

Chapter 2

Mission and Organization of Tank Units

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Section 1. Mission.

The mission of the tank battalion is to close with and destroy the enemy by using armor-protected firepower, shock effect, and maneuver and to provide anti-mechanized fire in support of the Marine Division.

Organization

A typical tank battalion consists of four tank companies, a Headquarters and Service Company, one antitank platoon and one scout platoon. The tank companies are the basic tactical unit with which the battalion accomplishes its mission. The antitank platoon provides anti-mechanized support to the battalion. The battalion scout platoon performs reconnaissance, provides limited security, and assists in controlling movement of the battalion. The tank battalion has 58 M1A1 tanks (with 120-mm guns), 26 TOW weapons systems, 4 armored vehicle launch bridges (AVLBs) with 8 bridges, and 6 M88A1 tank recovery vehicles.

Employment

The tank battalion is best employed as a maneuver element without detaching units. However, the GCE commander may create mechanized forces by task organizing tank, mechanized infantry, and other combat support and combat service support units based on mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available-time available (METT-T) Employment of the tank battalion must take advantage of the speed, mobility, and firepower of the organization.

Section 2.

2201. Organization of the Tank Battalion.

Tank Battalion Wire Diagram Here

Note: Insert Diagram from MCRP 5-12D.

Section 3. Battalion Commander and his Staff.

Commander. The commander influences the unit under his command by his personality, attitude, technical and tactical proficiency, and leadership. The commander discharges his responsibilities by sound planning, timely decisions, clear definitive orders, personal supervision, and exemplary leadership. The commander alone is responsible for everything that his unit does or fails to do. He cannot delegate his responsibility, or any part of it, although he may delegate his authority. In discharging his responsibility, the commander issues orders to subordinate units through the chain of command. The chain of command descends directly from him to his immediate subordinate commanders,

whom he holds responsible for everything that their units do or fail to do. The commander issues orders and instructions to his staff through staff channels.

Staff. The role of the staff is to assist and advise the commander in the exercise of command and control. The commander uses command and control, to make effective decisions, manage the uncertainty of combat, and to direct the successful execution of military operations. Functions common to all staff officers include: providing information and advice, making estimates, making recommendations, preparing plans and orders, advising other staffs and subordinate commands of the commander's plans and policies, and supervising the execution of plans and orders. The commander and his staff should be considered as a single entity. Staff officers may be authorized to act in the name of the commander in certain matters; however, no staff officer has any authority in his capacity as a staff officer over any subordinate unit of the command.

The staff officer ensures the commander has been provided the necessary, timely, and correct information to make the right decisions. The commander deliberately limits the amount and type of information received based on his priorities. Staff officers are assigned functional areas of responsibility to balance the division of labor and provide a single point of contact. There must be complete cooperation and coordination between the individual staff officers in accomplishing common tasks. Each staff officer is responsible for appropriate coordination on matters of mutual concern to other members of the staff. Staff officers cooperate and coordinate with higher, adjacent, supporting, supported and subordinate headquarters. Staff briefings are streamlined and limited to those absolutely necessary to the commander's decisionmaking process. Routine or scheduled situation briefs not required by the commander are cancelled or conducted internally for the benefit of the staff.

Executive Officer. The executive officer is second in command and the commander's principal staff assistant and advisor. He must be prepared to assume the commander's duties at any time. He directs, coordinates, and supervises the activities of the staff. He keeps the commander informed of current and developing situations, issues instructions to the staff to implement to the commander's decisions, studies all situations to ensure preparedness for future operations, and represents the commander when authorized. He is normally located in the main echelon, but may be otherwise positioned by the commander if the situation dictates. The commander and executive officer normally do not absent themselves from the planning sections at the same time unless the executive officer is placed in command of a force organized for a specific mission or task. During displacement of the main echelon, the executive officer normally moves with and oversees displacement to the next location unless the commander is present. In this instance, the executive officer may move with the last element to displace in order to supervise the overall effort.

