FAST-VAL: Case Study of an Attack by A Marine Platoon on an NVA Company near Kin (1) South of Da Nang

K. K. Weaver and S. G. Spring

A Report prepared for

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PROJECT RAND
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Rand
SANTA MONICA, CA. 90406
PREFACE

The Forward Air Strike Evaluation Model, Phase II (FAST-VAL II), was developed at Rand to measure the influence of close-air support upon the outcome of ground engagements of regimental size or smaller. This two-sided simulation model measures the contribution of artillery, mortars, and small arms as well as air-delivered weapons upon the outcome of a fire fight. This research is intended to assist the Air Force in selecting weapons, vehicles, and operational techniques for the close-air-support mission.

This report describes one of a series of case studies used to compare the results of FAST-VAL simulations of small-unit (company-size) actions in Vietnam with actual combat results. Data for this series of case studies came from interviews with fire-fight participants and from official records. The interviews with military personnel were conducted in Okinawa and Vietnam during March and April 1969 under joint Air Force-Marine Corps sponsorship.

These comparisons are the basis for the critical evaluation of the FAST-VAL model and its parameters presented in R-810-PR, FAST-VAL: Summary Report on the Comparison of Model with Combat Results (Infantry Fire-Fight Outcomes and Effectiveness of Small Arms, Bombs, Artillery, and Mortar Rounds).

This report describes an attack by a U.S. Marine Corps platoon against a North Vietnamese Army unit dug in along a treeline and compares the results of a FAST-VAL simulation of the attack with the combat results.

* * * * * * * * *

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of the U.S. Marine Corps in providing us information that made this study possible. The results and conclusions we have drawn, however, should not be interpreted as reflecting the official opinion or policy of the U.S. Marine Corps.

A bibliography of related FAST-VAL reports appears on the following pages.
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RELATED FAST-VAL REPORTS


R-817-PR  Harris, K., and S. G. Spring, FAST-VAL Expected Casualties from Small-Arms Fire (U), The Rand Corporation, November 1971 (Confidential).


R-821-PR  Weaver, K. K., and S. G. Spring, FAST-VAL: Case Study of an Attack by a Marine Platoon on an NVA Company Near Kim (1) South of Da Nang (U), The Rand Corporation, November 1971 (Secret).

R-822-PR  Lind, J. R., S. G. Spring, and K. Harris, FAST-VAL: Case Study of a Series of Mortar Attacks on a Marine Infantry Company at LZ Margo, 16 and 17 September 1968 (U), The Rand Corporation, November 1971 (Secret).


SUMMARY

This report compares the results of a FAST-VAL II* simulation of an actual fire fight with the results of the fire fight itself. The engagement studied is an attack by a Marine infantry platoon (37 troops) on a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) unit occupying a treeline. The NVA unit was first estimated as a squad, but as the engagement progressed, the estimate of its size was raised to that of a company. The Marines used only small arms; the NVA employed small arms and mortars. Data for the comparison were developed from an interview with the officer in command of the Marine platoon.

Computed Marine casualties, as a percentage of initial Marine strength, differed from reported casualties by from 1.8 percent to 10.6 percent, depending on assumptions made concerning the mixture of incoming NVA rounds. Based on a simple statistical test, these differences appear not to be significant. On this basis, FAST-VAL simulations succeeded in computing the casualty outcome of this engagement realistically.

The study did not come to a significant finding on the influence of casualties on unit performance, since the Marine platoon was ordered to withdraw before casualties became a consideration.

FAST-VAL outputs reflected all significant aspects of the actual combat action simulated. Thus, the case study tends to corroborate the realism of FAST-VAL simulations.

*FAST-VAL II is a set of mathematical models designed to compute the expected casualties from rifle, machine-gun, mortar, artillery, and air munitions; and to estimate the effect of casualties on the performance of engaged ground units.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The excellent advice and assistance of K. Harris and J. R. Lind is gratefully acknowledged.
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I. INTRODUCTION

A major mission of the U.S. Air Force is close support of ground forces in battle. This is a complex mission, conducted in concert with ground units, generally under ground-force rules and directed toward augmenting ground weapon systems. Rand's objective in the FAST-VAL project has been to provide an analytic aid to the selection of tactics, techniques, vehicles, and munitions for this mission.

The FAST-VAL model has been used to examine in detail the interaction of men and weapons on the battlefield. In the earlier phases of this study, hypothetical combat situation scenarios were used. Highly detailed, confirmed descriptions of actual engagements of small units--our area of current primary interest--were not available. The situation changed in the spring of 1967. While the first battle of Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, was being fought in April and May of that year, the U.S. Marine Corps recorded the details of the action in depth and, at Rand's request, made the records available for use in Rand tactical studies.

Both the firing records of the artillery batteries supporting the Marine infantrymen and a fine-grained after-action report prepared by the Marine infantry regiment involved in the fighting were provided. In addition to providing records, the Marine Corps allowed Rand to interview key participants in the Khe Sanh fight. Most significantly, members of the study group were able several times to interview the infantry company commander in that part of the battle of prime interest to the analysis. The application of artillery was discussed with both the forward observer and the commander of the artillery units delivering the supporting fires. The Combat Activities (COACT) File of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided data on the sorties flown and the air-delivered munitions used during the battle.

A FAST-VAL II simulation was made of one portion of this first battle for Khe Sanh. The simulation results in terms of casualties suffered by the Marines were quite similar to those given in the after-action report and described in the interviews. Additionally, unit reaction to casualties bore close resemblance to the reaction
implied by the model. These results suggested quite strongly that the FAST-VAL methods of evaluating weapons effects and their influence on unit performance and battle outcome are realistic and that the FAST-VAL methodology warranted additional case study examination.

To facilitate further investigations, the Air Force entered into a joint agreement with the Marine Corps that enabled members of the FAST-VAL study group to visit South Vietnam and the Pacific theater to interview military personnel with recent battle experience and to gather data on artillery battery fire and air munition deliveries. In March and April 1969, 23 Marine Corps officers were interviewed in Okinawa and South Vietnam on 16 different combat actions, and 3 U.S. Army officers were interviewed on 3 engagements.

The scenario for this report is taken from an interview with a Marine officer, concerning an attack by a Marine infantry platoon on a reduced-strength NVA company.
II. THE TACTICAL SITUATION

In late November and early December 1968, the Meade River operation, a multibattalion Marine maneuver, took place several kilometers south of Da Nang, South Vietnam (see Fig. 1). The Marines were to set a cordon around an area several kilometers on a side and, sweeping in from four directions, destroy North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) forces en route or drive them into a "pocket" for destruction or capture. The 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment was on the southern side of the cordon and remained generally in place from 20 November, the day it was helilifted into position, until it started sweeping northward on 29 November. During this period, battalion units were stretched out along Route 4 with the Battalion Command Post just west of the junction of Route 4 and the Suoi Co Ca River (see Fig. 2).

All battalion units were subjected to sniper and mortar fires from both the north and the south, but the Battalion Command Post received particularly heavy fire. By 27 November it was decided that the Command Post security should be increased, so the 1st and 2d platoons of Company L were moved from their positions east of the Suoi Co Ca bridge to positions on the southern boundary of the Command Post perimeter. The platoons were sited just north of a stream flowing eastward into the Suoi Co Ca (see Fig. 3).

Sniper fire coming from tree clumps circling the Command Post on the south at a range of about 600 meters was the principal concern. Since attempts to check out that area with squad-size forces on 27 November and very early the following day failed, the task was given to 1st platoon, Company L. Starting at daybreak on 28 November, prior to the platoon's departure on its mission, the treeline was hit by U.S. air-delivered supporting fire. Three flights of fixed-wing aircraft delivered napalm and bombs into the area.

The platoon moved out at about 0800 hours, 28 November, using the stream bed as the route of its approach march (see Fig. 4). The platoon, less the 3d squad, was to advance to the point in the stream bed closest to the treeline, then enter and clear the treeline. The 3d squad was to drop off en route and set up a base of fire south of the
Fig. 1—Location of the Meade River Operation
Fig. 2—Engagement area
Fig. 3—Initial deployment and movement of 1st Platoon, Company L
Fig. 4—Troop movement and deployment, 28 November
stream bed to cover the platoon's movement from that point to the treeline.

The 3d squad, with a machine gun attached, left the shelter of the stream bed and had advanced to within 40 or 50 meters of the treeline when it was hit by automatic weapons from the southeast. The platoon sergeant was with the squad and was severely wounded in the knee by the first bursts of enemy fire. Although caught in the open with little cover other than the high grass, squad riflemen and the machine gunner returned the fire. The exchange started at about 1300 hours.

The remainder of the platoon was still in the stream bed when the 3d squad came under fire. Almost simultaneously with the start of that exchange, contact between the platoon and the squad was lost. Investigating the situation, members of the 1st and 2d squads climbed up the creek bank, and as they did so they too came under fire. The squad leader of the forward squad, the 1st squad, was killed instantly and his radio operator was severely wounded. Riflemen and the machine gunner took up positions along the crest of the creek bank and fired into the treeline. By this time, enemy hand grenades and rocket-projected grenades (RPGs) were landing among the Marines, who reinforced their small-arms fires with light assault weapons (LAWs).

The platoon commander regained contact with the 3d squad about 1320 hours, and the squad was ordered to rejoin the platoon in the creek bed. By this time, it was apparent that they were being hit from two directions by machine-gun fire and that the plan of attack had to be changed. Additionally, the platoon commander was sure that the enemy strength was greater than his original estimate of a squad. He perceived that two, and perhaps three, machine guns were firing at him, and mortar rounds were also coming in by this time, which suggested strongly that he was facing a full company.

After assessing his situation and evaluating the probable size of the enemy force, the platoon commander radioed his company headquarters and was ordered to pull back.

Getting the 3d squad back to the shelter of the stream bed posed a very knotty problem. The squad was too close to the enemy
for supporting fires—mortars, artillery, or close air support—to be used; and, with platoon weapons alone, it was extremely difficult to establish the level of fire superiority needed to cover the squad's withdrawal. With the 1st squad providing covering fire from the creek bank, the 2d squad maneuvered part way out to the 3d squad, and under cover of the joint fires of all three squads, everyone, including the wounded, were withdrawn into the creek bed by 1400 or 1430 hours. The platoon was back in the company perimeter by 1530 hours.

This study is confined to the actions of the 1st platoon, Company L, between the first contact with the enemy at about 1300 hours and its withdrawal into the creek bed.
III. SIMULATION OF THE ENGAGEMENT

TYPE OF DATA REQUIRED

Data for the FAST-VAL simulation model falls into two general categories: (1) parameter values needed for evaluating casualty and casualty-related influences on unit performance, and (2) data required for computing casualties produced by ground weapon fires and, where applicable, air munitions. As a general rule, data of the first type remain invariant from simulation to simulation, but they may be changed for special cases. Data in the second category must be extracted from the context of the specific encounter. These data include the weapons fired, the target or targets, the number of rounds fired, and the range. For area weapons—artillery, mortars, and air munitions—the fusing and delivery mode (height of burst, etc.) must be specified as well. Some supplementary information may be needed also. For instance, since FAST-VAL permits a targeted man to change his primary (upper) posture for a safer (lower) posture when he comes under fire, descriptive inputs about these two postures are required. A rifleman's upper posture in a hasty defensive position might be standing in an open foxhole; his lower posture, crouching in the same foxhole. Attacks on materiel (machine guns, mortars, artillery pieces, etc.) are simpler to simulate than attacks on personnel, since equipment postures, for the most part, remain unchanged throughout the engagement. And finally, the expected casualties per unit of fire (artillery or mortar round, aerial bomb, or small-arms burst) based on the range, the delivery mode, the target, and the target posture must be determined by preliminary calculations (see Appendices B and C) and supplied to the model as inputs.

INPUT DATA

The only source of information for the present simulation was the interview with the platoon commander, Lt. H. B. Overton. Official reports, as far as could be discovered, did not cover the actions of this platoon or identify its losses in this action. The interview with Lt. Overton is reproduced in Appendix D.
Personnel and Weapons. The organizational structures of the Marine platoon and the NVA company used in the simulation are shown in Figs. 5 and 6. The personnel and weapons in each are given in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Marine 1st Platoon, Company L</th>
<th>NVA Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riflemen</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew members and support personnel</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit weapons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine guns</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenade launchers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAWs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60mm mortars</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[a^a\] Number of RPG launchers unknown.

The relative positions of personnel and equipment within the deployment shown in Fig. 4 are input to the model by means outlined in Ref. 2.

Estimates of Small-Arms Fires During the Engagement, 1300 to 1400 or 1430 Hours. The engagement breaks into two phases, distinguished primarily by the enemy's rate of fire. The first phase extended from 1300 hours, the time of initial contact, to 1308 hours. During these 8 minutes the Marines were under intense rifle and automatic-weapons fire, their advance was stopped, and they deployed for the fire fight.

The second phase lasted for about an hour or an hour and a half--from 1308 hours until 1400 or 1430 hours. During this phase, enemy fire was much reduced, NVA mortar rounds fell in and around the Marine position, the platoon was ordered to withdraw by company headquarters, and the 3d squad was withdrawn into the creek bed.

Estimated rates of NVA small-arms fire in each phase are summarized in Table 2. These estimates, gathered from the interview, show a range of firing rates.
Fig. 5—Organization of 1st Platoon, Company L, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment
Fig. 6—Organization of NVA Company
Table 2
ESTIMATED RATES OF NVA SMALL-ARMS FIRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Firing Rate (total rds/min)</th>
<th>Rifles</th>
<th>Machine Guns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target: Marine 1st and 2d Squads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1300 - 1308</td>
<td>100 - 150</td>
<td>35 - 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1308 - 1400/1430</td>
<td>40 - 60</td>
<td>15 - 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target: Marine 3d Squad</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1300 - 1308</td>
<td>20 - 30</td>
<td>8 - 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1308 - 1400/1430</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 100 rounds per minute was estimated from combined rifle and machine-gun fire. It was presumed that the division was similar to that received by the 1st and 2d squads, i.e., 77 rifle rounds and 23 machine-gun rounds.

The platoon commander, Lt. Overton, estimated that 70 percent of his riflemen fired and those who fired delivered between 140 and 160 rounds during the engagement. He judged that each of his machine guns fired at least 3500 rounds.

Range of Small-Arms Exchange. Lt. Overton said that the fight was in close--"no more than 40, 50 meters at the most." A review of his sketches suggests that he was referring to the position of his most forward elements; the majority of his men appear to be more than 50 meters from the treeline, and some seem to be more than 100 meters away. In the simulation, 75 meters was used as the average range for the exchange of fires.

Postures During Small-Arms Exchange. In Lt. Overton's opinion, the NVA were in covered foxholes or the equivalent during the engagement. He did not see the positions but based his evaluation on the fact that the unit had survived the preparation fires delivered by air prior to the attack and the fires of his platoon as well. For the simulation, it was presumed that the NVA vulnerability to small-arms fire was one-half that of troops standing in open foxholes.

*The COACT File does not contain an identifiable record of these strikes. No analytic assessment was attempted.*
The 1st and 2d squads of the Marine platoon were firing from the crest of the creek bank; their posture was very similar to and presumed to be equivalent to standing in foxholes, in terms of vulnerability to small arms. Since we were unable to discern the time period during which a portion of the 2d squad was out of the creek bed and assisting the 3d squad in its withdrawal, no allowance was made in the simulation for this different disposition.

The 3d squad was considered to be prone in the open throughout the simulation. It was presumed that during the withdrawal—a distance of 100 to 150 meters—the troops stayed very close to the ground and presented targets little if any better than those they presented when prone.

**Expected Casualties from Small-Arms Fires.** Computed casualties for a FAST-VAL simulation are derived from "building blocks" made up of expected values for 6-round bursts. Expected casualties per unit of fire are functions of several factors—range, aiming and ballistic errors, terrain, posture of the target (protection available to targeted personnel), size of the area covered by fire, and probability of acquiring the target—which are inputs to the model. The expected casualties per 6-round burst used in this simulation are given in Appendix B.

