

January 1966

Third Tanks

Note: This CC has an S-1 Personnel Annex. Most CC's do not. The MarCorHistDiv cannot explain why the S-1 Annexes are routinely omitted lest it be privacy concerns at that period of time.

Commanding Officer: LtCol M.L. Raphael

Executive Officer: Maj J.G. Doss, Jr.

Operations Officer: Maj H.L. Maxwell

Logistics Officer: Maj F.W. Coates

Location & Operations Summary: Da Nang (AT 989708)

The increase in strength over the last reporting period may be explained partially through the joining of programmed replacements to this organization, but more important to this increase was the joining of "A" Company, 1st Tank Battalion heretofore attached to RLT-1. The joining of "A" Company established this organization with five gun companies. A Flame Section did not arrive with "A" Company nor did any of the company's gun platoons. Only the "A" Company Headquarters element of 2 Officers and 39 enlisted Marines and 1 Navy Corpsman were joined. Since "A" Company, 1st Tank Battalion was directed to assume the tactical obligations previously assigned to "C" Company, 3d Tank Battalion, two platoons from "C" Company, 3d Tank Battalion were transferred to "A" Company, 1st Tank Battalion.

On 3 January elements of Company B, Company A, and Tank Battalion Headquarters participated in Operation War Bonnet in support of 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. This search and destroy operation involved the largest number of tracked vehicles used by the Marine Corps thus far in Vietnam. The Commanding Officer of 3d Tank Battalion was coordinator and tracked vehicle advisor to the infantry battalion commander. The tanks were used as the point and rear guard for the armored column, reconnaissance, destruction of fortified positions, and perimeter security. On 28 January War Bonnet II was conducted. With the exception of there being less tracked vehicles, this operation was the same as the operation held on 3 January. The same problems of tracked vehicle control and coordination existed in the conduct of this operation and again the Commanding Officer of 3d Tank Battalion was tracked vehicle coordinator and advisor for the infantry battalion commander. The tanks had the same mission as in the first operation.

On 20 January 1966, Company A (-) (Rein), 1st Tank Battalion came under administrative control of 3d Tank Battalion while remaining attached to 1st Marines. The 1st and 2d platoons of Company C (-) (Rein), 3d Tank Battalion were assigned to Company A (-) (Rein), 1st Tank Battalion. Company C remains attached to 4th Marines. Company B (Rein), 1st Tank Battalion remains attached to 7th Marines. All are supporting operations in the Chu Lai Enclave. Operational control is exercised by the supported units. Administrative control and logistical support is exercised and provided by Commanding Officer, 3d Tank Battalion.

Companies A and B, 3d Tank Battalion remain in direct support of 3d Marines and 9th Marines respectively. Operations are in support of the Da Nang Enclave with one platoon supporting operations in the Hue-Phu Bai Enclave.

Command and control of tank units operating in the three enclaves is exercised through: frequent command and staff visits; a monthly command and staff conference; daily communication between battalion and each company; and, submission of periodic reports of activities by each company.

H&S Company C.O.: Capt A.E. Lee

Location: Da Nang (AT 989708)

During the month of January H&S Company conducted 22 daylight patrols and 9 night ambushes in areas adjacent to the Battalion Cp. The battalion continued to provide one infantry platoon on standby for immediate employment in the 3d Marine Division TAOR.

C.O. Company "A": Capt F.W. Jarnot

Location: Da Nang (AT 946762)

Company A remains in direct support of the 3d Marines, occupying strong points along the MLR and providing a mobile reserve force for the regiment. Tanks in the company were also used for indirect long-range fire. The 3d platoon, Company A, attached to the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, occupies strong points on Highway 1 and provided the battalion with a mobile reserve force. This platoon had three contacts while in support of Marine and ARVN operations. The tanks are credited with an estimated 48 VC KIA (40 of these according to ARVN count).

C.O. Company "B": Capt W.A. Coomes

Location: Da Nang (AT 067719)

Company B remains in direct support of the 9th Marines. One platoon is in support of the 2d Battalion and the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, while the remainder support the 1st Battalion. The 1st platoon, Company C is also in support of the 2d Battalion and the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines. As in the past four months, this company continues to have the majority of tank offensive actions.

During January, elements of Company B participated in 28 search and clear or search and destroy operations, 5 armored patrols, and were used 8 times in a mobile reserve capacity. The company had 37 VC contacts and killed an estimated 34 VC and wounded an estimated 13 VC. The company has 6 tanks on hill #55 (AT 970620). These tanks are being used extensively to fire deep H and I's south of the hill.