S-1/Adjutant. The S-1/Adjutant is the principal staff officer in matters pertaining to personnel management and administration. He monitors the administrative chain from subordinate units to higher headquarters and keeps the commander abreast of the personnel situation within the unit. He recommends personnel policy and assists the

commander in handling personnel and morale factors that influence the combat effectiveness of the unit, including supervision of legal matters and disciplinary action.

S-2/Intelligence. The S-2/Intelligence Officer acts as the commander's intelligence assistant for the planning and supervision of command intelligence functions. He makes recommendations for the assignment of resources and the management and coordination of intelligence means and activities of other elements of the command. He has the responsibility for the production and dissemination of intelligence, counterintelligence, graphic intelligence aids, and intelligence training.

S-3/Operations. The S-3/Operations Officer is responsible for matters pertaining to the organization, training, and tactical operations of the unit. He is responsible for planning, coordinating, and supervising the tactical employment of units, integrating fires and maneuver, planning and supervising civil military operations, and determining priorities for allocation of personnel, weapons, equipment, and ammunition. Within the operations section are staff assistants dedicated to nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) warfare defense, training, and for aviation.

Fire Support Coordinator. Within a Tank Battalion table of organization (TO) an artillery officer is assigned and designated as the FSC. The FSC is responsible for developing fire support plans that support the unit's scheme of maneuver, and making recommendations for priority of fire support to subordinate units.

Air Officer. The air officer is the subject matter expert on matters pertaining to aviation. He is a naval aviator or naval flight officer and is under the staff cognizance of the S-3. He is the officer responsible for coordinating tactical air assets and operations such and close air support (CAS) and acts as the point of contact for the two forward air controllers (FACs) assigned to the battalion. During the planning process, he provides input on aviation capabilities and availability as they affect courses of action and schemes of maneuver. He has the staff responsibility for coordination of aviation support in the unit fire support coordination center (FSCC).

NBC Officer. The NBC Officer is responsible for preparing plans, annexes, and unit SOPs on NBC defense. He develops and monitors NBC defense training of the unit. He supervises and coordinates operational and technical activities essential to NBC early warning and defense. He is under the cognizance of the S-3.

S-4/Logistics. The S-4/Logistics Officer has responsibility for determination of logistics and combat service support (CSS) requirements. He coordinates requirements for supply, transportation, health services, maintenance, and food service with the higher headquarters. He makes recommendations for the allocation of means, prepares computation of detailed requirements, and assists in the development of plans and orders. He constantly monitors responsiveness of support. Within the logistics section are staff assistants for embarkation, supply, motor transport, and maintenance management. A detailed discussion regarding the personnel resident within the battalion S-4 shop is included in *Chapter 6, Logistical Operations*.

Motor Transport Officer. The Motor Transport Officer is responsible for matters concerning control of transportation. He normally operates under the staff cognizance of the S-4.

Maintenance Management Officer. The Maintenance Management Officer is responsible to the commander, through the S-4, for the coordination and integration of all command maintenance efforts. The maintenance management officer's duties involve the management and coordination of the eight maintenance management functional areas. These functional areas are maintenance administration, personnel and training, records and reports, publications control, equipment and availability, preventive maintenance checks and services and corrective maintenance, supply support, and maintenance related programs.

S-6/ Communications and Electronics. The S-6/ Communications and Electronics Officer is responsible for planning and supervision of the installation, operation, and maintenance of communications systems; disseminating communications-electronics operating instructions; and managing the cryptographic material systems. He coordinates with the S-3 to ensure that communications planning and training are compatible with the overall plan. He recommends, in coordination with the S-3 and Headquarters and Service company commander, the location of key installations. To improve communications, he coordinates with the higher headquarters and communications officers of reinforcing, adjacent, and supporting /supported units.

Section 4. Command and Control.

2401.General.

The successful mechanized commander must see the battlefield and respond quickly. This can be achieved through an effective command and control system. The relatively large size, dispersion, and mobility of mechanized forces often pose command and control problems for the commander. There is no single solution for how a command and control system should be organized or function. Key variables such as echelons of command, personality of the commander, and METT-T will determine the composition of any organization's command and control system.

