

TAC NEWS

January - February 1996
Celebrating GHQ's
Twenty-Nine years of Modeling Excellence

GHQ
28100 Woodside Road
Shorewood MN 55331, USA

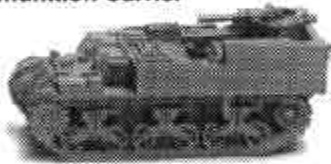
US66 M15 "Special"



Photographs appearing in
Tac News are not necessarily to scale



US27 M30 Ammunition Carrier



R2 T-34/85

KOREAN WAR ARMOR

On June 25, 1950, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) struck south of the 38th Parallel and invaded the Republic of Korea (RoK). The NKPA was a first-class war machine cored by eight superb infantry divisions. Schooled in combined operations and shouldering the latest Soviet arms, the NKPA easily whipped the poorly-equipped RoK defense forces. To shore-up the crumbling RoKs, the United Nations rushed in reinforcements. These troops, comprised mostly of Americans grown flabby from occupation duty in Japan, also proved no match. Within weeks the entire UN army was hemmed into a tiny pocket centered by the coastal city of Pusan.

Much of the NKPA's hitting power centered on the 105th Armored Brigade. Armed with Soviet-built T-34/85s, this unit was first established in October 1948 as an armored battalion. By May of the following year, the 105th was up to regimental strength. Just prior to the invasion it was further bulked-up to brigade status with a final muster of 120 tanks. Other NKPA units also had T-34s. The 7th Infantry Division had an organic 30-tank regiment and the army retained a brigade-strength strategic reserve.

The 105th was organized along the lines of a typical late World War II Soviet armored brigade. It consisted of three armored regiments (US battalion equivalents), and one mechanized infantry regiment (battalion). Each armored regiment consisted of 40 tanks organized into three 13-tank battalions. Each battalion had three 4-tank companies. Battalion, regimental, and brigade commanders each had a personal tank.

NKPA armored tactics were brutally simple. Single 4-tank companies, closely supported by squads of "tank descent" infantry,

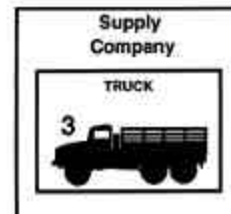
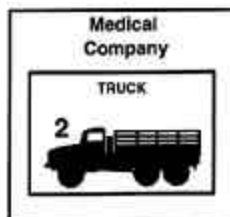
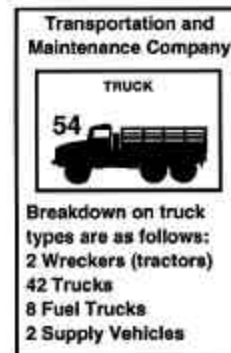
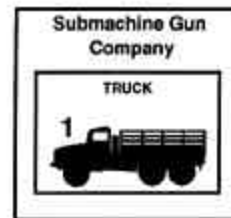
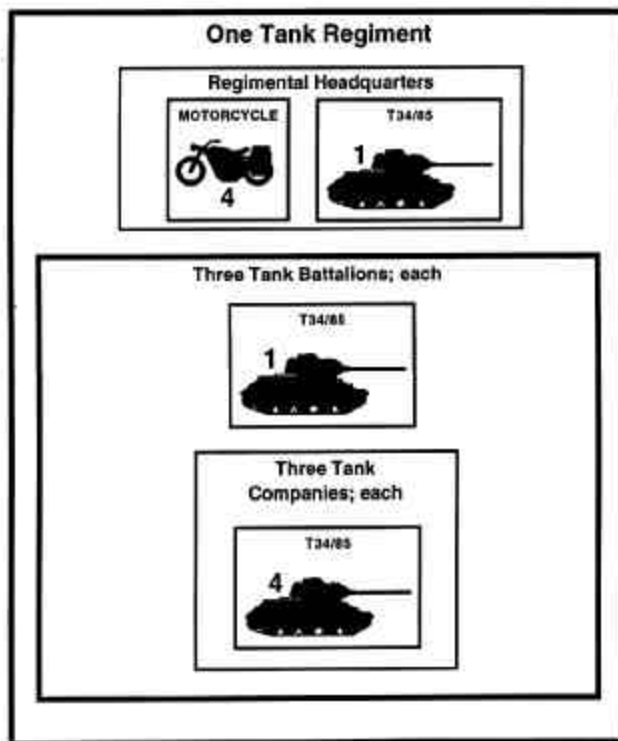
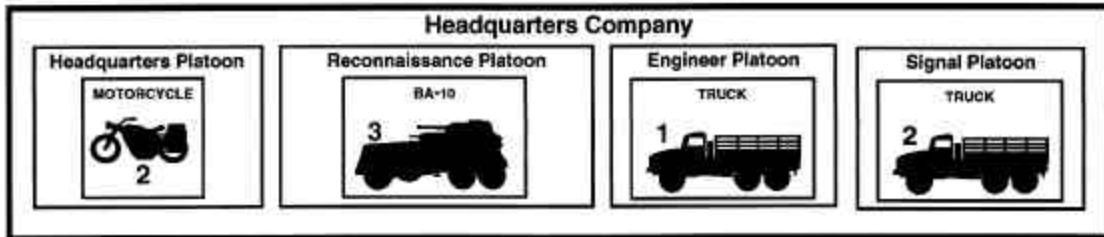
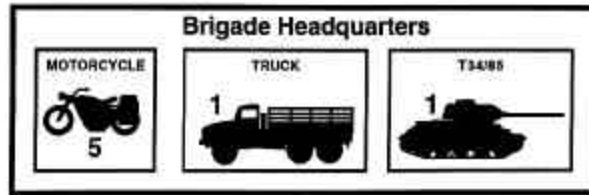
attacked in column along a road or track. The lead tank fired forward, the second the third tanks blasted targets on the flanks, while the "tail-end Charlie" covered the rear. NKPA tanks rarely deployed out of column, it was their job to shatter the enemy by brute force. NKPA infantry on the other hand skirted strongpoints, attacking communication lines and second echelon troops.