C.O. Company "C": Capt E.L. Erickson

Location: Chu Lai (BT 531094)

Company C, attached to the 4th Marines, occupied strong points along the MLR and provided a mobile reserve force in the Chu Lai enclave. The Headquarters tanks were used to support Company G while the 2d platoon is in direct support of the 2d Battalion and the 3d platoon supports the 1st Battalion. On 20 January the two platoons of Company C were placed under OPCON of Company A, 1st Tank Battalion just recently arrived in RVN. The Company C Headquarters remains attached to the 4th Marines. Company A, 1st Tank Battalion is attached to the 1st Marines.

C.O. Company "A", 1st Tanks: 1stLt J.D. Sparks

Location: Chu Lai (BT 533080)

Note: Company "A" is only the Hq Personnel who came ashore at Chu Lai w/no tanks. Rather reminds one of the many time the infantry Bn. C.O.s came ashore leaving their Tanks and Ontos sitting in the well decks of their respective amphibious shipping.

(1) Company "A" (-), 1st Tank Battalion landed in Chu Lai. 3d Tank Battalion was directed to transfer the 1st and 2nd Platoons of "C" Company, 3d Tanks to "A" Company. The transfer of supplies and equipment; the sorting of the outstanding requisitions pertaining to the transferred platoons; and the transfer of personnel is a problem which will require close supervision and coordination.

C.O. Company "B", 1st Tanks: Capt H.A. Bertrand, Jr.

Location: Chu Lai (BT 548060)

Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, attached to the 7th Marines, supported operations within the TAOR, participating in search and clear and search and destroy operations and support of patrols. The company conducted beach patrols in the TAOR and provided one section for the defense of the Chu Lai Airfield.

January 1967

Third Tanks

Commanding Officer: LtCol W.R. Corson

Executive Officer: Maj E.R. Larson

Operations Officer: Maj E.L. Tunget

Logistics Officer: Maj J.P. Schultz

Location & Operations Summary: DaNang (AT 989708)

During the month of January 1967, the Third Tank Battalion remained in support of the First and Third Marine Divisions. In the Da Nang TAOR, the Battalion Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Company (-), and Company "B" (Rein), were under the operational control of the Commanding General, First Marine Division. In the Dong Ha TAOR, Company "A" (Rein), Company "C" (Rein), and the Forward Operating Group (Det., H&S Company) were under the operational control of the Commanding General, Third Marine Division. The Forward Operating Group continued to provide logistical and maintenance support for "A" and "C" Companies. Administrative control for the entire Battalion remained with the Third Marine Division.

On 6 January 1967, the First Platoon of Company "B" was transferred to BLT 3/9 for rotation to Okinawa. On 7 January 1967, the tank platoon attached to BLT 2/4 was joined and assigned to Company "B" in Da Nang.

Tank combat operations improved somewhat during the month of January. Cross-country mobility, especially in low areas, was still hampered by wet rice paddies and continued high water levels in the streams. Tanks continued to be utilized in a defensive posture and for direct fire H&I's both day and night.

The following support assignments were effective during the month:

Company "A" - D/S Third Marine Regiment (Dong Ha)

Company "B" - D/S Ninth Marine Regiment (Da Nang)

Company "C" - D/S Fourth Marine Regiment (Dong Ha)

Tank combat operations for the month accounted for 11 VC/NVA KIA (confirmed), six VC/NVA KIA (probable), and two boats destroyed. Ammunition expenditure for the month was: 953 90mm rounds; 7,400 caliber .30 rounds; and 300 caliber .50 rounds.

During January, the Commanding Officer, Third Tank Battalion continued to serve as the Commander, Southern Sector, First Marine Division Rear Area Defense, with the mission of coordinating and directing as required the active defensive measures for the tenant units of the Southern Sector. During the month, a number of provisional squad and platoon sized reaction forces were committed within the sector either in response to VC initiated incidents or intelligence gained from local officials and ARVN sources. Third Tank Battalion operations in the Southern Sector resulted in 11 VCS/detainees. Operations in this area have had the effect of disrupting the local VC infrastructure and keeping the operating elements off balance.

H&S Company C.O.: 2ndLt A.W. Hauser
Location & Operations Summary: Da Nang (AT 989708)

At 022320H a Third Tank Battalion patrol member became disoriented in the dark, was given an order to halt, and he continued to move. Another patrol member bringing up the rear fired approximately five 7.62mm rounds. The disoriented patrol member was hit in the chest, resulting in one friendly KIA.

16 January 1967: At 160900H a Third Tank Battalion patrol apprehended one VN male in Phong Pac Hamlet (AT 997710). His ID papers showed his name as Ngo Nguyen. This name appears on our blacklist as a cover name for Ngo Phu, a VC battalion commander. The detainee was turned over to Hoa Cam Training Center for initial interrogation.

