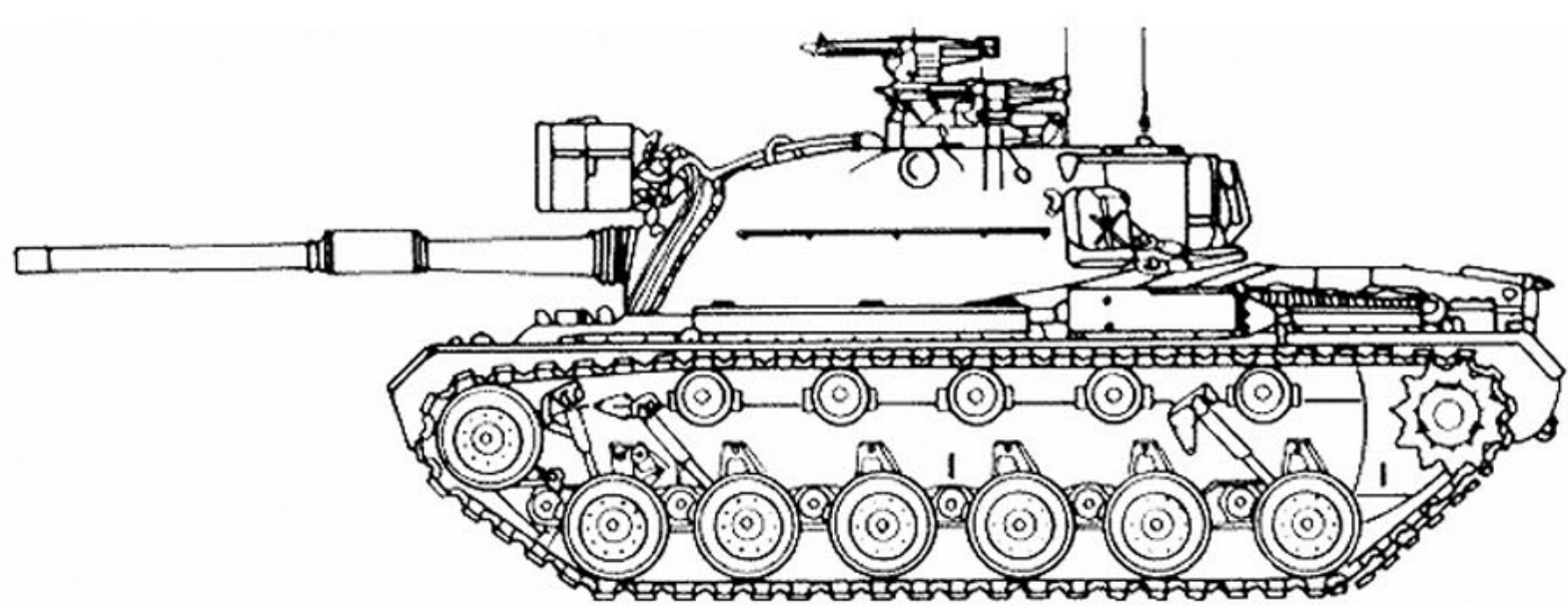


Our Answer to Red Tanks

Sherman, Pershing and Patton Fight Again as America's Heavy Weapons Enter the Korean War



In the battle for favorable war stories a U.S. general has about as much chance against a U.S. Marine as a Communist. But this week three fearsome names, Sherman, Pershing and Patton, had Marine publicity experts scurrying for help—and the North Koreans scared witless.

Wherever the United Nations troops struck in the counteroffensive, in Seoul, Pohang or Tundok, American tanks named for American heroes—William Tecumseh Sherman, John J. Pershing and George S. Patton—could rightfully claim much credit for the success of the drives to final victory. They were being used for more purposes than a pocket bottle opener.

In the foothills west of Masan they had proven their worth as reconnaissance vehicles. They were troop carriers, weapon carriers, water trucks and emergency ambulances. Along the railroad tracks north of Seoul they were converted into excellent pillboxes. And most important of all, as in the drive across the Kimpo airfield, they had proven conclusively that they could outgun, outrun and outfight any tank in the same weight class the Communists had yet been able to field.