**Estimates of Mortar Fires Between 1300 and 1430 Hours.** Between 1310 and about 1410 hours, 8 to 10 NVA 60mm mortar rounds landed in the area occupied by the 1st and 2d Marine squads, and 4 to 5 landed in the area of the 3d squad. The firing was fairly well distributed over the whole period. The first few rounds in the area of the 1st and 2d squads landed 60 to 70 meters from the Marines, but the later ones were walked in to about 15 or 20 meters. In fact, it appeared that 4 or 5 landed "on" the 1st squad. All the rounds fired at the 3d squad were described as "pretty close."

No mortar fires were delivered by the Marines.

**Postures During Mortar Fires.** Mortar rounds striking in the vicinity of the 1st and 2d Marine squads landed behind the troops. Since the squad members were sprawled against the creek bank firing their weapons, their posture was judged to be equivalent to prone.
Marines in the 3d squad were prone.

**Expected Casualties from Mortar Fires.** Casualties from explosive ordnance are calculated in the manner outlined in Ref. 3. Expected casualties from these munitions are not a direct input to the model (as are the expected casualties per unit of point-target munition fire such as small arms). Instead, these casualties are calculated as a part of the computing routine.

**RESULTS**

A series of simulations were run to compute the expected casualties for significant variations in reported fires. (The narrow range of estimated rounds fired per Marine rifleman was considered to be nonsignificant). Computed Marine casualties are shown in Table 3 and in Fig. 7. Computed NVA casualties are included only to complete the record. There was no estimate of NVA casualties on which to base a comparison.

**Reported Casualties.** Lt. Overton recalled that his platoon took 7 casualties—3 from small-arms fire, 1 from grenade fragments, and 3 from mortar fire. He was unable to provide any information on NVA casualties.

**Comparison of Reported Marine Casualties with Computed Casualties.** The computed casualties are those resulting from small arms and mortar rounds; grenade casualties were not simulated. Therefore, the comparison is based on the 6 casualties reportedly resulting from mortar and small-arms fires. These 6 casualties represent 16.2 percent of the initial Marine strength of 37. Computed casualties ranged from 6.69 to 9.86, or between 18 and 26.8 percent of initial Marine strength. The greatest percentage difference between computed and reported casualties is 10.6.

To evaluate the significance of the spread between reported and computed casualties, the statistical test described in Appendix A was applied. The normalized difference between the reported and the 6.69 computed casualties is 0.295, while that for the 9.86 computed casualties is 1.6. Given a significance threshold of 2, the computed casualties may thus be regarded as realistic.
FAST-VAL computed casualties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NVA firing rate (rds/min)</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rifles</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine guns</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifles</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine guns</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Range of reported mortar rounds received
- ----- Reported casualties

Engagement time = 1 1/2 hours
(Phase 1 = 8 min; Phase 2 = 82 min)

Small-arms rounds received =
12,000
8,200

Engagement time = 1 hour
(Phase 1 = 8 min; Phase 2 = 52 min)

Small-arms rounds received =
8,500
6,000

Fig. 7 — U.S. casualties during the attack
Table 3
COMPUTED MARINE CASUALTIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NVA Rates of Fire (rds/min)</th>
<th>Mortars</th>
<th>Rifles</th>
<th>Machine Guns</th>
<th>Marine Casualties</th>
<th>NVA Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>3.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Engagement = 1 hour&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>3.93</td>
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<tr>
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<td>...</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>4.02</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td>3.96</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>3.94</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>4.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Engagement = 1½ hours&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>3.89</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Phase 1 = 8 minutes; phase 2 = 52 minutes. Higher firing rate in each case refers to phase 1.

<sup>b</sup>Inputs pertaining to mortar rounds were outside the reported range of fires.

<sup>c</sup>Phase 1 = 8 minutes; phase 2 = 82 minutes. Higher firing rate in each case refers to phase 1.

The test band for reported casualties, centered about FAST-VAL midpoint values, is shown in Fig. 8 for the reported upper and lower estimates of rounds received. All computed casualties fall within this band. So, the computed casualties are not significantly different from those reported.
Comparison of Reported and Simulated Unit Performance. The Marine platoon was ordered to withdraw before casualties became crucial. Since FAST-VAL evaluation of a unit's capacity to maintain an attack is based on casualties, the study failed to shed any light as to the validity of the parameters used in the model.
IV. CONCLUSIONS

In this case study, we primarily compared FAST-VAL computed small-arms and mortar casualties with those reported in actual combat. Computed Marine casualties, as a percentage of initial Marine strength, differed from reported casualties by from 1.8 percent to 10.6 percent, depending on assumptions made concerning the mixture of incoming NVA rounds. Based on a simple statistical test, these differences appeared not to be significant. On this basis, FAST-VAL simulations succeeded in reproducing the casualty outcome of this engagement realistically.

A second purpose of the case study was to compare the effect of casualties on unit performance in an actual fire fight with the effect predicted by FAST-VAL. Since the engagement was terminated by a command decision and the Marine platoon was ordered to withdraw before casualties became crucial, this second purpose could not be realized.
Appendix A

RULE-OF-THUMB STATISTICAL TEST

To judge the significance of the difference between reported and
computed casualties, the rule-of-thumb statistical test outlined below
was applied.*

1. An estimated standard deviation of the reported casualties,
   \( C_r \), is calculated, viz.,

   \[
   \text{S.D. of } C_r = \left[ N \times p(1 - p) \right]^{\frac{1}{2}}
   \]

   where \( N \) = initial troop strength
   \( C_r \) = reported casualties
   \( C_f \) = FAST-VAL computed casualties
   \( p \) = FAST-VAL computed casualty fraction = \( C_f / N \)

2. Next, the absolute value of the difference between reported and
   computed casualties is calculated. This difference is divided by the
   standard deviation of the reported casualties to obtain the "normalized"
   difference,

   \[
   \frac{(C_r - C_f)}{\left[ N \times p(1 - p) \right]^{\frac{1}{2}}}
   \]

3. A value of 2 for the normalized difference is chosen as the
   threshold of significance.

4. As a corollary to (3), reported casualties, \( C_r \), are not signifi-
   cantly different from calculated casualties, \( C_f \), if they fall within
   the band \( C_r = Np \pm 2 \sqrt{(Npq)} = C_f \pm 2 \sqrt{(Npq)} \)

   where \( q = 1 - (C_f / N) \)

*This test is described in detail in Ref. 4.
Appendix B
CALCULATING EXPECTED CASUALTIES FROM SMALL-ARMS FIRES

During the engagement considered in this study, small-arms fires were exchanged at an average range of 75 meters. As was noted earlier, some Marines were within 40 to 50 meters of the objective, while others were 100 meters or more away. Marine machine guns were mounted on bipods, and it was presumed that NVA machine guns had the same posture.

All weapons were presumed to fire 6-round bursts, and the trajectory of the rounds was taken to be that of the U.S. 7.62mm machine gun. (5) Assumptions regarding muzzle heights, ballistic errors, and aiming errors are given in Table 4.

The target for all weapons was assumed to be an area 5 meters wide and 9 meters deep, containing one man. The vulnerable area of the man within the target area is a function of range, the approach angle of the round, the muzzle height of the weapon when fired, and the man's assumed posture.

Individual Marines were in substantially the same posture throughout the engagement, but the posture was not uniform throughout the unit. With relatively minor exceptions, the members of the 3d squad and the accompanying machine-gun crew were prone during the fight, while the posture of the remainder of the platoon, as far as vulnerability to small-arms fire was concerned, approximated that of standing in an open foxhole.

The NVA were presumed to occupy covered foxholes during the encounter. Their vulnerability to small arms was equated at half that of standing in an open foxhole.

Expected casualties per 6-round burst are given in Table 5.
Table 4
SMALL-ARMS WEAPONS CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Posture</th>
<th>Muzzle Height (in.)</th>
<th>Ballistic Error (mils)</th>
<th>Aiming Error (mils)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rifle</td>
<td>Prone\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine gun</td>
<td>Bipod mount</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marine Small-Arms Weapons

NVA Small-Arms Weapons

\textsuperscript{a} Although some Marines were partially protected by the creek bank and their vulnerability was approximately equivalent to that of standing in foxholes, their firing positions were considered equivalent to prone.

Table 5
EXPECTED CASUALTIES PER 6-ROUND SMALL-ARMS BURST
(Range = 75 meters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Expected Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marines Firing on NVA Targets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifle</td>
<td>Troops with half the vulnerability of standing in foxholes</td>
<td>0.00060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine gun</td>
<td>Troops with half the vulnerability of standing in foxholes</td>
<td>0.00643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NVA Firing on Marine Targets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifle</td>
<td>Troops with vulnerability of standing in foxholes</td>
<td>0.00346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifle</td>
<td>Troops prone in the open</td>
<td>0.00383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine gun</td>
<td>Troops with vulnerability of standing in foxholes</td>
<td>0.01485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine gun</td>
<td>Troops prone in the open</td>
<td>0.02231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

EXPECTED DAMAGE PATTERNS FOR MORTARS

- The probability of damage to a target, at the aim point, or at points nearby, is computed for each target type with specified target vulnerability criteria, weapon delivery conditions, and warhead fragmentation data and blast characteristics.

- In this appendix, the target types for the simulation are defined from interview data. The method of computing target vulnerable areas is detailed, target vulnerability assessments are outlined, and delivery conditions for mortars are specified. Table 6 lists computed damage patterns and lethal-area patterns.

TARGET DEFINITION

- FAST-VAL permits the degree of protection available to troops to vary. Casualty probabilities are calculated for each protection level for each weapon. Among the several FAST-VAL standard postures are (1) standing, (2) prone, and (3) standing in open foxholes. The FAST-VAL open foxhole is 2 by 4 feet, and 4 feet deep.

- In the case study examined in this report, Marines were hit by mortars while they were in positions offering very little protection. The average posture for individual Marines was evaluated as equivalent to prone.

TARGET VULNERABILITY CRITERIA

- Target postures are used in the development of damage probabilities caused by mortar fire in the following manner. Standing men may become casualties from fragments. The BRL* 5-minute battlefield casualty cover function for standing men on "average" terrain is presumed to apply. Prone men may become casualties from fragments. The BRL 5-minute battlefield casualty cover function for prone men on "average" terrain is presumed to apply. Men standing in foxholes may

---

*Ballistic Research Laboratory, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.
become casualties from fragments. The BRL 5-minute battlefield cover
function for a man standing in a one-man foxhole in flat terrain is as-
sumed to apply.

WEAPON DELIVERY CONDITIONS

A set of detailed assumptions on delivery and ballistic error
and weapon spacings (for multiple weapons per volley) is made for each
munition. Firing-table data used for mortars are given in Table 6.

DAMAGE PATTERN ASSUMPTIONS

Expected Damage. Expected damage to a target from fragment-
ing weapons at the weapon detonation point or nearby is computed using
a modified version of Picatinny Arsenal's Full Spray model. The expected
damage to a target at the volley aim point and all other points within
the pattern is then computed using the delivery accuracies and Full
Spray results in the FAST-VAL Target Coverage model. The sets of
constants necessary for computation of damage functions for each tar-
get posture used in this study are detailed in Table 6.

Damage Functions. The developed damage functions are presented
(in numerical order) in a so-called "people print" format. The "people
print" is a matrix of damage to a target located in each 100-x 100-foot
square. For example, a 60mm mortar round fired at a range of 150 meters
has a pattern lethal area of 1606.20 square feet when fired against a
prone man. The \( P_K \) against a man prone at a pattern aim point \( X = 0,\)
\( Y = 0 \) is 0.10419. Downrange, along the round's flight path at \( X = 100 \)
and \( Y = 0 \), the \( P_K \) is 0.00774. At a point to the side of the aim point
at \( X = 0 \) and \( Y = 100 \), the \( P_K \) is 0.00950.
Table 6
WEAPON DATA FOR SINGLE-SHELL 60mm MORTAR ROUNDS

a. Lethal Areas for Typical Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lethal Area (sq ft)</th>
<th>Prone Men</th>
<th>Men Standing in Foxholes</th>
<th>Standing Men</th>
<th>Machine Gun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1606.20</td>
<td>868.70</td>
<td>4323.46</td>
<td>170.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Single-Shell Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range, meters</td>
<td>150.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drag factor</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape factor</td>
<td>0.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height of burst, ft</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angle of fall, deg</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velocity of burst, f/sec</td>
<td>170.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight of explosive, lb</td>
<td>2.90</td>
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</table>

c. Attack/Volley Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pattern of definition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range (x)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spacing between aim points, ft</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of aim points</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deflection (y)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim-point offset, ft</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shells/bombs at aim point</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballistic error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range (σx), ft</td>
<td>23.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deflection (σx), ft</td>
<td>5.869</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pattern aim error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range (REP), ft</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deflection (DEP), ft</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target definition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range (σx), ft</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deflection (σy), ft</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (continued)

d. Distribution of $P_X$'s Around the Aim Point

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prone Men</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$X$</td>
<td>$Y$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-200.0</td>
<td>0.00009</td>
<td>0.00004</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.00001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.00018</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
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<td>0.00001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men Standing in Foxholes</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$X$</td>
<td>$Y$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-200.0</td>
<td>0.00009</td>
<td>0.00004</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standing Men</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$X$</td>
<td>$Y$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>-300.0</td>
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<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
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<td>0.00000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.00003</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.03919</td>
<td>0.00099</td>
<td>0.00006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.01901</td>
<td>0.00435</td>
<td>0.00027</td>
<td>0.00003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>0.00006</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Machine Gun</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$X$</td>
<td>$Y$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-200.0</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>-100.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

INTERVIEW WITH 1ST LT. H. B. OVERTON, USMC

This appendix presents a transcription of a taped interview with 1st Lt. H. B. Overton, USMC, conducted by K. Harris and S. Spring, both of The Rand Corporation, in Okinawa on 29 March 1969. Harris is identified as A, Overton as B, and Spring as C.

Sketches of troop and weapon deployments drawn by Lt. Overton are reproduced at the end of the interview. Map references are taken from map sheet 6640 IV, scale 1:50,000, Army Map Service stock No. L701466404.

The text of this interview is assigned the overall classification of Confidential, Group 4, since it reveals detailed information concerning friendly combat casualties. In the interest of simplicity and clarity, no attempt has been made to separately classify each question and answer.
A. This tape records an interview with Lt. H. B. Overton, United States Marine Corps. The interview covers the operation of his platoon, 1st Platoon, Company L, 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, on 1 December 1968.

B. The operation, I think, was initially started on the 20th of November, and my battalion, 3/5, was supposed to set up the southern portion of a large cordon and we were going to take from the railroad berm all the way over to the Korean compound.

C. Would you read the map coordinate?

B. Yes, sir. Well, the compound was about 019571.

C. Could you give us the other coordinate where you started at the railroad bridge, too?

B. Yes, sir. I think the battalion left flank would have been about 994578, and our right flank would have been the right flank of my company, Lima, which was at the Republic of Korea (ROK) compound. I think the intelligence we had was at least one battalion of NVA within the area. The cordon which was bound on the north by the river up here, Song La Tho, and on the south by Highway 4, and the railroad tracks on the left and the river on the right. And we moved out in the morning by helicopters.

A. The morning of which day?

B. This was the morning of the 20th.

A. Morning of the 20th.

B. I think we left about around 0830 or 0900. And they choppered us up in waves, where a whole platoon would be lifted at once from each company, and they were lifting two battalions at the same time. I think from An Hoa it was 2/5 that they lifted along with 3/5. My platoon had that second wave.

. . . . . .

My platoon was in the second wave of helicopters and it took a while for the first wave to get back. We were all expecting them back a little sooner so evidently they figured out we were taking fire. So
we loaded up on the second wave of choppers and we got over an area below Route 4, about due south, on the southern side of the Song Ky Lam River. And we started taking fire there in the helicopter I was in.

