

68th ORDNANCE COMPANY, 66th ORDNANCE BATTALION
 - and -
 " B " COMPANY, 66th MAINTENANCE BATTALION
 ~ Circa 1965 through 1968 ~

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<p>THANK YOU 68th ORDNANCE COMPANY, 66th ORDNANCE BATTALION "B" COMPANY, 66th MAINTENANCE BATTALION</p>		

From the Desk & Mind's Eye Of:



**PASS IN REVIEW: 68th ORDNANCE COMPANY, 66th ORDNANCE BATTALION
- and -
" B " COMPANY, 66th MAINTENANCE BATTALION
~ Circa 1965 through 1968 ~**

I. A COURSE SET FOR KAISERSLAUTERN - "A Long & Watery Way":

Since November 1964, I had been assigned to USAOC&S and the 5th Enlisted Training Company (ETC) as a trainee, learning the Army's "Basic Skills & Knowledge" of [*then*] MOS 635.10 (DS/GS Tracked & Wheeled Vehicle) Automotive Repairman. In January 1965, I was heading into the last five weeks of the course. On the threshold of the fourth week, the scheduled curriculum was accelerated and compressed, shaving-off a full week [*plus days*] of the course, but not depriving us of any of the course subject matter/material or testing. At the truncated end-of-course, however, we weren't privileged to participate in the traditional graduation ceremony, receive graduation certificate(s), or commence "zero days" which had previously been routine during normal out-processing procedures/receipt of PCS assignment orders. This was anything but routine. We were shot through a superficial and expedited out-processing exercise and [*surprisingly for me and a couple of others*] were issued direct assignment PCS Travel Orders (TOs) . . . and then "told" to "*stand by*" in our barracks area. During this "bums rush", though, we were provided additional orders awarding us our earned MOS(s) and were notified that our graduation certificates "would follow you to your new duty station".

In the early morning hours on the last day of January we were given alert orders to "*pack-it-all-up*", "*call home and say your 'good-byes'*", and "*be ready to move out at any moment*". I was really amazed at both myself and others over how well and efficiently we were able to pack-up [*cram*] all our footlocker and wall-locker "stuff" [*all our military & personal belongings*] into the one duffle-bag and one barracks-bag we were each authorized to take with us. As "slick-sleeved" MOS-produced graduates we, naturally, weren't given "the skinny" - that was reserved for "the higher-ups" - but the intensity exhibited by all the USAOC&S Officers, NCOs, and cadre projected a sense of urgency [*most of us had*] never before witnessed in any Army organization [*up until 'now'*] - not even in Basic Training.

Around 0100 hours of the first February morning, a long line of busses had been staged in front of the 5th ETC barracks. We were herded out to specified busses, loaded our [*two authorized*] bags in the undercarriage stowage compartments, and as we filed onto the busses we were each handed the [*now*] infamous "boxed-lunch", to be eaten en-route. (*For those who don't remember, the "box lunch" included [and this was the "Deluxe" version]: two sandwiches, one multi-layered thick-cut bologna on dry-white bread and one equally thick-cut multi-layered American cheese on dry-white bread; one monster-to-peel, day old, hard-boiled egg; one [slightly-aged] pulpy Red Delicious apple [and possibly one bruised orange, as well - depending on who packed that particular "box"]; one ½ pint each of vitamin D white and chocolate milk; and two napkins, both wet from the sweating milk cartons.*)

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The convoy of busses finally pulled-out a half-hour later and we were on our way north via I-95 - on our way to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. We were going to be transported to Germany per the MSTs and, specifically, the USNS Geiger (T-AP-197) - a Navy owned and Merchant Marine operated troop-ship, which by the way was launched/commissioned in 1949. We pulled away from the dock around dawn. The fog and mist was so thick we could hardly see the Statue Of Liberty as the USNS Geiger slipped by Her on its way out to the choppy Atlantic. Before the seas "hit", we were all wondering if this wasn't the reason for all the urgency and commotion we experienced back at "OC&S". When underway, it was learned that two other troop-ships had departed during that week's timeframe, separated by two or three day increments (those being the USNS Patch and USNS Rose).



USNS GEIGER (T-AP-197)

From the crew's scuttlebutt, we surmised that it wasn't so much the urgent need to fill the thin ranks of G.I.s in USAREUR with our [individual] MOSS', but more so an issue generated by the MSTs of filling the USNS Geiger's troop manifest prior to its scheduled turn-around departure date. Regardless, we were on-board and riding the cold Atlantic swells as we would be for the next nine ocean-tossing days.

BOOTS BACK ON *Terra Firma* ~ DEUTSCHLAND ~ A NEW EXPERIENCE:

We arrived in Bremerhaven during the middle of night/early morning. The entire thousand-man troop manifest debarked the "Geiger" rather quickly while still blanketed in the dark - we couldn't get off that ol' rust-bucket fast enough. A frigid cold breeze welcomed us to northern Germany. I was processed through the Mil-Per-Cen there rather rapidly [*most probably due to my direct assignment T.O.s*]. Still in the cold and dark of night/early morning [*can't remember the time*] we were shuffled around and then re-grouped, loaded on busses, taken to the Bremerhaven HauptBahnhof (HBf), and finally herded onto one of the Army's waiting Rail Transportation Operations (RTO)-scheduled troop-trains. At the time, obviously, I had no idea of where Kaiserslautern was located nor how long the "milk-run" south would take, but it did provide the time needed to catch-up on some "shut-eye". We really couldn't get quality sleep on the "Geiger" - but "that's another story". The troop-train was not "Pullman-class", but we didn't expect the next event - Army traditions hadn't been severed, not even in Germany - once again, we "feasted" . . . the "box lunch"! *Mmm, yummy!!* Oh well.

For the hand-full of us destined for "K-town", we arrived [*I think*] in the afternoon where it was relatively warm for February and the sun was shining - a definite change from Bremerhaven. The Kaiserslautern HBf was very impressive and the comingling wafts of great food bowled me over. (I didn't realize [*how could I*] that in a year or so I'd be living in one of the more exclusive areas and homes in the hills of Casimirring, a 'bit' away from the HBf.) Anyway, outside the HBf, a well maintained M-35 ("duce-and-a-half") waited for those of us assigned to the 66th Ordnance Battalion. The driver had "troop-rolled" the cargo canvas so that we could get a glimpse of "K-town" on our way out of the city. I remember how disgraced we felt, dressed in our crumpled Class "A" Greens and then being "passed-in-review" of the "K-town" populous. "Bunk-pressing" while on-board the "Geiger" - well, let's just say . . . that feasibly was a "No-Go". Steam pressing service wasn't offered to us arriving troops before leaving the "Geiger", at the Bremerhaven Mil-Per-Cen, or anywhere, so the "A's" were a mess - having been "freshly" pulled out of our duffle-bags a "handful-of-hours" before. Never-the-less, looking forward, "K-town" and the surrounding area was one beautiful place !!

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II. The 66th ORDNANCE BATTALION ~ At First Glance:

Unit Patch: Although, initially, structured under the 7th Army and later (for a short-lived period in late 1965) under the 7th Army Support Command (7th SUPCOM), all personnel in the 66th Ordnance Battalion proudly wore the 7th Army ["Seven Steps To Hell"] patch.



Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI)/Unit Crest (UC): A DUI/UC for the 66th Ord. Bn. had been locally designed in the 1950s during its tour in Korea, but that design (per The Army Institute of Heraldry [TIOH]) was never authorized/adopted by the U.S. Army and, subsequently, was never worn outside Korea and definitely not worn in Germany. More to follow, later

1. ORGANIZATION: In February of 1965, the 66th Ordnance Battalion consisted of four DSU companies, including:

1.1. 546th Ordnance Company ("K-town", at R.O.B.)

1.1.1. The 546th was "considered" the "heavy" or "main" support element of/for the battalion.

1.2. 68th Ordnance Company ("K-town", at R.O.B.* with two remotely emplaced detachments.)

1.2.1. The 68th was the "secondary" main support of the battalion, operating two additional and remotely located detachments: one at Germersheim (Army Depot), north of Karlsruhe, and a second at Pirmasens (Army Depot), east-south-east of Zweibrücken.

1.3. 48th Ordnance Company (Baumholder)

1.4. 43rd Ordnance Company ("K-town", at Dänner Kaserne)

2. MISSION: I cannot discuss with authority the "mission statement" of the 66th Ordnance Battalion or the specific missions of each company within the battalion during my plebe period. We "new-bees" weren't briefed with that information and, therefore, assumed [*at our low "pay-grades"*] that gaining such knowledge was a "learn as you go/grow" proposition. As one might expect, during those early months, my attention was focused on "self-preservation and survival" with peripheral awareness limited to the general information provided all personnel in the 68th Ordnance Company. On the other hand, I quickly learned the operational metrics surrounding my responsibilities in the Track Section and those of the Shop Office. This, in itself, afforded the best means for widening observations and becoming more familiar with "my" Company, "our sister" companies, and the 66th Ordnance Battalion, as well. As 1965 progressed, I "aged" with the 68th Ordnance Company . . . and it's from this "line of departure" that this history of a [truly awesome] company unfolds.

2.1. When I first arrived in "K-town", and immediately "delivered" to the 68th Ord. Co., the company's primary support mission had been diverted to a larger 7th Army and USAREUR-wide mission, as had other U.S. Forces throughout the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), that of supporting the total evacuation of all U.S. Armed Forces units, personnel, property, depot stocks, et al out of France. Efforts exerted in this mission were extreme and grueling. Directly involved personnel from the 68th were obligated to a twenty-four hour, around the clock operation . . . catching breaks and cat-naps when they could. When returning to "K-town" on a turn-around leg of a sortie, however, the driver and "shot-gun" of each vehicle was switched-out.

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The 68th Ord. Co. (as well as all companies in the 66th Ord. Bn.) continued involvement in the evacuation until April or May of 1965, as I remember. Our company was void of heavy transporter vehicles, but provided our two M-62 ["gasser"], 5-ton wreckers and "crews", on a rotating basis, for this effort. The company had few M-35 duce-and-a-half cargo trucks, so they "stayed home". Four (4) of the M-35s were required to maintain company operations and, more specifically, to transport our shop personnel to/from the [*remotely located Vogelweh*] barracks and the shops in R.O.B. - and let's not forget the one (1) built-up mess hall truck - essentially used for making those all-important Class 1 runs to the Einsiedlerhof US Army QM & Class 1 Distribution Point [*located in the beautiful and hilly ENE outskirts of "K-town"*].

2.2. The 68th Ordnance Company, as part of the 66th Ordnance Battalion under the 7th Army & (later) 7th SUPCOM, was a DSU responsible for providing general area-support to elements of the 7th Army (on-condition), but having the assigned primary mission of providing DSU maintenance support to four (4) War Reserve Storage (a.k.a., "Pre-Positioned Equipment") units, those being the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th Augmentation Readiness Groups (ARGs).

2.2.1. What a job that proved to be for the organizational/unit level maintenance personnel of those units. All the ARG equipment [*at that time and for many years later*] were "stored" under "open skies" and simply covered with canvas tarps - when/if, in fact, they were. Storage sites, especially for the "line combat vehicles", were typically scattered about random landscapes with equipment most always "inserted" where they could be - located among tree-covered hills, valleys, and/or ravines. The equipment was "hell" to access, let alone pull org/unit level maintenance !! Trees provided the best "hide-in-plain-sight" options, but lacked the quintessential protective coverage expected of a long-term storage function/operation.

2.2.2. Adding to this maintenance dilemma was the reality that most all ARG equipment was of the Korean War or immediate post-Korean War vintage - all "gassers". As an Army, we were lucky that the ARG equipment was never called upon to perform their mission - go to war !! As an example, the ARG equipment we supported included: M-59 and M-75, F/T APCs; M-74, Medium and (a few) early-vintage M-51, Heavy Tank Recovery Vehicles; M-42, 40mm SP AAA; M-53, 155mm SP Arty; M-55, 8-inch SP Arty; M-52, 105mm SP Arty; M-44, 155mm SP Arty; M-48 [*carbureted AVS-1790 powered*], 90mm Medium Tanks; and so on.

