Praying for Slack: A Marine Corps Tank Commander in Viet Nam by Robert E. Peavey

Two different wars were fought in Vietnam, the jungle-and-booby-trap one down south, and the WWII-like one up on the DMZ. I was one of a handful whose Vietnam tour was evenly split between the First and Third Marine Divisions, and saw, firsthand, the difference 170 miles could make during the wars bloodiest year. Corporal Robert Peavey was a tank commander in I Corps (Eye Corps) on the DMZ when LBJ ordered a bombing halt over the North. His compelling first-hand account chronicles operations just south of the Z, operations that most Vietnam War histories have completely ignored. Peavey offers detailed, understandable explanations of combat strategy, strengths and shortcomings of standard-issue armament, and inter-service rivalries.

My Personal Review:
Not many people think of tanks in Vietnam. We sent over 600 of these M-48 Patton tanks during the Vietnam War. They were very valued for not only the firepower, but for the protection against RPG's and mines (sound familiar?) and ability for "jungle busting". The Sheridan tanks (M-551) and Armored Personnel Carriers (M-113's) were not so well liked.

Robert Peavey was a gunner, later Tank Commander in 1968-69. His observations and experiences are excellent. The absolute need for infantry & tank coordination are explained here, many tactical lessons that are still invaluable today, whether in urban, forest or open terrain.

There's humor, sorrow, incredible true stories about tankers fighting the heat, enemy and our own government (Johnson's cease fire rightly is criticized). A few maps and color photos help the reader understand the geography and tanker's life.
Anyone who wants a great picture into the Vietnam War, armored history, and infantry should read this. Should be required reading at Armor and Infantry school. Also has a lot of important leader lessons - setting the example being one of the best. Definitely recommended. I've been waiting a long time to pick this one up, very glad I did.

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