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1-31 Dec. 67

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Material

(2)

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division, FMF

Jan 67
Feb 67
Mar 67
Apr 67
May 67
Jun 67
Jul 67
Aug 67
Sep 67
Oct 67
Nov 67 -- Operations & Training; Intelligence
(Enclosure only)
Dec 67 -- Organizational Data; Intelligence;
Operations & Training (Enclosure only)

RECORDED TO _____
PER AGENT _____
DATE 31 Dec 75 Chris Eichman

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PART I

(This page is unclassified)

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. DESIGNATION

COMMANDER

Headquarters,
1st Tank Battalion, FMF
1st MarDiv (Rein), FMF

LtCol V. J. GENTILE
1-31 December 1967

SUBORDINATE UNITS

H&S Company
Company A
Company B
Company C
Company A (Rein) 1st AT Bn

Capt C. R. CASEY 1-20 Dec 1967
Maj L. A. GILBERTSLEWVE 21-31 Dec 1967
Capt R. W. MADDOX 1-23 Dec 1967
Capt C. R. CASEY 24-31 Dec 1967
Capt R. E. ROEMER 1-31 Dec 1967
Capt R. D. GUNSTILLMAN 1-31 Dec 1967
Capt C. E. WOODS 17-30 Dec 1967
1stLt V. C. DAVIS 31 Dec 67

2. LOCATION

Headquarters (AT 977723)
H&S Company (AT 977723)
Company A (AT 977723)
Company B (AT 962621)
Company C (BT 072644)
Company A (-) 1st AT Bn (YD 333493)
3rd Plt (Rein) Company A, 1st AT Bn (ZD 077992)

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Battalion Executive Officer Vacant 1-21 Dec 1967
Battalion Adjutant Maj P. G. RADTIG 22-31 Dec 1967
Battalion S-2 Officer 1stLt C. S. SCHURING 1-31 Dec 1967
Battalion S-3 Officer Capt R. G. MCPHERSON 1-31 Dec 1967
Battalion S-4 Officer Maj R. W. CROLL 1-31 Dec 1967
Battalion S-5/Civic Action Officer Maj J. L. SCHUYLER 1-31 Dec 1967
Capt N. O. WHITTINGTON 1-31 Dec 1967

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

<u>OFF</u>	<u>USMC</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>USN</u>	<u>ENL</u>
45		527	2		10

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1st Tank Bn

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Dec 67

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INTELLIGENCE

WEATHER. The weather during December was characterized by two distinct types. Temperatures at the beginning and end of the month ranged from a high 73° to a low of 60°. During the middle of December "Indian summer" type weather was experienced with clear skies and temperatures varying from a high of 80° to a low of 64°. Total rainfall for the month was 9.06", .76" above the 8.3" normally experienced during December. Precipitation, although not excessive, limited tank trafficability to road networks, except in the Company C area where the terrain is sandy and offers good trafficability.

INTELLIGENCE. With the detonation of an unusual type mine by B-13 the Battalion total rose to 111. The mine detonated by B-13 was the first of its type encountered in the Division AOR. The mine was approximately 12"x 12" x 7" with 90° corners. Inside the mine was one pound of compressed TNT and a standard blasting cap. The exterior was dark grey to black in color and resembles pumice. The exterior can be ignited easily and burns with a bright light similar to the brightness given off by burning magnesium. The mine is detonated by crushing the blasting cap and carries the explosive force of approximately 80 pounds of TNT. B-13 was rendered unserviceable by the mine. Because of the lack of metal components the mine cannot be detected by electronic mine detecting devices employed by engineer sweep teams. After the detonation, an engineer probe team located a similar type mine that is being analyzed to determine its composition. The results of the incident were 2 USMC (KIA), 5 USMC (WIA) and an M48A3 unserviceable.