A. Where would it be then? Could you give a coordinate?

B. I think the coordinates would have been about 006555, around there. And there were several rounds that came through the bottom of the chopper and it started leaking fuel, so we expected to set down in the area. We got on the north side of Highway 4, and the coordinates must have been about 015574, and we were circling to come down and we took fire again. So this was definitely a hot zone coming in there. And we set down about 018572, just to the north of the highway and just to the west of the ROK compound. And once we got on the ground there was sniper fire. We got my platoon all assembled and deployed along Route 4 there. There was a little confusion in joining up. We had elements of H. and S. on our side of the river. Initially, it was just supposed to be Lima on the right side of the bridge--the one at 013568. Once we got straightened out, we got [all joined up and everything. And we took up defensive positions along the east side of the bridge.

A. On the east side of the bridge and south of the road?

B. No, we were sitting right on the road. The road--on the map it shows a highway--is about a foot wide and a dirt path in actuality. And the Koreans were sitting in our places, so there was another confusion there. They had to move the ROKs off the highway back to their compound...and there was a little language barrier too. But once we got all squared away there and they were back in their compound, we were strung in on the bridge all the way back to the ROK compound.

.....

I think, initially, somewhere in the higher echelon, somebody had misbriefed the ROKs, or they had misinterpreted, because when we landed they were strung out in defensive positions exactly where our company was supposed to be. At this compound where they were was about
a company-size force--and, after coordinating with the company commander, they moved from the road back into their compound. I think they were actually involved in the cordon operation, but somehow their positions got confused with ours, because we were definitely supposed to be on the road there.

A. Now, were they there before Meade River started?
B. Their compound was there before Meade River started.
A. And how long had they been in the area, do you know?
C. It was more or less a permanent setup, permanent camp?
B. It was a permanent camp right in the battle area. And they didn't actually participate in any sweeps, but they did hold down a blocking position, or help us hold down a blocking position there.

From the 20th, we sat on our position of the cordon there for about, I guess, anywhere from 8 to 9 days. And, during this period of our position of the cordon, we had several fire fights--probes more than anything else. And we had incoming from the south as well as the north. I think in the initial cordon we were supposed to have all the enemy inside of our cordon.

A. So you expected them all to be north of you.
B. Yes, but they weren't! They were to the south and southwest. And we got mortars and small arms nightly. But we also got several kills nightly too, for the ones from the north were trying to get out of the cordon, and this river route that went right beneath the bridge was a good access route.

C. Would you spell the name of that river?
B. I think it's spelled S-u-o-i C-o C-a. And that's the one that runs directly beneath the bridge that we were linked up with. I want to make a correction. I think initially we had all three of our platoons to the right of the bridge. But eventually we moved one platoon to the left of the bridge and they tied in with Kilo Company, 3/5.

C. And what date did you move them to the left?
B. I think it was the first day after we set up, which would have been about the 21st. So we had the third platoon to the left of the bridge tie in with Kilo, and we had the first platoon tie in with the bridge to the right, and we went about 600 meters and then to our right
was the second platoon and they tied in with the ROKs in the ROK compound. So we didn't do anything offensive. We just sat on the road for about eight or nine days, which was our mission there anyway, being a blocking force on the southern part of the cordon. As I said before, 3/5 was the southern part of the whole cordon and while we were sitting there the rest of the units involved in the operation were sweeping towards the center. I think from the east, 2/5 and other units were sweeping towards the west, and from the west, nearest the 7th Marines sweeping toward the east, toward the railroad berm. I think the ultimate objective of the units on our right, or east, was to sweep to the river, which would eventually be the right boundary of the cordon, and the units on our west would sweep to the east and to the railroad tracks, which would be the west, or left boundary of the cordon, and the same with the...I think it was the units in the First Marines, I think it was 1/1, I'm not sure, swept south to the river along the north of us, I think it's the Song La Tho. That was the river that would eventually be the northern boundary of the cordon. So we got just about all the boundaries of the cordon finally set up. Along about the 28th of November, the battalion had been receiving mortars all along, so they had quite a bit of incoming. And they had Bravo, 1/5, attached to the battalion. They were set in, supposedly, around the battalion as security for the battalion command post. And the battalion was located at about 005567, right below there just south of the highway, I guess 566. And they had several ground attacks along with the mortars. So we hadn't had as much contact as the battalion area had, so we were moved, two platoons, down to the rear of the battalion to provide security down toward the river.

A. What were these coordinates of the new location?

B. We moved down to about 004565, just north of that little stream that runs into the main river there which is still the Suoi Co Ca. There's a branch that comes off to the left here.

C. Which companies of your battalion were present for this operation?
B. Sir, we had India Company which was the extreme left flank of the battalion and Kilo which was the center and then Bravo 1/5 was strung out along the battalion Command Post (CP), and Lima tied down the right flank. So we had India, Kilo, Lima, and Bravo 1/5 attached. Our company, Mike, didn't make the operation. They were left in An Hoa area for the security of the main supply route. To retrace a little, we had almost nightly contact for about the week or eight days we were strung along the southern portion of the cordon. And we were waiting all this time, stationary, for the other units to sweep in towards their final objectives. And the contact we had was mostly small arms and anywhere from light probes to heavy probes. It was from the north, the people trying, I think, to get out of the cordon and from the south, from the NVA trying to make a hole in the southern portion of the cordon, which was our lines, in order to let the people trapped inside, out. But I think we had several wounded in action (WIAs) but no killed in action (KIA's). And I even came up with about seven NVA confirms from these skirmishes we had nightly while we deployed along Route 4 there for the first week or so. And the way we were set up, in my platoon, we made our main lines along the road. We dug in. It was pretty hard to dig in, because there were swamps going right up to the road and the road itself was maybe 18 inches wide. So digging in in the marshes and swamps out there was pretty senseless because you'd dig your hole and it would be full of water anyway. So we tried to scrounge up lumber or tree stumps or anything else we could find, which was almost nil, and in fact, the whole operation area of Meade River was mostly swamps and under water. And we had several cases of immersion foot which took their toll too. So, I think we made off better than the enemy so far as the casualties were concerned. Along the cordon we had no KIA's that I can remember; we had mostly WIAs from small arms or fragments or hand grenades. We lost, also, a corpsman. He got his third heart, well, he got two hearts right here—we were sitting on the main supply route (MSR) upon Route 4. He got hit by a chicom the first night and the next night he got fragments from a mortar, I think it was. But after we moved across the river, to the west, we left the third platoon.
Now let me retrace a little. First of all, we called the ROKs out of the compound finally, because we found out we were stretched thinner than we could safely be, because the battalion was strung from the railroad berm all the way down to the ROK compound, I guess about three clicks. Well, actually, about three and half or four clicks because the road bends up and the CP was getting mortared there, hit with ground attacks about every night. So being stretched this thin, we wanted to provide a little better security down there. Plus, we wanted to get the ROKs to take a fair share of the cordon. So we finally got them to pull out of their compound, and I think they put up a platoon on the road, and they stretched from their compound down to the bridge where we had two platoons. So we moved the third platoon across the bridge and they tied in with Kilo Company, I believe it was. And the first and second platoons, that was my platoon and Karl Shultz's platoon, we pulled down behind the battalion CP (and I think I gave the coordinates before for the CP: 005567), just south of the road there. And we made a 180, tying in with Bravo, 1/5, and my platoon and the second platoon. And we put our lines just along the streambed there. I think we started about 004, and right along the streambed, back up around to the right to the east, to about 008565, around there. So we had the river as the southern boundary there, and it was a sort of obstacle for anyone to try to get across.

Well, after we had set up around the battalion command post, we had pretty well fixed the area where the mortars were coming from and possibly where the sniper fire was coming from, which was about, I think, the grid would be about 009563. It's at a tree line which runs about 600 meters and the tree line just about circles the battalion perimeter. So we sent a recon team out with some scout dogs. I think they all got their wacks. I don't think any of them came back. So we, in the afternoon, sent a patrol out with a squad from the second platoon and I think they got about 200 to 250 meters, just about to the tree line and they received heavy fire. Out of the ten men, I think
eight were wounded. And we knew we were going to have to go to the tree line, just a matter of time till we did.

\[ ... \]

A. Let's start where your platoon comes out.

B. Well, the same day that the squad came back from the second platoon, we knew we were going to have to send a larger force. So my platoon, the first platoon, saddled up and were going to move out toward this tree line. There were only two ways to go--either down the creekbed, or on top, in the open to the south of the creekbed--in order to get to the tree line. I'll give the coordinate of the tree line again: it was about 009563. It starts there and goes southerly and is strung out about 4000 meters. So I decided to take my platoon down the creekbed. They gave a kind of covered approach rather than go on the southern side across the rice paddy there. So we moved out in a column, my first squad up front, and my platoon CP and machine guns and the rest of my platoon in the rear. We had some newspaper photographers and writers with this particular move we made. We got down to within about 50 meters of the tree line and we had negative contact. We got to about 25 meters from the tree line--we were still in the creekbed--and received AK fire, automatic weapons fire. Right away, my first squad leader, kid by the name of Roach, and the first squad radioman both got hit. Roach was killed instantly and the radioman got hit in the shoulder real bad. He was hit by two rounds and I think Roach was hit by three rounds. And we returned fire right away. I moved one of my guns up onto the riverbank on the southern portion of my high ground. We had incoming chicos and a couple of RPGs, too. Meanwhile, I'd set a base of fire around the southern part up across the open ground, just to the south of the creekbed we were on. They had a machine gun and about eight people with them. They had contact about the same time we did. So they immediately got down and laid down a base of fire. But we couldn't maneuver because we were pinned down and we'd already taken one KIA and one WIA. Now by this time my platoon sergeant had gotten hit in the leg--he was in charge at the base of fire. They'd hit the leg and it broke his leg. So he
couldn't move; they couldn't carry him because of the low fire. So they were pinned down over there.

Meanwhile we were trying to maneuver around the flank of the tree line, but we discovered that there were portions of another force due east of us. Now we had the mouth of the creek covered and also the southern portion of the tree line. Initially, I thought it might have been anywhere from a squad to a platoon. But we had enemy machine gun fire plus, I think, small mortars coming from the southeast.

A. Would these be 60-millimeter mortars?

B. Sixty millimeter mortars. And so now they were hitting us from about three different points. So I kind of regrouped. And I think more than a platoon--maybe a company--were there because we had three enemy machine guns shooting and we had mortars, which is normally what a company carries. And my base of fire down here, they'd had WIA's and they'd been hit pretty bad. The rest of the men in my platoon in the creekbed here were running pretty low on ammo. I guess the fire fight must have lasted anywhere from 60 to 90 minutes, and it was pretty hot and heavy in there for a while. So I received instructions to pull back, but before I pulled back, I had to get my wounded out from the base of fire and there was just plain nothing as far as cover given to them. And they would try to move out, but they'd get pinned down again. So, eventually what happened, I guess, is that we put out enough fire for them to start moving. It was too close to call in arty because they were only about 10 to 15 meters, I guess, from the tree line. They had waited until they got right on top of them before they fired, which is what the NVA normally do anyway. And we received fire trying to get out WIA back and the KIA back.

(C) But, eventually, the platoon got back down the creekbed and now it was just a matter of getting the WIA's back from out in the open at the base of fire out there. So there was a platoon sergeant, hit in the leg, another WIA who was hit in the arm. We had one man over there--I put him up for the Bronze Star--who picked the platoon sergeant up and literally ran about 10 meters at a time, and fell each time; he braved all the intense fire we had coming in, got him back to the riverbed. So with that done, it was just a matter of getting the
rest of the base of fire back to the creekbed. And this took us about another hour. They could only move a few feet and they'd get incoming fire again. So the NVA had everything all zeroed in, as far as fields of fire, and the approaches to their position; they knew exactly where anybody would be able to move. And they had all these ROKs covered by fire. So we took another casualty while getting them back. So we had about five WIAS and one KIA.

So we got back to the creekbed and all the time we were putting fire on these positions up there and we started pulling back to the company perimeter. That is only about 250 meters space involved here. They'd been in that tree line all along; it was just a matter of their waiting for somebody to come out there. And they knew we were out here. So we got all the wounded back and KIAs back and next we sent out the second platoon.

The second platoon was going to try a different approach route to get to the tree line. And what it amounted to, I think, was that they lost about one WIA and, correction, one KIA and two WIAS that had to be medevaced and the three WIAS were "continue--no matter wounds." And the second platoon was going to move down the level ground to south of the creekbed on the same ground where I set my base of fire. And my platoon was going to move around to the north of the creek and set up a base of fire. So we moved out to about 008567 and started putting a base of fire on the positions, tree line. The second platoon started moving down--I think it was the southern portion of the ground just below the river there. They got to within about 150 meters of the tree line and got pinned down pretty bad there. So the fire we were putting out was helping, but they had really good dug-in positions in the tree line. We pulled back and called for air which we'd done before the second platoon had started out. Like I said, we were too close for arty so we called for air and they put snakes and napes in there. We had Hueys also; they put barrages of machine gun fire in there. But I think all the time they were hitting a little too far back in the tree line. The NVA bunkers were just this side of the tree line. So the second platoon went and tried it again, with negative results; they couldn't
get closer than 150 meters. So they pulled back again there, and by this time it was getting dark. So we just pulled in our perimeter and set up.

A. What date was this?
B. I remember it was Thanksgiving; I think about the 28th.
A. This was Thanksgiving day that that happened?
B. Yes, so we wound up with quite a few casualties from this tree line. I think the final estimate was that at least a company was there in the tree line. But the next morning we jumped off on the sweeping portion of the operation on the Meade River. So we started from the road moving north.

A. Can I interrupt at this point to ask, during the night, did you bring artillery or air?
B. During the night we hit them with mortars and arty, the tree line.
A. The tree line, and do you have any idea what the results of that arty and mortar attack were?
B. I don't know what the estimated casualties were.

A. O.K., give us a date first.
B. This was about the morning of the 29th. They were holding back here on line, along the Route 4. They were strung from the bridge on our right flank all the way down to the railroad berm on the left flank, and we moved out in order about 0730, I think it was, and we started sweeping north within the boundaries, the river on our right and the railroad tracks on the left. And it was pretty slow going through the water paddies and the mush and everything. We moved up to phase line Alfa and we spent the night there. And during the day, getting to Alfa, we had sporadic contact and we had a concentration of enemy automatic weapons fire on our right flank. But we didn't do too much with it. That night we dug in. And the next morning we moved out again just to phase line Alfa. And again, we had the same complex; we found out that day it was the bunker complex. That stopped us right
there. So for two days it was a matter of trying to get through to
his bunker complex. We had quite a few casualties right here. And
I'll come back to this.

A. How many casualties did you take during that two-day
period?

B. Well, our HST man was hit, and we had anywhere from
eight to ten casualties, I think, just from this complex. It was a
matter of going across two open paddies to get to it. That's one rea-
son we got hit kind of hard here. And this is Alfa. After two days
of trying we got past phase line Alfa and we tied up with Kilo again
on our right---on our left flank. They had come around to the west of
phase line Alfa trying to skirt this pocket right here. So we moved
up to the pocket and tied in with Kilo and moved on up towards phase
line Bravo. Well, going through Bravo was pretty easy except for the
normal sniper fire. And after we left the pocket, other than a little
sniper fire, it wasn't too bad getting through Bravo. So we got to
Bravo, which was a little trail and a series of trenches, trench lines
running along the trail. We had just got up there and coordinated and
I remember the incident, because we were staring, looking at Charlie.
We could see Charlie just about 100 to 1100 meters off, the final
phase line, and everybody was in the trenches. They were getting
ready to get set up. This is when I think everything broke loose
down there. Since I've been in Vietnam, this is the biggest con-
centration of incoming fire I've seen, and the most accurate. It started
off all at once. We had people inside the trenches. It hit while we
were lying down.

A. Small arms fire?

This is machine gun fire, small arms fire. It was AK, every-
thing and some 30-calibers too. And it was just a matter of consoli-
dating our lines, there, getting our wounded or trying to get them back.
But nobody could move. We were just pinned down real good. And this
went on---well, let me retract a little bit.

How it started was our second platoon on our right had moved
up just equal to this little vill, this little village, a couple of
hooches right here, just north of phase line Bravo. Now I guess the
coordinate ought to be about 008585. And the second platoon had just moved in there and they caught, evidently, I think what happened, they caught an OP asleep, or something, because just as they pulled in he started pulling out. He was running back across to the northeast towards this area over here, the horseshoe, what we called the horseshoe. And they took him under fire. And when they took him under fire, the people inside the horseshoe opened up. And we found out later this is where we got all our incoming.

