


KOREAN WAR PROJECT

**REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 1ST TANK
BATTALION, PERIOD 27 JULY TO 31
OCTOBER 1953**

Headquarters
1st Tank Battalion
1st Marine Division (Reinf), FMF
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

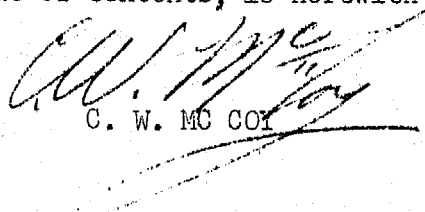
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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, 1st Marine Division (Reinf), FMF
(Attn: ACofS G-3)

Subj: Activities 1st Tank Battalion, period 27 July 1953 through
31 October 1953; report of

Ref: (a) CG, 1stMarDiv ltr serial 002541, dtd 5Nov53

1. In accordance with the instructions contained in reference (a), activities of this battalion during the period 27 July 1953 through 31 October 1953, as enumerated in the table of contents, is herewith submitted.


C. W. MC COY


Enclosure (11)


TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I

OPERATIONS DURING FIRST 72 HOURS FOLLOWING ARMISTICE

	<u>Page</u>
Disposition of Tank Elements	1-1
Salvage of Equipment and Material	1-4
Immediate Effects of Cease Fire on Personnel	1-6

SECTION II

SHOW OF FORCE FOR NON-REPATRIATED PRISONERS OF WAR	2-1
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SECTION III

TANK BATTALION MISSIONS

Tank Employment in Support of Counterattack Plans	3-1
Antimechanized Defense	3-2
Selection and Preparation of Tank Firing Positions in Defense of Div Sector	3-3

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Enclosure (1) Map, Korea, 1/25000 Showing Tank Unit Disposition
period 27 July through 31 October 1953.
- Enclosure (2) Map, Korea, 1/25000 Showing Location of Units
Participating in Show of Force.
- Enclosure (3) Map, Korea, 1/25000 Showing Tank Firing Positions
in Support of Division Sector.
- Enclosure (4) Map, Korea, 1/25000 Showing Tank Support of Div-
ision Counterattack Plans.

SECTION I

OPERATIONS DURING FIRST 72 HOURS FOLLOWING ARMISTICE

Disposition of Tank Elements

On 27 July 1953 elements of the 1st Tank Battalion (Reinforced) were located and assigned as shown below:

Able Company (Reinf), D/S 5th Marines, CT 013005

Baker Company, Rear Reserve Tank Company, CS 090928

Charlie Company (Reinf), D/S 1st Marines, CT 091048

Dog Company, Forward Reserve Tank Company, CT 082999

1st KMC Tank Company, D/S 1st KMC RCT, CS 016971

Flame Platoon (-), D/S 1st Amphibian Tractor Bn, BS 973852

1st Tank Bn (-), CS 088925

1st Provisional Tank Platoon, Attached to 1st Provisional Partisan

Regt (WOLFPACK) KANGWHA-DO, BS 780880

Able Company (Reinf)

On 27 July 1953 Able Company had operational control of tank platoon 5th Marines, and was in D/S of the 5th Marines with thirteen (13) tanks in firing positions on the MLR. Balance of the company was located at the company command post at CT 013055. (See enclosure (1)). At 280900I July all tanks were withdrawn from the MLR to the company command post and tank platoon 5th Marines was released to parent control.

At 010730I Aug the command post at CT 013005 was closed and the company displaced rearward to CT 055005 and opened a temporary command post. (See enclosure (1)). Able Company remained in D/S of the 5th Marines during the 72 hours following the armistice and at 171330I Aug displaced to CS 069973 where a permanent command post was established. See enclosure (1).

Charlie Company (Reinf)

On 27 July 1953 Charlie Company had operational control of tank platoons

of the 1st and 7th Marines and was in D/S of the 1st Marines with twelve (12) tanks in tank firing positions on the MLR; See enclosure (1). Balance of the company was located at the company command post, CT 091048.

