to the customers in Berlin. In doing so, the army relied upon a coordinated rail and truck system developed largely through trial and error. As noted earlier, EUCOM had learned many lessons during the Little Lift in April 1948 and had continued to deliver tons of food and coal to Berlin in the interim between April and the June crisis. It thus proved easy to activate an "aerial port of embarkation" at Rhein-Main several days before the Berlin Airlift began and to begin forwarding supplies to the base. On June 21, the Logistics Branch at Headquarters EUCOM learned of the need for food supplies in Berlin and ordered train loads of flour from army depots to Rhein-Main. This supply was thus available a few days later when Colonel Howley in Berlin asked for flour in the first airlift deliveries. Concurrently, the European Quartermaster Supply Depot at Giessen sent additional supplies to Rhein Main while the 6th Transportation Truck Battalion (MOBILE) mobilized the 67th Heavy Transportation Truck Company. On June 29, the Army Transportation Corps established a second traffic control point at Wiesbaden Air Base, while the 66th Transportation Truck Company (Heavy) brought fifty-seven trucks and eighty-four 10-ton trailers to Wiesbaden from the Munich area on June 29th to move supplies.

During the first five weeks of the airlift, EUCOM was responsible for procuring and transporting commodities from sources throughout the zone of occupation to the bases at Rhein-Main and Wiesbaden. It operated food trains from the port at Bremen to storage facilities at terminal points in the Frankfurt and Wiesbaden area. From there, Army trucks delivered the commodities to Rhein-Main or Wiesbaden as needed. Coal was the highest quality available from the mines in the Ruhr Valley. From the Ruhr it went by rail to dealers in Frankfurt, Hanau, Offenbach, and Mannheim, where merchants bagged it in regulation U.S. Army duffel bags. EUCOM's goal was to maintain a minimum of one-day airlift of vital commodities at the two bases. The Transportation Corps also managed the delivery of aviation fuel from the ports to storage points in Germany for the airlift. Ultimately, three ships and 1,500 rail tank cars provided the necessary fuel, which amounted to 15.6 million gallons monthly. The Airlift Field Operations officer had a chart that listed all rail cars and the type of supplies each contained. Upon his request, the air base transportation officer notified the German railroad agency to make up a train with a specified cargo. Rail cars for Rhein-Main went to the railhead built to support the airlift at Zeppelinheim, just across the autobahn, or to the air base railhead. At that location, six-man teams of workers loaded the cargo on trucks pulling 10-ton trailers and took it to the control point near the aircraft loading area. This holding and consignment area was of absolute necessity to ensure the smooth flow of the airlift because it ensured that cargo was always on hand for immediate loading on the aircraft. Nearly to the end of the airlift, Rhein-Main lacked warehouse space, so between two hundred and three hundred trailers were kept always loaded. The control point maintained its ready reserve of loaded trailers in three lines. A ready line of loaded trucks was immediately ready to go; the second "working" or "active" line was ready to be picked up from the railheads; and a "reserve" line-maintained trucks on hand if needed" 57 Army traffic control personnel directed trucks from the ready line at the control point to specific aircraft. When the control tower notified the control point that an empty plane was within ten minutes of landing, the lead truck was dispatched to the

proper hardstand complete with a flight clerk and a crew of ten laborers. Noncommissioned Officers in jeeps whizzed around the base ensuring that everything ran smoothly. Rhein-Main lacked a loading ramp almost to the end of the airlift, so the aircraft were loaded at their hardstands. Wiesbaden, in contrast, had a loading ramp, as well as a more compact physical layout.

Ultimately, centralization of cargo at each base by category facilitated the process. The loading of coal and food at Rhein-Main enabled an emphasis on speed and efficiency at that base. After July 26, Wiesbaden handled a wide variety of bulky, oversized, and heavy cargo that often required the use of forklifts or

other mechanical loading equipment. Consequently, loading at Wiesbaden tended to take more time.

Additionally, since such cargo was best carried by C-82s and the lone C-74, these aircraft usually flew out of Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Wiesbaden, Germany.



“The 66th Heavy Transportation Truck Company brought fifty-four trucks and eighty-four trailers to Wiesbaden.” American trucks with their German loading crews waiting to load airlift aircraft at Wiesbaden, July 20, 1948. (U.S. Air Force.)

66th Transportation Company (Heavy) loading cargo at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Wiesbaden, Germany on 20 July 1948. Photograph by US Air Force.