And there was such a concentration of fire that we just had to dig in and really get down. We tried to return fire, but they were about a foot off the deck around us. They were really good. So we were taking casualties inside the trenches here along with the second platoon over here. So we wanted to get back into this vill just below phase line Bravo here and consolidate. And I think, to our left, Kilo hadn't taken any incoming thus far; we were getting some strays from our people over in the horseshoe, the area of the horseshoe. But they'd pulled back and consolidated along Bravo, too. We'd kind of broken, contact with them in order to set up our perimeter. And this incoming just didn't stop; I mean, it was constant. The second platoon was in heavy contact, so we took the rest of the first and third platoon and tried to swing them around here in order to set up our defensive positions.

A. And this would be the night of what day?
B. This would be, I guess, the evening of the 30th. And all this day, we had heavy contact coming from these positions over here and they weren't short of ammunition. This was the first time I'd seen them shoot this much—you know, constant like that because we were getting sniped at in bursts which normally they don't do unless they get a good target.

C. What were they doing besides sniping at you?
B. You know, the NVA, he's pretty scarce of ammunition; he only shoots when he's got a good target and they were really putting out some fire. So we had the whole company just about pinned down in these trenches along phase line Bravo. And like I said, we took casualties that were inside the trenches, which means they had the trenches
set up real nice with their weapons. They were shooting into the trenches. So I think what they'd done, they'd set up a great field of fire. They knew where we could take cover and where we couldn't. There were a couple of bunker complexes here. We set up our perimeter behind the bunkers and as it got later in the evening, it started to get dark. There was no moving forward for us, you see...the idea of setting up a perimeter. All that day, from the time we'd reached phase line Bravo, which was around noon, I guess, until that evening, we took this fire back and forth. It was pretty hard to spot them at this time, but we knew where the one that got away across here went in the tree line over here. And we had the area spotted where the weapons were coming from, but we didn't know exactly what kind of force it was, or how large it was. But there were definitely several enemy automatic weapons.

That night we drew our place up and set in. We had incoming 82s--I guess it must have been about nine o'clock because it was just getting dark--so we just double checked our positions and everything. They got a bird in, a helicopter; he brought us resupply and mail. Just after the chopper left, we had, I think, about four or five incoming 82s. Our perimeter was tight--we had to make it this way because of the tactical situation; in other words, we had paddies to our rear and paddies to our front. And we were in this little vill complex, but actually, there wasn't any. All the hooches were blown away. But we had to draw a pretty tight perimeter, and the four 82s, I think we took ten casualties: we had one KIA and nine WIA's from the mortars they shot. And the mortars were right on target, right exactly where we were. So I don't know if they watched the choppers come in, or they already had everything, all the positions zeroed in, or what. But they were pretty accurate. And we got set for a ground attack which never came. We had some probes that night, but as far as the full ground attack, we thought it was going to come and it didn't.

The next morning, the 1st of December, we got a new one at the headquarters. There was this pocket over there, and we came to call it the horseshoe--a bend in the river there. I think the
coordinates of that would be about 015587. The next couple of days were spent trying to get through this thing.

A. O.K., we're going to start on the 29th.

B. O.K., on the morning of the 29th we started out in a battalion sweep, and the whole third battalion was on line. We started from the red line, Route 4, and moved out abreast, India, Kilo, and Lima, up to phase line Alpha and we got to phase line Alpha. Kilo had light contact and we moved on up on their right flank and we ran into heavy contact. We had enemy automatic weapons fire, B-40s and RPGs, so we attempted about twice to get through this pocket but we couldn't. So it got dark, we pulled back and consolidated for the night. And we hit it that night with arty. And next morning we moved off again in the attack, on the 30th, and we moved throughout the two attempts. The second platoon tried and my platoon tried. So we finally got through and moved on up to phase line Bravo on the 30th. And on the 30th we ran into heavy contact on phase line Bravo. We took numerous casualties here, from incoming automatic weapons fire, also B-40s and RPGs and mortars. We were hit in the trench as we were lying down. So they had everything zeroed in. So that night after several attempts to move through this pocket we pulled back, consolidated, set just below phase line Bravo.

And the next morning, on the 1st of December, we moved up again in the attack and this time negative results getting through. We had heavy contact, and had numerous casualties. There must have been at least a company, I think, probably more in there and about three automatic weapons, heavy type, and numerous B-40s and rockets. We pulled back to just below phase line Bravo on the 1st.

After several attempts we pulled back and we set up a perimeter that night and we got several probes and incoming and automatic weapons fire that night of the 1st. And next morning, the 2nd, we pulled down about 150, 200 meters to cover the rear of Bravo, 1/5, because
they were going to assault the same bunker complex we had. So we covered Bravo, 1/5, and got hit from the rear--automatic weapons fire--that morning. And about noon that day we received word to move out, back up to phase line Bravo to join the rest of the company and the rest of the battalion. And we moved that day, out on a sweep from Bravo up to Charlie. And we got in there about 1500 that afternoon and we had sniper fire, but no heavy contact. So we got to Charlie. The next day we moved out from Charlie and swung toward the east and got on a line with the rest of the battalion in a sweep towards the final objective. And we reached this area on the 2nd and we set up here. We had occasional sniper fire and, again, negative heavy contact. Most of the heavy contact was down in the horseshoe. So we spent the 3rd here in a perimeter defense and small patrols, and the 4th. On the morning of the 5th we lifted out.

C. Would you give us the details of the fight you had on the morning of the 28th south of Route 4?

B. Yes sir, we moved out about 0800. Our plan of maneuver was we were going to send one squad, the third squad, around to the base of fire with a machine gun, while I took the first squad machine gun and the second squad down the riverbed. I didn't feel there was any more than maybe a squad in the tree line. However, I found out later how wrong I was. The first contact was when the third squad at the base of fire got hit. I had my platoon sergeant with the base of fire. He was the initial casualty. He got hit in the left knee. And they were receiving automatic weapons fire from their right flank, or down to the southeast of where they were.

(C) Meanwhile, the first squad and the second squad and myself were moving down the creekbed. We heard the firing and tried to make contact with the other squad but couldn't get in contact right away. We started moving up the slope and we could see something from the riverbed where we were. And we were about 300 meters down the creekbed and all of a sudden the point had taken fire. So we got out and went up to check out the situation and we couldn't pinpoint where the
fire had come from right away, but we'd taken one KIA—he was the first squad leader, and the WIA was the first squad radioman—right quick. So about the same time I got up front, we had incoming explosive devices. I later found that they were RPGs and chicoms.

C. Excuse me, what's an RPG?
B. That's a rocket propelled grenade.
C. And a chi what?
B. A chicom, a Chinese Communist grenade.
C. Just like a U.S. grenade?
B. No, they make several types. They make the concussion type and they make a shrapnel type—a fragmentation. I think these we got were shrapnel type—we had a couple of people with fragment wounds.

C. The fragment type you call a chicom?
B. Chicom. And, at first, we thought the fire was coming from directly down the streambed, off to the northeast. I put a couple of LAW-men down in the streambed and we put some LAWs into the tree line that was directly ahead of us, which was about 25 to 30 meters away. I also brought my machine guns into action and I put them up on the ridge. And about this time we made contact with our base of fire and they were taking pretty heavy automatic weapons fire and they got two more casualties—by bulls.

C. What hour was this?
B. This was about 1320, I guess. And we made contact with them and they were getting hit pretty hard over there. They'd taken three casualties thus far. And one was the platoon sergeant. He couldn't walk, or couldn't move, so I told them to start working their way back over toward the creekbed. By this time I'd estimated two machine guns, enemy type, hitting us from two different directions and we weren't quite set up to continue the attack in the way we were. So I was going to redeploy my base of fire a little closer to us. I instructed them to start working their way back toward the creekbed, to join up with the rest of the platoon.

C. This is the third squad?
B. Third squad, yes sir. So meanwhile, we'd taken another casualty in the first squad, in the point closest to the tree line. And we received, plus the machine gun fire, and the rocket propelled grenades and the chicos, we started getting some mortars dropping in the creekbed. So now, I knew we were up against little bigger than a squad. So I radioed and made contact with the company and informed them about the casualties I'd taken so far and the estimated size of the unit, which this time I figured maybe anywhere from a reinforced squad to a platoon. And we received word to start pulling back. However, we had trouble getting our third squad back to the creekbed. They were pinned down pretty close with automatic weapons fire and they also by now were receiving a mortar or two. So the big problem now was getting them back to join the rest of the platoon and work down the creekbed. This process had taken a total of about an hour. So we could get them back to the creekbed and get started back. And meanwhile I'd set the other gun up. It was running pretty low on ammunition, and we'd sent a runner back to a platoon, correction, company area, to get more ammunition and grenades. And we'd taken a few more casualties by this time. We spotted muzzle flashes in the tree line from the semiautomatic weapons.

C. You saw what in the tree line?

B. Muzzle flashes. These were coming from just forward of the tree line. So they were dug in pretty well and definitely well camouflaged.

C. What do you read from a muzzle flash? What weapon did you think they were firing?

B. The muzzle flash was from an automatic weapon because it was a long muzzle flash. If it had been just one shot it probably would have been too quick to catch. But a lengthy kind of flash stayed there, indicating an automatic weapon; plus, the round was getting pretty close over our heads. We were returning fire with our own M-60 and M-79s, and also we were throwing frags, hand grenades. We were too close to the enemy to get mortar support from our company rear back there. So we had planned on getting our third squad back and pulling
back and then employing our mortars and calling for air. However, we held up because the third squad got pinned down pretty bad, so we sent people from the second squad over to help get them back. And eventually we did get them back. The wounded were a problem--getting them across. I had one man, this really showed outstanding leadership, this squad leader over there, he picked the platoon sergeant up and ran with him about 150 meters. He fell several times, but he got the man down to the creekbed.

C. What did the second squad do in their reinforcement of the third squad?

B. They worked their way over half way toward them and laid down a base of fire to the tree line that we were always receiving fire from. And they put M-79 rounds over there also. I think this helped to suppress the enemy fire long enough for the base of fire, third squad, to get back over toward the creekbed. Eventually, we did get all of our wounded out plus our KIA and get them started towards the rear. And as we started moving back, I put the third squad at the head of the column, leading the way back, and had the first squad cover while the second squad started moving out. And we started working our way on back.

C. What time did you get back to the perimeters?

B. We got back to the perimeter, I guess, around 1530 or 1545. And right away we got the air in right on top of the tree line. We had fixed wing, with 250-pound snakes and napalm. And they worked the area over real good. And this next time, before it got dark, we set up a new plan of attack and the second platoon was going to assault.

C. Let's take a break right here.

C. Was the fire part of a planned operation?

B. Yes, in fact, the battalion command post had been getting hit pretty regularly with mortars and ground attacks. And we knew that there was something in the area to the rear, or south of the creekbed there. We didn't know the size or what unit it was. So initially, we'd sent out this small recon squad and they got hit pretty bad, so we felt that it was a job for at least a platoon. And this was when
my platoon was assigned the mission of cleaning out the tree line.

C. When was this prior contact for the recons?
B. Earlier in the same day.
C. The same day? About what time?
B. Early in the morning, they went out at daybreak. And they
   got hit and they came back.
C. What size is a recon?
B. There was about a squad--had about eight to ten men.
C. And your mission really was to clean out that tree line.
B. The tree line where the fire had come from.
C. What was the enemy's mission, in your opinion?
B. I think he was entrenched there to mainly harrass us from
   the rear and possibly to break up our cordon which we had going to
   the north of the creekbed, and to eventually make a hole for the people
   we had encircled.

C. Did the enemy add any additional forces or withdraw any of
   the forces during this engagement?

B. Negative. I think he maintained what he had well entrenched
   in this tree line there and I don't think we routed him out. However,
   the air and the supporting weapons definitely gave him some casualty,
   probably. He was still dug in there when we moved back into the area
   that day.

C. What was your estimate of the enemy force at the start of the
   fight?
B. Initially, I thought it must have been about a squad.
C. Did you ever change you opinion?
B. Yes, I did when we started getting enemy automatic weapons
   fire and mortars. I felt it must have been at least a reinforced
   platoon and possibly even a company in the tree line along the 600
   meter front there.

C. Did you get fire from all parts of that 600 meter front?
B. Yes, we did. We received fire initially from the southeast--
   the base of fire came under fire, the third squad. And they reported
   to me later that they received sniper fire from their right rear which
   would be the due south. So this is definitely about 200 meters, 275,
200 meters apart—the two places where we received fire from. And yet we were still about 100 meters to their left flank and we were getting automatic weapons fire, so I think the whole thing was an extended defense line there in these trees.

C. Was this a VC or NVA unit?
B. There on the field it was NVA.
C. What kind of protection was available to your troops? Did they get behind logs, trees, natural fern, graves, that sort of thing?

B. Well, there was very little protection there as we were moving against this particular tree line, except for the bank of the river there. And the small arms, once we got down and started turning fire we made smaller targets. But we had very little protection from the rocket-propelled grenades and mortars, because they were dropping on the open side of the river bank and we were open to fragments from these.

C. Would you think your protection was equivalent to an open foxhole?
B. I don't think we had as much protection.
C. Not quite as good? Half as good?
B. I guess we had about 50 percent as good as a foxhole.
C. What kind of protection was one of your riflemen finding when he was just plain down and he wasn't firing or moving?
B. Very little because it was quite open area except for the bank where we were and the infantry took real good grazing fire which he definitely had, straight down a place where we were approaching.
C. And this, in relation to an open foxhole?
B. I think this still was not as good as an open foxhole because you had no place to get down into. There weren't any rises or anything to get behind.
C. Half as good, three quarters as good?
B. Yeah, about half, I guess, once you get down a little bit.
C. How about just relative to being prone, or was that what you were?
B. We were prone.
C. You were prone and just pretty much out in the open?  
B. Pretty much out in the open, especially for the third squad out there.

C. Would you repeat the last thing? That was particularly true, especially for the third squad?

B. Especially for the third squad because they were setting up the base of fire in nothing but tall grass and once those bullets started zooming through the grass there was no protection at all. More so for them than for us because we did have the riverbank going along the northern part of the tree line there. So the squad that was forming the base of fire, they were pretty much in the open even though they did get down flat.

C. How about your machine guns? Was their position equivalent to a revetted position or a machine gun pit, half as good or?

B. Negative, it was pretty hastily drawn up and the one on the base of fire was just about in the same position as the regular troopers. There wasn't any protective covering to get behind out there. Just a hasty position--by getting down and returning fire right away. Now under the bank we had a little more advantage. We could get behind the riverbank there and bring fire upon the enemy. But for the one squad out in the open area it was pretty negative on cover.

C. O.K., let's skip over to the questionnaire, I am at 13. What kind of protection was available to the enemy forces? Do you want to tell me what, how the enemy riflemen were set up? Was he in the open, the open foxholes, dug in, do you know? Do you have an opinion what his protection was like?

B. Well, he was definitely dug in, well concealed because it was quite a while and after quite a few rounds we spotted muzzle flashes and these are only instantly. And he was dug in because we were definitely putting the fire on him. And after we pulled back and put air on him and again assaulted the same tree line, the same amount of fire just about came out. So he was well entrenched and he was waiting on us to come up the avenues of approach that he had probably already set up.

C. So you think he was in covered foxholes?
B. I think he definitely had overhead cover.
C. Do you want to guess at how or what his overhead cover was? What is typical of overhead cover for the NVA rifleman in position like this? One foot, two feet?
B. They take anything from railroad ties to logs and make very good bunkers; and it's anywhere from 12 to 18 inches sometimes and more when they really dig in.
C. You never saw this position?
B. These particular positions, we didn't get that close. We saw where it was coming from, some of the fire, but we couldn't actually spot the hole because of the undergrowth and the big brush.