Tanks remained on the MLR covering withdrawal of the 1st Marines until 291100I July when they displaced to the company command post.

At 291400I July the company was released from D/S of the 1st Marines, operational control of tank platoons 1st and 7th Marines was relinquished, and the command post at CT 091048 was closed. The Company displaced to CS 088926 and became an element of the division tank reserve. See enclosure (1).

1st KMC Tank Company

On 27 July 1953 the 1st KMC Tank Company was located at CS 016971 in D/S of the 1st KMC RCT. At this time no tanks occupied MLR firing positions. All tanks were located in platoon assembly areas in rear of the MLR.

At 010730I Aug the company closed the command post at CS 016971 and displaced to CS 092921 where a new command post was established and became an element of the division tank reserve under operational control of the 1st Tank Battalion.

Dog Company

On 27 July 1953 Dog Company was located at CT 082999 as the division forward reserve tank company. At 290900I July the command post at CT 082999 was closed and the company displaced to CS 146974 where a new command post was opened and became an element of the division tank reserve.

Baker Company

On 27 July 1953 Baker Company was located at CS 090928 as the division rear reserve tank company. No change was made in the location of this company, however, its mission was changed and it became an element of the division tank reserve.

1st Tank Bn (-) (Reinf)

On 27 July 1953 the battalion command post was located at CS 088925. Inasmuch as this location was contiguous to an excellent road net, centrally located within the division sector and of a sufficient distance from the demarcation line the command post remained at this location. See enclosure (1).

1st Provisional Tank Platoon

On 27 July 1953 this platoon was located at BS 780880 on the Island of KANGWHA-DO, attached to the 1st Partisan Regiment (WOLFPACK).

Location of this unit remained unchanged until 101400I Aug at which time it moved by water and rail arriving at the Tank Bn CP on 12 August 1953.

This platoon was disbanded on 14 August 1953 with personnel and equipment reassigned within the battalion.

Flame Platoon (-)

On 27 July 1953 the Flame Platoon (-) (6 tanks) was located at BS 973852 in D/S of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion. At 141000I Sep the platoon closed the command post at BS 973852 and joined its parent organization at the Tank Bn CP.

Salvage of Equipment and Material

During the first 72 hours subsequent to the armistice the 1st Tank Battalion was presented with the tremendous task of removing from vicinity of the MLR large quantities of ammunition (206 tons or 82 truck loads); fuel oil and grease (19 tons or 9 truck loads); fortification material (15 tons or 6 truck loads); and the camp equipment and organizational property of three (3) MLR tank companies (approximately 35 tons or 14 truck loads). See enclosure (1) for tank unit disposition on 27 July 1953.

The most difficult of logistical problems confronting this battalion during the 72 hour period was preparation and movement of class III and V supplies and in particular class V. Ammunition was stored in 35 MLR on-position dumps extending across the entire frontage of the division sector as well as on one (1) combat outpost where tanks were positioned near FANMUNJOM. A small ammunition dump and a sizeable fuel dump was maintained at each of the three (3) committed tank company command posts. In addition, the battalion maintained a large class III and V dump north of the IMJIN River in vicinity of the battalion forward command post (see enclosure (1)). To make the problem even more difficult, additional vehicles and personnel could not be obtained from division; the battalion was operating with only twenty-four (24) of its authorized thirty-four (34) cargo trucks; it was necessary to retain thirty (30) percent of the tanks and crews on the MLR for security purposes during sixty (60) of the available seventy-two (72) hours; and, the necessity for completing the withdrawal behind the southern boundary of the DMZ within seventy-two (72) hours.

Since all of the ammunition in the MLR on-position dumps was unpackaged and in a ready-for-use status, and since no ammunition handlers or technicians were authorized or available to prepare it for safe movement, it was necessary to establish an "around the clock" schedule for all hands to meet the terms of the armistice. Members of the battalion worked "around the clock" until 311200I July at which time the task was completed.