COLD WAR:

In 1949, Russia detonated its first atomic bomb and the Communist Chinese drove the Nationalist Chinese from the mainland onto the island of Formosa. The Soviet Union formed out of the buffer states that Russia kept after World War II. This created the Iron curtain and

the United States, and the rest of Europe formed the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO). These acts divided the world into a conflict between the communist governments and democratic governments. The superpowers avoid direct conflict but instead fought each other indirectly in a series of conflicts in Third World countries. This face-off between the superpowers was known as the Cold War. This threat required the United States to maintain a large standing army during a time of relative peace.

In August 1956, the 6th Transportation Battalion was designated as a "Gyroscope" unit. The battalion then conducted an eight-week training program, six weeks of which were spent on field problems at Camp A. P. Hill, Virginia. On 11 March 1957, the battalion left the United States and arrived at Panzer Kaserne, Boeblingen, Germany, on 21 March 1957, for a two-year unit rotation. It replaced the 29th Transportation Battalion (Truck), which returned to the United States. It picked up the 62nd Medium Truck Company was attached to the 10th Transportation Highway Group. In Germany, the 6th Battalion formed part of the line of communication that stretched from the ports of Northern France to US combat divisions in Germany.

During the Cold War, US Army Europe established its line of communication back to the ports of Northern France. The 37th Transportation Highway Group had responsibility for the first leg of the line haul. It handed off cargo to the 10th Group which then delivered to the garrisons and units in the field.

GYROSCOPE:

The 62nd Medium Truck Company was relieved by the 126th Medium Truck as part of Operation GYROSCOPE and rotated back to Fort Eustis in March 1957.

After the settling in period, the 6th Battalion looked to a busy year. In July, the Battalion hosted the 7th Army Special Troops Drivers Proficiency Contest and participated in a farewell ceremony for COL Carol K. Maffout prior to his departure for 7th Army. The Battalion again played host to the 7th Army Support Command Driver Proficiency Contest in September in July 1958. On 20 February 1959, the 6th Battalion was redesignated as the HHD, 6th Transportation Battalion. The 6th Transportation Battalion "Gyroscoped" back to Fort Eustis, Virginia, in April 1959 and was the last battalion to do so from Europe.

In August 1962, a section of the 6th Transportation Battalion headquarters and the 151st Transportation Company deployed to Europe to support the Berlin Crisis logistics effort; the elements returned in August 1962.

On 22 August 1962, the 62nd Transportation Company (Medium) disembarked at Hampton Roads, Virginia from Germany and was attached to the 27th Battalion only for a short time that year then it was attached to the 6th Transportation Battalion.

In March 1963, the 62nd Transportation Company (Medium), 6th Transportation Battalion was assigned the mission of Headquarters Company (Provisional) to support the Joint Task Force

(JTF) 4 Headquarters. In June, the 62nd Transportation Company (Medium) participated in Exercise BIG STEP II at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. In October and November 1963, the battalion participated in Operation BIG LIFT and the headquarters airlifted to Ramstein Air Base in Germany on 22 October 1963 where it moved to Lorsch Woods outside Viernheim. The battalion received many commendations for outstanding work during Operation BIG LIFT including a letter from the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Operation Gyroscope was a United States Army program implemented between 1955 and 1959 during the Cold War that modified the replacement system so that entire divisions were rotated out of overseas service together rather than as individuals. The program also applied to smaller non-divisional units, and was primarily used to exchange units between the United States and forces stationed in Germany under United States Army Europe. The system aimed to increase retention rates by boosting morale and unit cohesion with the added incentive of improving military family stability through keeping soldiers together for most of their careers. The program initially increased morale, but the Army was unable to keep its promises to soldiers and thus expected benefits failed to materialize, resulting in the early termination of the program after just one of the planned-three-year rotation cycles had been completed.

OPERATION BIG LIFT:

In the early morning of October 22, 1963, soldiers of the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas, lumbered up with their gear and individual weapons to an assembly of large cargo aircraft from the Military Air Transportation Service. Their destination was the front-line of the Cold War's Central Europe. Over the next 64 hours, the division, two artillery battalions, and assorted transportation units from around the country made the day-long flight across the Atlantic. An air strike force went as well. Altogether, the planes made over 200 flights, ferrying some 15,000 personnel and nearly 500 tons of equipment, one quarter of which belonged to the Army. It was the largest movement of troops by air to that date.