C. Do you want to estimate the protection he had for his machine guns? Were they in the open, revetted?
B. I am pretty sure the machine guns were in bunkers. In fact, one hole we did spot had overhead covering. And it would be up, out of the hole long enough to fire and there would be only a multiple weapon and go back down there and the covering would be back down. This was when we spotted them, but normally you don't even spot them when you're firing, but we had employed 250-pound bombs and napalm after the first try and we went back and they were still there so we tried 500-pound bombs the next time and the next assault we made we still received fire, so I think they were definitely well dug in.
C. That's the second assault? This is a later day? This is not on this particular day, or are we talking about the same day?
B. This is the same day. We went up the second time as covering force for the second platoon.
C. I see, but this is separate from your operation?
B. Yeah, it was separate, but same run.
C. O.K., we'll veer off from that. I think we'll stick to your operation. But you think the machine guns were in bunkers with good overhead cover. They had embraziers, I assume, that they could drop the covers over and back right into them.
B. Well, they had to have because we employed everything that we had at our disposal; LAWs and M-79s and air. I think the '05s and the '55s couldn't dent it, evidently, because they were still firing after we employed these. So we tried bombs and napalm.

C. How about the mortars, how were they set up?

B. I think the mortar was behind the tree line somewhere because we could hear it popping, but we couldn't see the flashes. But we could hear distinct pops from somewhere in the rear of the tree line. And they've been known to just set the mortar in the ground and fire it and then get under cover when they get incoming.

C. Was there preparation fire and phase in this operation before you started moving out at about 0800 in the morning?

B. That's affirmative. We had an air strike in there with napalm and bombs before we moved out and we thought they'd prepped it pretty good, and we felt sure they'd knock some of those bunkers out down there, if not all of them.

C. Do you know how long your prep fire lasted?

B. Yes, the air strikes went on, I think it was three flights, fixed wing, and I guess it went on for about 45, 50 minutes.

C. Do you remember what hour that thing was?

B. It was at daybreak.

C. This was before you started moving out?

B. Yes, the air strikes went on, I think it was three flights, fixed wing, and I guess it went on for about 45, 50 minutes.

C. Do you remember what hour that thing was?

B. It was at daybreak.

C. This was before you started moving out?

B. Yes, the air strikes went on, I think it was three flights, fixed wing, and I guess it went on for about 45, 50 minutes.

C. This was before you started moving out?

B. Yes, the air strikes went on, I think it was three flights, fixed wing, and I guess it went on for about 45, 50 minutes.

C. No significant changes took place during that? You didn't see any secondary explosions or any other changes during that time?

B. Negative, we messed it up pretty good with napalm.

C. How many casualties did you have during the attack?

B. In the actual attack phase, the platoon sergeant got a bullet wound in the leg, and the radioman get a bullet wound in the back and the squad leader got killed by a bullet. And one shrapnel casualty from a chicom, initially. This all happened right quick, at the first start.

C. How many casualties did you take during the withdrawal? What did they come from?

B. We had the right guide, and a squad leader, and a point man hit with shrapnel. I think these were either from the mortars or from the chicoms. But it probably was from the mortars because they were putting
out a little more shrapnel while we were moving back. So we had a total of three bullet-wound victims and four shrapnel casualties.

C. Will you tell me why you started to withdraw?
B. Well, the big thing is after we maintained radio contact with the company and keep the company commander informed of the situation, and already I reported several, or three or four AKs over in my area, plus one machine gun. And the base of fire, third squad, reported machine gun over where they were. And now we were both receiving mortar fire. So it was kind of evident to me that we had something on our hands a little bigger than a squad and we might have been outgunned here. So I thought possibly the best avenue for us was to withdraw far enough so we could get some supporting fire on the target, and then maybe try it again. But right now we were a little too close in to get friendly fires on the tree line. So, in order to get my casualties back and regroup, we would have to probably withdraw a ways to get re-grouped and get the base of fire back.

C. How many rounds did each of your riflemen start with when they left camp that morning?
B. We moved out with about 160, 180 rounds per man--5.56 for the rifles--and we had about 1500 rounds per machine gun.
C. How many grenades did each rifleman carry?
B. We had about four frags per man, about four grenades per man.
C. At what range did your rifle fire begin?
B. Well, it all started right close in, so we were fighting at no more than about 40 to 50 meters at the most. Sometimes I deployed to move closer and started getting heavier contact. The NVA didn't open up until we were just about on top of them.
C. How many rounds, on the average, did your engaged rifleman fire? 50, 100?
B. Oh, when it got heavier, we were running short on M16 ammo and especially machine gun ammo. There'd been pretty heavy contact, and we did have to send people to the rear to get more ammo from the other platoon to our rear because we were really putting out some fire here. Especially trying to cover getting the casualties back.
C. How long did you maintain M-16 fire? From about 1300 to around 1430?

B. About an hour, hour and a half.
C. Hour, hour and half?

B. Mostly the machine guns were doing a lot of work. The riflemen were trying to pick out targets. It was pretty hard to determine exactly where they were, but they were firing. We couldn't see where they were coming from, we were trying to fire and stay down too.

C. Do you think your average rifleman fired 160 rounds, or 200 rounds?

B. Well, anywhere from 140 to 160 rounds. When we got back and consolidated, we were pretty low on ammo.

C. Now in what position was your average rifleman firing? Standing, kneeling, prone, from the hip? How would you say?

B. Prone, mostly.

C. Mostly prone, O.K. What percentage of the riflemen that could fire, did fire, in your opinion? Do you think all fired, or 60 percent?

B. There was some in the second squad that we couldn't ... because of limited air we had covering, we couldn't get everybody up on line, So there were several riflemen back in second squad that we were using to take casualties back and they couldn't get up to fire. But I'd say at least 70 percent did fire.

C. If they were on line, they did fire?

B. Yes, sir.

C. How would you compare the accuracy of your rifle fire with the accuracy that you would attain back on the firing range back in the U.S.? Take, for example, the training fire range. Do you think you did as well, your accuracy was good, better, worse?

B. Well, lot of times the excitement that goes with heavy contact. You always lie down and squeeze them off. You try to get fire out there. The M16 is not a pinpoint weapon anyway. It puts out a lot of fire, and lots of times this is what we need in close contact like these trees, in the jungle and the heavy undergrowth and stuff. So I'd say, maybe 50 percent of the people or 45 percent of the people do take well-aimed shots, but the majority are getting the fire out there.

C. Did you ever fire at the training fire range?
B. Yes, I did.

C. In that situation, do you think you do half as well, or two-thirds as well, one-fifth as well in accuracy?

B. Shooting back when you're getting fire, it's a little different than on a rifle range. I don't know if you take as much time to squeeze each round off like you do on a rifle range, but we do pretty well. I think you probably get the same accuracy as you do on a range.

C. What we're really trying to find out...there is an awful lot of pressure on you, comrade, and we're trying to really be honest, to get an honest estimate from you. What is the impact of the stress of the battlefield?

B. Well, basically you don't get the same accuracy and concentration as you do on a rifle range.

C. Want to give me an estimate? Half as good?

B. I'd say anywhere from 50 to 60 percent maybe.

C. Do you have any experience, then, with defense, so that you know what the relative accuracy would be?

B. Yes, in the defense, now, it's altogether different. You're sitting in a hole and he's trying to come at you. We had experience like this on Taylor Common, we just came off of, and during the Tet Offensive, we got hit pretty hard. But we racked up quite a few casualties on the enemy because we were sitting there, we already had our fields of fire and everything arranged. So there is a difference in being on the offense and the defense, I think.

C. How would you rate the defensive?

B. Almost up to 85, 80 percent.

C. You mean 85 percent as good as it is on the rifle range? You've already told me what range the machine guns were fired, and you didn't tell me how many rounds were fired by the one--you had two machine guns....

B. We had one gun out with the third squad at the base of fire, and the other gun was with my CP and the other two squads. And we got resupply with ammo twice there and I think we initially carried out about 1500 rounds but we ran out of that ammo pretty quickly because we got to putting fire on them out there, trying to achieve fire superiority. But I'd say we were firing anywhere from 3500 rounds at least.
C. Each gun? Were the guns in bipod or tripod?
B. Bipod.
C. How high off the ground would you say the muzzles were?
B. Well, as we were moving quite a bit, and our base of fire, they couldn't set any one position, they were firing as they were moving and sometimes they were kneeling in order to get a better view of the targets, because of the high grass. And the gun along with me was firing and moving at the same time. We wanted to get away because they were dropping mortars and they wanted to get our gun. So we sometimes were firing from the hip, and sometimes at a prone, and sometimes kneeling. It was never a stag, sit down and shoot deal.
C. The average is about kneeling?
B. Well, from behind the bank we had to kneel to see over. So I guess we would be about kneeling.
C. I can get that one!
C. You want to comment on the accuracy of the machine gun fire with relation to the accuracy that you'd achieve on the machine gun range in the U.S.?
B. Well, we suppressed the fire till we could get our casualties back across and I think that was a pretty good job they'd done there. As far as the estimate of the casualties put upon them, it was pretty hard to estimate, as we never did get into the tree line to actually check the bunkers. But as far as suppressing fire, I think they did a real good job at that.
C. But on the whole, do you think they could give the same accuracy, they could cover the area with the same accuracy, the same discrimination under combat situation that you were getting in Quantico on the range?
B. Well, this wasn't an ideal situation and the terrain wasn't ideal either, and it was kind of confined to shooting at areas suspected of having enemy troops in them. Because we didn't definitely pinpoint all the enemy positions and we were in a restricted field of fire because of the high grass and the river bank. So it probably wouldn't be as accurate if you could face a target at Quantico.
C. How would you rate it, 50 percent as good?
B. Well, I'd say anywhere from 55 to 60 percent maybe.
C. Let's get down to the targets that you were covering with small arms. Were you covering an area? Was it an area fire proposition or were you firing at an individual, were you firing at a point target, a group of individuals?

B. We were firing at an area target more than pinpointing one particular target. Because we knew they were in the tree line there dug in, and we spotted the one muzzle flash and we tried to bring most of our weapons to bear on the one. But, most of the time we were just trying to suppress his fire and keep his head down.

C. Now when you used to fire on the range with a squad or platoon back at Quantico you probably fired area coverage until ... and as your range shortened, you probably started picking out other areas, or smaller areas, is that right?

B. Yes, sir. The ideal way would be to concentrate fire and distribute fire in the area if the target warrants, but in order to bring all your weapons to bear when you're getting fire. Say, in our instance we knew where the automatic weapon was coming from, because of the muzzle flashes. Well, the ideal situation would have been to fire concentrated fire on the target, but because you're receiving fire from other areas also, it was pretty hard to get everything assembled and shoot in one point.

C. But, on the average, in your experience, I assume this also varies with the terrain in which you are.

B. Yes, that's correct. The terrain situation dictates just about all of it.

C. But in this particular area, you think that you were firing more point targets than area targets? How big an area would you think you were shooting at? If you were to tell one of your riflemen, well, fire at that machine gun, or at such and such an area, how big an area do you think he's firing at? Ten by fifteen yards or something like that? Just for instance.

B. You mean you'd be limited to that area right in there? I'd say about 10, 15 meters, maybe.

C. For width and depth, huh?

B. Yes, about that.
C. Do you want to guess the chances that your rifleman was firing at the target that you wanted him to fire at, was 50-50, 40-60, 70-30, or something like that?

B. Well, the rifleman's chances of hitting him are pretty good.

C. I mean just firing, and picking up the right target; just the chance that he will fire at the target you designated, that he's able to pick it out.

B. If I'm able to point out to him, he will fire at the one I designate for him. The idea is you can get the heavy rifle and point the target out to them and they're trained to return fire immediately. And the majority of the time, it's common sense when you start firing right back at where you receive fire from.

C. But you think the chances of guessing correctly the right area where it came from...what're the chances that he'll pick the right area? 100?

B. Well, lot of times the squad leader is there to direct him also. I would just designate an area for a squad to fire into and the squad leader in turn would probably take it from there. Most of the time....

C. If you were a rifleman, and I assume you have been one, what chance do you think you would have of picking out the target that your fire team leader or your squad leader told you?

B. Very good, because normally, he may even mark it with his own tracers, or the squad leader'll do it sometimes.

C. O.K. Well, we'll try the next one. How about the enemy small arms fire. What range did they start firing at you?

B. I'd say from about 25 to 30 meters.

C. Do you want to give me an estimate of his rate of fire? Rounds per minute? Or some kind of an adjective description, like heavy, moderate, light, and then tell me what it means?

B. Well, initially, it was pretty heavy--about 100, 150 rounds per minute.

C. That's incoming from all the weapons?

B. It's from the gun we ran into on our side over there; it was pretty steady.
C. That's squads one and two?
B. That's right. The squads that were in the riverbank are the first and second squad. We received pretty heavy fire.
C. You think you were getting 150 rounds?
B. Anywhere from 100 to 150 rounds a minute over there.
C. AK 47?
B. Well, this was AK plus whatever kind of machine gun he had in there, so it was a little heavier than AK.
C. John, do you want to try to break out the... what machine gun you think you were getting?
B. I don't know exactly the designation of the type of the gun, but it was firing maybe 10-to-12-round bursts, which normally they don't do unless there are enough of them to defend it really well because they don't want to give away their machine gun position any more than we do.
C. What were they firing? A couple of bursts a minute?
B. They were firing just enough, maybe, to keep us bent down.
The AKs were firing constantly. But the machine guns were firing not quite as often as the AKs.
C. Do you want to guess that about half of the 150 rounds was AK and the other....
B. They were firing about 35 to 40 rounds a minute of machine gun.
C. Do you want to guess how many rifles were firing at you over there?
B. That'd be pretty rough to estimate. I know their fire was coming from about three directions and how many people they had in each hole or fortification, or bunker, I don't know. There were at least three positions they were coming from on my side alone over there.
C. That was on the right flank of the enemy position?
B. Right. On the right flank of their position.
C. Did you think there were three squads that were firing at you?
B. I don't know if it would be three squads or not, but there was the machine gun and there were the AKs and the other positions. So there probably were some rifle shots thrown in with the automatic weapon fire but you tend to pay a little more attention to the automatic.
C. Do you have any estimates of what positions--I believe you've already told me, they were all dug in.
B. They were dug in, well sealed.
C. Pretty low to the ground.
B. Definitely low to the ground.
C. You've already told me about the type of position that the machine guns had. Now during the withdrawal phase....


C. Earlier, you said that the average rifleman fired around 150 to 160 rounds during the operation. Do you want to break that down into the approximate number he fired during the attack period which ran roughly from 1300 to 1400 and then during the withdrawal period roughly from 1400 to 1530?
B. Well, sir, I think a rough estimate would be, we fired, I guess, approximately 75 percent during the sustained attack. And I guess about the other 25 percent when we were withdrawing.
C. Would that be roughly the same distribution as far as your machine guns that fired, as I remember, about 3500 rounds?
B. The machine guns, I guess, fired closer to 80 percent during the attack and as we started pulling back, I guess it was about the other 20 percent.
C. Now, let's get back to the enemy small arms. I think you told me that there was a period about 1300 hours when this fire, your two squads, the two squads that were with you, the first and second squads, were hit with about 150 rounds per minute, of which about 60 to 80 were machine guns and the rest were AK-47s. Was that approximately correct?
B. Yes, sir, I think initially the machine guns were really working out, but I think after a while they fired only when we moved. They had us, so to speak, pinned down pretty good and mostly AK after the initial contact.
C. Do you want to tell me how long this high rate of fire lasted, five minutes, ten minutes?
B. Well, it all happened kind of fast. To give a rough estimate, I guess it was about the first seven or eight minutes when we had quite a bit of incoming, and they were really trying to put casualties on us pretty quick. So the machine guns and the AKs were both going full force for about five or six minutes.

C. Full force—you mean the 150 rounds per minute you were getting for the first...

B. About the first five or six minutes when the machine guns and the AKs were firing.

C. That was against your two squads that were with you—the first and second squads?

B. Yes, on my side, over where I was.

C. How about your third squad, what were they getting?

B. I debriefed the third squad leader before, and the initial burst was the heaviest strike they had also, except when you tried to move or withdraw. They caught the full force again there when they tried to get out.