During the period 271000I July to 311200I July the following types and quantities of material, ammunition, fuel and equipment was recovered from the forward areas and transported to rear area dumps and command posts:

- 2240 Grenades, all types (2 tons)
- 855 rds 76mm ammunition (15 tons)
- 2944 rds 90mm ammunition (95 tons)
- 1332 rds 105mm ammunition (38 tons)
- 100,750 rds Cal. .50 ammunition (19 tons)

850,000 rds Cal. .30 ammunition (32 tons)

2062 Empty shell cases, 76mm, 90mm and 105mm

1150 Drive stakes (6 tons)

14000 Sandbags (reclaimed) (2 tons)

1 Bunker, 12'x20' ($7\frac{1}{2}$ tons)

1700 gals, oils (6 tons)

3370 gals, gasoline (12 tons)

Camp and maintenance equipment (35 tons)

Greases (1 ton)

TOTAL TONS - 275

TOTAL $2\frac{1}{2}$ TON TRUCK LOADS - 111

Immediate Effects of Cease Fire on Personnel

In anticipation of the armistice, company commanders were directed to avail themselves of every opportunity for troop indoctrination and to explain to all hands the meaning of the term "cease fire", stressing that it was not to be considered a permanent peace. The importance of maintaining combat readiness and our new mission was explained. Consequently, when the cease fire went into effect all hands were relatively well prepared psychologically. Little or no change in attitude was noticed with the exception that there was a general lessening of tension. Significantly, there were no "celebrations", but rather a serious attitude of interest and watchful waiting.

SECTION II

SHOW OF FORCE FOR NON-REPATRIATED PRISONERS OF WAR

On 2 September 1953 the 1st Tank Battalion received instruction from the G-3, 1st Marine Division to assist in the planning for a Show of Force to be conducted for non-repatriated PW's that were to be transported daily by rail through MUNSAN-NI to the non-repat PW Holding Camp north of FREEDOM Bridge during the period 10-23 September 1953.

The Division Plans Officer and S-3 of the 1st Tank Battalion conducted a detailed reconnaissance of the area between MUNSAN-NI and the PW Holding Camp with the purpose of selecting sites on which to locate participating units. Two (2) batteries of the 1st KMC Artillery Battalion were already located (points Baker and Charlie of enclosure (2)) so that both areas could be easily observed by non-repat PW's from their passing railway troop coaches. It was decided that these two units would be assigned a role in the Show of Force to conduct artillery gun drill as non-repat PW trains passed.

Two (2) Tank Company positions were selected (points Dog and Easy of enclosure (2)) which passing PW's could observe. One (1) marine tank company, with one (1) flame thrower tank attached, could be placed on each of these positions and normal preventive maintenance and gun drill would be conducted during the passing of PW trains. Flame throwing tanks could fire in both areas and it was planned that several seconds of flame would be fired during the passing of each train.

The area east of the north end of FREEDOM Bridge possessed excellent beach conditions for the operation of LVT's. It was planned to place a platoon of LVT's at this location (point Fox enclosure (2)). At the time of PW trains crossing FREEDOM Bridge the LVT's would be waterborne conducting formation driving.

The hill located west of the north end of FREEDOM Bridge enjoyed excellent observation from the bridge and a decision was made to place the 5th AT Tank Platoon at this location (point George enclosure (2)). Like the two (2) tank companies, the 5th AT Tank Platoon would conduct maintenance and gun drill during the passing of trains.

No other suitable sites remained for the placement of other units and it was concluded that the units listed below would constitute the Show of Force:

Two (2) Artillery Batteries, 1st KMC Arty Bn.

One (1) LVT Platoon, 1st Amtrac Bn.

Two (2) Tank Companies, 1st Tank Bn.

One (1) Tank Platoon, 5th Marine Regt.

Two (2) Flame Tanks, 1st Tank Bn.