The commander positions himself wherever he can best influence the battle. He does this to gain as much situational awareness as possible while still being able to exercise command and control. During operations, the commander normally moves forward to personally observe and influence the course of the battle. During mechanized operations, the commander and his command group must be mounted in vehicles in order to keep up with his maneuver elements. The number of spaces in the vehicle will limit the size of the command group. The primary vehicle used for mobile combat operations centers in the AAV-C7.

2402.Command Echelons.

The commander establishes appropriate command echelons to assist him in the continuous collection, processing, and dissemination of combat information and orders. A Combat Operations Center is a unit headquarters where the commander and the staff perform their activities. Command echelons must have the requisite mobility to locate where the commander wishes and should be as mobile as the rest of the unit. Control of the battle is focused through only one command echelon at a time. The echelon in which the unit or subordinate commander is located, or from which such a commander operates, is called a command post. It is the commander's physical presence at a particular echelon that makes it a command post. Since each echelon is a likely objective of attack, both active and passive security measures should be taken to protect them.

Command Echelons. Depending on the situation, the commander may establish as many as three command echelons: the **tactical echelon**, the **main echelon**, and the **rear echelon**

Tactical Echelon. The tactical echelon provides the commander freedom of movement and the information required to maintain situational awareness. The tank battalion's table of equipment includes a section of tanks that enable the commander to establish the battalion's tactical command post or TAC CP. These tanks enable the commander to position himself forward, stay mobile, and maintain the communications and situational awareness necessary to command and control his unit. His survivability is directly related to their armor protection and capability to rapidly displace. He normally collocates with the main effort during critical events and focuses on the current operations of committed forces.

Main Echelon. The main echelon is designed, manned, and equipped to direct the actions of all organic, attached, and supporting units. The primary interests of the main echelon are monitoring and directing current operations and planning future operations. The main echelon includes a Combat Operations Center. The combat operations center (COC) *is the primary operational agency required to control the tactical operations of a command that employs ground and aviation combat, combat support, and combat service support elements or portions thereof. The combat operations center continually monitors, records, and supervises operations in the name of the commander and includes the necessary personnel and communications to do the same.* The COC includes the fire support coordination center.

When the commander is located forward during combat, he monitors communications between the combat operations center and higher and subordinate units. He will designate an individual; normally the executive officer or S-3, to act in his behalf in the event that communications between him and the combat operations center is lost.

Rear Echelon. The principal function of the rear echelon is to support combat operations by providing command and control of rear area operations. The S-1 and S-4 are normally located in the rear echelon. The rear echelon must be capable of monitoring the activities of the forward units and the other two echelons. Normally, the rear echelon is collocated with, or sited near combat service support units to facilitate

logistical efforts.

Increments. Command echelons can be split into **increments** to facilitate displacement and survivability (normally called the Alpha and Bravo Increments). In this method, the commander organizes two increments with nearly identical structure. The Alpha increment is usually composed of the S-2, S-3, FSC, and principle fire support liaison officers. Normally, the primary function of the Alpha command element is to command and control the current operation underway. The Bravo increment is usually composed of the assistants for each of the functional areas: S-2A, S-3A, Assistant FSC, etc. The Bravo command element monitors the current tactical situation and is immediately prepared to assume control in the event of the Alpha command element becomes disabled or during extended operations. The Bravo command may also be tasked to conduct future plans, maintain records, submit reports. When the force is extended the Bravo command element may be used as a relay to higher and supporting units. The Alpha/Bravo command elements may be consolidated when required by the tactical situation. Consolidation of the combat operations center allows full utilization of the entire staff for planning and the establishment of a single watch sections and provides more time to rest personnel. Well-developed SOPs and repeated rehearsals for passing C2 between increments are vital to success.