C. What were they getting during the first ten minutes of the operation?

B. They were getting, I guess, something similar to what we were getting. I spoke to them later, getting a lot of sniper fire also, accurate sniper fire, plus the automatic weapons they were getting over there.

C. Relatively, then, they may have been getting 100 rounds per minute on that squad, 75 rounds?

B. I guess they were getting about 100 rounds a minute over there too, from the AKs and the machine gun initially. Then the machine gun kind of laid off and it was mostly AKs.

C. Then it eased off after the first ten minutes?

B. After the first eight, ten minutes I'd say.

C. All right, during the next, say, fifty minutes during the attack...you want to give me an estimate of what their rate of fire was against the two squads with you, the first and second squads? Both as far as the incoming rifle rounds and incoming machine gun rounds.

B. I guess the AK stayed about the same. They were firing in
bursts and they were still putting anywhere from 80 to 100 rounds a minute. It was kind of sporadic bursts—like they'd fire when they had a target and we'd try to move around getting our wounded back. And we kept up the sustained rate against them trying to pin them down.

C. If you were sporadic, it was up and down. Let's say they'd fire heavily and then they'd slow down. What would you think the AKs were firing on the average? About 50 rounds a minute?

B. Anywhere from 40 to 60 rounds a minute.

C. That was on the average, but sometimes they'd peak up to maybe 100 and then drop back to maybe 30 when there was no evident target?

So you say average out about 50 to 60.

B. About that, sir.

C. How about the machine guns?

B. The machine guns, after the initial contact, didn't fire much unless we got up or maybe one or two of us got up, and then the machine gun'd fire.

C. Do you want to try to give me a size on the incoming on that?

B. I'd say anywhere from 15 to 20 rounds a minute, maybe, on that. It was pretty sporadic.

C. But it would go up to 100 and then down to nothing and up and bounce around, so on the average, you were getting somewhere around, you said, 20 to 30? Now how about the third squad, that was split about the same way? But based on slightly smaller overall fire?

B. I think we were getting the brunt of the concentrated fire on us. And the third squad was just getting enough to pin them down. There was a lot of sniper fire on their side over there.

C. What rate of fire would you like to say? Do you want to say about half of what you were getting?

B. I'd say about somewhere nearly half of what we were getting. The sniper fire was coming from the trees, and it was almost constant every time they'd try to move.

C. But on the overall, you'd say the AK fire and the machine gun was about half of what your two squads were getting?

B. I'd say about half.

......
C. As I understand it, there was no mortar employment, no friendly mortar employment during this operation, that is, subsequent to the prep fire that you had prior to the departure from the base then.

B. Yes, sir. The danger was the close element, it was too close. We were a little bit too close to employ our own mortars.

C. All right, now let's go into the enemy mortar fire. Do you want to give me the time that they started and the time that the mortar fire ended?

B. The mortar fire was, I guess, initially after we'd first had heavy contact with the automatic weapons. The mortars came in more or less, I guess, kind of sporadic, too. It'd be maybe two and the next time three...

C. What hour did they start? Do you remember? About 1310?

B. Just right after the initial heavy contact with the automatic weapons. They were inaccurate to begin with, and they started walking them in towards...getting a little better.

C. Do you want to show here on the sketch map where the impact area was?

B. They initially started hitting down over by the north side of the creekbed out here and they started getting a little closer to the southern side here. The first four to five fell down here at about 011566.

C. The first four or five dropped at about 011566.

B. At about 566, yes, sir.

C. The first five rounds fell in that general area. And then they moved...

B. They started walking to the west.

C. They walked to the west and then they walked in closer to you. How many rounds were there? Do you remember?

B. I guess they must have dropped from eight to ten rounds initially on us and I think there was about four or five on our first squad over there.

C. Eight to ten on you. How close were those? The first rounds looked as though they may be 50 yards away from you.

B. I'd say about 60 to 70 yards away. They got in to about, maybe, 15 to 20 meters.
C. Well, did you receive some casualties from those mortars?
B. We got casualties from the mortar fragments. No KIAs from the mortars, though—just got shrapnel wounds.
C. How many hits in your third squad?
B. I think they received four to five.
C. And how close were they to the squad?
B. They were hitting pretty close to them, I guess, because they had a line of sight on the...we had a couple of casualties out there from shrapnel also.
C. Two casualties. And they fired for just one short period?
B. No, sir, initially they dropped a couple in, and then they dropped a couple more. I guess over a 60-minute period, it was paced out evenly, about the first couple in about the first ten minutes, and the first three to four in the first ten minutes in the area, and then they threw more in.
C. It was all over by about 1410?
B. Yes, sir, around then.
C. Did they fire any at you during the withdrawal period?
B. Negative, we didn't receive any more while withdrawing.
C. I think you've already told me, they were 82 or 60 millimeters?
B. Sixty millimeters.
C. You've already told me how many casualties they inflicted.
None of these fires were close enough to your troops so they had much effect on the rates of fire of your rifles, or your machine guns?
B. We had people wounded that were firing, but we continued the firing. No problem...
C. Is there any artillery employment during this operation between the time your platoon went out and returned back to camp?
B. Negative. We called in air, but they both couldn't work at the same time, so the air was there on station and we used the air.
C. All right, now we're down to the tactical air employment. Who called for this support?
B. Our air officer, forward air controller.
C. How did you describe the target to him? Did you describe it as a company, a platoon, or how did you describe it?
B. I told them it was at least a reinforced platoon and possibly a company in there and well dug in and suggested napalm and 250s.

C. Did you identify the type of places he had, well dug in? Did you say they had overhead cover?

B. Overhead cover, yes sir.

C. Did you kind of describe what the cover was?

B. Right, I told them we had possibly heavy log overhead cover because we'd spotted the one bunker where he'd lift it up, fire, and then get back down in there.

C. Did you suggest any type of fusing?

B. Delay fuse on some of the bombs.

C. Who controlled the air strike?

B. The forward air controller.

C. Who marked the target?

B. We had an AO, an OV-10, mark it with white phosphorus.

C. How about your evaluation of the results of the bombs? Were the bombs on target? If they missed, how much did they miss?

B. Well, when we went back in the next time, we were still receiving fire and from the same general areas, so possibly your bombs were not exactly on target. But we're sure they made some casualties on the enemy.

C. Do you know which direction the misses were?

B. Yes, they were too far into the tree line and I think the gooks were dug in on the forward edge of the tree line. And they were too far back.

C. Do you think they used the right fusing, the right munition?

B. I think so. And after this initial strike ran in, we ran napalm also.

C. At the time when the air strikes were going on, was there any exchange of small arms fire between you and the NVA?

B. Sniper rounds, we were receiving.

C. That was all, just sniper rounds. How would you evaluate the performance of the air support? Good? How did you like it in general?

B. I think the air did a real good job. Especially for morale. Seeing those big balls falling up there did a lot for the troops.
C. How about destroying the target?
B. I don't think they got all the targets. No, because we went back in there and they were still there.

C. Now, what's the normal strength of your unit?
B. A platoon will normally run between 35 and 42 men.
C. How many of those are in a squad?
B. It normally runs from eight- to ten-men squads.
C. How many riflemen in each squad?
B. You've got maybe eight rifles in each squad there, M-79 man, and radioman.
C. How many fire teams do you have in a rifle squad?
B. We try to bring in fire teams.
C. Now what do you have at platoon headquarters?
B. There's a platoon commander, a platoon sergeant, a senior corpsman, and the radio man.
C. How many did you have the day that you were present... the fight on this particular day?
B. Well, we started out with 37 people. And we had the attachment of these news photographers.
C. On this particular day, did you have more or fewer weapons than you normally do?
B. We had what we normally carry: two machine guns and about nine LAWs and our regular three M-79s.
C. You've already told me how much ammunition each one of them carried. About the enemy, do you want to guess at what size that outfit was in the tree line? They came to about 60 to 80 men, probably?
B. I'd say about that. Their companies run anywhere from 60 to 80 to 90. I'd say, probably, after the initial contact we had and after seeing all the weapons they employed, I'd say it might have been a company in there of 60 to 80.
C. Did he have any weapons unusual to his type of unit?
B. Negative. Every weapon that we were hit with I'd seen before. The mortars, the AK-47s, the rifle-throwing grenades, and the chicos.
C. So the weapons and everything else were pretty...

B. They were normally what an NVA company would carry.

C. Do you want to guess how much ammunition he had available for each one of his rifles, and each one of his machine guns?

B. That's pretty hard to estimate, but I'd say he knew that he didn't have a resupply source such as we did. And he fired most of the time after initial contact, and it was at a target. He was conservative, yet he used enough to keep us down.

C. How many rounds do you think he had left for each weapon after this show was over?

B. I think he still had enough ammunition. Due to the fact he was static, he was stationary, and he was dug in. So he probably prepared his position pretty good and had the ammo right with him.

C. Do you think he'd fired maybe half the ammunition that he had? Just a good fat guess.

B. He fired a lot of ammunition, but I don't know if he fired half. I'd say, maybe, anywhere from one-fourth of what he had maybe... had a lot of incoming.

C. Can you guess about how many rounds they carried for the 60mm mortars?

B. This is the enemy?

C. Yeah, the NVA.

B. Well, they employ these civilians to carry ammunition for them and they got it stored all over, and every little village, they've got the ammunition stored somewhere probably. So I imagine they had a pretty good supply of mortar ammo because they'd been hitting the battalion CP there quite a bit, too.

C. Say, 40 to 60 rounds?

B. Well, I think he may have a little more than that.

C. How many tubes did you think they had? Two?

B. I know they had one for sure and they might have switched the one, but there could have been a change in the direction from the time that we got hit and the time that the third squad got hit, because I can't definitely say that there were two mortar tubes.

C. I think you told me how close they came to the third squad, they came within about 20 meters.
B. The third squad had it pretty close in there.

C. I think you told me how many rounds the third squad took, too.

A. Lieutenant Overton will now proceed to discuss the operation that took place in the region of phase line Bravo, on the 30th of November and the 1st of December.

B. On the morning of the 30th of November we jumped off from south of phase line Bravo and we reached phase line Bravo about around 0830 on the 30th and we immediately, upon reaching phase line Bravo, started to reorganize and consolidate our positions along the phase line to tie in with the friendlies on the left, and coordinating within our company to make the tie in on the right with the river. We'd checked the area and there were definitely signs of the NVA having recently been in the area. Equipment, food cans, and so forth. And, shortly after arriving on phase line Bravo, we made contact on our eastern flank.

The second platoon had spotted an outpost possibly, an area warning system running across the paddies northeast toward the horseshoe. They immediately had taken the enemy under fire and shortly after commencing fire, we received return fire, in a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire. And it pinned the whole company down right away. And we were receiving quite a few casualties from the incoming automatic weapons fire. It was accurate, grazing fire coming from the northeast--the same horseshoe area where the enemy had withdrawn to earlier. And we had sought contact all day, up until late in the evening. And we had called artillery and air on the enemy positions. However, we didn't succeed in silencing the incoming fire we were receiving. That evening, around 1830, we started to withdraw just south of phase line Bravo into a tight defensive perimeter. We were set up, as indicated here on the overlay, and we just completed getting all of our medevacs out around 1900 to 1930. The last chopper had just taken off and shortly thereafter we received incoming mortars, 82s, and immediately we had ten casualties—one KIA and nine WIA's. The mortars fell in the southern part of the perimeter and in the eastern part. The majority of the casualties came from the third and second platoon and the remainder from
the mortar section. My platoon, we were lucky, we didn't receive any casualties from the mortars. The remainder of the night was spent preparing for a ground attack which never materialized.

The next morning, on the 1st of December, we moved out at about 0730 on line, moving north from phase line Bravo. And we'd gotten no more than 75 to 100 meters from phase line Bravo and we immediately started receiving accurate sniper fire. And we took several casualties right away. So we took cover and started returning fire immediately. And again, it was coming from the northeast in this horseshoe area—several tree lines. We started shifting to our east. We knew we were going to have to sweep through this tree line area in this horseshoe area. The second platoon started moving due east and my platoon was on the left flank in this sweep, followed the trace of the second platoon moving to the right. We had moved about 200 meters when the second platoon point came under heavy automatic weapons fire.

The second platoon had received several casualties immediately upon their receiving incoming fire. Their point had moved east and they'd swung north-northeast, so they were about 200 meters up into the horseshoe area. And they were in a column when they got hit. So your automatic weapons fire hit the second and third and fourth men, and let the point man go. So immediately they were cut off from the rest of the column, the rest of the platoon. And this started what was to be an all-day fire fight. The platoon commander tried to organize his forces, the second platoon man tried to organize his people into a line to get a base of fire and to maneuver into a tight tactical field position. Initially, this was his train of thought, I think, to move through the enemy positions. But as their fire continued, we soon realized that this was a larger force than we thought. And he was in pretty deep, and we all were receiving more casualties, even back in my area, my platoon. I was strung out west of him, about 150 to 200 meters and down just to his south-southwest. We were tied in physically, but there was a gap about 75 meters between my CP and the rear element of his platoon, which was well covered by automatic weapons fire. In fact, I think it was probably a 30 caliber machine gun they were using.

C. Will you indicate the coordinates of the gap, please?
B. It'd be approximately 012586. And this was an open paddy-like area having a real dike—-I guess it must have been about six to eight inches tall. And the only way across this fire-swept area was on your stomach, real low. And this, in fact, is where we incurred many of our casualties, trying to get across this area to be of some relief to the second platoon. The second platoon commander was receiving everything from automatic weapons fire to RPGs, B-40s, and even M-79s. So immediately it became a matter of switching from the offensive to reorganize and try to get our wounded back, because we were out-gunned here.

And it was pretty evident after about two hours that the enemy had heavy automatic weapons plus RPGs, B-40s, and 60mm mortars. So, we'd sent a unit from the third platoon around to the east, well into the horseshoe, trying to get back the four wounded, correction, three wounded of the second platoon, and we could almost pinpoint several of the weapons in the enemy positions. There was a brick wall, I think the coordinates would have been about 013587, and we were receiving fire from behind the brick wall. While the relief unit went around and tried to retrieve the wounded, he got fire from the brick wall plus M79s and so they had to withdraw back to the perimeter.

So the second platoon had all the time been receiving more casualties. We had an aircraft on station, an A0, a cowpoke, and we asked him to see if he could locate the enemy positions. He had located the same unit that we had behind the brick wall, but the heavy automatic weapons fire was coming from at least two to three positions, to our west-northwest. He couldn't quite spot them due to the heavy brush and concealment.

So around 1230, the second platoon commander got wounded. He had an incoming B40 and it hit right in the CP area and the platoon sergeant got wounded also. And we lost communications with the second platoon. So, immediately, I moved across the open area to the second platoon command post area and I found out when I got there that the platoon commander had been badly wounded. He'd received a head wound plus a bad leg wound. So we got him back across, and got him med-evaced, and the platoon sergeant and the rest of the wounded. We discovered that they had about five wounded in the immediate area of the
CP and that they had about four wounded off to the northeast. And we couldn't get back due to the automatic weapons firing coming from the northwest, shooting right across the gap in between there—the relief force and the people that were cut off. I moved my platoon to the east and shifted to the east to fill in with, where the second platoon was, plus, I set up a machine gun to try to suppress the fire of the automatic weapons fire that was coming into our ranks. And I took about five men from my first squad and moved them across the open area and we immediately tried to set up a base of fire to get the remainder of the second platoon out—the wounded and the ones that were pinned down.

And we thought of a scheme of maneuver to get the wounded, the four people that were cut off, back. We'd contacted the AO and requested that he make several dummy passes, as he was running low on ammunition after he'd checked the area towards which we thought the automatic weapons fire was coming from. And meanwhile, we'd knocked out the enemy position to the rear of the brick wall with M79 and small arms. So I think the only thing that was restraining the people that were cut off was the machine gun to the northwest which we actually hadn't spotted yet. But the aircraft did work. After several dummy passes, I was able to make hand and arms signals to the people who were cut off. And we got across to them that if they would run when the aircraft came in, that we may be able to suppress the fire long enough for them to get across one at a time. I just learned at this time that one of the wounded had died and there were only three left to get across. And there was no chance of bringing his body across, as it was about 75 meters of flat open terrain and there was definitely grazing fire being fired across there. So as the aircraft started making the passes, we started working them back one at a time, and finally we got all three back. And at this time, it was late in the evening, about 1730. So we'd received word to pull back south of phase line Bravo to start to consolidate the position for the night. And we got all the second platoon out and the remainder of my unit. We pulled back, and we set up a company defensive perimeter for the night.

