

116th TCS Convoy Memories

Boise, Idaho 1973

The first deployment of the 116th TCS in 1973 was to a location a couple of miles south of Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.

The convoy left Portland on the 5th of July, and the weather was very hot, so driving a duce-and-a-half wasn't a particularly nice experience.

The unit did not possess all of our authorized vehicles either. So we had to borrow some from the Army National Guard. Well, as you can imagine we didn't get the cream of the crop. Most of the duce's we got were 1950's vintage with canvas tops.

So, here we are heading east on I84, and we're starting up Cabbage Hill out of Pendleton, Oregon (probably one of the steepest passes in Oregon), when everyone starts passing this Army duce-and-a-half that that's struggling up this very steep hill.

As we go by, the sight that later earned some chastisement from the command, was the Radar Maintenance NCOIC driving the duce-and-a-half. With the top rolled back, throttle pulled all the way out, standing up with the upper portion of his body above the windshield of the truck, wearing a cowboy hat with the front pinned back with a set of captains' bars. Kind of like from the old Rin Tin Tin movies.

At the rest stop at the top of the pass there was some discussion about proper driving procedures, as well as some comments from motorists who had observed this driving exhibition.

Needless to say the Radar NCOIC earned the nickname Captain Buffalo, which stuck with him for the rest of his career.

It may not seem that funny, but it sure was at the time.

Camp Rilea, Oregon 1981

Our 1981 deployment to Camp Rilea on the Oregon coast was during an ORI. So after mobilizing all our equipment

(Manual CRC), we convoyed approximately 100 miles. The inspectors and the Command, thought for safety reasons, they would call a time out when all the vehicles got to Rilea, as it was quite late in the evening. So all the vehicles were parked on the old grass runway and everyone broke for the evening.

The next morning everyone reported to their vehicles which were still lined up in elements. In the element next to me was the AGE Maintenance Vehicle. They were International Harvester Trucks with a maintenance van mounted to the chassis.

When the AGE vehicle started to move I noticed it suddenly stop and the front end dip down. The entire right front wheel assembly had broken off the axle.



Well, you may say, so what, the vehicle wasn't moving that fast and no one was injured. Which was great. Until the guys started thinking about what would have happened if the wheel let go when we were crossing the coast Range Mountains. It probably would have been a completely different story.

Departing Camp Rilea, Oregon 198?

Normally when we deployed to Camp Rilea, we would convoy over highway 26, a very popular tourist route to the coast. This particular deployment, it was decided to use highway 30 along the Columbia River to make it easy on the tourists.

On the return deployment, I was driving the 5 ton, with the 43E antenna, pulling the 43E van. Just as you leave Astoria, Oregon, the highway becomes two lanes, and is quite steep and curvey for a few miles.

The exact spot to blow the air line to the mobilizer. So there I was, all brakes locked up, in the middle of the highway, and no way to move. And no way for anyone to get around as I was stopped on a curve.

Of course the Vehicle Maintenance guys were the last vehicle in the element, about 10 vehicles back. They finally were able to make it up to us to find out what the problem was. They immediately identified the problem, and could fix it in minutes. When they got back to their truck, rummaged around, found a new air hose and hustled back to my vehicle replace it in record time.

So hats off to the Vehicle Maintenance Troops and all the other "Support" troops that made life, safe, exciting, and kept us fed.

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