Unknown Quantity. No tank expert, either in Korea or in the Pentagon, was willing this week to risk a forecast on the outcome of tank warfare, if the Soviets threw into battle their heavy Joseph Stalin III, a 57-ton behemoth, armed with a 122 mm cannon. But fragmentary reports from the battlefronts (no full technical analysis of tank-against-tank combat has yet been made) have

Heavy Weapons Enter the Korean War



Patton. *Tanks that bear his name and his tactics are speeding victory.*

added up to an impressive score for the superiority of the new Patton (a medium tank, weighing about 45 tons) over the North Koreans' comparable T-44 or T-34:

1. The new Patton, which can attain an "easy" speed of 45 mph, travels 13 to 17 mph faster than the enemy's similar tank.

2. The Patton, equipped with a new single stick control for shifting gears and steering, can almost "turn on a dime"; it is considered the most maneuverable medium tank in the world.

3. Given similar terrain, weather and time-of-shooting advantages, the Patton's 90 mm. cannon is a more effective weapon than either the 85 or 100 mm. gun mounted in the Koreans' tanks. (There was one verified report last week that a new Patton had knocked out a T-34 at a range of slightly more than 1½ miles with only one round.)

4. The shell of the Patton tank—a hard, titanium-alloy steel—resists armor-piercing bullets better than any known Red tank.

5. The 810-h.p. motor which powers a Patton tank has 310 more horsepower than the T-44 and the T-34, and even 210 more horsepower than the heavy Joseph Stalin III.

In only one major respect do the Soviet tanks surpass the American. Every

Heavy Weapons Enter the Korean War

enemy medium tank now in use is at least one foot lower, thus providing a smaller silhouette target. But American designers, still striving to bring the U.S. mediums and lights closer to the ground, insist that the additional firepower, maneuverability and visibility provided by the higher tank now being produced is together Chrysler auto motors—the Continental is three times as powerful as the motor of the already obsolescent Pershing. Unlike the old water-cooled motor, it runs far better in subtropical and subarctic regions.

Next major accomplishment is the standardization of parts. Prior to 1945 nearly every component of a tank was built for tanks only and could not be interchanged with any other machine. Today, by simplifying designs, Army Ordnance has produced 43 major parts which can be used in many types of motor-driven weapons. For example, a tank and a twin 40 mm. gun motor carriage are equipped with the identical generators; a medium tank and a cargo tractor use the same kind of headlights, shock absorbers and transmissions. A tank-recovery vehicle's radio duplicates that of any tank it services.