Our helicopters, as they were going out, taking out medevacs, were still receiving heavy automatic weapons fire from this horseshoe
area. In fact, one got knocked down for a short while, but he got back into the air. So this remained a definite threat to our right flank all night.

We set up a tight defensive perimeter this night of 1 December and we got hit from our right flank by AK fire, automatic weapons fire. And I believe that this was a probe on our right flank in order for the people to see how thinly stretched we were. They were trying to exit down to the south-southeast, along the riverbank to get out of the cordon area.

And the rest of the night...we hit it all night with 105s and 155s, and we even worked out 8-inch guns into the horseshoe area. However, due to our friendlies on the east bank of the river, we couldn't get any closer. Actually, we couldn't get close enough to knock out the bunker complex system that was there. And the 105s and 155s couldn't do the job. So we were kind of stuck there for support of supporting arms.

The next morning, Bravo, 1/5, moved up and attempted to go through the same area we did, and my platoon was assigned the mission of covering their rear, about 200 meters south of phase line Bravo. This was on the morning of the second.

C. What was the size of the enemy force? Your estimate of the enemy force in that horseshoe?

B. Well, we knew immediately, as soon as we started receiving heavy automatic weapons fire from machine guns that it was at least a minimum of a company in there, maybe a company. And probably more. We found out later that there was a battalion there.

C. O.K. What led up to the fight? Was this part of a planned operation?

B. This was part of a planned operation in sweeping through the area completely from phase line Bravo all the way to Charlie. And this horseshoe area was sitting right on phase line Bravo. So this was one of the planned operations—to sweep out and clean this area, a search and destroy.
C. You'd had prior contact with the enemy for how many preceding days?
B. Heavy contact for three preceding days.
C. Now what do you think the enemy's mission was at this particular period?
B. Well, definitely, the troops were there to defend their battalion perimeter, which I found out later. And I think the overall scheme of the NVA being in this area was to eventually attack the Da Nang battle area, which was a short ways north of the Meade River Operation area.
C. I think we have on the sketches, all the changes in the friendly troop dispositions during the period of the fight. Are there any changes in the enemy? Did they bring any new forces in, or take any out?
B. No, the enemy seemed to be getting stronger the farther north we swept. And I believe that as we fought the enemy north, he was withdrawing and consolidating into a particular area. I think, we found out, this particular area was this horseshoe area that we ran into on the 1st of December.
C. So far as you know, did any leave the horseshoe area during the day, during the 1st of December?
B. That's negative. We had aircraft overhead and I'm sure they should have spotted anybody in open movement. We had the friendly lines on the east bank of the river, so the route most open to be taken would have been down the river or the road to the banks of the river, and we had these covered very well.
C. How many casualties did your platoon and the second platoon take that day? Since you ended up as the C.O. of the second platoon as well, could you give me the casualties of both of them?
B. We took anywhere from 25 to 30 casualties during this contact.
C. Now this is just one day, the 1st of December? The first platoon?
B. I had three killed and I think there were about seven wounded during the 1st of December fire fight.
C. How about the second platoon, do you remember what their killed and wounded were?

B. The second platoon casualties were heavy. In fact, they almost became an inefficient platoon to operate. They lost a number of people; they lost a platoon commander, two squad leaders, and the actual number, I think, was anywhere from 15 to 18 casualties.

C. Do you remember how many were killed?

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C. How many in that first platoon were KIA or medevaced?
B. I had two KIAs and about five medevacs.
C. How about the second platoon?
B. The second platoon had about two KIAs and around seven medevaced.
C. Do you know what caused the casualties? Small arms? Mortars?

B. Mostly small arms. Especially on KIAs. Definitely small arms. Some of the WIs of the second platoon were shrapnel and fragments from B-40s and M-79s.

C. O.K., now we're going to get into the protection you had available to you. We'll first talk about the riflemen. What protection did they have? Did they get behind logs, trees, or things like that?

B. Well, in the case of the second platoon, they had sufficient cover only around the CP area and this was from small arms. But they had insufficient cover from B-40s and M-79s. The rest of the company was strung out behind paddy dikes...but this proved insufficient because the enemy guns were so accurate that they actually would hit any portion of your body that was sticking above the paddy dikes.

C. Now we're talking about the period when you were moving forward, either in squads abreast or squad columns, right? That's up to about the period of 1940 in the morning?

B. At this time, initially, on the move out, we had pretty good cover. We were moving behind graves--these Vietnamese graves--
and when we started taking incoming sniper fire, we immediately got down behind the graves and returned fire. And this was pretty good cover. But as the morning wore on, we had to move to our east and the graves ended in there...started the tree lines. And the cover became more sparse. In fact, there was very little cover except for the paddy dikes as we moved into the horseshoe area.

C. At this time, when you're moving, both the second and the first platoon, would you rate them, would you rate that equivalent to an open foxhole, half as good, or the equivalent of being just standing?

B. I'd say it was about 50 percent as good as a foxhole, better than standing, though, because you had the dikes.

C. Now this is the period up to about 0940, if I remember correctly, when you flanked to the north and took up a position along the dike, right?

B. That's affirmative.

C. And this particular time, if I recall correctly, the second platoon, the point, was up about the brick wall.

B. The point got just about to the center of the brick wall before they got hit.

C. Now we'll start discussing protection at this particular time for both platoons. How would you rate the protection of the second platoon? The equivalent of an open foxhole, better, or worse?

B. Well, definitely worse because they had hardly any cover at all and the point in the front of the platoon had been caught in the fire lanes which were prepared by the enemy, and which pretty well had that whole area covered by fire. So this was not even 50 percent as good as an open foxhole.

C. I assume that most of them were down. How would you rate their protection, equivalent to being prone in the open?

B. That's about the max rating right there, being prone in the open, because they had heavy grazing fire going over their heads and any move was almost a certain wound.

C. That was about the situation for the second platoon, from roughly about 9040 to noon. Is that about right? Or a little longer than that?
B. I'd say it was around 1400 to 1430 when we started trying to withdraw.

C. They were at relatively the same position, all right. Now let's take your platoon. How would you rate their protection from about 0940. I believe that was the time you established a fire base along the dike in the space to the north.

B. We were in little better position as far as covering the segment, due to the fact that we did have the paddy dikes and a few trees to take cover behind. Now this was still insufficient as far as cover from small arms and M79s and B40s, because we were still taking casualties. So I'd say it was not as good as an open foxhole, definitely.

C. How about relative to being prone in the open?

B. We were prone and I guess it was just a little bit better than being prone because we did have dikes.

C. O.K. What kind of protection did you have for your machine gun? You had one or two machine guns?

B. We had two guns. One had a pretty good position; he was down low behind in the paddy dikes. And the other gun was pretty exposed. He had to be exposed in order to put the fire in the proper place. So one gun had a pretty good position, pretty good cover.

C. That was about the equivalent of a gun pit or a revetted position?

B. Negative, I don't say it's that good. No.

C. About half as good?

B. About, maybe--possibly half.

C. How about the other one.

B. The other guy was exposed and received a lot of incoming enemy fire.

C. He's the equivalent of being kneeling? Standing?

B. The gun was fired from a prone position. And in fact, the gunner did get wounded from small arms. He was in a prone position.

C. Just practically in the open.

B. Practically in the open. Prone.

C. Now we turn to the protection available to the enemy forces. Do you want to describe the protection that was available to the enemy rifleman?
B. First of all, we'll have to consider that he was in a prepared position and we'd walked into his fire lanes, so he was definitely well dug in, well concealed, and in well prepared positions. Definitely good overhead cover because we'd run several air strikes and were still receiving automatic weapons fire from the enemy positions, along with artillery which we also ran in there. So he had overhead cover which was real thick, and were later found out to be concrete bunkers in this horseshoe complex. And he had good concealment.

C. Do you know what the depth was of the concrete covering he had?

B. Well, we were dropping 500-pound bombs and 155 shells and they weren't knocking them out. So they must have been pretty thick.

C. How about the machine guns? The enemy machine guns? Did they have the same type of protection?

B. The enemy machine guns had real good protection and they were also well camouflaged and overhead protection was real good.

C. Did they have concrete overhead?

B. I'm sure they had concrete overhead and railroad ties--these iron rail ties.

C. How about mortars? Did they have mortars?

B. They had mortars on this particular incident. I think we were a little too close for the enemy to use his mortars, so we didn't receive any mortars.

C. Were there any specially protected positions in there, such as command posts, that you know about?

B. I'm sure they had a command post in there only we didn't get that close to find it this day on the 1st of December.

C. Do you want to tell me about the preparation fire you had before you jumped off, on the morning of the 30th? Do you want to start on the night before, after you pulled back behind line Bravo?

B. The previous date, on the 30th, we'd had contact pretty heavy, but we still hadn't pinpointed where the accurate automatic weapons fire was coming from. So, we just, in general, hit the whole general area--and in fact, all the way to phase line Charlie, which is up to the
northeast of where we were. We kind of thought the fire was coming from Charlie, all the way back down to the big tree line at the grid, about 019590 in this vicinity. And we dropped fires low as 014587, but we didn't actually put any heavy fire into the area just adjacent to phase line Bravo which is where, really, to hit hard, because this is, in effect, danger close almost to our positions, so we didn't bring any artillery fire down this close, but we didn't actually think there was any heavy concentration of forces in this area, until we moved out the next day.

C. When was the artillery preparation lifted on the morning of the 1st?

B. Well, we'd had continuous fire off and on--H and I, harassment and interdiction fire--all night. And the next morning on the 1st, about 0700, our artillery support was lifted.

C. How many KIAs or medevacs did you take during the withdrawal period of about 1500 to roughly 1730 or 1800?

B. We had several who were wounded during withdrawal, but we had no medevacs or KIAs.

C. Do you want to tell me how many rounds each of your riflemen carried at the time of the operation, as well as how many grenades they had?

B. Every man carried at least a bandolier, a magazine, which would have been about 160 to 180 rounds, and most of the troopers carried two bandoliers. So, small arms, we were pretty fat on ammunition. Grenades, we carried, normally, anywhere from four to six hand grenades.

C. On the average, how many rounds would each one of your riflemen have, do you figure?

B. Anywhere from 180 to 200 rounds.

C. How about your rounds for each machine gun?

B. We carried, normally, about, at least 1500 rounds per gun and anywhere from 1500 to 2000 rounds per gun.
C. All right, now we'll start with the period from 0730 to about 0830 when you were sweeping almost due north. Now, at what range did your rifles fire at that time? Or were you firing?

B. We didn't put any fire out until we received fire and this was after we reached the site of the graves, the mounds, which were approximately anywhere from 150 to 200 meters up from phase line Bravo. And we moved from 0730 to 0830 up to the grave area. And we started returning fire at once when we started receiving fire right in this area.

C. How long did you fire? Do you know what time you started firing? 0830?

B. No, we were up in this area about 30 minutes. We'd been firing back and forth here, small arms. We were shooting at a range anywhere from 200 meters all the way to maybe 400 meters.

C. Do you know what time you started firing your rifles? About 8 o'clock?

B. It was around 0800.

C. Do you know about how many rounds they put out, the average rifleman put out, say, during this half-hour period?

B. We were firing, we were trying to fire pretty accurate fire because we had a pinpoint target, a couple of bunkers and hooches.

C. Where were they?

B. They were northeast of us, in a tree line. The grave coordinates would have been about...


C. The target for your rifle fire was what coordinate?

B. We were returning fire at the tree line area grid probably about 012588, in the vicinity of that.

C. Do you know about how many rounds the average rifleman in your platoon fired during this period?

B. We fired anywhere from 30 to 50 rounds.

C. Each rifleman?

B. Each rifleman, mostly semiautomatic fire.

C. Do you know what posture they were firing from, standing, kneeling, crawling, from the hip?
B. It was anywhere between a kneeling and a standing because we were leaning on these graves, firing. And we were trying to crawl from the top of the graves around the sides of them.

C. I've asked you this question before, but how would you rate the accuracy of your rifle fire in this particular incident, with what you would accomplish in a firing range in the United States.

B. I think we probably came closest to getting any accuracy out of this fire, this particular contact site, due to the fact that we had a pinpoint target. We were really trying to zing them in there. I think we had maybe up to 65 or 70 percent accuracy as compared to a rifle range back in the States.

C. Did you fire your machine guns during this period?

B. The machine guns were in heavy contact. We really put out some automatic weapons fire. We fired anywhere from 1000 to 1200 rounds...

C. During this half-hour period.

B. During this half-hour period we really put some fire out.

C. What did they fire at?

B. The machine guns were firing on basically the same target that the infantry and riflemen were.

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C. Now, I'll go back and ask you about your machine guns. I think you told me how many you fired during this half-hour period and you told me you had them mounted on top of graves. How high were the graves off the ground?

B. I think the graves were about 7-1/2, 8 feet.

C. And your machine gunners were prone on top of the graves?

B. There was fairly good camouflage on top of the graves, due to the grass growing on top, and the graves themselves provided a little cover, and the machine guns were prone on top of the graves. They were still susceptible to enemy fire, because they were still getting incoming, because they had no actual cover in front of them. The grave itself was covering the lower portion of his body.

C. You're using bipod mounts?
B. Bipod.

C. And how about the accuracy of machine gun fire in this particular instance in relation to the accuracy you achieved in the U.S. on the range in the U.S.?

B. I think we had about 80 to 85 percent accuracy. The guns were really putting them in there. They had a pinpoint target and they were firing real good fire.

C. O.K., now the target for your small arms fire at this particular case were identified areas?

B. That's perfectly true.

C. Point targets, really--you knew where these targets were so you're positive that all your riflemen and machine gunners knew where the target was that they were firing on. Is that right?

B. That's affirmative. We had definite targets.

C. O.K., now we're still in this period of 0730 to 0830. At what range was the enemy rifle fire delivered during this period?

B. Well the snipers were pretty close. It was pretty hard to pick them out of the tree line, in the brush. I'm sure they had spider holes in the ground immediately to our front and we suspected they were in some of the graves around us because we had several people get hit from the rear, in the head and the back. So we also suspected them being in trees to our left flank and to our right front. So the range was anywhere from maybe 15 meters up to 200, 300 meters.

C. Do you want to estimate how many rounds of enemy fire you took per minute, on the average during this half hour period?

B. Well, initially, when we first had contact, it was about 100, 125, 130 rounds a minute. Pretty heavy.

C. That started at what hour?

B. This was around 0800 so we moved up on the graves.

C. And that lasted for how long?

B. This was intense. In fact, even as we moved off from the grave position we were still receiving heavy automatic weapons fire and sniper fire.

C. That was about 100 rounds a minute?

B. About that.
C. Do you think that was about the estimate throughout this half-hour period, 0800 to...
   B. 0830.
   C. Do you want to estimate what part was machine gun and what part was rifle?
   B. That's pretty hard to state because the incoming were AKs and machine guns, I'm sure. I think the machine gun was the more accurate of the two, because sometimes we could distinguish the heavier barrel of the machine gun, and most of the time it was right in there. We'd always be taking casualties.
   C. So you would say it was mixed, hundred...
   B. And snipers.
   C. You've already described the position of the rifle, the enemy rifle, machine gun.