On 5 September 1953 this battalion received LMARD-00-12-53 delegating responsibility to the 1st Tank Battalion for over-all coordination of the demonstrations and the establishment of communications to all participating units. The details of coordination and communications were completed and an observation post (point Able of enclosure (a)) from which a sentry could observe the arrival of PW trains was established. From the observation post a telephone line was laid to all Show of Force units (point Baker through George).

At 091930 September 1953 BAKER and CHARLIE Companies, 1st Tank Battalion, displaced from the battalion command post area and established temporary tank parks at points Dog and Easy, respectively. During the night of 9-10 September tanks were positioned and shelters erected for security personnel.

At 100600 September 1953 all participating units were in position as shown by enclosure (2) and the first PW train arrived at point Able at 0710 hours. The sentry on duty at point Able warned all units of the arrival of the PW train. All units prepared to execute their assigned mission.

When the PW train passed positions Baker and Charlie the 1st KMC artillery crewmen could be observed conducting gun drill. At points Dog and Easy tank crewmen were working on tanks and the tank flame thrower fired long bursts of flame. As the train arrived at FREEDOM Bridge the PW's could observe the LVT's maneuvering in the river to the east (point Fox) and the 5th AT Tank Platoon conducting tank drill to the west (point George). An average of five (5) PW trains passed Show of Force units daily and a demonstration was conducted for each train.

At 230900 September 1953 the last PW train crossed FREEDOM Bridge concluding the movement of non-repatriated PW's. By 1600 the same date all Show of Force participating units had been released by division to control of parent organizations.

It may be concluded that non-repat prisoners of war displayed intense interest in the Show of Force, as it was noted without exception that prisoners seated on the far side of troop coaches habitually crowded to the near side of coaches in order to gain a better view of each demonstration along their route.

SECTION III

TANK BATTALION MISSIONS

Tank Employment in Support of Counterattack Plans

During the period from 20 August 1953 to 6 September 1953 members of the battalion staff and staff officers of the reserve regiment (1st Marines) conducted extensive reconnaissance with the purpose of planning counterattacks on objectives designated by 1-MARD-00-10-53. See enclosure (4).

In planning the tank support required for counterattack plans it was evident that the nature of the terrain eliminated the desire for large scale tank movement with the infantry while assaulting objectives; however, limited tank movement onto objectives was planned to support plans Baker, Charlie, Dog and Easy in all cases where terrain and road net permitted. See enclosure (4).

It was determined in this situation that overhead supporting tank fire delivered from close-in base of fire positions constituted the most advantageous method for providing maximum tank support.

Construction of tank roads to selected supporting positions commenced on 24 August 1953 and was completed by 20 September 1953. It was possible to utilize existing MBP tank firing positions to support counterattack plan Baker. See enclosure (4).

Disposition of the division tank reserve is tactically sound. Time and space factors and all-weather road nets were the governing factors in disposition of this unit. Three (3) tank companies were centrally disposed within the division sector, contiguous to an excellent road net. The fourth reserve tank company was located at CS 146974 to permit immediate displacement of armor to the extreme right flank of the division, which is vulnerable to an excellent route of approach and IMJIN River fording sites for enemy armor.

Antimechanized Defense

The antimechanized mission of this battalion was given strong consideration during planning for redistribution of units of the battalion subsequent to the Armistice. With exception of strengthening the division's right flank with one company of tanks, it was considered that the area in and adjacent to the existing battalion CP (see enclosure (3)) was most desirable for early execution of both the counterattack mission and the antimechanized mission. Early and timely displacement in depth over an excellent road net to attack, blocking, counterattack, and main battle supporting positions were primary factors during planning. See enclosure (3).

On 5 August 1953, G-3 assigned this organization the task of preparing the Division Antimechanized Plan. On 6 August 1953 representatives of all supporting arms met at tank battalion headquarters to coordinate and establish planning principles and to assign work tasks. During the period 7 August through 13 August extensive reconnaissance was conducted and rough plans completed and submitted to the Commanding Officer, 1st Tank Battalion.