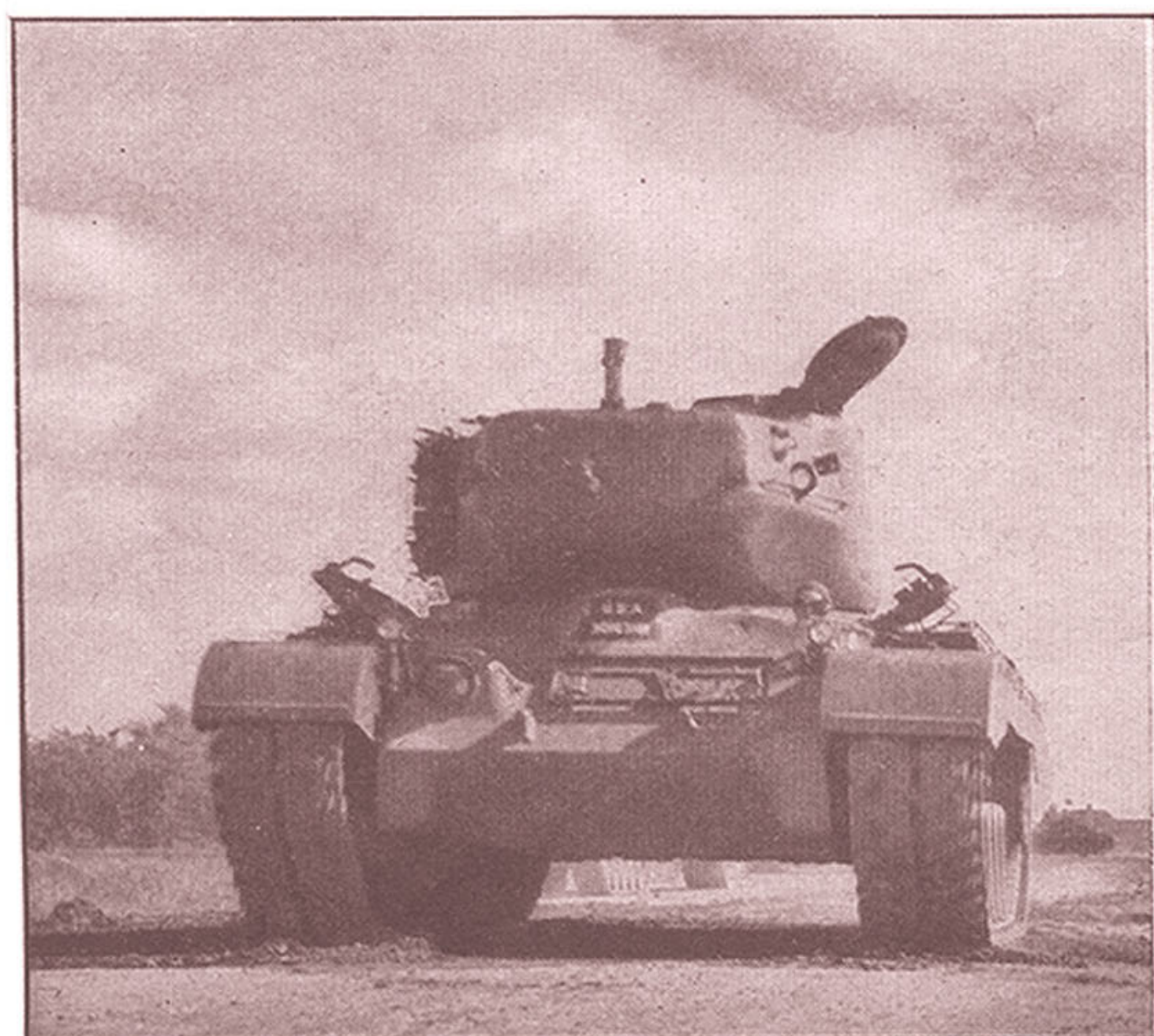
Tanks of all trades. The Korean war forces tanks to serve as pillboxes . . .



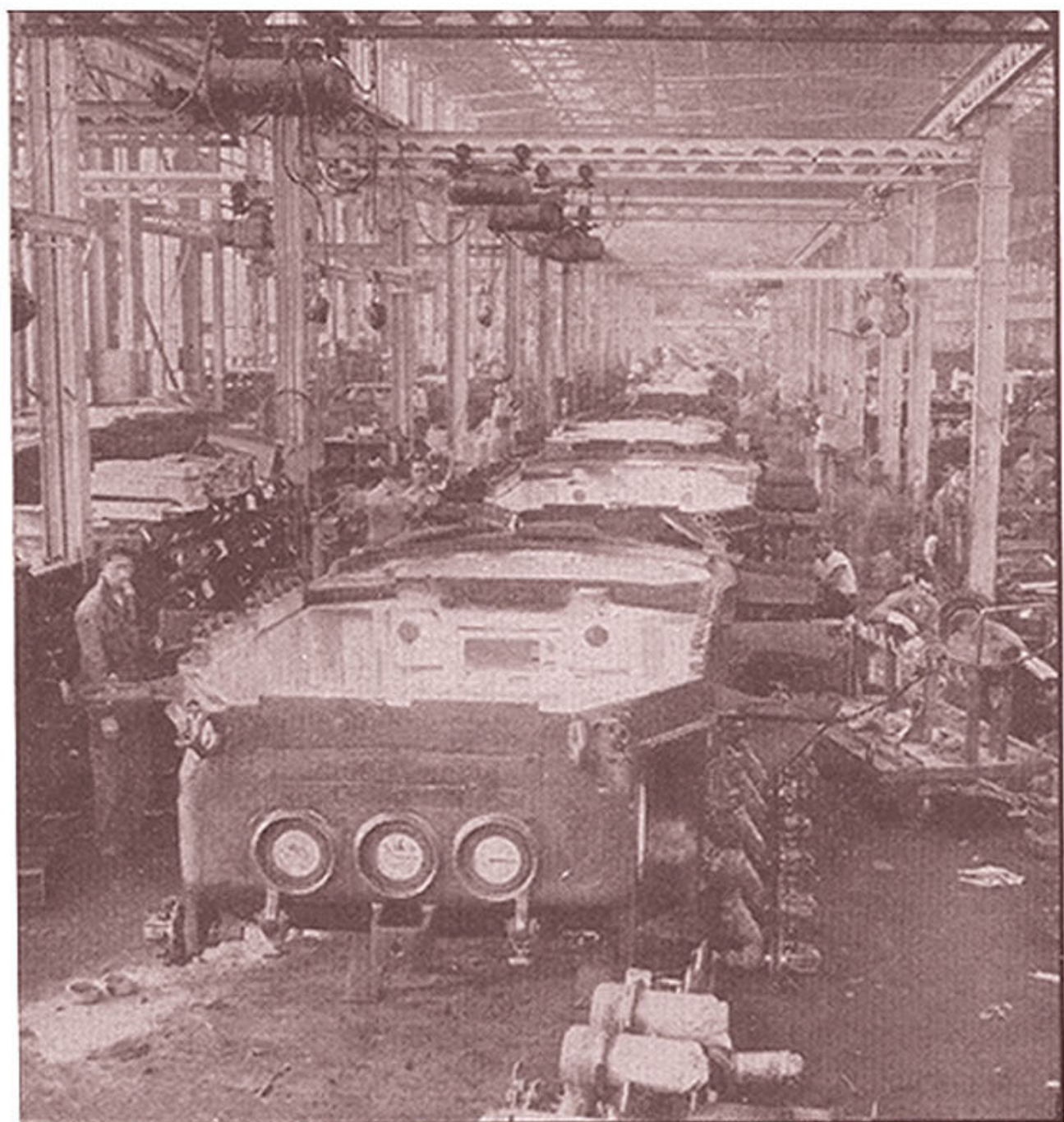
. . . or as combination supply trucks and supporting weapons for attacking troops.

