

FM 17-15
FMFRP 6-71-6

Tank Platoon



U.S. Marine Corps

PCN 140 067160 00

PREFACE



This manual describes how the tank platoon fights. It focuses on the principles of platoon operations and the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) the platoon uses to exploit its combat power and minimize its vulnerabilities while conducting move, attack, and defend operations.

FM 17-15 is for tank platoon leaders and members of M60A3, M1, M1A1, M1A2, and M8-AGS crews. Because weapons and equipment vary among units, users should adapt information to fit their specific situations. Where capabilities of the various systems differ significantly, this manual examines alternative considerations and techniques for their use.

In addition to FM 17-15, three publications are critical reference sources for the tank platoon. ARTEP 17-237-10-MTP, the mission training plan for the tank platoon, contains collective platoon tasks and outlines training procedures and exercises. The other two manuals are published as Fort Knox Supplementary Material (FKSM). FKSM 17-15-1 contains information on TTP for platoons equipped with a variety of enhanced technologies. Included are the latest updates on systems covered in FM 17-15, such as the intervehicular information system (IVIS), and on newly developed equipment like the missile countermeasure device (MCD). FKSM 17-15-3 contains a detailed example of tactical standing operating procedures (TSOP). Each tank platoon can modify the TSOP to meet its unique mission requirements. For information on obtaining FKSM publications, call (502) 624-2987/5848 (commercial) or 464-2987/5848 (DSN).

The proponent of FM 17-15 is HQ TRADOC. Record comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028, and send the form directly to Commander, 2d Squadron, 16th Cavalry Regiment, United States Army Armor School, ATTN: ATSB-SBB-D, Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121-5200.

Unless otherwise stated, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION



The fundamental mission of the tank platoon is to close with and destroy the enemy. The platoon's ability to move, shoot, communicate, and provide armored protection is a decisive factor on the modern battlefield. It moves, attacks, defends, and performs other essential tasks to support the company team or troop mission. In accomplishing its assigned missions, the platoon uses fire, maneuver, and shock effect, synchronized with other maneuver elements and with combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) assets. When properly supported, it is capable of conducting sustained operations against any sophisticated threat.

The tank platoon can survive and win in battle, however, only if it is well trained, effectively led, and highly motivated. Crews must be aggressive, and their tactics must reflect the tempo and intensity of maneuver warfare. Platoon training must prepare them to operate in hostile territory with the enemy to their front, flanks, and rear.

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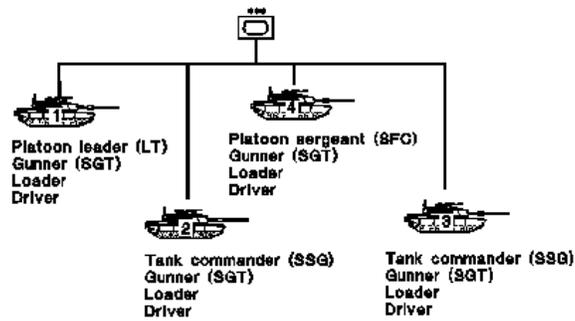
SECTION I. Organizations
SECTION II. Responsibilities
SECTION III. Capabilities and Limitations

Section I. ORGANIZATIONS

The Tank Platoon

By itself, any tank can be vulnerable in the face of diverse battlefield hazards (such as enemy forces or unfavorable terrain) and situations; these vulnerabilities are significantly reduced when tanks are employed as units.

The tank platoon is the smallest maneuver element within a tank company. Organized to fight as a unified element, the platoon consists of four main battle tanks organized into two sections, with two tanks in each section. The platoon leader (Tank 1) and platoon sergeant (Tank 4) are the section leaders. Tank 2 is the wingman in the platoon leader's section, and Tank 3 is the wingman in the platoon sergeant's section (see Figure 1-1).



**NOTE: Loader and driver are in grades E1 to E4.
On the M8-AGS, the loader is replaced by an autoloader.**

Figure 1-1. Tank platoon organization.

The tank platoon is organic to tank companies and armored cavalry troops. The platoon may be cross-attached to a number of organizations, commonly a mechanized infantry company, to create company teams. It may also be placed under operational control (OPCON) of a light infantry battalion.

Under battlefield conditions, the wingman concept facilitates control of the platoon when it operates in sections. The concept requires that one tank orient on another tank on either its left or right side. In the absence of specific instructions, wingmen move, stop, and shoot when their leaders do. In the tank platoon, Tank 2 orients on the platoon leader's tank, while Tank 3 orients on the platoon sergeant's tank. The platoon sergeant (PSG) orients on the platoon leader's tank. (See Figure 1-2.)

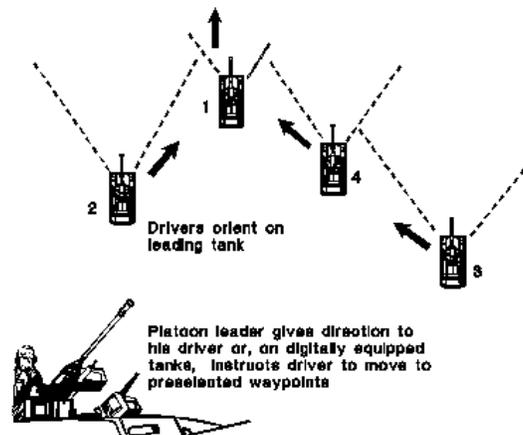


Figure 1-2. The wingman concept.

The Tank Company

The tank company is organized, equipped, and trained to fight pure; it can also be task organized by higher headquarters to fight with infantry as a company team. The tank company consists of a headquarters and three tank platoons. The company headquarters is equipped with two tanks, one M113A2 armored personnel carrier (APC), two M1025 or M998 high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWV), and one cargo truck with a 400-gallon water trailer (see Figure 1-3, page 1-4). A maintenance section from the battalion maintenance platoon is normally attached to the tank company. The maintenance section consists of one APC, one heavy recovery vehicle, and one utility truck with trailer carrying spare parts based on the prescribed load list (PLL). A medic, normally attached from the battalion medical platoon, travels in another APC.

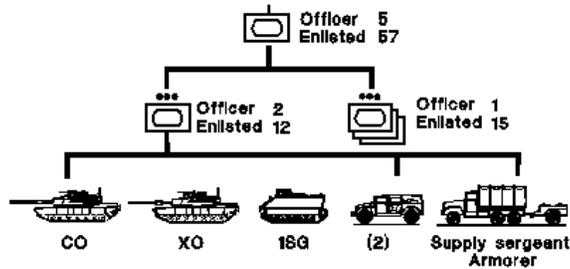


Figure 1-3. Tank company organization.

The Armored Cavalry Troop

The cavalry troop is organized, equipped, and trained to protect and conserve the combat power of other combined arms forces. While its primary missions are reconnaissance and security, the cavalry troop may be called upon to execute attack, defend, and delay missions as part of squadron and regimental missions.

The armored cavalry troop consists of a headquarters, two tank platoons, two scout platoons, and mortar and maintenance sections. The headquarters section is equipped with one main battle tank, one command post (CP) carrier, one APC, one cargo truck, and two utility trucks. The scout platoons consist of six M3 cavalry fighting vehicles (CFV). Equipment in the mortar and maintenance sections includes two 107-mm mortars mounted in self-propelled carriers, one APC, one heavy recovery vehicle, etc. (See Figure 1-4.)