These tactics proved effective against lightly-equipped RoK and American troops. On July 5th, the American 24th Infantry Division was attacked in the vicinity of Osan. NKPA armor, striking in regimental strength, advanced in eight separate columns of four tanks each. American antitank weaponry proved worthless. One bazooka team bounced twenty two 2.36-inch rockets off passing T-34s without effect.

To counter the T-34 menace, the UN rapidly deployed over 500 medium and heavy tanks to Korea. The most potent tank-killers in the UN arsenal, however, proved to be the 3.5-inch bazooka rocket and napalm aerial bomb. This new weaponry, along with MacArthur's audacity at Inchon, proved decisive. The North Koreans were forced back beyond the 38th Parallel to the Chinese border. On November 1st 1951, the American 6th Medium Tank Battalion wiped-out the remaining North Korean armor just 18 miles south of the Yalu river.

This proved to be the last tank-to-tank battle of the war. The Chinese People's Liberation Army had virtually no armor. The Soviets made good all NKPA tank losses, but the North Koreans opted to retain them as a defense force for their capital of P'yongyang. As for the United Nations, their armor was used exclusively as infantry support until war's end.

World War II Red Army Tank Brigade (T-34/85)



Total Equipment and Personnel:

543 Officers & Enlisted Men	296 Rifles	209 Submachine guns	41 T-34/85 Tanks	18 Antitank Rifles
12 Light Machine Guns	3 Armored Cars	65 Trucks	11 Motorcycles	51 Radios

STATS, SPECS, AND FACTS

US27 M12 155mm MC



SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT:	31,195 kg
OVERALL LENGTH:	9.04 meters
HULL LENGTH:	6.65 meters
WIDTH:	3.15 meters
SPEED:	38.6 km/hr (road speed)
OPERATIONAL RANGE:	161 kilometers
MAIN GUN:	one 155mm gun

At the start of World War II the US Army had in its arsenal a number of obsolete large-caliber artillery pieces dating from the Great War. Rather than scrap out these guns, the Americans decided to mount the tubes in modified M3 tank hulls. Thus was born the M12, the US Army's first self-propelled 155mm. The concept proved successful, although it was evident that further development required new ordnance. By late 1943, the excellent 155mm M1A1 "Long Tom" was available in significant numbers to convert a portion of the production run into self-propelled guns. The carriage chosen was the M4A3 tank hull. To take the gun's girth and weight (along with 20 rounds of ammunition) the M4A3's hull was widened and the chassis strengthened. The engine was also repositioned to the rear and a spade was added to absorb the 155mm's massive recoil.

Development took longer than expected and the Gun Motor Carriage 155mm, M40 wasn't introduced until January 1945. Despite this late showing, the M40 was judged a success and given production priority. Between January and April of 1945, no less than 311 were built. Production continued after the war and the vehicle was widely exported. In Korea the M40 saw its most extensive combat service. The French also used it in Indochina as a counter-battery weapon against the Viet Minh's Soviet-built 122mm artillery.

SU-76



SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT:	10,800 kg
LENGTH:	4.88 meters
WIDTH:	2.73 meters
SPEED:	45 km/hr (road speed)
OPERATIONAL RANGE:	450 kilometers
MAIN GUN:	one 7.62cm gun
MACHINE GUN(S):	one 7.92mm

The Red Army, desperately seeking an expedient design to make good its armor losses suffered in 1941, decided to convert the obsolete T-70 tank into a gun carriage for the ZIS-3 76.2mm "Crash Boom." The conversion process was relatively straight forward with the Crash Boom mounted slightly off-center into an open-topped compartment. To carry the gun's bulk an extra pair of road wheels was added to the chassis. The T-70 hull was also widened slightly to accommodate the stowage of 62 rounds. Designated SU-76 (SU for Samokhodnaya Ustanovka, or self-propelled mounting) the vehicle was serviceable, but unloved. The fighting compartment was cramped and fully exposed to the elements. The driver sat next to the vehicle's twin-engines without an intervening bulkhead. No wonder the SU-76 was christened Sukami (bitch).