On 15 August the recommended antimechanized plan for the division was delivered by the battalion S-3 to G-3 for approval and reproduction. On 21 August 1953 G-3 approved and published the antimechanized plan as Annex KING to 1-MARD-00-10-53.

Selection and Preparation of Tank Firing
Positions in Defense of Div Sector

With the post-armistice disposition of tank companies completed on 311200I July 1953 the primary task then facing the battalion was selection and preparation of tank firing positions to: support main battle positions; support general outpost line; support counterattack plans; and to cover by fire probable enemy fording sites across the IMJIN River. In considering the task it was obvious that many positions could be located to fulfill more than one purpose. Wherever possible this would be done, but, it was immediately and firmly established, where a choice existed between one less-suitable two-purpose location and two more-suitable single-purpose locations, the latter would be selected. Also, in order to enable a logical sequence of construction, it was apparent that a priority as to types of tank firing positions would have to be established. Accordingly, it was decided to prepare MBP and general outpost supporting positions first, and then, counter-attack support positions, and positions covering enemy potential river crossing sites. Wherever possible old firing positions which had been previously prepared to support lines WYOMING and KANSAS were to be utilized.

With the above considerations in mind reconnaissances of the general outpost sector, MBP's and the river line were planned and executed jointly by the S-3 and company commanders. Firing positions in the general outpost area were primarily selected to cover likely avenues of enemy approach into that sector and only secondary consideration was given to placing tank positions within areas occupied by infantry troops (see enclosure (3)). The tank company in direct support of the North Regiment, "A" Company, was assigned responsibility for preparing positions as well as access roads to these positions.

Tank firing positions in the right regimental sector were selected and coordinated with the 7th Marines (right regiment) to assure their integration into the over-all defense plans of that sector. Preparation of tank firing positions was then assigned "D" Company, the reserve tank company located in the division right sector.

In the center regimental sector, where the 1st KMC RCT was positioned, responsibility for preparing tank firing positions was assigned the KMC Tank Company under operational control of the 1st Tank Battalion. Here again they were integrated into the over-all defensive plan.

The Flame Platoon at this time was located in the left regimental sector (old WHISKER area) where tactical disposition remained essentially unchanged. Consequently, this sector was well provided with old firing positions leaving little work other than addition of a few supplementary tank firing positions.

Thus, a total of two hundred four (204) tank firing positions as shown in enclosure (3) were prepared by this battalion throughout the division sector. Positions N1 through N16 were placed to cover likely avenues of

approach into the general outpost area. In a few instances they support infantry positions and in addition, cover critical avenues of enemy approach. Firing positions in depth was stressed. Such positions as R4, RL2, C4, and L3 support the MBP's as do others. In addition to many of the firing positions within MBF's which overwatch possible river crossing sites such as R4, other positions, such as R3, 5, 7 and C2 and 5, were prepared specifically to overwatch the river at critical points. Certain other positions, such as C1, were located to support counterattack Plan DOG as well as support a MBP. Others, such as R3, cover a river crossing site as well as support counterattack Plan ABLE. See enclosure (4), Counterattack Plans.

During preparation of tank firing positions an entirely new capability became obvious. From the numerous positions over-looking the river it was apparent that tanks could provide considerable direct fire support to the North Regiment during withdrawal and river crossing actions. With this in mind a study was made of the fields of fire with results as shown in enclosure (3). Though limited in some areas, it is believed that over-all, a substantial amount of shallow and deep direct fire tank support can be provided the North Regiment from tanks in position south of the river.

In accomplishment of this task only organic equipment, consisting of tank dozers and one TD 18 bulldozer, was used. On several occasions when dozers were not available, tank firing positions were dug by hand. It is interesting to note that a total of eleven (11) miles of tank road were constructed in gaining access to the firing positions.

**THIS
SECTION
CONTAINS
OVERLAYS
REFER TO
ORIGINAL
FOLDER**