Heavy Weapons Enter the Korean War

New Tank Armada? The Army won't say how many new tanks, lights and mediums, it is making today. The Detroit Arsenal employs more than 6,500 people, has one assembly line in operation on two eight-hour shifts each day. Some idea of production rate can be drawn from the fact that if (and it's a big *if*) all parts were ready to be assembled, it would take three days to put one tank together. This is a rough guess, at best, since the number of tanks in the assembly line on any given day is also secret. Perhaps a better estimate of the probable U.S. tank strength within a year comes from the allocation of \$500 million of the defense budget to tank construction. The average tank costs between \$200,000 and \$250,000. (The size of the tank makes little difference in the final cost, since parts are often interchangeable.) Thus, Americans can look forward to between 1,500 and 2,000 new light and medium tanks by the end of 1951.



Land dreadnaught. *Improved Patton tanks roll off one assembly line today;*



in 18 months six similar lines will be operating.

Heavy Weapons Enter the Korean War

To this estimate can be added another possible 3,000 light, medium and heavy tanks, to be completed within the next 24 months. Defense planners hope to earmark \$1.5 billion of the next two years' appropriations for all types of armored vehicles. Of this about \$1 billion will be spent on tanks. By then, at least six major auto and truck manufacturers will have finished converting car assembly lines to tank lines.

Dispersal. To provide maximum protection against possible atom bomb attacks and to apportion the vast amounts of arms money so as to avoid disrupting any one area's economy, Ordnance experts have divided the country into five sections: (1) Eastern seaboard, New England and Middle Atlantic states; (2) from Rochester, N.Y., west to Detroit and south to Huntington, W.Va.; (3) Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis; (4) Southern, from Atlanta to Houston and north to Nashville, and (5) Far West, from Los Angeles to Seattle.

In these regions at least 600 subcontractors and countless sub-subcontractors, in addition to the six major producers, will have a hand in creating the new tank armada.