C.O. Company "A": Capt A.W. Facklam Jr.

Location & Operations Summary: Dong Ha (YD 061545)

11 January 1967: At 111615H, Company "A" tanks in support of elements of 3/3 at (XD 975573), received a heavy volume of small arms fire and mortars. Tanks returned 90mm fire at possible FO sites. Results were inconclusive.

At 132025H a Company "A" tank in support of 2/3 at (XD 063543) while engaged in an H&I fire mission, had a 90mm HE round explode prematurely in the turret. PFC Edwards was killed immediately and Corporal Parker died of wounds at a later time. Lance Corporal Hicks, Corporal Wright, and Corporal Parker were med-evac for wounds.

C.O. Company "B": 1stLt D.B. Garner

Location & Operations Summary: Da Nang (AT 962611)

6 January 1967: At 061030H Company "B" tanks in support of 3/7 at (AT 876574) observed a friendly jet aircraft crash, and observed approximately six VC/NVA at (AT 863558) approaching the crash site. Tanks fired 90mm rounds, resulting in three VC/NVA KBGF confirmed and two VC/NVA KBGF probable.

At 021045H a Company "B" tank in support of 3/7 at (AT 376574) observed two boats containing six VC. The tank fired 90mm rounds, resulting in six VC KBGF confirmed and two boats sunk.

8 January 1967: At 080845H, Company "B" tanks in support of elements of 3/7 at (AT 981624) fired 90mm rounds at VC movement at (AT 982620) picked up on AN/TPS-21. Results of fire were inconclusive.

9 January 1967: At 090845H a Company "B" tank at (AT 968589) detonated an anti-tank mine causing one friendly WIA and moderate damage to the tank suspension system.

At 161045H a Company "B" tank in support of 1/26 at (AT 968595) while on a road sweep detonated an anti-tank mine. Results were moderate damage to the tank suspension system and one tank crewman WIA med-evac.

20 January 1967: At 201400H Company "B" tanks in support of 1/26 at (AT 938527) conducted a search and destroy mission in the following areas: (AT 951526), (AT 946526), (AT 962526). Tanks conducted reconnaissance by fire with 90mm rounds with negative results.

C.O. Company "C": 1stLt R.C. Kinhead

Location & Operations Summary: Dong Ha (YD 234582)

At 142250H, Company "C" tanks in support of elements of 3/4 at (YD 143617) received 10 to 15 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. Tanks did not return fire as the enemy location was unknown.

17 January 1967: From 170230H to 170250H, Company "C" tanks while in support of elements of 2/3 at (YD 145616) received 50 to 70 rounds of 82mm mortars, causing light damage to one tank.

On 26 January 1967 the Third Tank Battalion S-1 reported Lance Corporal Richard G. Langley of Company "C" was a casualty due to an accidental discharge and **self-inflicted wound**.

January 1968

Third Tanks

Commanding Officers: LtCol's F.D. Chapman & K.J. Fontenot, Jr.

Executive Officer: Maj B.M. MacLaren

Operations Officer: Maj C.J. Samuelsen

Logistics Officer: Maj R.E. Finney

Location & Operations Summary: Phu Bai

The battalion sustained 22 casualties during January. Two were KIA, and twenty sustained wounds as a result of enemy action. Three personnel are listed as MIA since 8 January. There were three non-hostile casualties.

Activity during January continued at the same pace as in the past few months until the arrival of TET when action increased significantly.

During the 1-25 January tanks of this Battalion participated in 5 operations.

Operation Kentucky. Tanks of Company "A" and one platoon of Company "A", 3d Anti-Tank Battalion supported the 2d Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment and the 12th Provisional Artillery Battalion. Tanks fired 90mm HE and WP, H&I fires and fired 90mm direct and indirect at known and suspected enemy positions resulting in one KIA (confirmed). On 5 January a platoon from the Special Landing Force was chopped to this Battalion and was redesignated the 3d Platoon, Company "C". This platoon was in support of the 3d Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment and the 1st and 3d Battalion, 3d Marine Regiment at A-3.

Operation Lancaster. Tanks of "B" Company participated in this operation in the Camp Carroll-Rockville areas in support of the 2d and 3d Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. Support included firing 90mm HE H&I fires and providing escorts for seven convoys from Thom Son Lam to Cau Lu. On 13 January the convoy was ambushed by an estimated reinforced NVA Company. The tanks fired 90mm HE and cannister and 30 and 50 caliber machine guns at ambush positions with unknown results. On 24 January two tanks from Camp Carroll went out as part of a reaction force to assist a company which had been ambushed on Route# 9. The reaction force was also ambushed and the tanks suffered one KIA and one WIA. Tank B42 was hit by an RPG and evacuated to DongHa where it was repaired and returned to service.