Displacements. Tactical considerations will dictate the frequency of echelon displacements. Common causes for displacement include: ground maneuver threatening the security of the echelon, enemy observation or attack by supporting arms, and degradation of communications between subordinates, higher, and adjacent units. Displacements should be executed at a time and in such a manner that creates the least possible disruption of operations. An echelon that has displaced assumes control only after communications are established at the new location. Normally, the tactical echelon displaces relatively frequently. Displacement of the main echelon is a more deliberate act. The main echelon normally displaces during lulls in the action or periods of inactivity. At such times, the main echelon normally displaces to a location in proximity to the tactical echelon in order to consolidate and allow for face-to-face coordination. Rear area echelons normally displace based on the ability to provide responsive logistical support, maintain security, and continue communications with subordinate, higher, and adjacent units.

2403. Combat Operations Center

Most units have established standard operating procedures for combat operations center operations. When task organized as a mechanized force these procedures may have to be modified to maintain the ability to echelon the command element, maintain a high degree of combat operations center mobility, and to make rapid decisions required in mechanized operations. The tank battalion combat operations center typically is comprised of an AAV-C7 and an AAV-P7 chase vehicle. The lack of space in these vehicles limits the number of personnel that can sit in these vehicles. This arrangement often requires staff members and commanders to personally monitor radios in order to facilitate rapid decision making. The high speed, high stress, and continuous nature of mechanized operations can create a great deal of physical and mental fatigue. When members of the combat operations center are tired their judgment can be impaired and they can make critical mistakes. To provide rest and allow for continuous operations, personnel assigned to the COC should be organized into work shifts. Rest should be

encouraged during extended halts, regardless of time of day, when their duties do not require them to be elsewhere.

Due to the limited space inside the AAV-C7 only individual combat gear is normally taken inside the vehicle. Other equipment and packs may be tied to the outside of the vehicle or carried on the chase vehicle.

The AAV-C7 has map boards mounted in front of the staff stations which can be removed and mounted on the outside of the vehicle for briefings. Ideally, S-2, S-3, and FSC maps/charts should be in close proximity to allow the commander and principal staff officers to view this information at one time and from a general location. During movement it is very difficult to write on the map boards. Consideration should be given to a system of maintaining and changing graphics while the vehicles are on the move. Until digital displays are fully fielded, it is recommended in the near term that units utilize a system of colored pins or stickies with unit symbols to track unit positions.

All staff officers operating inside the AAV-C7 must maintain a high level of awareness of the situation on the battlefield. The use of standard message forms or “yellow canaries” within the command vehicle is imperative when the primary officers are operating on a number of radio nets. Occasionally, staff members should conduct a “staff huddle” to coordinate efforts.

Personnel unfamiliar with the AAV-C7 often become frustrated by communication problems. Many of these problems are caused by operating at vast distances, engine noise when moving, located in a poor position for communications, and poor preventive maintenance. Some of the following considerations may alleviate these problems:

- Utilize communication personnel to position back up radios so they do not interfere with other vehicle radios. Do not operate strap-on radios unless the primary radio is not functional.
- When moving and engine noise interferes with an important transmission conduct a hasty and temporary halt. Sometimes just reducing the speed of movement will improve the transmission.
- Communication requirements should be considered when selecting a position for higher a temporary or extended halt. If communications is poor, often a move to another position will greatly improve communications.
- Occasionally, in the fast paced nature of a mechanized operation, time is not allowed for preventive maintenance. During extended halts back-up radios may be used while preventive maintenance is conducted on vehicle radios.
- Back up hand sets and headsets should be maintained in each command vehicle.

During a mechanized operation there are temporary halts and extended halts. The temporary halts are relatively short term where the staff personnel will be operating outside of the vehicle. During extended halts the chase vehicles will come forward and personnel in those vehicles will be employed in the combat operations center. Consideration should be given to notifying subordinate units and all vehicles in the

command group of the anticipated duration of the halt. Procedures can be developed which allow this notification to trigger other actions. For example, halts of more than 10 minutes might require troops to dismount and establish local security, or halts of greater than an hour might require laying wire.