2.3. The Repair Parts Supply pipe-line in those days was slow [*for our ARG support requirements - rating only a "12 Priority"*]. Most of our Track Section's DSU maintenance/repair actions involved tracked vehicle engine/transmission powerpacks. We so frequently wound-up having to "rob Peter to pay Paul" - cannibalizing/removing good parts from two "bad" packs to repair/make a third pack serviceable - one good powerpack out of three. But again, so it was.

3. SHOP FACILITIES: Here as well, I'm somewhat limited in commenting on the shop facilities for each of the four companies in the 66th Ordnance Battalion. Covering this initial period, 1965, here's what I recall. The "rest of the story" will follow as the years progress and are individually discussed.

One image that remains vividly strong in my mind was the overall layout of the Rhine Ordnance Barracks (a.k.a., "R.O.B." or, just "ROB"). One of its main distinguishing features, to a certain degree and only when "translating" a map, was the fact that ROB was [*in a sense*] "split" by the Mannheim-Saarbrücken Autobahn passing "through" the installation, although its roadbed was laid-out over a naturally elevated terrain. One hardly paid any attention to "it". It didn't interfere with navigating around the installation, although at times we had to pass through some small tunnels/underpasses to get from one side to the other. R.O.B. covered an extensive amount of both rolling hills and tree-covered terrain - hiding many partially-entrenched or sub-surface bunkers and other "sensitive" facilities "behind the fence-line" - unknown by most troops - at least not during my tenure there. It was a very beautiful and interesting "installation" . . . and I loved it/enjoyed being there.

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- 3.1. The 546th Ord. Co. had the largest and most extensive shop space. The 546th commanded the two massive, long shop buildings which were located south of and perpendicular to the railhead in R.O.B.. The shop space was more than enormous, in excess of twenty bay-shop areas on just one side of the main building alone. Beyond that, I cannot detail the shop's wealth of Set, Kits, & Outfits (SKOs) and support equipment they were authorized by their M/TO&E, but I can only guess that it was significant - including more equipment than we were authorized in the 68th Ord. Co..
- 3.2. Back "home" with the 68th . . . our main shop facilities (at "ROB") were putridly inadequate and small. Constructed of apparent European-type white-wash covered cinder blocks, this one building had a low head clearance. The floor space could only partially accommodate the "noses" of two (wheeled) vehicles, at a time, into the two (2) short and narrow shop bays (and through two side doors which had to be added to the south wall of the building). Furthermore, those vehicles could not be larger than a M-35, 2½-ton Cargo. At the east end of the building, there was only enough space for maintenance/repair of one AVS-1790 powerpack or possibly two (2) AOS-895 powerpacks. A 4-caster-mounted "A-Frame" was the only lift capability we had for the Track Section. Our M-62, 5-ton wreckers couldn't access the shop. Where heavy [wrecker] lift was required, those tasks had to be performed outside. Later, in this immediate timeframe, the company was able to acquire a center-beamed maintenance tent [*current for that era*] which improved "outside" conditions for the Track Section, but still posed problems when requiring wrecker lift. Not much for performing combat/tracked vehicle DSU maintenance/repair. SKOs and other shop support equipment were very minimal, limited to our individually assigned General Mechanics Tool Kit and a "Basic Shop Set, Less-Power", at the most. On the west end of the building, a small office was used for the Shop Office. Next to it and along the North wall of the building, a semi-enclosed/walled-in area was used for our F&E Shop. The F&E Section had sufficient SKO and special tools for accomplishing the basic carburetor, fuel pump, distributor, generator, and regulator repair and rebuild tasks. Our Tech Supply ("AKZ") operations were co-located with those of the 546th in a quonset hut which had been erected in close proximity to and just east of the R.O.B. railhead and loading platform.
- 3.2.1. The two 68th Ord. Co. detachments stationed at Germershiem and Pirmasens had more practical shop facilities and tool support than those of our main shop in "ROB". Both were working with and/or in-collaboration with the adjacent depots at their locations, making it easy(ier) to obtain any additional support they may have needed.
- 3.3. I can't sufficiently detail the shop facilities of the 48th Ordnance Company stationed at Baumholder, but I remember they were closely comparable to those enjoyed by the 546th. There, however, the shop layout was split into two parallel buildings with apparently sufficient floor space to support their mission. I can't recall whether-or-not the 48th had SKO or special tool issues.
- 3.4. My recollection of anything pertaining to the 43rd Ordnance Company is extremely vague, except for the fact that their operations were strangely located outside the perimeter wall of Dänner Kaserne.

4. **BILLETING**: I'm limited, here as well, and can only reflect on the barracks and troop support facilities for the 68th Ordnance Company. I didn't have the opportunity to visit the billeting areas of the other companies. As I indicated earlier, "home" for the 68th was located a distance away from "ROB" and in an area at the far west end of Vogelweh. There, our company headquarters, billets, and company mess hall were located in Pulaski Barracks (and yes, I said company mess hall - those were the "good ol' days" when companies had their own integral cooks, mess sergeants/stewards, and messing/dining facilities).

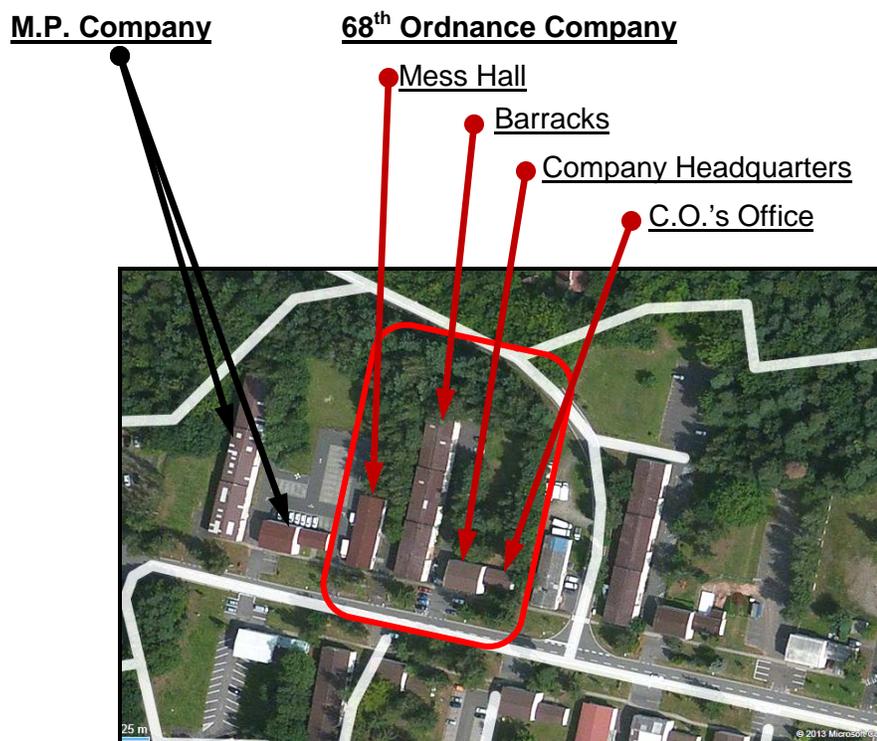
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We were located almost at the very top of "the hill" known as Pulaski Barracks, and above all the many four-number designated Civilian Labor Service Group (CLG) companies housed there (of which there were many different foreign nationals and their corresponding labor-related units. Right at this moment, however, I can only recall two of the [*more prominent ethnic group*] units - those being the Albanian and Polish CLG units).

A U.S. Army M.P. company was billeted right behind our complex (can't remember the unit designation). On rare Saturday nights, though, some of our troops didn't particularly appreciate that fact . . . and . . . then, there were those other times where "the guys" were more than happy at having the M.P.s "in the area".

Below us on the steep northern slope of the Pulaski "hill" and along-side the winding northern access road was the U. S. Army Mortuary. Continuing just a short distance further down the access road to the base of the hill was the "T-bone" intersection with the Kaiserslautern-Landstuhl (and beyond) BundesStrasse B-37. Gazing across the near-distant opposite side of B-37 one found the BundesBahn [railway] freight mustering yard.

4.1. Our company area consisted of two (2) two-story buildings and a ground-level mess hall. The company headquarters was quite large and was oriented parallel to the main road. The first floor of the headquarters building included the 1SG's Office, company clerks' area, and the company day room. An integral first floor ell extended out from the east wall of the building and served as the C.O.'s (private) office. The second floor housed two office spaces and an open area which functioned as a training room and an additional dayroom. The long barracks building was two stories high and was divided into three large sections. Both floors of each section had four large squad bays, a multi-stall shower and wash room, a latrine, and a utility closet. The barracks stretched-out in perpendicular alignment to the main road. The ground-level mess hall was behind (west) and parallel to the barracks.



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- 4.2. I can only recall one thing about the 546th billeting on "ROB" - the barracks were newer than those of Pulaski Barracks and were three stories high. They were located just beyond the southern periphery of the R.O.B. main parade field and on the lower plateau to the east behind the headquarters building of HQ, 66th Ordnance Battalion.

III. The WINDS OF CHANGE ARE APPROACHING:

It must be noted here and carried forward throughout the ensuing history - with the experience and observations realized through many decades of full-time Army service - that official historical documentation may not necessarily track with the actual "on-the-ground" course of events. This has been frequently proven true when events/timeframes are "scripted" to "match/coincide with" those highly ambitious projections stated within General Orders (GOs), Letter Orders (LOs), Directives, et al. All too often, idealistic high echelon-planned/projected timeframes have had to be "slipped" /extended (or in other rare cases, shortened or compressed) to permit ordered actions to physically "fall into place" and be fully realized down through the chain-of-command to each and every effected unit. Unfortunately, in many such situations, official documentation is not adjusted to record these deviations or reflect accomplishment(s) as they "harden" down-through the lower echelons. Rather, records frequently remain untouched and only reflect the pre-conceived milestones of the "Big Picture" as envisioned at the higher levels of command. This, obviously, can/will and has generated [*in the past*] diversities and/or gaps of accuracy as contrasted against the experience(s) of each unit and/or event as the actions are cascaded between/through every layer of command.

1. First, it should be remembered that it was the Combat Support Theater Army Reorganization directive (COSTAR II), with all its dynamic facets, which initiated and proliferated the ever-changing faces and structures of organizations and their "mission statements" within the 7th Army. Prematurely, at that time in the Army's developing philosophy - COSTAR II commenced the implementation of the tentative, unresolved, and challenged philosophies embodied within the 1962-???? Combat Support To The Army (COSTAR) concepts - unsettled concepts which were continuing to be contested between two major HQ DA components, those being ODCSLOG and ODCSPER.
- 1.1. As we now look back on this era (COSTAR & COSTAR II) with the vacillating decisions made and the resulting instability and perpetual juggling impacts those directives placed on organizations, units, and military service-members of that time - what did it accomplish towards creating a harmonious and cohesive Cold War defensive posture ?? Again, after-the-fact, it would appear that the constant flux weakened "our profile" in Europe. It brings one to the ever-returning conclusion, "*change is not always the best option or solution, especially when it's made in haste without thorough evaluation*" and, equally, "*change is not always a change for the better*".
2. As mentioned earlier, my first introduction to the 68th Ordnance Company came during the heightened activity centered around our company's supporting obligation to the "Fast Re-Deployment Of The Lines Of Communication" (FRELOC) operation - the total extraction of all COMZ and U.S. Forces properties from French soil by end-date 1 April 1967, as demanded by French President Charles de Gaulle. There appears to be some disagreement [*from reading other accounts*] as to when participation in this effort was actually initiated by units under USAREUR and the 7th Army. Activities of the 68th Ordnance Company, in this regard, is well-burned into my mind - they trumpeted my official "welcome" to the US Army in Europe. So, in early 1965, before my arrival there, the 68th Ord. Co. - had been - well engaged with FRELOC. Later, around April or [definitely before] mid-May 1965, I witnessed the gradual end of the company's participation in those exhausting sorties and the return of activities to normal daily routines and mission tasks - almost !! This "normalcy" would only last for a few more months - as we'd soon find out.