A recapitulation for the year reveals that of the 111 total mines detonated by the battalion 107 were detonated by tanks, 2 by trucks, 1 by an LVT, and 1 by a man. Company totals are as follows:

Company A	- 14
Company B	- 30
Company C	- 63
Miscellaneous	- 4
TOTAL	111

Intelligence reports affecting the Southern Sector increased during December indicating an increase in activity in and around the Sector. A six man VC recon team was encountered just South of the Sector's boundary by the 51st ARVN Regiment. Action resulted in 2 VC (KIA) and 1 VC (WIA+Captured). Doc-

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uments found on the VC indicated their mission was to collect information on US and ARVN defenses and activity around the Song Cau Do. Of particular interest was a map showing the location for the North defensive tank position at the Song Cau do Bridge. The 2nd Platoon, Company "A", retrieved two rafts from the Song Cau Do containing political documents. The first raft lauded the People's Liberation Front for their successful struggle against the "capitalist aggressor." The second raft contained material that asked the U.S. military man to stop supporting the war and come over to the NLF. The successful undetected launching of these rafts is indicative of the elusiveness of the VC in this area.

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OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

During the month of December the 1st Tank Battalion did not participate in any major operations.

Company A (Rein) continues to remain as security for the two top priority bridges in the Southern Sector Defense Command AOR; the Song Cau Do bridge and the Song Tuy Loan bridge. Company A has also assumed responsibility for the security of the Ha Dong bridge at (AT990641). The 3rd Platoon supplies two tanks for bridge security on a rotating basis.

Company B (Rein) continues to remain in direct support of the 7th Marines. Their movement has been restricted to the roads making them more vulnerable to enemy mines.

Company C (-) (Rein) continues to remain in direct support of the 5th Marines in the Marble Mountain area. Trafficability in this area is good because of the composition of the terrain.

The locations of the gun companies and their supported units are as follows:

Company A (Rein), G/S 1st Mar Div (DaNang)
Company B (Rein), D/S 7th Marines (DaNang)
Company C (-) (Rein), D/S 5th Marines (DaNang)
3rd Platoon, Company C, D/S 2nd Battalion, 5th Mar (An Hoa)

On 1 December 1967, the 2nd Platoon, Company A, located at An Hoa was redesignated the 3rd Platoon, Company C, and was assigned the 3rd Platoon command frequency.

Also on 1 December 1967, the 3rd Platoon, Company A, 3rd Tank Battalion, was redesignated the 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, and was assigned the 2nd Platoon command frequency.

On 17 December 1967, the 1st Tank Battalion joined Company A (Rein), 1st AT Battalion. On 22 December the 3rd Platoon (Rein) consisting of one officer, 27 enlisted, and 8 M50A1 Ontos were attached to the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines and on that date began moving vehicles from the 1st Tank Battalion to the Phu Loc area in the vicinity of (ZD077992). The movement of all rolling stock was completed on 29 December 1967. Three vehicles participated in the initial road march. The remaining were transported by low-boy. Company A (-) remains in the Quang Tri area attached to the 1st Marines.

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Current plans call for the movement of an Antitank cadre, presently located on hill 34, into the 1st Tank Battalion CP. This cadre will handle the records and maintain files for the Antitank Battalion, in the event the reorganization of the Battalion is ordered.

On 27 December a representative from the 1st Tank Battalion traveled to the Binh Son area to the 2nd Korean Marine Brigade Headquarters as the Tank Battalion representative. Discussions were centered on the utilization of a Tank Platoon in a direct support role within the Korean TAOR.

Results of the various activities which the 1st Tank Battalion participated in during December were 2 VC KIA (C) and 2 VC KIA (P).

During the month of December the 1st Tank Battalion's M67A2 flame tanks expended approximately 3000 gallons of diesel fuel and napalm on assigned missions.

The 1st Tank Battalion conducted 62 patrols and ambushes in the battalion area of responsibility and responded with one special activity of squad size in the SSDC TAOR.

Two significant events occurred in the 1st Tank Battalion during December. At 090100H a tank from 1st Platoon, Company B located at (AT923563) received one incoming fragmentation grenade which landed on the tank. A Marine standing watch on the tank threw the grenade from the tank, but received slight injuries when the grenade detonated in the air. Machinegun fire was returned with unknown results.