The deployment had been ordered by the U.S. government in consultation with its NATO allies to stem a likely attack by Warsaw Pact forces into West Germany. The scenario, however, was entirely notional. Instead of being met by hundreds of enemy tanks, the incoming troops were greeted by a 250-pound cake in the shape of a tank. The operation was, in fact, a preplanned exercise, aptly named BIG LIFT. Its actual purpose, as Defense Secretary Robert McNamara announced in a September 23 press conference, was to "provide a dramatic illustration of the United States' capability for rapid reinforcement of NATO force."

Upon arriving in Europe, the soldiers made their way to strategically located depots where they collected a wide array of heavy equipment. The Army had stored the items -- enough for two divisions and ten combat support elements -- following the 1961 Berlin Crisis, when the East Germans unexpectedly built a wall through and around the city to seal off their side from the West.

They were to be available for U.S. troops that would be airlifted to Germany, should another crisis occur. After collecting the materiel, the 2d Armored met up with elements from the U.S. Seventh Army, the field command in Europe, for a week-long NATO exercise that simulated an attack along the border between East and West Germany. The exercise took place in West Germany between Darmstadt to the south and both Marburg and Hersfeld to the north. V Corps, under the command of Lt. Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, served as higher headquarters for both sides. Abrams was also the exercise director.

The 3rd Infantry Division played the enemy (ORANGE) force. Elements of the 8th Infantry Division, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, and a reinforced Panzer Grenadier Battalion from the III German Corps served as the friendly (BLUE) force. Altogether, nearly 46,000 personnel, 900 tanks, and hundreds of trucks and armored personnel carriers participated. The Air Force flew 759 sorties in support as well. Ultimately, BLUE proved victorious, but not before it was nearly overrun by ORANGE and suffered heavy damage in the partially choreographed battles.

In conjunction with the actual exercises, VII Corps, which operated along the West German/Czechoslovak border to the south of V Corps, conducted a command post exercise. The Corps simulated the steps it would take in an emergency, when the 4th Infantry Division and support elements would deploy rapidly to its zone from the United States, collect prepositioned equipment, and conduct operations.

Following the exercises in the north, troops there returned the prepositioned equipment, performed maintenance, and rested a few days. Some units participated in live-fire exercises. Between November 12 and 21, most of the U.S. based force redeployed stateside, but about 550 personnel remained to assist Seventh Army with repositioning and repairing the weaponry. The last soldiers returned home by December 4, two weeks ahead of schedule. The initial cost

for the exercise was \$5.8 million, but later estimates that included payments to Germans for property damage ran \$9 to \$20 million.

In terms of its fundamental objective -- to deploy a large force quickly overseas that would collect prepositioned equipment and use it in field exercises -- many experts at the time considered BIG LIFT a success.

In a speech slated for November 22, President Kennedy planned to tout it as proof that the nation was "prepared as never before to move substantial numbers of men in surprisingly little time to advanced positions anywhere in the world."

The address, however, was never given. Earlier that day the president was gunned down by an assassin. Not everyone concurred with Kennedy's broader assessment of the effort. Some observed that the Seventh Army had to devote tremendous resources to prepare the prepositioned equipment for the exercises; that these weapons -- mostly older M48 tanks and M-59 armored personnel carriers -- were obsolete; that the deploying units had months to plan for the event; and that they had been able to augment their staffing some 30 percent above normal.

Because of this, critics claimed, OPERATION BIG LIFT was not an accurate test of strategic airlift. General Paul L. Freeman, Jr., Commander, U.S. Army, Europe in 1963, later referred to it as the "big hoax." Despite these concerns, the underlying concept behind OPERATION BIG LIFT became a cornerstone of U.S. military strategy during and following the Vietnam War. In 1968, the Army moved two brigades and support units stateside where they were to be available for rapid deployment to Europe during an emergency.

REFORGER:

To maintain their readiness, the military (beginning in 1969) held regular exercises dubbed REFORGER (Redeployment of Forces to Germany) during which the troops were airlifted to Europe, collected prepositioned equipment, and participated in NATO field exercises, much as had occurred during OPERATION BIG LIFT. These exercises demonstrated the capability, strength, and resolve that helped the United States and our NATO Allies eventually to win the Cold War.

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Transportation Corps, 1977-2007

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