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- 2.1. A turbulence of change loomed on the near horizon - one which would not relent, not even for years to follow after my PCS to CONUS "four years" later - in 1968. The 68th Ord. Co., as well as the 66th Ordnance Battalion, was to endure many and frequent changes . . . effecting all metrics of its upcoming rollercoaster existence. Those years in which the company and battalion sky-rocketed me up through the ranks also proved to be a demanding period and a "rough row to hoe" for all of us in the ol' 68th Ord. Co.. The path ahead guaranteed us, by the same token, that there'd be no stagnation or boredom.
- 2.2. In retrospect, the three years I experienced, filled with the subtle and major instabilities forced on the company, was both interesting and, from a professional observation, was exceptionally beneficial as a learning tool. Throughout all tasked missions, the 68th [future "B" Company] completed "all endeavors" in an extraordinarily exceptional manner and always with "Pride In Service". It's hard to find any unit in the Army where all individuals worked and lived in harmony with each other and, especially, over an extended and demanding period of time. All personnel in the 68th (and "B" Company) from "top-to-bottom" and "among ourselves" demonstrated this family-like association, replete with an equally aggressive work ethic. This association proved to be one of the best-remembered throughout my Army career.
3. In pursuing this history, I hope that I'll be able to sufficiently recall all the changes and major events that occurred during this "era". I will attempt to address what I can regarding peripheral impacts to the 66th Ordnance Battalion and "our" sister companies through the upcoming changes. Essentially, however, my narratives will be mandatorily limited to/focused on those activities and events involving the 68th Ordnance Company (and the future "B" Company, 66th Maintenance Battalion) - as they were experienced.

IV. 1965 ~ " A YEAR OF TURBULENT CHANGES " :

1. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OVERVIEW (US Army-wide):

- 1.1. Rank Designations - Standardized: In the Mid-1965 timeframe the previously-used variable-character rank designations (i.e., old designations = S/Sgt., M/Sgt., 1stSgt., 2nd.Lt., 1st.Lt., Capt., Lt.Col., etc.) were standardized by HQ, DA (ODCSPER) into the three (3) digit [capitalized] construct which has been protocol since that time. This standardization significantly affected all officer and the "top four" senior NCO rank designations (i.e., new designations = SSG, MSG, 1SG, 2LT, 1LT, CPT, LTC. etc.). The lower enlisted rank designations were not greatly impacted other than capitalizing all alpha characters (i.e., Pvt. = PVT, Pfc. = PFC, Sp4 = SP4, Cpl. = CPL, Sgt. = SGT, etc.).
- 1.2. CMF-63/MOS Re-Designations/Re-Structuring: Also in the Mid-1965 timeframe, HQ TRADOC and HQ DA joined to implement major changes within all Career Management Fields (CMFs) and, more central to our concerns, throughout CMF-63 which managed the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) disciplines across the ordnance-maintenance automotive, armament, and engineer MOS fields, just in naming a few.
 - 1.2.1. Most obvious changes were noticed in the enlisted MOS designations, examples including:
 - 1.2.1.1. From 631.1 - (Unit/Organizational Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic) = to 63B10
 - 1.2.1.2. 632.1 - (Unit/Organizational Tracked Vehicle Mechanic) = 63C10
 - 1.2.1.3. 633.1 - (Tracked & Wheeled Vehicle Recovery Specialist) = 63F10
 - 1.2.1.4. 634.1 - (DS/GS Fuel & Electric Systems Repairman) = 63G10
 - 1.2.1.5. 635.1 - (DS/GS Tracked & Wheeled Vehicle Automotive Repairman) = 63H10

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- 1.2.2. More crucial, however, were the revisions being made to the "Basic Skills and Knowledge" (BSK) disciplines trained within each MOS curriculum. In many [individual] MOS structures, BSK training tasks were deleted or transferred from one MOS to another MOS BSK training base. In other cases, MOSs were "retired" with some of their inherent BSKs being fragmented-out across and integrated within the BSK disciplines of other/selected MOSs.
- 1.2.3. CMF/MOS re-designations and associated MOSs' BSK impact(s) generated changes to many TO&Es, but had a larger effect on training curriculums established within most OCONUS theater command training facilities/schools. This became most apparent.
- 1.2.4. CMF-63 Impact "At Ground-Level": In June of 1965, I was selected to attend a two-week Ground Power Generator Course at the US Army School - Europe in Murnau, Germany (commonly referred to as either "Murnau School" or, simply, "Murnau"). Upon arrival/signing-in for the course, I was informed that the course no-longer existed [*an obvious casualty of the CMF-63/MOS restructuring*]. The only other approved/related "new" course was the ten-week, MOS-producing Engineer Heavy Construction Equipment Operator and Maintenance Course. The Murnau School conferred with the S-3 Training Officer, 66th Ordnance Battalion where it was decided that I would proceed/attend that course, even though the original intent of receiving Power Generator training for the 68th Ordnance Company would be lost. I graduated with a certified Secondary MOS of 62B20, Engineer Heavy Construction Equipment Mechanic.
- 1.2.5. "While I Was Away": The training gained at Murnau, although personally/professionally interesting and beneficial, was not relevant to the "larger scheme of things". The "Murnau period" only served as a benchmark for [*mentally*] "tagging" the timeframe when more significantly historic events were occurring "back home" with the 68th Ordnance Company and 66th Ordnance Battalion . . . while I was away . . .

2. 66th ORDNANCE BATTALION & UNITS ~ Re-Designations & Impacts:

- 2.1. As-It-Happened: Many weeks after the Murnau School and S-3, 66th Ordnance Battalion had resolved the course curriculum debacle, I received [*hard copy*] orders amending the fund site to support the changed course/funding requirements. Upon further review of those orders, however, more striking elements were revealed - hidden in the fund site, itself, and as boldly exhibited in the header data and "Distribution" entries. The orders embodied an unfamiliar, new header indicating the " 66th Maintenance Battalion " with an equally unfamiliar "Distribution" citing " B Company ".
 Lastly, the orders were surprisingly signed by a new Battalion Adjutant - 1LT Michael B. Geary, my (68th Ordnance Company) Commanding Officer (CO) when I left for Murnau School.
- 2.2. The "jump-off" date for activating the 7th SUPCOM and its implementing cascade of reorganizations and unit re-designations had commenced.
 - 2.2.1. IAW General Order No. 209, dtd 27 July 1965, US Army Europe, re-designation of the 66th Ordnance Battalion and 68th Ordnance Company, to the 66th Maintenance Battalion and "B" Company was officially ordered with effective date of 3 August 1965.
 - 2.2.2. We continued to wear the 7th Army patch. A DUI/UC was not authorized for the "re-flagged" 66th Maintenance Battalion in 1965. More on this to follow, later . . .
- 2.3. Company - Re-Designations:
 - 2.3.1. 546th Ord. Co. = was "re-flagged" and merged with HQ Company = HQ & A Company.
 - 2.3.2. 68th Ord. Co. = was "re-flagged" B Company
 - 2.3.3. 48th Ord. Co. = was "re-flagged" C Company

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2.4. 66th Maintenance Battalion - Unit Losses & Gains:

- 2.4.1. 43rd Ord. Co. - Loss - stayed in Dänner Kaserne, but was transferred to the command of either the re-designated 51st Maint. Bn. or 81st Maint. Bn., both located in Mannheim, Germany.
- 2.4.2. 171st Support Platoon - Gain - was picked-up as a new unit - located in "R.O.B."
- 2.4.3. 508th CC&S Company - Gain - was picked-up as a new unit - temporarily located in "R.O.B."

3. 68th ORDNANCE COMPANY Organization & "ROLL CALL":

3.1. Company HQ - Early 1965:

- 3.1.1. Company Commander (CO) - Capt. Robert H. Mackintosh
- 3.1.2. Company First Sergeant (1stSgt) - M/Sgt. (P) Charles L. Scott*
- 3.1.3. Company Officers (Other):
 - 3.1.3.1. 2nd.Lt. (P) Michael B. Geary**
 - 3.1.3.2. 2nd.Lt. Timothy P. Sullivan

3.2. Company HQ - Mid 1965 (Changes):

- 3.2.1. CO - **1LT Michael B. Geary (Apr- Aug) - Re-Assigned as Adjutant, HQ, 66th Maintenance Bn.

3.3. Company HQ - Late 1965 (Changes) - As "B" Company, 66th Maintenance Battalion:

- 3.3.1. CO - 1LT Robert L. Woodson (Aug-Dec)
- 3.3.2. 1stSgt - *1SG Charles L. Scott

3.4. Company Operations:

3.4.1. Shop Office:

- 3.4.1.1. Shop Officer - 2LT (P) Jerry W. Whitt
- 3.4.1.2. Shop Office NCOIC - SFC Buel P. "Junkman" Ramsey

3.4.2. Maintenance Platoon:

- 3.4.2.1. Plt. Ldr. - 2nd.Lt. Donald J. Napoli
- 3.4.2.2. Plt. Sgt. - SSG (P) Billy J. Copeland

3.4.3. Track Section:

- 3.4.3.1. Section Chief - SP5 "Baby-Cakes" Dardeen
- 3.4.3.2. Mech./Rprm. - SP4 Benson
- 3.4.3.3. Mech./Rprm. - SP4/PFC Capuzzi
- 3.4.3.4. Mech./Rprm. - PFC Harry Kelloway
- 3.4.3.5. Mech./Rprm. - PFC J.A. Creati^(t)

3.4.4. F&E Section:

- 3.4.4.1. Section Chief - SGT Norris T. Bolduc
- 3.4.4.2. Repairman - SP4 Gary P. "California" Boettger
- 3.4.4.3. Repairman - PFC Anthony J. "Tony" Melius

3.4.5. Armament Section:

- 3.4.5.1. Section Chief - SP5 Barney M. Younce

3.4.6. Motor Pool Operations:

- 3.4.6.1. Motor Sergeant = SGT Daniel J. "Dan" Dansereau
- 3.4.6.2. Mech/Rprm-TAERS/ESC = ^(t)SP4 J.A. Creati

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4. MISSION ~ as 68th ORDNANCE COMPANY & "B" COMPANY:

- 4.1. In Review - As previously stated, the mission of the Track Section was providing DSU maintenance support for the tracked vehicles stored among the four (4) ARGs. Of the four, however, the 6th ARG began receiving upgrade replacements to their "fleet" of "line combat vehicles".
 - 4.1.1. Among the replacement vehicles the 6th ARG had received were the new M-88 VTRs, powered by the AVSI-1790 "gasser" Continental Engine which was coupled to a CTX-1410 Allison Hydro-Static Transmission. The new state-side manufactured M-88s, however, did not meet NATO/Germany STANAG ("Standardization Agreement") guide-light requirements for armored combat vehicles. The Track Section was tasked to apply the "guide-light modifications" to the 6th ARG's entire fleet of 22 M-88s. As a note, when the M-88s were parked side-by-side, they exceeded the length of the entire shop - two-fold. The five of us were able to complete all modifications prior to my departure for Murnau.
- 4.2. After my "Murnau period" and the company's re-designation, I wasn't able to "keep close tabs" on the Track Section's evolving new mission. I had been loaned-out to the Motor Pool. What I was able to observe, however, was the apparent, but slowly progressing reduction of mission support to the ARGs. By the year's end all ARG support, except for the 6th ARG, had been diverted to other unknown DSUs - maybe to the 171st Support Platoon (??) - or other battalions, I don't know. "B" Company continued its much needed and increasing Track Section support to the 6th ARG. The Wheeled Section seemed to be suffering the same reduction of mission support commitments, as well.
- 4.3. This period of time surrounding our "re-flagging" and move to new maintenance shops (see below) seemed to transport us though a nether-zone. Increasingly, it felt as if our company's whole support mission was enduring a great calm before an impending storm.

5. SHOP FACILITIES ~ as 68th ORDNANCE COMPANY & "B" COMPANY:

"While I Was Away" [at Murnau] and somewhere in-between being the 68th Ordnance Company or ["re-flagged"] "B" Company, the "mice" were having "their days". A juggle-fest had occurred and "we" now occupied a huge new [to us] maintenance shop. The juggle-fest involved three (3) units and two (2) [known] maintenance shops. I would have enjoyed being there to see how this was orchestrated, and within the timeframe [ten weeks] "while I was away".