At 181014H a Company B tank hit a mine estimated at 80 pounds at (AT923548). Damage to the tank was heavy. One crewman was killed and one was wounded. One engineer was also killed and 4 wounded.

Anti-Tank activities decreased during December from the previous month. There were two mine incidents involving tanks. The mined vehicles received moderate to heavy damage from mines of approximately 75 pounds. There was a total of one USMC KIA and two USMC WIA within the Battalion resulting from the mine incidents. There were no rocket or recoilless rifle incidents.

Training for the 1st Tank Battalion was centered on weapons safety, care and cleaning of the M16 rifle and technical MOS training. The officer and staff school continues to meet each Friday. Subjects presented during December included recognition and handling of marijuana and cantonment handling of

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casualties. At the officer and staff school a briefing, summarizing the friendly and enemy activities within the 1st Division TAOR continues on a weekly basis.

The Tuesday morning meeting for all battalion officers that was instituted last month has been continued. This meeting allows all section heads to summarize their week's activities and inform the other sections of their plans and problems.

The total ammunition fired during December by 1st Tank Battalion is as follows:

	90mm			.30 CAL	.50 CAL
	HE	WP	CANISTER		
Direct	102	11	5	5000	1050
Indirect	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	102	11	5	5000	1050

The following is a listing of the total figures for calendar year 1967 concerning ammunition fired and resulting enemy casualties:

VC KIA (C)	----	250
VC KIA (P)	----	273
VC WIA	----	33
VCC	----	19
VCS	----	23

	90mm				CAL .30	CAL .50
	HE	WP	CANISTER	BEEHIVE		
	2,682	541	169	3	49,150	15,550

The Combat Operations Center of the 1st Tank Battalion continued to initiate, control and direct defensive activities within the Southern Sector. During the month, 930 activities were conducted by the SSDC tenant units.

Two significant events occurred in the Southern Sector in December. At 03220H a 7th Engineer Battalion squad sized ambush spotted four VC with weapons moving across a rice paddy at (AT 949711). The squad fired small arms and received small arms before the enemy broke contact. Negative results were obtained.

At 172330H a squad sized patrol from the 1st Antitank Battalion spotted six VC in black pajamas and carrying weapons at (AT 988701). The patrol received 100 rounds of small arms.

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The patrol returned 200 rounds of small arms and saw two enemy fall. A search revealed drag marks on the ground indicating two VC KIA (P).

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Nov 67

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INTELLIGENCE

Weather. The temperature range for November remained within the mean average for the previously experienced Novembers. The mean temperature ranged between 69 and 80. Total precipitation for the month was 8.3 inches. Although the total precipitation was 6.8 inches below the monthly average, enough rain was received to keep trafficability at a minimum.

Intelligence. During November a light section of Company "B" participated in Operation Foster; however, no major contact involving tanks occurred. The Battalion's mine incidents total rose to 109 with five mine incidents during the month. Four mine incidents involved tanks and the fifth resulted in major damage to five ton truck. Company "C" continued to bear the brunt of the mine incidents, having led the Battalion nine out of eleven months in total mine incidents. The Battalion's box score for November was 11 VC KIA (confirmed) and 54 VC KIA (probable), and 5 VC WIA.

Numerous low level agent reports and special reports were received indicating increased activity in and around the "rocket belt". Only through aggressive patrolling was the enemy denied the opportunity to establish firing positions. The Battalion and Southern Sector tenent units participated in excess of eight hundred activities during November. The Battalion continues to react to special intelligence reports with special activities and did so on three occasions with up to platoon size activities.

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OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

During the month of November, the 1st Tank Battalion participated in one major operation. On 13 November, a light section from Company B, 1st Tank Battalion moved into position at A7907545 as a blocking force for Operation Foster. Throughout the operation, elements of Company B were called upon to provide direct-fire support, blocking positions and react to enemy sightings.