Consideration should be given to creating standard procedures for immediate emplacement and displacement. These procedures might include designated “teams” that camouflage the vehicles, establish security, lay wire, remote antennas, and configure the COC for stationary operation. These and other procedures for emplacement and displacement should be trained and executed as drills.

Procedures that might be included in operations from a static position include the following:

- Establishment of a standard configuration of the COC.
- Establishment of standard watch sections.
- Establish standard locations for resting. A designated bivouac site with designated sleeping positions for each member of the command groups will simplify finding a needed member of the group in a hurry or during periods of darkness.
- Establish a method of providing power to the vehicle radios. The radios on the AAV-C7 can operate off the vehicle batteries, however they must be recharged periodically. When the engine is started there will be a brief disruption of all radios. The engine should not be started without the approval of the watch officer. While the engine is running, noise may become a problem. Another method is to slave another vehicle to the AAV-C7 to provide the required power. Any vehicle with a NATO slave adapter may provide the required power. Establish standardized force resupply system for the command group.

2404. Battalion Fire Support Coordination.

The tank battalion Fire Support Coordination Center is organized similarly to that of an infantry battalion. The tank battalion Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) normally consists of an air officer (AirO), an artillery officer (Fire Support Coordinator - FSC) and the battalion operations officer (S-3). While the battalion FSCC is built around this nucleus, the cell is augmented with personnel and equipment appropriate to the fire support coordination functions to be conducted. Sources of augmentation may include USMC and external sources. Examples include the provision of watchstanders, individuals with specific skills such as electronic warfare (EW), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), air defense, or individuals with a required level of proficiency in fire support coordination.

Coordination during operations is dynamic in the FSCC as staff members are simultaneously required to plan fires, conduct targeting, and integrate fires with maneuver elements. The coordinating responsibility includes the requirement to disseminate timely fire support information, to institute coordination measures as

required, and to integrate fire support activities which affect two or more fire support agencies, subordinate elements, or adjacent units.

Duties of FSCC members.

Fire Support Coordinator (FSC) The FSC is an artillery Captain by T/O. His responsibilities include:

- Supervises the operation of the FSCC, including organizing and training personnel.
- Advising the Battalion Commander on all fire support matters.
- Developing the fire support plan based on the scheme of maneuver, the intelligence estimate, requests from subordinate units, and the fire support available.
- Coordinating all fire support within the Battalion zone of action.
- Processing of target information to include shellrep.
- Ensuring the safety of friendly troops from our own fire support.

Air Officer (AO) The AO is a pilot or Naval Flight Officer (NFO) Captain by T/O. His responsibilities include:

- Advising the Battalion Commander/FSC on all air support matters.
- Developing the air fire plan based on the scheme of maneuver, the intelligence estimate, assets available, and coordination with the FSC.
- Submitting air requests.
- Coordinating the actions of forward air controllers.

Artillery Liaison Officer (ALO) The Artillery Liaison Officer is normally a Lieutenant provided by a direct support artillery battalion. His responsibilities include:

- Advising the Battalion Commander/FSC on all artillery support matters.
- Developing the artillery fire plan based on the scheme of maneuver, the intelligence estimate, assets available, and coordination with the FSC.
- Passing requirements for support to the appropriate artillery Fire Direction Center for action.
- Coordinating artillery unit requirements with the Battalion Commander/FSC.
- Coordinating the actions of the artillery forward observers.

Mortar Liaison Non-Commissioned Officer. The Mortar Liaison NCO is normally a Sergeant provided by the Weapons Company of an Infantry Battalion. He will typically bring two mortar forward observers that will travel with the tank companies.

- Advising the Battalion Commander/FSC on all mortar employment issues.
- Developing the mortar fire plan based on the scheme of maneuver, the intelligence estimate, assets available, and coordination with the FSC.
- Coordinating the actions of the mortar forward observers.
- Coordinating mortar platoon requirements with the Battalion Commander/FSC.