- 5.1. The New Shop - Our new maintenance shop was located in the beautiful back-woods and thickly-forested NW sector of R.O.B. and on the northern-side of the Mannheim-Saarbrücken Autobahn which, as discussed earlier, more-or-less "split" R.O.B.. The immediate area around the shop building and the accompanying hard-stand had been groomed and cleared of trees, leaving a pronounced yet comfortably-close surrounding tree-line - quite relaxing in its own merit, especially when the always-present breeze would rustle and whisper through those "back-woods". The shop was previously occupied by one of the CLGs which had been contracted to operate a "can-point". I never knew where the CLG re-settled, but it surely wasn't within R.O.B.. Although the CLG had removed their support equipment from the immediate shop area, the residue of their operations there remained quite evident. Around the northern periphery of the shop area clearing was strewn empty shells of gutted transmission housings, transfer cases, axle housings, engine blocks, and remnants of railcar axles, steel construction beams, and just about anything else you could think of. The "junk-yard", as we called it, although still in eye-sight was far-enough away from the shop area that it didn't interfere with our operations.

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- 5.2. Shop Lay-Out - The shop area was huge and probably matched the size of the previously-envied main shop building of the 546th Ord. Co. [*will dreams ever come true ??*]. The shop floor area was large enough to fully hold four (4) of our old shop building. The east end of the new building had office areas which we used for the Shop Office, Motor Pool Office, and a small, but sufficient Shop Supply. The shop floor was so spacious that, in fact, there was more shop space than both the wheeled and track sections could use (at that time, underscored !!).
- 5.3. " Those Poor " Bastards " !! - The recently activated 171st Support Platoon were the "condemned" troops who, unfortunately, became the new occupants of the putridly anemic maintenance shop we just vacated - " those poor bastards " !!
- 5.4. Short-Lived - On The Move Again - The mission doldrums we were experiencing, since "re-flagging", might have been pre-planned and in concert with this current move to the NW "back-woods" of R.O.B. - serving as an interim staging measure prior to implementing the final "jump". After a couple months in the blissful and tranquil NW forest, "B" Company was once again mustered for another shop move. In October or November of 1965 we moved our shops and mission operations into both of the [*long-envied*] maintenance shop buildings of the former 546th Ordnance Company. It didn't take a genius to realize that "B" Company was in store for growths in its "mission statement" and mission-support specialties/capabilities, which would equally include the associated expansion and build-up of requisite personnel. Changes which will become increasingly evident throughout 1966 and 1967.

6. BILLETING: Remained in Pulaski Barracks.

7. UNIT ORGANIC IMPROVEMENTS ~ "B" COMPANY:

Upon returning from Murnau School, the CO loaned me out to the Company Motor Pool, solely with the mission of assisting the Motor Sergeant in updating all records associated with the company's organic vehicles. Since the move to the NW "back-woods" maintenance shop, the initial phases of company vehicle upgrades were slowly commencing - across the family of 2½-ton Cargo Trucks at first. The old Reo-powered "gasser" cargos were being exchanged with the new Studebaker/White manufactured M35A1, 2½ ton Cargo Trucks - powered by the Continental LDS-427-2 "multi-fuel" engines which were matched-up to the improved Spicer 305-5-3A synchromesh 'trannies'. Equally, during this time, the company was sensing "hints" of other replacements and additional new M/TO&E-authorized vehicles we'd be receiving . . . but those acquisitions - developing later at a proportionally increasing rate, through 1966 and beyond.

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V. 1966 ~ " ANOTHER 'TOPSY-TURVY' YEAR "

1. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OVERVIEW:

- 1.1. HQ & A Company - Transceiver site: In late 1965, or early 1966, an operational transceiver site was established in the HQ & A Company area. This was a crucial component of the Army's effort to expedite the processing of supply actions from initial parts request to receipt at the requesting unit. This process hinged on the IBM key-punch and "computer link" operations conducted at each transceiver site. The site(s) established direct link-ups with Inventory Control Points (ICPs) and National ICPs (NICPs) in OCONUS and CONUS, resulting in almost-immediate responses (to our specific concerns over Class IX repair-parts) of expedited supply requisition-fills-to-shipment turn-around times through the MILSTRIP "Direct-Supply-Pipeline".
 - 1.1.1. DA Form 2765/2765-1 replaced DD Form 1348/1348-1 as the primary requisition form for Class IX repair-parts. It became the prominent "hand-in-glove" form used in conjunction with the IBM-based transceiver site.
- 1.2. As a note, on 1 December 1966 both command headquarters of USAREUR and the 7th Army merged, as an efficiency-management action, to form the joint HQ, USAREUR and 7th Army.

2. 66th MAINTENANCE BATTALION RE-ALIGNMENT:

- 2.1. Battalion C.O. = LTC W.F. Higgins
- 2.2. Re-Alignment: Again, in the time-frame somewhere between July-September 1966, our battalion became a by-stander to another, albeit high-echelon, theater-command re-organization and re-alignment. Although "we" weren't noticeably effected organically, this event signaled the, not-unexpected, "death-wail" of the rapidly dissolving 7th SUPCOM. Solely from our perspective (as an ordnance-maintenance DSU), assets of the 7th SUPCOM were divided into two (2) [*new*] commands - those being the 1st and 2nd Support Brigades (SPT BDEs). The 1st SPT BDE was aligned under the 7th Army while the 2nd SPT BDE was aligned within V-Corps. The 66th Maintenance Battalion was re-aligned under the 1st Support Brigade which was headquartered in Taylor Barracks, Mannheim.
 - 2.2.1. Subsequent to the 1 December 1966 decision, the lines of the theater organizational chart were re-drawn exhibiting a direct line between the 1st SPT BDE and the newly formed HQ, USAREUR and 7th Army.
- 2.3. Unit Patch:

In late 1966, all personnel in the 66th Maintenance Battalion and its component companies and units begrudgingly and sadly had to remove all 7th Army patches from our uniforms. In its place we sewed-on the new 1st Support Brigade patch.



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2.4. **A Brief History of the 66th Maintenance Battalion:** The 66th Maintenance Battalion, through all its various transformations, had been serving the US Army [*at this juncture in time, 1966*] for a couple years short of a-half century, although under many different monikers. The unit was officially constituted on 1 May 1936 in the Regular Army as HQ, 1st Battalion, 33rd Quartermaster Regiment (Light Maintenance). The battalion was composed of an amalgam of separate units with respective lineages extending back as far as 1918. The battalion passed through many rollercoaster episodes of repeated de-activations, re-activations, and re-designations from 1936 through 1945. On 1 December 1945 the World War II support commitments of the 66th Ordnance Battalion came to an end when it was de-activated at Camp Myles Standish, in Massachusetts. In 1948, however, the 66th Ordnance Battalion once again rose from the ashes and was re-activated on Okinawa where, after a period of time there, it was eventually re-deployed to Korea in 1950. In the late 50s/early 60s the battalion's stability was, again, up-rooted with re-deployment from Korea to Germany. In 1965 the 66th Ordnance Battalion was re-organized and re-designated as the 66th Maintenance Battalion with its current [1966] compliment of subordinate companies/units.

2.4.1. **World War II:** In World War II, the battalion went through dynamic throes with companies being separated from the core battalion and deployed to opposite theaters of battle - Pacific and Europe. Often, those separated elements wound-up being re-designated (i.e., separate companies "A" through "D" being re-designated "3401st" through "3404th" Ordnance Medium Maintenance Companies, respectively). In 1943 the battalion was re-designated as HQ & HQ Detachment, 66th Ordnance Battalion until its de-activation in 1945.

2.4.1.1. **The "Hedge-Row Cutter":** After the beachheads along the Normandy coast were made secure, pursuant to the successful "D-Day" Normandy Invasion, the end-run of "Operation Cobra", being conducted by "Patton's Own" 3rd Army, ran into the soldier-frustrating and impenetrable hedge-rows which inter-laced and blanketed the Normandy landscape. This severely stalled Patton's advance and subjected the 3rd Army to savage and deadly bombardment and suicidal cross-fire laid-in by the determined German forces. An ingenious farmer-turned citizen-soldier and sergeant of the 66th Ordnance Battalion envisioned a solution. Taking the remnants of the [then] dismantled German-emplaced steel caltrops which had previously infested the landing beaches of Normandy, the sergeant designed and fabricated his famous jagged-edged steel hedge-row cutters. He and the other members of the 66th Ord. Bn. both fabricated and welded these cutters to the lower-front glacis of all leading M4, "Sherman" 76mm Medium and M5A1, "Stuart" 37mm Light Tanks. These tanks provided the means which allowed the 3rd Army to "shred-through" the hedge-row-created grid-lock and forge forward, eventually reaping the end-rewards of a successful "Operation Cobra". The sergeant's inventiveness was lauded a resounding accomplishment and monumental event for the 66th Ordnance Battalion.

2.4.1.2. **66th Maintenance Battalion - World War II - Campaigns, Banners, and Citations:**

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 2.4.1.2.1. Normandy | } | Meritorious Unit Citation, European Theater |
| 2.4.1.2.2. Northern France | | |
| 2.4.1.2.3. Rhineland | | |
| 2.4.1.2.4. Ardennes-Alsace | | |
| 2.4.1.2.5. Central Europe | | |
| 2.4.1.2.6. Okinawa-Ryukyus | | |
| 2.4.1.2.7. New Guinea | } | Meritorious Unit Citation, Luzon |
| 2.4.1.2.8. Luzon, Philippine Islands | | Philippine Presidential Unit Citation |

2.4.2. **66th Maintenance Battalion - Korean War - Citations:**

- 2.4.2.1. Meritorious Unit Citation, Korea 1950-1951
- 2.4.2.2. Meritorious Unit Citation, Korea 1952-1953

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2.5. 66th Maintenance Battalion ~ DUI/UC:

SMO: Letter Order, dtd. 12 May 1966,
Subject: Distinctive Insignia (Badge) for the
66th Maintenance Battalion. The distinctive
insignia for the 66th Maintenance Battalion is
authorized. The badge depicted is authorized
for wear on 24 November 1966.



2.5.1. Symbolism:

- 2.5.1.1. Torii (Korean gate) - [field/back-ground element] represents the meritorious service in Korea/Korean War.
- 2.5.1.2. Lion Rampant - [foreground element] represents the meritorious service in WW II Europe.
- 2.5.1.3. Hedge Shrubs (2) - [extending up and in front of both legs of the Torii] represents the Battalion's invention, fabrication, & installation of the "steel hedge-row cutters" on M-4 & M5A1 tanks, enabling the 3rd Army's break-out from Normandy during the stalled beginning of "Operation Cobra", WW II.
- 2.5.1.4. Motto - " PRIDE IN SERVICE " - inscribed in gold over a three-segmented red scroll.

2.6. 66th Maintenance Battalion ~ Coat-Of-Arms:

2.6.1. Symbolism (Differences Between DUI/UC):

- 2.6.1.1. The "Hedge Shrub" is located in the Crest of the Coat-Of-Arms together with a "Guisarme Sable" [ancient cutting device - symbolizing the "steel hedge-row cutters"].
- 2.6.1.2. Addition of the flaming "Ordnance Bomb" [or grenade] in top-center of the Shield - symbolizing the affiliation with the US Army's Ordnance Department.
- 2.6.1.3. Symbolism of the twin Torii and the Lion Rampant remain the same as symbolized on the DUI/UC.



3. "B" COMPANY Organization & " ROLL CALL " : ("Known" Changes from 1965 Only)

3.1. Company HQ - 1966:

- 3.1.1. C.O. - 1LT(P) Jerry W. Whitt
- 3.1.2. "Top Sgt." - 1SG Charles L. Scott

3.2. Company Operations:

- 3.2.1. Shop Officer = 1LT Melvin Wamock
- 3.2.2. Shop Office NCOIC = SFC E.C. Rainwater

3.3. Track Section:

- 3.3.1. Section Chief/Track Inspector - SP4 J. A. Creati
- 3.3.2. Mech/Rprm - SP4 "Speedy" Soltero
- 3.3.3. Mech/Rprm - PFC "Gentleman" Jim Sollers
- 3.3.4. Mech/Rprm - PFC "Goofy" Hartman

3.3. Motor Pool:

- 3.3.1. Motor Sergeant - SSG Russell "Russ" Campbell

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4. MISSION:

As "we" had realized in the waning months of 1965, the "mission doldrums" we'd been experiencing would be quickly shaken-up and, as expected, come to a thankful and final end. The very start of [both fiscal & calendar years] 1966 witnessed a major increase of supported/active-unit "customers" and a great expansion of requirements in our mission support capabilities/responsibilities.