Company A (-) continues as security for the two top-priority bridges in the Southern Sector Defense Command ACP, the Sang Cau Do Bridge and the Song Tuy Loan Bridge. One platoon of tanks is located at each bridge.

Company B (Rein) continues in direct support of the 7th Marines. Poor trafficability in the 7th Marines TAOR has limited tank operating capabilities and restricted movement to the roads.

Company C continues in direct support of the 5th Marines in the Marble Mountain area. Trafficability in the Marble Mountain area is good because of the sandy terrain.

The location of the gun companies and their supported units are as follows:

Company A (-), GS 1stMarDiv (DaNang)
2nd Platoon, Company A, DS 2nd Bn, 5th Marines (An Hoa)
Company B (Rein), DS 7th Marines (Da Nang)
Company C (-), DS 5th Marines (Da Nang)

On 26 November, the 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Tank Battalion was transferred to BLT 3/1, SLF BRAVO.

On 29 November, the 2nd Platoon, Company A, 3d Tank Battalion, from BLT 2/3, SLF BRAVO, entered the 1st Tank Battalion C. P. On 1 December the platoon will be redesignated the 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Tank Battalion.

Results of the various activities in which the 1st Tank Battalion participated during November were 11 V.C. KIA (confirmed), 54 V.C. KIA (probable) and 5 V.C. WIA.

During the month of November, the 1st Tank Battalion's M-67A2 flame tanks expended a total of 4,200 gallons of diesel fuel on assigned missions.

Anti-tank activities increased during November from the previous month. There were four mine incidents involving tanks, one mine incident involving a truck and one anti-tank rocket incident. The mined tanks received from light to moderate damage and the truck received heavy damage. The mines averaged 40 pounds in size and were pressure-detonated. There

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were a total of three USMC WIA (non-evac) resulting from the mine incidents. The rocket incident involved incoming RPG rockets. No hits were scored by the enemy and no casualties were sustained.

Training for the 1st Tank Battalion centered on weapons safety, care and cleaning of the M16 rifle and mines and booby traps.

A comprehensive battalion quarterly inspection schedule was initiated encompassing 22 functional areas with staff officers inspecting all companies.

The officer and staff NCO school continues to meet each Friday night. Subjects presented during November included supporting arms fire adjustment and control and recognition of performance of duty. A briefing summarizing the activities within the 1st Division TAOR was initiated on a permanent basis by representatives of the S-2 and S-3.

A meeting every Tuesday morning for all battalion officers was instituted in November. This meeting allows all section heads to summarize their week's activities and to inform the other sections of their plans for the coming week. All newly-arrived personnel continue to be briefed by the Battalion Commander. Officers and SNCOs are also briefed on an individual basis by the staff sections. Enlisted personnel are processed through a formal orientation program.

The Combat Operations Center of the 1st Tank Battalion continues to initiate, control and direct defensive activities within the Southern Sector. During the month 840 activities were conducted by the SSDC tenant units.

1st Tank Battalion conducted 60 patrols and ambushes and responded with 3 special activities of platoon-size in the SSDC TAOR.

Three significant events occurred in the 1st Tank Battalion during November. At 051925Z a Marine loading ammunition onto a tank was struck in the right leg by a sniper round resulting in one USMC WIA (med-evac). At 000100H two tanks from Company B were in position as a reaction force for 3/7 at (AT 920577) when they received one incoming RPG round and mortar fire. At the same time they were requested to move to assist an infantry unit which was under heavy attack. Enroute to the scene the tanks were ambushed by an estimated 30 NVA and received 3 RPG rockets and automatic weapons fire. The tanks were not hit.

On 221800H approximately 100 V.C. were spotted in the open at (AT 904666) by a 7th Marines' patrol. B-34 fired direct supporting fire and was credited with 25 V.C. KIA (probable). A secondary explosion was also obtained by the fire, indicating the possibility of a V.C. rocket or mortar team.

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