

From The Front In Korea

BY CAPTAIN
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Battery A, 26th AAA AW Battalion (SP), commanded by Captain Charles W. Harrison, provided the antiaircraft force for the 24th Division. This battery was the first of the antiaircraft units to enter into the pell-mell of Korean ground warfare. In many varied roles on the Kum River, at Taejon and on the Naktong the officers and men of this battery added to the heroic traditions of the 24th Division and established some standards for the Antiaircraft Artillery in this type of warfare. In doing so they suffered severe casualties. For the present we have lost contact with the battery.—Ed.

With the 26th AAA Battery In Korea

AT THE KUM RIVER

DURING the early phase of our activities we were attached to the 19th Infantry. Slated for an advance, we took second place, behind an M-24 about 500 yards in front of the infantry column.

Engaging the enemy, strength unknown, we remained in position until the M-24 ran out of ammo. This reverse left us in first place, and we continued to fire upon the Jo-Kos, slaughtering them on all sides with our M-16's and M-15A1's.

Soon the North Korean artillery got too hot, at which time we retired to cover in the rice paddies. We were under their fire for about one half an hour. All at once four jets appeared out of nowhere, strafing and rocketing the North Korean positions. The jets gave them all they had, then spread their wings toward home. This, then, allowed the North Korean tanks to resume their fire in our direction.

Trying to get out of the paddies onto the road, a front wheel of one of our tracks fell thru into a culvert. This setback made it impossible to recover the vehicle; so we destroyed it while under fire by the enemy.

During our retreat we were pinned down by enemy machine gun fire three

times until the Air Force came in and destroyed the North Korean positions in our vicinity.

AT TAEJON

At Dawn, Sunday 20 July, an M15A1, detailed to check on a burning enemy tank, was surprised by four additional North Korean tanks. The enemy mounted an 85mm gun in the turret, augmented by co-axial mounted caliber .30 MG's. We fired upon them immediately with AP to no avail, but we slowed them enough for the infantry to get two with 3.5 bazookas. We then returned to a position near the 34th Infantry CP to which regiment we were attached.

About 1500 hrs another North Korean tank appeared, strafing and shelling everything in its path. We met the tank with an M15A1 at an intersection and knocked the turret out of action with AP rounds from about 25 yards, possibly killing the gunner. The enemy then retired from the vicinity. Later this same tank was seen burning along the streets of Taejon as we departed from the ill-fated city.

AT THE NAKTONG RIVER

Late in the evening of the 2 August we dug in on the front line to protect the 34th Infantry. With us we had two M-16's guarding the bridge.

Although our sector of fire was about a half mile wide, the terrain was not to our advantage. The slope extended to the river bank, making proper camouflage almost impossible.

With about 250 men, including the AAA, trying to hold down a front of five miles, it was easy for the enemy to break through despite the many casualties due to the fire power of our AW's and the infantry. We later regained the lost ground. During the breakthrough, our M15A1 became surrounded at which time we quickly destroyed the vehicle and rendered it useless.

When we were withdrawn a battalion of infantry and three M26 tanks were sent to replace us.

ON MAINTENANCE AND FALLACIES OF EQUIPMENT

IN post mortem we recommend that an A1 priority be given to the installation of an auxiliary motor to be used as a battery charger on all full track vehicles. The necessity for this was indicated by the failure of the engine in an M39 command vehicle to start at a crucial moment during the siege of Taejon.

We also suggest the addition of an M32B3 wrecker to the T/OE. A vehicle such as this would have proven its worth on several occasions. A result of this deficiency being the useless abandonment and destruction of an M39 which slipped into the Naktong River. On another occasion an M16 turned over in a rice paddy during a run, creating a five-hour delay for the entire column. All hands had to assist in the righting of this vehicle. In addition the 81mm mortar mounted on the M32B3 could have been



Mortar, artillery and tank fire blast Communist troop concentrations in Korea.