- 4.1. The support missions and operations of our two (2) remotely located detachments at Germersheim and Pirmasens continued unchanged.
- 4.2. My temporary detailed mission of updating organic vehicle records and maintenance schedules was completed by the time our company picked-up and moved from the R.O.B. NW "back-woods" maintenance shop to the now vacant and former twin shops of the 546th Ord. Co.. I departed Motor Pool Operations and returned to the Maintenance Platoon as the Track Section, Section Chief and Tracked Vehicle Inspector.
- 4.3. As mentioned earlier, DSU maintenance support to the 6th ARG remained in our "mission statement". During this early period of 1966, the 6th ARG was continuing to "turn-in" their "legacy" fleet and "gain" the newer line-combat vehicles, including: the M-60, 105mm Main Battle Tank; M-113, F/T APCs; and M-88, VTRs. Their immediate needs for our DSU maintenance support were not too demanding [early-on]. That would end, "as all things do", when the 6th ARG commenced unit-level scheduled maintenance later through the year. I was surprised at how much DSU maintenance was required on "new" equipment. It must be known, here, that after receipt of the "new" equipment, the 6th ARG began the policy of "running-up" and "exercising" all their "Pre-Positioned Equipment" as part of their DD Form 314 Scheduled Maintenance requirements - an activity that was noted as not having been routinely conducted with the "legacy" equipment.
- 4.4. New Units: The following new "customers" were added to our "mission statement":
 - 4.4.1. 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (2ndSqdn/3rd ACR), located in the eastern-half of Kleber Kaserne.
 - 4.4.1.1. Organic/supported vehicles included: M-60, 105mm Main Battle Tanks; M-88, VTR; M578, VTR; M-109, 155mm SP Howitzers; M-113, F/T APCs; M-577, CPC; M-114A1E1, ARVs; M543, 5-ton Wrecker; M-37B1, ¾-ton Cargo; M35A1, 2½-ton Cargos; and M151, 1/4-ton Utility.
 - 4.4.2. 440th Signal Battalion, located in Kleber Kaserne.
 - 4.4.2.1. Organic/supported vehicles included: M35A1, 2½-ton Cargos; M54, 5-ton Cargos; V-18A/MTQ, 2½-ton Post Hole Borer; and various families of 2-Wheel Trailers - most all vehicles/trailers associated with carrying RATT Rigs and Commo Shelters.
 - 4.4.3. 5th Engineer Company, located in Dänner Kaserne.
 - 4.4.3.1. Organic/supported vehicles included: M35A1, 2½-ton Cargos; M54, 5-ton Cargos; M55, 5-ton Extended Cargo Bed Trucks; M51, 5-ton Dumps; etc.
 - 4.4.4. Components of the 1st Signal Brigade, located in Kapaun Barracks, Panzer Kaserne, and else-where.
 - 4.5. DSU Maintenance Support for Armor "TCQCs" and Howitzer "ARTEPs".

As a reminder, the 2nd Sqdn./3rd ACR brought along, with its traditional DSU support requirements, some new "baggage" [for "us", up to this point] - that being support for its "on-cycle" and "off-cycle" "Tank Commanders' Qualification Certification/Course" (TCQC), for tank crews, and the "Army Training Evaluation Plan/Program" (ARTEP) for howitzer crews. For tanks and "big guns", TCQCs and ARTEPs, respectively, are the equivalent to those mandates requiring each individual/soldier to successfully achieve a passing score in "their" annual live-fire marksmanship qualification "challenge".

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4.5.1. "TCQC" Factors:

Each and every tank crew, to include the Squadron Commander (LTC), were required to negotiate and pass/qualify a series of multiple static "KD" (known distance) ranges and two dynamic "TF" (train fire) courses.

4.5.1.1. Tank/tank crews progressed through the "KD" ranges in six (6) phases. For all "KD" phases, tanks were staged and "secured"-in-place on the firing-line. Phase 1 used specific known-distant targets permitting crews to zero and adjust day-time live-fire of the tank's M73, 7.62mm Co-Axial Machine Gun (MG), the tank commander's M85, .50 cal. Cupola-Mounted MG, and the M-60 tank's 105mm Main Gun.

4.5.1.1.1. Phase 2, "KD" was the same as Phase 1, except, it allowed tank crews to calibrate and adjust weapons for night-firing.

4.5.1.1.2. Phase 3, "KD" scored day-time accuracy of the tank's two MGs, except here, the targets consisted of both "pop-up" and rail-mounted moving targets.

4.5.1.1.3. Phase 4, "KD" was the same as Phase 3, except it scored for night-firing.

4.5.1.1.4. Phase 5, "KD" was the same as Phase 3, except scoring day-time accuracy of the 105mm Main Gun.

4.5.1.1.5. Phase 6, "KD" was the same as Phase 4, here scoring night-time accuracy of the 105mm Main Gun.

4.5.1.2. The "TF" courses involved individual tanks moving "down-range" on a winding "snaked" route. The range of each target was unknown and consisted of both pop-up and rail-mounted targets. All three guns and the crew's efficiency (steel-on-target), targets acquisition, firing rates, gunners' accuracy, and times were scored. The "TF" courses carried the "heaviest weight" for scoring purposes and being TCQC accredited. "TF" courses were set-up in two phases. Phase 1, scored the day-time run and Phase 2, scored the night-time run.

4.5.2. "ARTEP" Factors:

Each and every M-109, 155mm, Self-Propelled (SP) Howitzer and its crew, within the 2nd Squadron's Howitzer ("How") Battery/"Troop", were required to negotiate terrain, transition from travel mode to vehicle emplacement/gun-platform set-up, "call-for-mission", calculate firing-tables/lay-in firing coordinates, select ammunition, and complete each [umpire-dictated] firing mission through a series of varied and multiple "fire-mission" scored events. The "gun crews" were scored on all seven (7) criteria discussed with emphasis placed on transition and fire-mission times, efficiency, safety, and the cannoneer's [repeated consistency of] "time-on-target" accuracy.

4.5.3. The 2nd Sqdn/3rd ACR with its "additional support requirements" not only offered us a new adventure, but introduced "B" Company to the "G.I.'s Playgrounds" of Grafenwöhr ("Graf") and Hohenfels - *A-a-ah !! Now there are some memories !* How could one forget any of the four (4) main camps there: Aachen, Algiers, Normandy, and the dreaded "tent city", Camp Kasserine ?? Or how about those "Franklin" pot-bellied coal-fired stoves - two per billet - as if the "twins" could keep "us" warm in those magnificent winter months. Had to keep a 24-hour duty-bound fire-guard on each billet, both to keep the "Franklins" stoked and fired-up, but more importantly, to ensure nothing caught fire. And the waft of that burning coal comingling with the cold/frigid "luft" - *I can still smell it . . . Oh, my !* Then there was that long "freezing-run" to those isolated/distant buildings to take a shower or use the latrine. In the summer we had the perpetual dust and heat. I won't go into the time when the reservations for Graf facilities arrived there late . . . *oh for the joys of a summer outing there next to nature in Camp Kasserine !!* Overall and in looking back . . . the support mission at Graf and/or Hohenfels might have been a little rough or demanding and the billeting not so "swift", but all-in-all that experience was professionally satisfying, fun, and most memorable - truly so.

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- 4.5.3.1. Starting this year (1966), our mission support responsibilities included the twice-annual TDYs to Graf in support of the 2nd Sqdn/3rd ACR's "on-cycle" and "off-cycle" TCQCs. Typically, automotive support was accomplished at any one of the maintenance shops we were lucky enough to get dibs on. Most shop areas were arguably passible, but there was that one leaning, earthen-floor, and rickety old "wooden shack" that Grafenwöhr Operations felt was acceptable as a DSU maintenance shop . . . I won't go any further . . . that having been said. The Armament Section usually had their armament vans out on the applicable tank ranges for on-site repairs. When tank-automotive or power-pack problems were called-in to us, one or two of us from the Track Section would "run-out" to the range, "jump on the tank", fault-isolate the trouble, and make on-site repairs when possible - or [worst case scenarios] have the pack "pulled" and have it (or the tank) evacuated to our assigned maintenance shop (or maintenance hard-stand) for further maintenance/repair actions.
- 4.5.3.2. The situation surrounding the Squadron's "How" Battery/"Troop" was somewhat more concerning, only in the fact that their ARTEPs, which had to be conducted at Hohenfels, could not always be coordinated with the schedule(s) of the Squadron's TCQC. This meant that rather than only having to make "two annual trips" to the "Playgrounds", we might wind-up having to make a third or, possibly, a fourth TDY "sojourn".
- 4.5.4. Shop Supply Support: During the timeframe 1966-1968, for reasons unrecalled now, but as a reality back then - coordination and authorization to establish supply support from the big "parts bin in the sky", Vilseck, was never achieved. As a result of this, a big burden was placed on the Shop Office to project DS supply support requirements that would "carry" our support mission through that period at Graf and/or Hohenfels. Where needed parts had been exhausted or were not available in our Shop Supply's TDY ASL, a "parts run" became necessary. A suitable vehicle would have to make a round-trip run to R.O.B. and back. *Yep!* The Shop Office, for no fault of their own, had to make quite a "few" of those "runs" over the [three] years when we "vacationed" there with the 2nd Sqdn/3rd ACR.
- 4.5.4.1. Fortunately for the Track Section, the Commander, 2nd Sqdn/3rd ACR always leaned heavily on his Squadron Maintenance to prepare vehicles and detect actual or potential maintenance problems and report them to us at R.O.B. before heading to Graf or Hohenfels. I can't remember ever having one of their tanks or howitzers "go-down" for serious failures while TDY at either "Playground", but they gave us plenty of business both before and after "trips" to Graf and Hohenfels.
- 4.6. R.O.B. and "A" Company: One vision about "A" Company that continues to pop-up in my mind every time I think about it, concerns one of their most probable "mission statements". I seem to recall the late 1965 or early 1966 time period. In my mind's-eye, whenever I glance over in the direction of the R.O.B. railhead, from our [new] maintenance shops (formerly those of the 546th Ord. Co.), I see all these M123, 10-ton Tractors with "A" Company bumper markings. Each one is "hooked-up" to a "Dragon-Wagon", possibly a M15A1, 50-ton Heavy Equipment Transporter (HET) trailer. In total there seemed to be about six or eight (6 or 8) of these HET rigs - staged, lined-up, and parked there, just a short distance north and on the far side of the roadway that passes by the railhead. It appeared to me that one of "A" Company's subordinate sections became/served as the HET support for the 66th Maintenance Battalion. Well, if nothing more . . . a very strong passing vision.

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5. SHOP FACILITIES:

As I've frequently commented, the old 546th shops were always "pie-in-the-sky" and something that I didn't think our company would ever see. That day did arrive in late 1965, as I've already discussed. The main shop building was divided right down the middle of its long axis. Plenty of room on both sides for spacious double-row facing bay shops. One side/half of the building was occupied by the Maintenance Platoon's Wheeled Vehicle Section. An office was built at the far end of their area for a Maintenance Platoon Operations Center and where you could "smoke-n-joke" with "the boss". Don't forget now, you could smoke "inside" in those days. At the extreme far end of that side of the building was located a six-bay maintenance shop for the Motor Pool. The Motor Pool Office was located in an ell off the end corner of the building. On the other side/half of the building we had huge bays for Auto-Body work (with a complete and fully-functional sealed paint booth), the F&E Section, the Track Section, Wheeled Vehicle Inspection Section with two (2) pit-bays and one surface bay, the Allied Trades Section with bays for the Welding Section, Metal Working Section, Machine Shop, Radiator Shop, and the Glass & Canvas Shop. The Shop Office, Shop Supply, Armament Section, and COMMEL Section were located in the second building.

- 5.1. "A" Company. If I remember correctly, a couple of shop bays and an office area, at the north-end of their "old" 546th shops [*the maintenance shops we now occupied*] were retained by "A" Company for their organic maintenance functions and operations. This ties-in with my visions of "A" Company having a HET Section.
- 5.2. 508th CC&S Company. In late 1965 with our exodus from the maintenance shop in the NW "back-woods" of R.O.B., the recently activated 508th CC&S Company came in and filled that new vacancy we had just created for them. As I've learned, that turned-out to be a relatively short stay for them as well - the CLG 8901st CC&S Company came in and curtailed the 508th's tenure there. I have no idea where the 508th wound-up being re-settled.