Naval Gunfire Liaison Officer (NGLO) The NGLO is normally a Navy Lieutenant provided by the direct support artillery battalion. His responsibilities include:

- Advising the Battalion Commander/FSC on all naval gunfire support matters.
- Developing the naval gunfire support plan based on the scheme of maneuver, the intelligence estimate, assets available, and coordination with the FSC.
- Assisting in the calling for naval gunfire support.
- Coordinating the actions of the naval gunfire spot team.
- Passing requirements for support to the appropriate Naval Gunfire support ship.

Target Information Officer (TIO) The TIO will normally be the Battalion S-2 Officer. His responsibilities concerning target intelligence include:

- Disseminating target information and intelligence to the FSCC.
- Advising the Battalion Commander/FSC on enemy weapons capabilities
- Keeping appropriate records of targets.

Section 5 Command Relationships.

2501. General.

Command relationships are the interrelated responsibilities between commanders, as well as the authority of commanders in the chain of command. Command relationships and levels of authority, although authoritative, must be adapted to meet the requirements of the mission. Commanders must have the flexibility to establish non-standard relationships when required by the situation. Collectively, command relationships and levels of authority provide the flexibility necessary to organize forces to respond to all situations. Command relationships foster understanding and freedom of action, and establish the basis for interaction among unit commanders. Before discussing command and support relationships of tank units in detail, it is important to briefly describe the organizational nature of the MAGTF.

Marine Corps forces are organized as Marine-Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF) and are either employed as part of an amphibious task force or separately as part of larger joint or combined forces. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principle organization for the conduct of all missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs are balanced, combined arms forces with organic ground, aviation, and sustainment elements.

MAGTFs have no standard structure; rather the MAGTF provides a single commander a combined arms force that can be tailored to the situation.

2502.Command Relationship/Levels of Authority.

Subordinate elements of a task-organized force may be organic to the unit, attached to the unit, or tasked to provide support to the unit. These command relationships do not imply tactical missions or techniques of employment. Although the terms operational control (OPCON) and tactical control (TACON) are often used in joint and combined operations, they are not used to establish command relationships within the MAGTF. For more information on OPCON and TACON see JP 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces. Within the Marine Corps, command relationships are termed as either command or support. When a Marine unit is under the command of a senior Marine unit, the subordinate Marine unit is either organic or attached. Support relationships are established when one element or unit of the MAGTF provides a required capability to another element.

a. Command. The concept of command is applicable to all elements of the MAGTF.

1. Concept. Command is the authority that a commander in the Armed Forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and discipline of assigned personnel. (JP 1-02)

2. Relationship. Marine Corps units are either organic or attached.

a. Organic. Organic is defined as assigned to and forming an essential part of a military organization. (JP 1-02) For example, the Tank Battalion is organic to the Marine Division.

b. Attach.

(1) Concept. Attach is defined as the placement of units or personnel in an organization where such placement is relatively temporary. (JP 1-02). When a tank unit is attached, it is under the command of the unit to which it is attached.

(2) Example. A tank company may be attached to an infantry battalion for an operation or a tank battalion may be attached to an infantry regiment. Attached units may be further attached to subordinate units. For example, an infantry regimental commander could further attach elements of a tank battalion to his subordinate battalions. In the case of attachment to an infantry unit, tank units are seldom attached below the battalion level. The reason for this is because infantry companies are not normally equipped to logistically support a tank platoon. The tank platoon normally acquires logistic support from the supported unit's battalion S-4.

(3) Responsibility. Unless the attachment orders qualify the degree of control involved, attachment of a tank unit to an infantry battalion or regiment implies that the infantry battalion or regiment assumes full responsibility for the tank unit's logistics, administration, training, and operations. However, the responsibility for matters relating to the transfer and promotion of personnel will normally be retained by the command to which the tank unit is organic. For example, an infantry battalion gaining an attached tank platoon is normally responsible for logistics, administration, training, and operations of that tank platoon. However, the platoon's parent unit, the tank battalion, will normally retain authority to transfer and promote personnel.