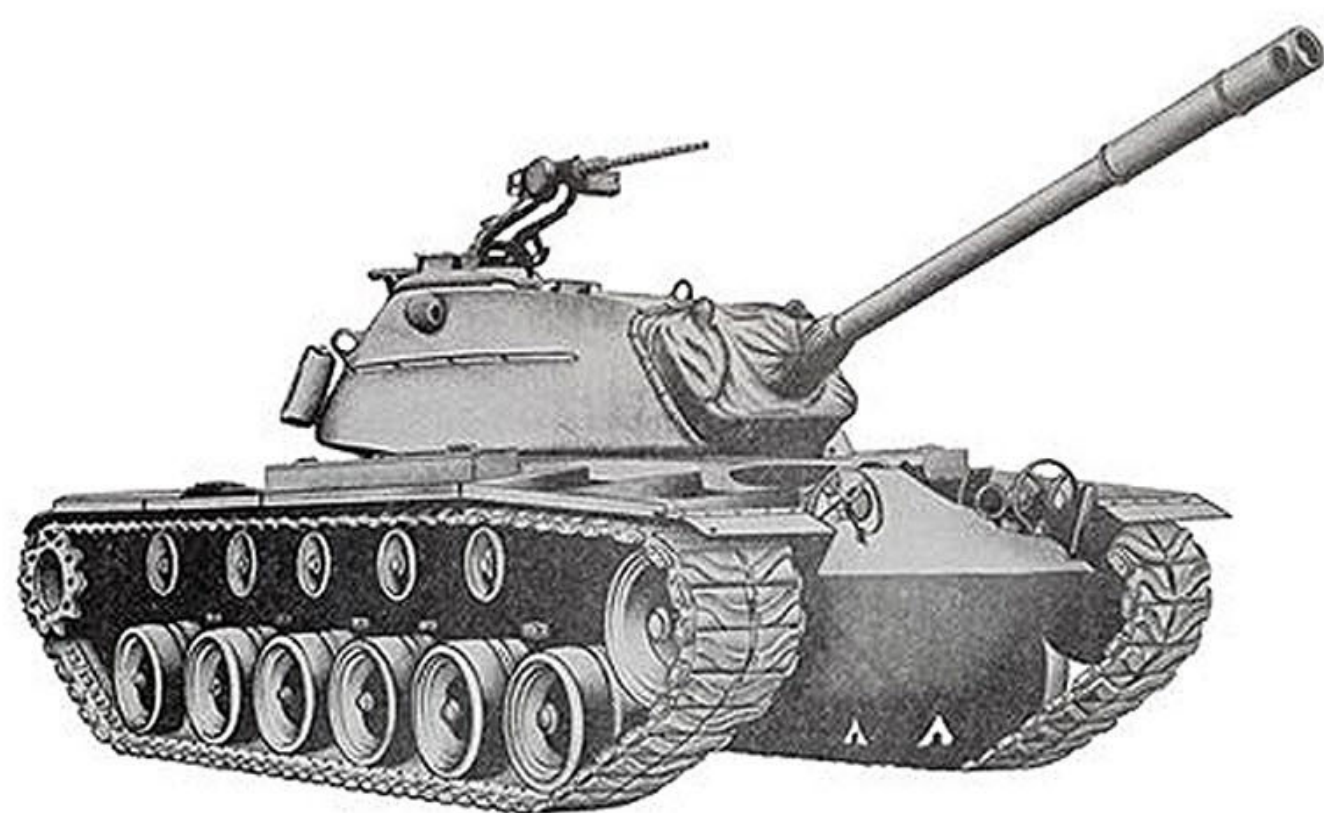
Until the United Nations forces acquire heavy tanks to pit against the Reds (the U.S. now has no heavy tanks, will probably not have any for combat until January 1952) it is likely that the tactics developed by General Patton in World War II will come back into play. Patton would simply assign a swarm of lights to hit the heavy German Tigers from every possible angle. With the flow of U.S. lights and mediums to Korean battle areas steadily increasing, U.S. commanders will pick up where Patton left off, ganging up on the Red heavies.

Destroyers on Land. Actually, there has been little change in tank tactics except for a few wider field uses traceable to mechanical improvements. Tanks are still primarily assault weapons, serving much the same purpose on land as destroyers do at sea during an amphibious landing: spearheading the attack.

So long as any enemy fights with tanks—and so long as the best antitank weapon is a tank—it is comforting that thus far, except for the early days of unpreparedness, U.S. tanks have bested the Reds in nearly every tank battle. As Maj. Gen. E. L. Ford, Army Chief of

Heavy Weapons Enter the Korean War

Ordnance, puts it: "If the outcome of this war, or any war, depended solely on tanks, Americans need never fear defeat."



Pathfinder

OCTOBER 4, 1950

p. 20

OldMagazineArticles.com