6. UNIT ORGANIC IMPROVEMENTS:

- 6.1. Personnel: In mid-1966, and probably more correctly extending into 1967, "B" Company's personnel strength was surprisingly growing in leaps and bounds and the scope of MOSs being infused into our MOS base was widening. The cause for my surprise lies in the fact that HQ, USAREUR & 7th Army was being raped with most all personnel allocations being diverted to Viet Nam. This gave me the additional sense that something important was going to happen with our company. We, on the positive side of personnel gains, were experiencing the exact opposite of what other maintenance units were experiencing.
- 6.2. Organic Vehicles: Having started in late 1965, the company's original density of vehicles were being replaced with the newest model variants. The "old man's" M38A1, ¼-ton "Jeep" was replaced with the new M151, ¼-ton Utility Truck (no-longer called "Jeep"). The Shop Office "picked-up" a new M37B1, ¾-ton Cargo Truck and a new "multi-fuel" powered M109A1, 2½-ton Shop Van. Our small numbers of Reo M35 2½-ton ("gasser") Cargo Trucks were still being slowly, very slowly replaced with the new M35A1, LDS-427-2 powered "multi-fuel" engines. Our old, dilapidated M62, 5-ton Wreckers were finally replaced with the newer M543, 5-ton Wreckers with the improved Garwood 10K Lift-Crane. Our existing M109, 2½-ton ("gasser") Shop Vans were being replaced with the new "multi-fuel" powered M109A1, 2½-ton Shop Vans to include some of the authorized "plus-ups". The Armament and "Commo" Sections were both issued new "multi-fuel" powered M185A1, 2½-ton Signal/Armament Shop Vans. We continued to wait, however, for the other increases of new M/TO&E-authorized vehicles which were coming "down-the-pipeline".

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7. BILLETING:

In mid-to-late 1966, we departed "our" billeting facilities in Pulaski Barracks and moved to R.O.B., occupying the two (2) barracks vacated by the 57th Ordnance Group (Ammunition). Both barracks were gigantic, even taking just one of them - in comparison to the one we had just left in "Pulaski". They were three (3) story buildings, each with a basement, and they were extremely long with many spacious squad bays as well as a number of semi-private or what we used to call "NCO or Cadre Rooms". Again, the first impression that came to mind was - "there's more room in one of these barracks than our company strength could fill." That was then. Months later - not so true !! Beautiful . . . great !! "Things were definitely looking up" for "B" Company !!

VI. 1967 ~ " ROCK-STEADY ~ WHAT A YEAR !!"

1. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OVERVIEW:

1.1. US Army-wide:

1.1.2. US Army Serial Number Identification: In 1967, HQ DA, ODCSPER and Military Personnel Centers (Mil-Per-Cen) began the processes for transitioning individual/personnel identification numbers from the traditional/legacy US Army-assigned Component Serial Numbers (ASNs) to use of the government-issued Social Security Account Numbers (SSANs).

1.1.2.1. US Army Component Serial Numbers (ASNs) consisted of two (2) alpha prefixes immediately followed by eight (8) segmented numbers (i.e., "aa xx-xxx-xxx"). The alpha prefixes were determined/assigned according to each service member's Army Component, which included:

1.1.2.1.1. "RA" - Regular Army - enlistee/volunteer Active Army Service.

1.1.2.1.2. "NG" - National Guard or Army Reserve

1.1.2.1.3. "US" - Draftee

1.1.2.2. The US Army Finance & Accounting Office(s) (FAOs) (payroll divisions) had commenced the transitioning process a year earlier (1966) as was evident on each service member's Military Pay Voucher (MPV), DA Form 2139. In Block 1, therein, "dual" identification numbers were entered below the service member's name, including the legacy ASN and new entry of the SSAN. "Dual" entries in Block 1 of MPVs were eventually eliminated in the 1970s, leaving only the (mandated) SSAN of the individual.

1.1.2.3. Mil-Per-Cen and other Order-issuing authorities followed the lead of the FAO by adding SSANs along with legacy ASNs in 1967. "Dual" entries became evident on all personnel actions and Orders, regardless of whether a single individual or group of individuals were listed. "Dual" entries may not have been consistent across commands or other Order-issuing authorities until the end of Fiscal Year 1967 - solely due to administrative "delay-factors".

1.1.2.4. Use of "dual" entries on all MPVs, Orders, and other documentation, requiring same, was gradually eliminated in the 1970s, to include use of ASNs. From that point forward, all new Army records, documents, and Orders only reflected an individual's SSAN. Transition across the Army had been implemented. Legacy documents/records were unaltered/unchanged.

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- 1.1.3. US Army, Supply System Part Numbers: In 1967, all US Army Supply System records and documents which identified/referenced repair parts and their associated Part Numbers (PNs) added a second reference number for the repair part - that being the Federal Stock Number (FSN).
- 1.1.3.1. All FSNs contained a uniform string of eleven (11) numbers which were segmented into three (3) groups (i.e., xxxx-xxx-xxxx). The first group of four (4) numbers identified the Federal Supply Category (FSC) of each part with the following seven (7) unique numbers indicating the specific repair part.
- 1.1.3.2. The FSC is/was a four (4) digit number which identified what "type" of part was being referenced, for instance: FSC "2805" indicated the category for all gasoline engines; "2815" indicated all diesel engines; "2520" indicated all vehicle transmissions; "2910" indicated engine fuel system components; "2920" indicated engine electrical system components; etc.
- 1.1.3.3. The FSN was required to clarify and enhance repair part identity. In so many instances totally-different repair parts were found to have the same PN, creating understandable confusion at the applicable ICPs/NICPs and, as so, frequently resulted with the requesting unit receiving the wrong and disassociated part. Initially, a painstaking resolution to this problem caused those requesting repair parts to add specific referencing data and excessive narrative descriptions of the needed part on the Supply Requisition Form (i.e., DA Form 2765 or, the alternate, DD Form 1348). The FSN eliminated, for most all cases, the need to submit such specifically excessive narrative data.
- 1.1.4. Standardizing Technical Support Manuals: In 1967, US Army publications took another major step in standardizing all support manuals to a common format within each category of manual - and in those areas where "our" concerns laid: i.e., repair parts supply support and maintenance technical support.
- 1.1.4.1. Through many previous years, operator (how to) manuals had been converted/updated to somewhat of a more standardized format under the Technical Manual (TM) series for "Operators". In the areas of organizational/unit and DS/GS maintenance and vehicle-associated repairs parts support, however, standardization was not found. At that time, manual support in those areas was only found in the individual-series of commodity-oriented publications identified as "SNL" (Supply Number List) manuals and "ORD" (Ordnance [*maintenance*]) manuals. The SNL and ORD manuals were separately composed, edited, and published - in isolation. Each manual, respectively, focused on their area of parochial domain. SNL and ORD manuals rarely, if ever, "dove-tailed" with each other over the inter-related and (supposedly) mutually supporting content they were responsible for providing on any common vehicle/weapon system.
- 1.1.4.2. In 1967, US Army publications began fielding TMs which were vehicle/weapon system oriented. Each Army vehicle/weapon system and major-item (i.e., engines, transmissions, etc.) were supported by its stand-alone series of TMs. Each TM series consisted of complete manual support covering the areas of technical maintenance/repair, repair parts, and special tools. The assigned TM series identification number (a.k.a., TM number) was a dedicated number for each individual vehicle/weapon system or major-item and stayed consistent across all levels of maintenance for that particular vehicle/weapon system or major-item.
- 1.1.4.3. The TM protocols and disciplines established in 1967 have essentially remained in-tact to this day. Maintenance philosophies may have changed, but those changes have been readily incorporated into TMs without violating the premises established in the publications initiated in 1967. Typically, each level of maintenance is supported by a "bound" volume (or volumes) within the designated TM series. Each level of maintenance is additionally supported by a complete and illustrated listing of repair parts and special tools authorized for that maintenance level - referred to as the Repair Parts and Special Tools List (RPSTL).

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1.2. USAREUR & 7th Army (Regional):

- 1.2.1. Maintenance Assistance & Inspection Team (MAIT): Sometime in late 1965 or 1966 a concept and doctrine was developed in USAREUR for [*initially*] "assisting" unit commanders in ensuring that organic vehicles/equipment were being maintained to a high maintenance standard/high state-of-readiness. Army Regulation (AR) 750-1 and the Equipment Serviceability Criteria (ESC) program, contained therein, directed that procedures shall be followed to ensure that high rates of maintenance readiness for all US Army vehicles/equipment are met. Although the ESC program had been in-place for a while, command levels above-division had a perception that organic maintenance requirements for US Army user vehicles/equipment were not being met in Europe. From those perceptions evolved the implementation of the MAIT concept - along with its purposeful good intentions. Although the MAIT complied with its charter and the ESC prerequisites, early-on, a contrary view quickly surfaced from the lower echelons and user elements over the program. In later reported instances, [*some*] MAITs appeared to exceed their purpose and scope.
- 1.2.1.1. Re-visiting the ESC: The ESC established three (3) categories or states of equipment maintenance readiness - those being "GREEN", "AMBER", and "RED". The ESC contained a mandatory "Check List" of items which had to be mirrored on each vehicle's/equipment's DA Form 2404 ("2404"). When completing inspection/check of each ESC listed item, the results were recorded on the "2404" with (a symbol):
- 1.2.1.1.1. Items meeting "serviceability criteria", received a "GREEN" rating (a check ✓).
- 1.2.1.1.2. Items with a minor deficiency/shortcoming, received an "AMBER" rating (a circled-X) and the deficiency had to be "worked-off"/repaired .
- 1.2.1.1.1. Items with a major deficiency/failing "serviceability criteria", received a "RED" rating (an X) and the equipment was "deadlined" for cause until fully repaired.
- 1.2.2. MAIT Charter: The MAIT "tested the waters" in the early-to-mid-part of 1966, but achieved its clout in 1967 which was carried forward from that time forward. The MAIT was primarily chartered with two command objectives - being a component of the Annual General Inspection Team (AGI Team) and, when operating as independent teams, conducting "road-side inspections" of US Army vehicles. The underlying goal of the Charter - elevate readiness.
- 1.2.2.1. MAIT & the AGI Team: To ease the burden of both expertise and personnel resources from the composition of AGI Teams, MAITs were satellited onto both the pre-AGI and AGI Teams. During the pre-AGI/AGIs, the responsibility of MAIT was to inspect: vehicles/equipment IAW ESC; logbooks and logbook forms/records; Dispatch Records; and DD Forms 314, Scheduled Maintenance records. Additionally, the MAIT would observe and score the conduct of daily vehicle/equipment Motor Stables and evaluate/score overall Motor Pool operations.
- 1.2.2.2. On-the-Spot Road-Side Check Points: The primary mission of MAITs was to operate as independent mobile entities for setting-up randomly selected On-the-Spot Road-Side Check Points for the purpose of stopping passing US Army vehicles and conducting on-the-spot inspections. MAIT inspected the driver's Military Operator's License (SF346), logbook, vehicle dispatch authorization, checked for the presence of the vehicle's OVE/OVM, and conducted a vehicle inspection IAW ESC. All results were recorded on triplicate DA Forms 2404, one copy of which the MAIT "inspectors" directed to be turned-in to the Company Motor Officer/Motor Sergeant for appropriate action and/or to be filed for record.

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1.2.2.2.1. Road-Side Check - Deadline Deficiency: If the MAIT Road-Side Check inspection revealed a deadline (X) deficiency that could not be corrected on-site, the vehicle was not allowed to continue travel - rather, a wrecker was called-in to evacuate the vehicle to the owning unit's Motor Pool. "*Deep Kimchee !!*" The MAIT would immediately send a command-level "Letter" to the owning unit's commanding officer through the appropriate chains-of-command describing all infractions, detailing the deadlining condition(s), and specifying required corrective action(s). The unit commander had a week to reply to the MAIT back-through "the chain" and state corrective actions taken. In those days "the Letter" was truly "feared" as, in fact, it embodied the weighty ramifications for violating command policy(ies) and/or directives. A possibility existed - and in certain cases as it was witnessed - serious "penalties" could be/were levied on the vehicle's owning-unit commanding officer. *That could really ruin any officer's day, especially unit commanders !!*

1.2.2.3. The MAIT quickly attained their reputation of being all this and more . . . "ruthless", "inconsiderate", "S-O-Bs" . . . etc. In some cases they might have warranted that reputation, but overall I'd have to disagree with those characterizations. In retrospect - a contributing element to the "problem(s)" with MAIT may have been with those few "long-in-the-tooth" members who believed they "*wheeled-the-wrath-of-God*" and ("being above the law") mistakenly exhibited that attitude while either conducting inspections during Pre-AGIs/AGIs or when pulling-over and inspecting vehicles as part of their "clandestine" On-the-Spot Road-Side Checks. They were frequently reported as being disrespectful and "brutal". Well, looking into the rearview mirror - whatever you believed or experienced - it's all back there in the faded dust-trail of history now . . .