Operation Scotland. Company "A", 3d Anti-Tank Battalion and the 3d Platoon of Company "B" supported the 26th Marine Regiment in this operation in the Kho Sanh area. Tank 90mm fire at enemy mortar positions resulted in one secondary explosion.

Operation Moosho. Tanks of Company "C" fired 90mm H&I fires in support of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment during the operation in the Phong Dien Area.

Operation Napoleon. Two tanks of Company "C" participated in this operation in support of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion. The tanks fired machine guns at observed enemy movement and on 19 January participated as part of a reaction force to engage an enemy unit. The tanks fired 90mm HE, cannister and WP as well as 30 and 50 caliber machine guns accounting for 17 KIA (confirmed).

On 25 January Company "C" lost two tanks at Cua Viet and one platoon at A-3, displaced from Camp Evans. The Company was to move to Quang Tri. While enroute down the Cua Viet River on LCU's the tanks came under small arms and recoilless rifle fire. The tanks returned fire with 50 caliber machine guns with unknown results. Upon arrival in Dong Ha these tanks were diverted to the "A" Company Command Post and are now operating out of that position.

During the period 26 to 31 January tank actions were varied and wide spread.

On 26 January tanks of Company "A" went on a sweep with elements of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment. The sweep made no contact.

On 27 January tanks of the 2d and 3d Platoons of "A" Company fired 90mm HE H&I fires and 90mm HE at suspected enemy positions. The 1st Platoon of "C" Company participated in a cordon and search operation with elements of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. The search covered a previous NVA ambush site and yielded documents and blood stained clothing.

On 28 January C11 hit a mine while operating in the CamLo area. The crew suffered one WIA (non med-evac) and the tank suffered suspension system damage. Tanks of the 2d platoon, Company "C" fired 90mm HE at suspected enemy positions.

On 29 January a Company "C" tank fired at enemy positions near the Washout and destroyed one bunker.

On 30 January Company "C" tanks fired at enemy positions around the Washout and destroyed one bunker and one enemy flag and caused one secondary explosion. "A" Company tanks fired at suspected enemy positions with unknown results. A composite platoon from "B" and "C" Companies commanded by the "A" Company Executive Officer conducted a sweep on Route #9 from Dong Ha with elements of the 3d Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. The tanks fired at suspected positions with unknown results.

On 31 January tanks of "A" Company at the Gio Linh and Washout positions fired 90mm HE at suspected enemy locations with unknown results. The Composite Platoon from "B" and "C" Companies went on a road sweep with elements of the 3d Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. The tanks received 60mm mortar, recoilless rifle and small arms fire. C31 and B24 fired a total of 28 90mm HE at enemy positions resulting in two KIA (confirmed).

Several weapons were also captured. At 0800 on 31 January the gun tanks from Battalion Headquarters and two flame tanks departed the Battalion Command Post enroute to Dong Ha via Hue. On Route #1 the unit was advised of heavy enemy activity toward Hue. The unit continued on and linked up with an infantry company also moving toward the city. In the vicinity of YD 7821 the tanks and infantry encountered another infantry unit which was engaged with the enemy. The combined force fought its way into the southern portion of the city in an effort to reach the LCU ramp. While enroute the unit was ordered to relieve the MACV Compound in Hue which was under siege. After eight hours of house to house street fighting the unit entered the MACV Compound and joined in its defense.

The locations of the gun companies on 31 January was as follows:

Company "A" (Rein) Dong Ha
Company "B" (-) (Rein) Camp Carroll
Company "C" Dong Ha (Company rear at Quang Tri)
Company "A", 3d AT Bn. Khe Sanh

The Battalion Reconnaissance Squad continued its activity around the Battalion Command Post until 30 January. There were no contacts.

On 30 January 130 men from Headquarters and Service Company were joined into a Provisional Rifle Company and assigned to Quang Tri for defense of the cantonment which is under construction.

At 0400 on 31 January the Battalion Command Post underwent a mortar and rocket attack. No casualties were taken.

On 31 January the Battalion Commander displaced and established a tactical Command Post at Dong Ha.

H&S Company C.O.: 2ndLt J.E. Georgaklis
Location & Operations Summary: Phu Bai
Hq CP security, active patrolling, and Reaction Force.

C.O.s Company "A": Capt's G.W. Baker & O.L. Sale
Location & Operations Summary: Dong Ha

2 Jan 1968 Tanks of the 3d platoon "A" company fired 3 HE direct at observed enemy movement resulting in 1 (confirmed NVA) KIA.