The SU-76 didn't appear in large numbers until mid-1943. By this time German tank armor was considerably thicker and the 76.2mm's effectiveness as an antitank gun was greatly diminished. Still, the Crash Boom remained an excellent field gun and the tactical role of the SU-76 was thus switched to direct infantry fire-support. Gradually the SU-76 was phased-out of this role by larger caliber self-propelled guns such as the ISU-152. After the war, SU-76s were exported to communist nations such as China and North Korea. Each North Korean infantry division had an organic 12-vehicle battalion of SU-76s.

M26 Pershing



SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT:	41.73 tons
HULL LENGTH:	6.51 meters
WIDTH:	3.5 meters
SPEED:	48 km/hr (road speed)
OPERATIONAL RANGE:	148 kilometers
MAIN GUN:	one 90mm gun
MACHINE GUN(S):	one 50 cal. two 30 cal.

The US Army decided early on in World War II to build their armored divisions around medium tanks armed with 75mm guns. Heavy tank development remained a low priority until GI tankers found themselves facing German Panthers and Tigers. With front line soldiers now screaming for a heavy tank, US Army designers dusted off the plans for the aborted T20 Medium Tank prototype. To make the T20 into heavy tank, its 76.2mm main gun was replaced by a 90mm anti-aircraft gun. To accommodate this new armament, the T20 turret was enlarged and fitted with a counterweight. The T20 suspension, which was similar to the M4, was replaced with a torsion-bar type. The result was designated Heavy Tank M26 General Pershing.

The Pershing became available early in 1945. This meant only a handful saw action in the European Campaign. Many more fought in the Pacific, fulfilling roles better served by medium or even light tanks. The Pershing saw its lion-share of combat in Korea where its principle opponent was the T-34/85. Here the concept of the heavy tank proved its worth. The Pershing's thick armor allowed it to trade shots, while its 90mm main gun was one of the few weapons in the US arsenal that could knock-out a T-34/85 with conventional ammunition.

Pusan Boots

Tac News Scenario #7



SET-UP AND SUGGESTED VICTORY CONDITIONS

The North Koreans enter the board along the west edge.

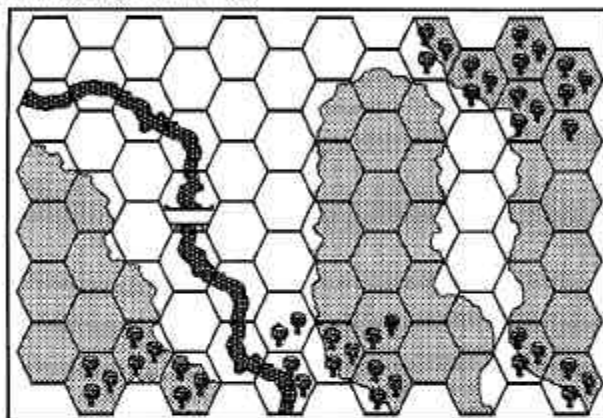
The Americans set-up entrenched on any elevation hex east of the ravine.

To win the North Koreans must exit one tank off the east edge of the board, or knock-out the American tank.

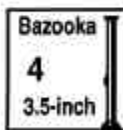
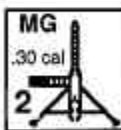
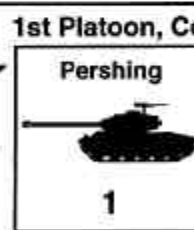
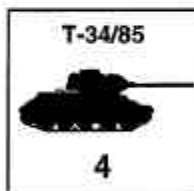
The Americans win denying the North Koreans their victory conditions.

TIME CHART

Battle runs from 6:30 AM to 11:30AM.



Armored elements supporting the 4th North Korean Infantry Division



SUGGESTED SPECIAL RULES

1. The North Koreans are superior troops.
2. The United States Marines are superior troops.
3. There was no effective indirect artillery support from either side during the battle. Limit it accordingly.
4. As the T-34/85s approached, they were under constant aerial attack. It appears the Mustangs had already used up their rockets or bombs, because their attacks were limited to machine gun strafing runs.

Obong-ni August 17th, 1950: On August 5th, 1950, the NKPA crossed the Naktong River. This push created a massive bulge in the United Nation lines and eliminated the last strategic obstacle to Pusan. The NKPA, sensing the kill, pressed their advantage and by mid-August had expanded their bridgehead out to the city of Obong-ni. This offensive left the UN no options; with its back to the sea it had to counterattack.

United States Marines of the 1st Battalion, 5th Regiment attacked Obong-ni at dusk on August 15. To reach Obong-ni, the marines had to cross a ridgeline formed by six knobs of high ground. Each knob was flanked by gullies cut deep by erosion. The first marine attack took several hills, but by dawn enfilade fire from the surrounding high ground stopped the assault. As the marines dug-in and consolidated their gains, the NKPA counterattacked with tanks.