1.2.3. Final Word & Analysis - ESC & MAIT:

1.2.3.1. During the 60's decade of the "Cold War", command emphasis was focused on the ability of units to "move, shoot, and communicate". Unfortunately, the existing maintenance philosophies and mandates of that era, although well intended, failed to support the essential need of units to be able to "move out quickly". The daily "Motor Stables", conducted in compliance with ESC prerequisites, were too burdensome, lengthy, and not well structured to meet routine, or especially, expedited move-out requirements. (Those requirements were not satisfied until the advent of the Preventive Maintenance Checks & Services (PMCS) criteria which introduced the "Before", "During", and "After" maintenance/services philosophy.) Subsequently, complete Motor Stables (and the "move" capacity) were frequently deferred with focus heavily placed elsewhere. This led, in many cases, to the fog of neglected attention which adversely effected the "readiness" of unit vehicles used on a frequent or daily-basis. If one can remember, Motor Stables was so involved and time-consuming that many unit commanders elected to spread-out ESC Motor Stables over a week's period. There, a selected number of individual and different items from the ESC Check List were grouped together and then scheduled for completion on specified sequential days within a week. This approach did ease the repetitious daily grind and "time factor" for conducting full ESC Motor Stables, but under this scenario existed the reality that "on any given day" you would not necessarily find a vehicle that complied with "all" ESC prerequisites . . . "*MAIT-meat*" !!

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1.2.3.2. Due to the overwhelming demands of Motor Stables, many means were created to superficially appease ESC requirements, causing many vehicles to suffer - maintenance-wise. Aware of these conditions, MAITs were established to counter this prevailing downward trend of vehicle (and equipment) maintenance readiness. Looking at the "Big Picture" and the umbrella of responsibilities major commands placed on the MAITs, their chartered mission of elevating the awareness, visibility, and need for organic vehicle/equipment to be maintained in a high state of readiness was accomplished. And, although most likely achieved through "fear" of the MAIT, the "message was received" - in units and down to the individual driver/operator. Regardless of how the MAITs were perceived or what the individual opinions may have been of them - they had a "hard product to sell" and a difficult command-level objective to achieve. I'm not aware of any comprehensive documentation that provides the "final, game-ending score" [*it certainly wasn't within the weekly DA Form 2406 "Deadline Report"*], however, the results of the MAITs' efforts can only be "judged" from a personal perspective - as each one of us experienced "it" and witnessed their impact(s) on vehicle readiness in "our" units at that time.

2. "B" COMPANY Organization & " ROLL CALL " : ("Known" Changes from 1966 Only)

2.1. Company HQ:

- 2.1.1. C.O. - CPT Jerry W. Whitt (to mid-1967)
- 2.1.2. "Top Sgt." - 1SG Charles L. Scott (to late-1967)
- 2.1.3. Lead/Morning Report Clerk - SP4 Loveless

2.2. Company HQ:

- 2.2.1. C.O. - 1LT Charles D. Bush (mid-1967)
- 2.2.2. "Top Sgt." - 1SG Donald Murray (late-1967)

2.3. Company Operations:

- 2.3.1. Shop Officer = 1LT Melvin Wamock
- 2.3.2. Shop Office NCOIC = SFC E.C. Rainwater

2.4. Inspection Section:

- 2.4.1. Chief Inspector: SP5/SSG J.A. Creati (mid-1967)

2.5. Maintenance Platoon:

- 2.5.1. Maintenance Platoon LDR = 2LT Phillip Schrock
- 2.5.2. Maint Plt Sgt = SFC Shockley
- 2.5.3. Maint. Plt. Section Chief = SSG Jean J. "Frenchy" Petit
- 2.5.4. Allied Trades Section Chief = SSG Arlin F. Chancey

2.6. Track Section:

- 2.6.1. Section Chief/Track Inspector = SP4/SP5 J.A. Creati (early to mid-1967)
- 2.6.2. Section Chief/Track Inspector = SP5 Phillip J. Hockert (mid-1967)
- 2.6.3. Mech/Rprm = SP4 "Speedy" Soltero
- 2.6.4. Mech/Rprm = SP4 "Gentleman" Jim Sollers
- 2.6.5. Mech/Rprm = SP4 "Goofy" Hartman
- 2.6.6. Mech/Rprm = PFC Clark

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3. MISSION & SPECIAL MISSIONS:

- 3.1. On-Call/Stand-By Wrecker Support: As the MAIT "On-the-Spot Road-Side Check Point" concept was evolving, it rapidly became evident that wrecker recovery/evacuation support was needed. This realization obliged HQ, 1st Support Brigade to establish a schedule for On-Call/Stand-By Wrecker Service across the regions it commanded. The schedule involved wrecker support from all maintenance battalions. Zones of coverage were identified for the battalions. Each battalion created a rotational schedule for the wreckers in their subordinate units which, additionally, interfaced with a master schedule that integrated the support schedules of the other zone-designated maintenance battalions. The rotational schedule involved the wreckers of "B" Company. The schedule, I believe, amounted to two (2) weeks "on" stand-by with four (4), or so, weeks "off". The two (2) weeks proved stressful for the two wrecker crews, always having to be "at-the-ready" while continuing to support daily shop requirements, et al.
- 3.2. Joint Task Force (JTF) "Pathfinder Express": In April 1967, "we" were alerted by HQ, 1st Spt. Bde. to identify members of "B" Company who would be detailed to a composite support group representing HQ, USAREUR & 7th Army in "JTF - Pathfinder Express". Our "contribution" provided Shop Office operations, automotive repairmen, communications/electronic (COMMEL) repairmen, small arms repairmen. and a wrecker and crew. The members of our team escape me [now], but I believe - 2LT Phillip Schrock was both the Shop Officer and "B" Company Composite Team Leader - I was (for JTF) the Shop Office NCOIC.
 - 3.2.1. JTF "Pathfinder Express" was a joint exercise involving U.S. Forces and those of Spain in a "scripted" airborne assault scenario against "elements of an aggressing enemy". The "spearhead" of the Allied Forces included: US Army - 1st and 2nd Battalions, 509th Airborne Infantry Regiment; and the I "Banderas" PAS (Spanish Airborne Brigade). The US Air Force provided support in all aspects of tactical & combat air-assault operations and logistical support airlift operations. The exercise was drafted into four (4) phases, including:
 - 3.2.1.1. Phase 1 - staging of Allied Forces in the "assembly area" (Moron AFB, Spain) located at the "Forward Edge of the Battle Area" (FEBA).
 - 3.2.1.2. Phase 2 - Up-load "spearhead" elements, airlift, and conduct Allied Forces airborne assault into the "Area of Battle" (AOB), at Zaragoza, Spain; defeat enemy forces; and commence "area re-consolidation".
 - 3.2.1.3. Phase 3 - Up-load logistical support elements: airlift to Zaragoza; and establish "area support" during "area re-consolidation".
 - 3.2.1.4. Phase 4 - Airlift of all "friendly" forces back to "home stations".
 - 3.2.2. Along with "our bodies", we provided our organic vehicles/equipment and SKOs needed to accomplish our projected support mission, as defined for JTF. At Sembach AFB, the Shop Office M109A1 Van, the two (2) Armament and COMMEL M185A1 Vans, and the M543 Wrecker were loaded on four (4) C-124 "Globemaster II" aircraft while the two (2) M35A1 Cargos were loaded on two (2) C-130 "Hercules" aircraft. What a new experience that turned-out to be. On 16 May, we were airlifted to Moron AFB, Spain where we off-loaded and positioned our vehicles in "assembly area" postures. Moron AFB was a Joint-Tactical/Strategic Air Command base. As I recall, it was one of the last-standing US AFBs in Spain - and would soon be "dismantled".

(NOTE: As you may recall, a few years earlier one of SAC's B-52s had accidentally and mysteriously dropped and lost one of its on-board nuclear-weapons into the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Spain. Subsequently, the Spanish Government requested the U.S. to remove all SAC bases from Spain. Moron AFB became one of the reciprocal "victims" to that request.)

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- 3.2.2.1. "Moron" had a humongous "dining facility" (not "mess hall") that operated 24-hours/7-days a week. They provided all three-meals around-the-clock - and of all things, we were authorized to "chow-down" there . . . what GREAT chow !! We were also authorized to shower, clean-up, and use the latrine facilities in their (vacated) barracks. All this "luxury" for six days . . . what a "war" !! The sad "thing" here . . . the base was totally vacated, except for the immediate facilities around and pertaining to the flight-line and aircraft/crew support. Brand-new family housing . . . barracks . . . schools . . . surrounding buildings . . . all empty ! Images from a sci-fi flick of desolation and void created by a neutron bomb come to mind (i.e., 1959's "On The Beach") . . . buildings - yes, people - no !!
- 3.2.3. On 22 May, we repeated the drill of loading our vehicles/equipment onto the previously designated aircraft and were airlifted to Zaragoza. There we deployed into support groups. Our composite group, representing USAREUR & 7th Army, constituted the Logistics-Rear Area Support Team (L-RAST), or more correctly the "RAST", which provided both integral Rear Area support and, when needed in a real combat scenario, back-up support to the Forward Area Support Team (FAST).
- 3.2.3.1. In Zaragoza we were 'in the field" [*in a manner of speaking*]. The sandy brownish-gray landscape was totally flat and empty - void of anything - except when looking a far incalculable distance away, where the land dramatically erupted into extremely high vertical palisades that could be seen climbing "miles" into the sky until reaching the rim of the surrounding high plateaus. What a vision !!
- 3.2.3.2. The "B" Company team was ready "to-go" once we were positioned in our "area of operation" (AO). Quartermaster (QM) and engineer (ENGR) support teams refined the RAST encampment with "comfort features". The QM erected a shower tent [*brother! was that water ever hot !!*] and provided "*fluff-n-fold*" laundry service (for both "whites", without starch - and fatigues, sans starch, as well). The ENGRs brought-in "porta-potties" [*never thought I'd ever see that on a "battlefield", but there they were - all shiny neon-green*] and graded land-surfaces to create un-paved Class-4 roadways. And somewhere between the mutual responsibilities of the QM and ENGR teams, fresh water was wheeled out to us in 400-gallon "water-buffalos" three-times daily.
- 3.2.4. On 1 or 2 June, we loaded-up our designated aircraft again - *thinking* - for airlift back to Sembach AFB [*I should have known better by now*] . . .WRONG !! We landed on an isolated airstrip somewhere around Tunis, Tunisia . . . WOW !! Flat and totally barren. Just bleach-white sand as far as the eye could see. The sand was so white, one couldn't discern the difference between the sand and the white cement landing strip/runway. To this day I don't know what that "detour" was all-about. I might have been told, but I've forgotten since. I do know, however, per our JTF "pre-brief", that a "*trip*" to Tunisia was not in the original "game-plan" for "Pathfinder Express". Well, for whatever its intent, we did "survive" the sun-broiling heat of Tunisia [*in spite of our "O.D." painted vehicles*] and were eventually airlifted back to Sembach AFB and "K-town" a handful-of-days later. Happy to get back to "bier and bratwurst" and the "cool" of a German summer !!
- 3.3. "On-Cycle" TCQC - Composite Support Team: In mid-July 1967, "B" Company was (again) given alert orders from HQ, 1st Spt. Bde. - this time announcing requirements for establishing a Composite Support Team (CST) to support the "on-cycle" TCQC for all three (3) Squadrons of the 3rd ACR. "B" Company would be the core element of the team. The balance of the CST would be supplied by our "sister" companies and drawn from units of the other battalions within the 1st Spt. Bde.
- 3.3.1. As a Company, this was the first time "we" had supported the entire 3rd ACR. We had always been dedicated to the 2nd Squadron. Additionally, this was the first time that unfamiliar "*strangers*" would be part of "our" support mission/efforts.

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- 3.3.2. The CST assembled with all vehicles/equipment ready at "0-dark-thirty", early 9 August 1967. We headed, in convoy, "over" the various many autobahns to Grafenwöhr, arriving there six-to-eight hours later. Surprise of all surprises . . . and for my last TDY to "Graf" . . . wouldn't you just know . . . we were being encamped in the dreaded "tent city", Camp Kasserine !! I'd managed to avoid "it" for so many years. And here it was - the hottest and dustiest month of all - August - "to boot". It must have been in the "numbers". Anyway, the TCQC support mission was not unlike those we had previously supported. The difference laid in the duration and the character of a composite effort. The 3rd ACR successfully completed their TCQC which qualified all "Brave Rifles". We returned to "K-town" and R.O.B. on 17 October.
- 3.4. The "Green Ball Express": On 1 December 1967, HQ, 1st Support Brigade notified "B" Company, through HQ, 66th Maintenance Battalion, that we'd be receiving a "Christmas Present" from both "Brigade" and the 51st Maintenance Battalion . . .
- 3.4.1. Apparently, personnel shortages throughout the 51st plus supply system support issues had created a job-order "back-log" there. Personnel shortages weren't necessarily the issue, but parts availability were. To that, as we were told, the supply system had been unable to "fill" the many requisitions the 51st had submitted over the past many months, placing most parts on "back-order" . . . up until that moment. The supply system had finally responded . . . "dumping" sufficiently dense amounts of repair parts on the 51st, so much so, that it raised a "red flag" at "Brigade". The 51st couldn't manage the overwhelming number of job-orders it now had to move from "Waiting Parts" to a "Waiting Shop" status - as created by the massive supply "drop" of repair parts.
- 3.4.2. "B" Company, with its greatly earned reputation of "getting the job done", was tasked with assuming 75+ job-orders from the 51st. All job-orders involved various models of the 5-ton truck family. The job-orders/requirements were "generously sorted-out" to only include those requiring replacement of fly-wheels, rear-main seals, clutch kits, transmissions and transfer cases - plus one that slipped-through, needing an engine (replacement not provided). The additional "kicker" . . . all job-orders had to be completed and vehicles picked-up by the 51st Maintenance Battalion NLT 31 December . . . hence, the "Green Ball Express". "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year" !! "B" Company completed that tasking with two (2) days to spare, even to include that engine job. The "lost" Christmastime had been enough . . . "we" weren't going to spend New Year's Eve in the shops as well !!

4. SHOP FACILITIES:

"B" Company began growing in both M/TO&E-authorized SKOs and shop-support equipment since moving into the former 546th Ordnance Company [new-to-us] maintenance shops. Previous non-existent and legacy shop sections grew into their [new] assigned shop areas. The complex proved to be an excellent shop facility for accomplishing DSU+ maintenance, repairs, and fabrication.

5. UNIT ORGANIC IMPROVEMENTS:

- 5.1. Personnel: Here as well, "B" Company began receiving personnel "fills" which were bringing us up to [*and I think beyond*] authorized M/TO&E levels. Quantitatively and qualitatively, equally, "we" were evolving into a more-than terrifically "awesome" DSU, in every respect. One small, but significant contribution to this growth were the "Project 100,000" repairmen we received.

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- 5.1.1. One of the smartest decisions the US Army has ever made was initiating "Project 100,000". Of course, that program was created in response to the Viet Nam-generated need for additional personnel. The Army's philosophy had been to accept, as a minimum, only high school graduates. That mind-set was not "filling-the-ranks". The Army opened-up the acceptance criteria for a select 100,000 'volunteers' who didn't "quite" meet standard induction requirements. They were tentatively scheduled through Basic Training and AIT. Those who successfully passed through those "hurdles" were "promised" formal schooling while on duty that would result in achieving, on merit, a high school diploma. "B" Company received approximately ten of "Project 100,000" MOS-trained 63H10 repairmen. They might not have had the high school qualifications for Army induction, prior to the program, but they turned-out well, were a welcomed resource and positive influence, and most importantly, they proved to be damn-good "thinking" mechanics/repairmen !!
- 5.1.2. In other respects, however, the Company began receiving some personnel with really "off-the-wall" MOSs, not associated with a tank-automotive/artillery ordnance-maintenance company. These were neither "new-bees" nor "re-treads", and only a few were Viet Nam "returning veterans". Some of the MOSs (job description) included: Railroad Box-Car Repairman; Carpenter; Photo Equipment Repairman; Rotary-Wing Aircraft Repairman; just in naming a few. I can't remember what their final dispositions were, but they only "stayed" in the company area for a week or so before being re-assigned.
- 5.1.3. Another curious event concerned personnel from our Baumholder "sister" - "C" Company. We began receiving some of "C" Company's "new-tour long-timers", ranging in grades from SP4 through SSG. I was "told" that "C" Company was being de-activated, so in order to keep those personnel in the "battalion-family", Battalion HQ had them transferred to us. I don't think "C" Company was really in the throes of being de-activated at that time, at least not through my remaining time - April 1968.
- 5.2. Vehicle Replacements: "B" Company continued to receive new replacement vehicles and "gains" per our M/TO&E. I think, by now, we were finally rid of all the old legacy vehicles the company was operating when I first arrived there in 1965.

6. BILLETING:

All barracks-assigned personnel had comfortably settled into their "new digs" - previously occupied by the 57th Ordnance Group (Ammunition) - as discussed earlier. The squad-bays in both barracks were filling-up, beyond my original observations and initial expectations. Re-visiting my earlier thoughts - by moving "us" to such spacious "twin" barracks, higher echelons of command must have looked-down the "yellow-brick road" and knew that "B" Company was going to grow and "be something" . . . what "they" didn't realize [*obviously*] was the fact . . . we had always been "something" . . . just not in "numbers" !!

- 6.1. Company Headquarters moved into the "first" building and had taken-over the central section of the second floor, just across the hallway from the center stairwell. That area appeared to have been set-up for a headquarters operation by the 57th Ord. Group, so the Company Commander, 1st Sergeant, and Company Clerks, after some minor "house cleaning", were able to move right in and "get-on" with business. The "ol man" had a very roomy and comfortable office, complete with carpeting that was just shy of being wall-to-wall. To get to the C.O. and/or his office, however, you had to "get-by" the 1st Sergeant and pass-through his equally roomy office - right beside the C.O.'s office - no rug though. And, outside and beside the "1st Shirt's" office were the four (4) ever-present Company Clerks - and damn-it - I can just see their faces, but can only recall one of their names !!. That being "SP4 Loveless", our Lead & "Morning Report" Clerk - I just added him to the "Roll Call".

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- 6.2. The Company Supply Room established its operation in the basement of the "first" building. One of the company's Day Rooms occupied a large room just down the hallway from the Supply Room.
- 6.3. All three (3) floors of the "second" barracks/building were typically laid-out in the squad-bay configuration. A second Day Room was established in the basement there, as well. The third floor had four (4) or five (5) of the squad-bays reserved and set-up as "Off-Post Ready-Rooms". "Authorized" off-post personnel had bunks and lockers assigned within these rooms. The lockers were used to store each individual's TA-51 and other "alert gear". The bunks served two (2) purposes: secondarily, as a place to "rest" in case of extended "alert stand-by" situations; but primarily, the bunks were only used during inspections by off-post personnel who were required to "lay-out" TA-51 and other related gear. In those days, NCOs, SSG E-6 and above, were not required to "lay-out" for inspections.
- 6.4. Absolutely none - none of these new barracks-generated "perks" were available to us, or could have even been contemplated, back in the old billets at Pulaski Barracks.

VII. 1968 ~ " ALLE, AUF WEIDERSEHEN !! "

1. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OVERVIEW ~ " PASS - IN - REVIEW !! "

1968 was a "short year" [*for me*] in "B" Company, 66th Maintenance Battalion, lasting only 3 months plus days past the beginning of that New Year. I can only imagine that events continued to "carry-on" in the same spirit as they had in the exciting year which had just come to a close - 1967. The Company had advanced in so many ways over the past three (3) years, it's hard to fathom. To have progressed from an almost "catatonic" existence into a truly respected, leading, and quint-essential organization over that span of time was beyond awe-inspiring.

The first six (6) months of 1965 were less-than anti-climactic and instilled a sense that the 68th Ordnance Company, 66th Ordnance Battalion was doing nothing more than marching to a "mark-time" cadence. Yes, there were those moments of heightened importance early-on, during the "French affair", but that was short-lived. True, the company was aggressively accomplishing its assigned mission of supporting the low-priority rated ARGs with their, equally, un-inspiring, obsolete and ill-managed equipment - but there had to be more for a company with so much stored potential. The year's end, in fact, did project a glimmer of hope, albeit wrapped in a shroud of seemingly endless turbulence - vacating a putridly anemic shop for a "new" maintenance shop, the promise of new/up-graded vehicles, and then a second re-location to yet another more accommodating maintenance shop . . . something was in the wind . . . a new beginning was on the horizon . . .

1966 offered "B" Company a rejuvenated sense of worth, arriving in the guise of challenges posed by the advent of new "mission statements". The company's full attention, efforts, and support had to be refocused on functional and active units, which included an armored combat line-unit as well. The latter part of that year provided an additional opportunity to demonstrate its grit - the prime mission support role became more impressive with responsibilities extending beyond sole garrison support, venturing into the realm of combat service DSU support to armored combat line-units during annual TDY live-fire qualification "trials". "B" Company was quickly earning its credentials. The heralding of personnel replenishment, increases of shop support equipment, and new vehicle gains gave insight to the prospects of its upcoming future . . .

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1967 witnessed the repeated calls upon "B" Company to demonstrate its full capabilities through a multiple series of highly-profiled and demanding support missions . . . missions successfully accomplished and, to a higher degree, in a manner which further validated the full worth and substance of its credentials. More poignantly, its tracked performance established "B" Company as the premiere "go to" organization throughout both the 66th Maintenance Battalion and the 1st Support Brigade. Rounding out the year found increases of personnel, shop support equipment, and gains of new vehicles being realized. And last, but not least, company personnel had settled fully into the more functional and accommodating "twin" barracks. Although that may at first appear a minor or insignificant point, for the "mechanic/soldier-on-the-ground", however, billeting is one of "his" more valued concerns. The "twin" barracks, therefore, served doubly as an "ultimate reward" and extreme morale-builder - a keystone event. What a year !

2. "B" COMPANY Organization ~ " FINAL ROLL CALL ":

("Known" Changes from 1967 Only)

2.1. Company HQ:

2.1.1. C.O. - 1LT Charles D. Bush

2.1.2. "Top Sgt." - 1SG Donald Murray

2.2. Company Operations:

2.2.1. Shop Officer - 2LT (P) Phillip Schrock

2.2.2. Shop Office NCO-at-Large - SSG J.A. Creati (late 1967-April 1968)

2.3. Track Section:

2.3.1. Section Chief/Track Inspector = SP5 Phillip J. Hockert

2.3.2. Mech/Rprm = SP4 "Speedy" Soltero

2.3.3. Mech/Rprm = SP4 "Gentleman" Jim Sollers

2.3.4. Mech/Rprm = SP4 "Goofy" Hartman

2.3.5. Mech/Rprm = PFC Clark

3. " ALLE, AUF WEIDERSEHEN !! "

History is not just a chronological listing of events, significant or otherwise, but is more so a reflection of intangible and embraced recollections associated with peers, activities, progress, duty, mission, and milestones coupled with the esthetic values which permeate those considerations. These historical recollections have been projected as accurately as I could possibly offer. I feel, however, that I most assuredly must have missed some moment/occasion or event which is relevant to the history of the 68th Ordnance Company or "B" Company that linger foremost in the memories of others - that is to be expected, especially after so many decades. Therefore, it is equally incumbent on "those others" who feel that experiences and/or events have been left out, whether major or minor (it doesn't matter), to step up and bring those memories to the forefront. Every bit of this Company's "story" is valued - and it would be especially shameful not to fill-in any "voids".

Und jetzt . . . fur alle, Auf Weidersehen !!

THANK YOU

68th ORDNANCE COMPANY, 66th ORDNANCE BATTALION

and

"B" COMPANY, 66th MAINTENANCE BATTALION