C. Now we're going to take up the period from about 0830 to 0940, when you were moving...This would cover the period when you moved almost due east and about the latter hour you took up a position along a berm; you took up firing position facing generally to the north along a berm just west of the river. Now, during this period could you give me an estimate of what ranges your rifles were being fired?
   B. Well, again, the enemy was in one definite location. We received accurate well-aimed sniper fire all while we were moving and the automatic weapons fire died down to kind of sporadic bursts, every now and then.
   C. How do you rate sporadic?
   B. Maybe a burst of six to ten every five or six minutes.
   C. That's your idea of sporadic? That's what sporadic means to you. O.K. Now, during the time you're moving generally eastward, how many rounds a minute did your rifles fire?
   B. We didn't fire too much while we were moving. Our main mission was to get over to a better position to fire. So there was a minimum of
outgoing fire. Moreover, the machine guns were covering us as we moved. In other words, I set the guns up in kind of a leap-frog position. And I think the rifle fire actually outgoing was less than about six rounds per man as we moved.

C. Is that per minute, or during the whole period?
B. Now when you ask me this, are you speaking of the whole platoon or just per man?
C. Well, what I'm trying to do is get an average during this period of about an hour and ten minutes. How many rounds did the average rifleman fire?

B. I'd say it'd be anywhere from five to ten rounds total.
C. O.K., how many rounds did your machine guns fire during this period?
B. The machine guns fired around 400 to 500 rounds, maybe.
C. Each one?
B. Each gun. Because they were covering the platoons movement.
C. So this would be each one of them fired about 500 rounds during this period of about an hour and forty minutes? Correction, an hour and ten minutes. During the time you're moving, that period from 0830 to 0940, at what was your rifle fire directed?
B. I think the rifle fire was mainly to cover the general area where we knew the enemy was, rather than pinpoint, because their troops were moving, shooting as they moved.
C. What was the target?
B. The targets were several buildings or grass hooches, grass huts, and some bunkers.
C. Do you want to give me the coordinates of where they were located?
B. That coordinate would have been about from 009 over to about 012, and about 588. In the vicinity of that was a tree line there. And these hooches and bunkers were in this particular tree line, these grid coordinates.
C. What was the posture of the riflemen when they fired? Did they fire from the hip?
B. We were firing from a kneeling and a prone position. In other words, they would move a little, stop, fire, and move again.

C. What are the machine guns firing at?

B. The machine guns were firing at the same general area and the main objective there was to keep their heads down while the platoon maneuvered.

C. Where were the machine guns located? Still on grave tops?

B. The machine guns initially were on grave tops, but they started leapfrogging across and eventually were on flat terrain.

C. O.K., but during this particular period, both the targets for both the machine guns and the rifles were an area.

B. An area, a known enemy area, but not quite pinpointed because we were on the move and we were coming over here. But mainly, our objective was to keep the enemy pinned down while we moved.

C. O.K., now we'll turn to the enemy small arms fire. Do you remember about what you were taking during the period in which you were moving?

B. Yes. We were taking accurate sniper fire and sporadic automatic weapons fire.

C. Do you want to tell me about how many rounds you were getting?

B. We were getting maybe bursts of from eight to ten rounds of automatic weapons fire which would come every five to six minutes, and the sniper fire was constant.

C. One round a minute? Ten rounds a minute?

B. Maybe two rounds a minute.

C. Two rounds a minute. Do you know what range they were being fired?

B. The snipers, it was pretty hard to say the range, because we were having people get hit in the back and from the rear, and also from the north. So we figured it was some we'd bypassed--they were behind us in the graves themselves and in the tree line to our southwest, and also the people to our north and northeast, in the tree line where we were firing.

C. These are all snipers.

B. These are snipers.
C. How would you evaluate the posture in which they were standing? Were they in stable positions, very well prepared positions?

B. The enemy was definitely in very well prepared, well concealed positions, because as hard as we tried, we couldn't quite pick out exactly where the snipers were. The automatic weapons, we never did actually pinpoint them. We had movement in this grid coordinate I gave you previously, and we knew there was some enemy in there but the automatic weapons fire was coming from positions other than this ... in addition to this.

C. From the period of about 0940 to 1400 you were along the dike there to the south. Can you tell me about how many rounds total during the whole period that your riflemen fired, on the average.

B. From about 0940 when we were set down on the dike here, we got resupplied from our reserve platoon back here, plus we got some ammo from our adjacent unit--I think to our west here.

C. From the west? Do you know which unit it was?

B. It came up either from Bravo, 1/5, I think, or maybe Kilo, but I think it was Bravo, 1/5, and we'd run short on ammo. We did replenish, though, and I think the riflemen used up to this period of time, easily about 250 to 275 rounds.

C. During this period, what were they firing at?

B. They were firing at the targets that we previously mentioned, plus the area adjacent to this second platoon here, this new tree line we're receiving all the fire from. It's harder to pinpoint targets, though, because the enemy automatic weapons fire and sniper fire, accurate, kept our heads down. So it was mostly area fire.

C. And what posture would you say your riflemen were in?

... ... ...

B. At this time, the majority of our people were in the prone. We were out of the grave area and we were just as low as we could get behind the small paddy dikes and the few trees that there were in the area. So cover here was pretty scarce. We moved out of the covered area in the grave area. Now we moved into an area where we had again,
heavy contact and cover was pretty scarce and we were all in a prone position. And we were taking casualties in the prone, so the sniper fire was really getting intense now.

C. Where were your machine guns at this particular time?
B. Both machine guns were to the west of my platoon CP. I was up with my fourth squad and when they moved across, we left both guns. When they moved up and we left both guns covering the field of fire, down to the southwest.

C. And they were with the second squad then?
B. Both guns were back along with the second squad. We could get better cover from the position they were in.
C. About how many rounds did your machine gun fire during this period?
B. We'd also gotten replenished on machine gun ammo and during this period from around 0940 to around 1400, we, I guess the guns had put out roughly anywhere from 1800 to maybe 2000 rounds.

C. At a target? What area were you covering?
B. They were also covering the same general area and the tree lines to our northeast.

C. The tree line and the hooch there, the same general area?
B. The same area.
C. The area that you mentioned earlier by coordinate?
B. Yes, sir.
C. Now, let's get the enemy small arms fire. What were you taking during this particular period?

... ...

B. We were receiving enemy heavy automatic weapons fire from machine guns and I believe these were 30-caliber machine guns: one of them sounded like it. And there were at least three machine guns from three different directions that we were receiving fire from, all to our north. But we were receiving sniper fire from our rear still and also to the west, and to the north. Our rear would have been the south. So we were receiving B40 rockets.
B. I don't know. In my area where we had our platoon CP, we had about three during the time we were there, and we had chics coming in.

C. That's the fragmentation grenade?

B. Yes, sir. Fragmentation grenade.

C. O.K. Do you want to appraise the amount of machine gun fire, average rounds per minute during this period?

B. Again, during this period, the machine gun fire was steady but it wasn't as fast as it had been at initial contact. It'd slowed down now and again just sporadic fire, and every now and then, just to keep us pinned down. The machine guns now started sniping with one round or two rounds; the machine guns were being used just like rifles.

C. You think there were three guns firing at you?

B. There were three machine guns, and several AKs and, of course, the snipers, I guess were using SKSs, rifles. But the machine guns had stopped firing bursts and were now shooting single shots.

C. Do you want to estimate how many rounds your platoon was getting per minute through this period?

B. Oh well, I think these machine guns were only occasionally firing bursts. I guess we were getting anywhere from fifteen to twenty rounds a minute, just a constant sniper fire and every now and then a burst of automatic weapons fire.

C. That was through that entire period, you say?

O.K., now we're going to the period from about 1500 to the time you got out about 1730. During this particular period, as I recalled it, you had your second squad still in position along the berm with two machine guns and you had a squad of about five of your own men from the first squad, plus three men from the B-1/5. This left about five men and a machine gun left behind, of the first squad. Is that about right?

B. That's about right, we had placed the machine gun to cover us from all incoming. And about 1400 or so, the second platoon
commander got badly wounded by, I think it was a B40 rocket and we lost radio contact with the second platoon. So I was about 150 meters south of his position, so I started working my way slowly across the paddy area to get to where he was. And after I got there, I found that he'd been wounded in the leg and the head, so I got him all bandaged up and we got him on the way back. We medevaced across the paddies, another KIA was sustained over there, and the remainder of the wounded in the second platoon. I then asked, called, for the rest of my, a portion of my first squad to come across, and we also had some people from the adjacent unit. And immediately we started taking the machine gun over there to fire, and working towards getting the other wounded, the four people that were separated, back across the open area.

C. Could I ask you a question here? How long did it take you to build up a base of fire around the old second platoon CP?

B. I guess we got everybody over there and situated in around 30, 35, 40 minutes.

C. You started over there at what hour?

B. I guess it was around 1415.

C. And you had your base of fire over there?

B. Around 1500.

C. All right, now we'll take this particular period. Let's go back again. You started over at 14--

B. About a quarter after two, 1415.

C. O.K., and you were over there by when?

B. Around 1430. I got over there and started working the rest of the people across and about 1500 we had some type of supporting fire going out to cover us as we started working the wounded back across the open area.

C. Did you take any casualties from small arms during this particular time--during this roughly half hour period?

B. Of the wounded that we were trying to get back, one of them got hit again, coming back across the open area, there where the machine gun fire was coming from.
C. That was the only hit that you know of?

B. I think so, we had another man get hit before we even started across, but I guess this was in the process of getting across also.

C. Do you want to describe the incoming fire at this particular period, from about 1415 till about a quarter to three?

B. Well, there was an open paddy area we had to cross. It was the only way to get over where the second platoon was. And I guess it's about 70 to 75 meters across, and the dike was real low, and it's just an open area and the only way across was with your nose in the dirt and mud. So, the machine gunners knew this. They were firing bursts of two and three rounds, and they were hitting pretty accurately.

C. About how many bursts a minute were you getting, during this particular half hour period?

B. Well, the guns were firing single rounds. They knew we were crawling, so they weren't firing bursts to miss. They were sniping, trying to get us as we crawled across. And, I imagine, crawling across, there would be around five and six rounds a minute of accurate sniper fire.

C. How many men did you have crossing that particular stretch at one time?

B. Only one man at a time.

C. And he'd be crawling?

B. He'd be definitely crawling.

C. And he was the equivalent of being prone.

B. Lower than prone.

......

C. Now, let's go to the period from 1500 to roughly 1730. I believe you had one of the riflemen hit by small arms fire during this period. Do you want to describe how heavy the incoming enemy fire was during this particular period, on the average?

B. We moved across and got a base of fire set up around 1500 and we started working the people that were wounded and trapped out in
front, and we tried to coordinate and get them back across. And during this period of time, the enemy kept up constant automatic weapons fire. I guess he knew what we were trying to do. So he was firing a little more regularly now than he was previously. I guess he was firing anywhere from 30 to 35 rounds a minute now, and automatic bursts were a little more often.

C. This was small arms of all kinds--automatic weapons, machine guns, and sniper fire, around 30 rounds a minute throughout the period. And you had one man hit. All right, now, on your side, about how many rounds per minute were you firing? Do you remember?

B. Well, we put out quite a few M-79 rounds, and we threw quite a few hand grenades.

C. In what direction were they going?

B. We were throwing northwest towards the machine guns. It was indefinite to us--and there was a little grassy knoll tree area that was between us and the machine gun. And this was the only covered position there was in this area over here, and this was where the second platoon CP was. And meanwhile we did knock out the brick wall position which was off to our northeast.

C. Do you know what kind of weapon they had in there?

B. They had an automatic weapon. And I think we were lucky in getting it with the first couple of M-79 rounds, as it had a good field of fire on the CP area. So we were lucky in knocking it out right away. But the main threat was still the machine gun off to our northwest, which had both routes to the wounded and back covered.

C. You had two bases of fire now. You had the base of fire back by the dikes. So how were they covering?

B. They were shooting at the machine gun to the northwest but at a different direction than where we were. In other words, we were in a covered position, close to the machine gun.

C. And that machine gun was roughly in about 010--011588?

B. That was right around this area right here.

C. Was that a pretty well identified area? Did you have that machine gun pretty well lined up?
B. Negative, we never did actually pinpoint it. I think we would have probably got it if we could have pinpointed. But it was definitely well camouflaged, and concealed, and we never actually pinpointed the gun. We found out later, from talking to all the troops, that it was down below in an overgrown area, and it was pretty hard to spot the muzzle flashes.

C. Can you remember about how many rounds a minute your base of fire down along the dike was putting out during this period?

B. Yes, we were running kind of short on ammo about this time. We had heavy contact all afternoon, and they were firing sporadics, too, in order to keep the enemy's head down when we were moving across. Once we got across, they kind of slackened off. I guess they were firing anywhere from fifteen to twenty rounds a minute.

C. Each man?

B. The machine gun and the small arms combined.

C. The total from that particular fire base was 15 rounds per minute.

B. Yes, trying to fire accurate sniper fire themselves against the enemy.

C. O.K. How about the second platoon and the, well, I guess you'd call it the jury-rigged squad up there on the second CP. How many rounds was that particular fire base putting out?

B. We put out about 150 M-79 rounds. We came over with plenty of M-79 rounds, and we'd thrown quite a few hand grenades. There were plenty lying around from the wounded. And as far as the small arms fire, we weren't in a position, really, to bring small arms to bear on the machine gun. Like I said before, it was kind of indefinite to us so we were throwing hand grenades, trying to angle them over the protection we had near the gun. And we were firing M79 grenades, and this was a lot more effective, I think, than the small arms, because we couldn't quite bring them to bear. This was also when we brought the aircraft onto the gun position.
C. You're talking about throwing hand grenades at the machine gun. Do you want to explain the relative position and range?

B. The gun was definitely out of range for hand grenades, but we felt that there was definitely a distraction in getting the wounded back, and it helped in getting our wounded back, so anything we could employ to aid in getting our troops back across the fire-swept area, we'd use it. So we did throw hand grenades, even though we weren't square on the range, and we couldn't actually see the gun where we were. But the M-79s were a little more effective, though they didn't knock him out either because he was well dug in.

C. You knocked out the brick wall shortly after three o'clock, apparently. The rest of the time, how many rounds of M-79s did you fire at that position?

B. At the brick wall?

C. Right.

B. I think we must have put about five or six in there before we were pretty sure we'd silenced it.

C. Then you switched the M-79 up to the machine gun that was up to your northwest. And how many rounds, do you remember, did you put over there?

B. Well, we fired, came over with about 175 rounds of M-79 and we fired the remainder towards this other machine gun, which would've been anywhere from 150 to 160 rounds.

C. Now, I believe there was no mortar or artillery fire during this particular operation. But you did use tactical air, is that correct?

B. That's affirmative. We had the Alpha Oscar up overhead, the AO, and he was flying an OV-10. And we were too close for fixed wing and, actually, we were too close for any type of air. But this was about the only way we had left getting the wounded back across that open area. So we talked to the pilot and we'd agreed that he'd make several runs on the enemy position area.
C. This is the OV-10?
   B. This is the OV-10. And we tried to work the wounded back across the same time he was coming down for his strafing run and rocket run.

   C. What was he firing? How many machine guns did he have? You said he strafed. What machine guns did he have?
   B. I think the OV-10 carries four 7.62s.
   C. And how many rockets did he deliver, do you know?
   B. He was pretty short on ordnance, so I think he fired about four or five rockets.

   C. What was your evaluation of the results of the rockets, were the rockets on target?
   B. I don't think the rockets had any effect on the gun, but I think it did help to distract them. The same with the strafing. I don't think they affected the machine gun, other than to distract it from our getting the people back across.

   C. Did it slow down the enemy fire?
   B. He did when he made his run, but as soon as he would pull up out of his run there, he'd start up again.

   C. About how long would he hold them down? What period, a minute or two?
   B. I'd say from the time he started down to the time he pulled out. I guess it'd be, maybe 15 to 20 seconds.

   C. Were you fairly well impressed with the performance?
   B. Good air support. It was outstanding; it was definitely well coordinated. They did an outstanding job. I don't think we could have gotten them back without the help of the aircraft, OV-10.

   C. I take it you like the OV-10.
   B. It's an outstanding weapon--Jesus Christ, yes!

   C. O.K., now let's get the infantry data. Now, what's the normal strength of your platoon? I believe we had that earlier, was it 43 men?

   B. We ran from 35 to 43. At this stage of the operation I was operating after the previous fire fights, and we hadn't got any replacements in, so my strength was pretty below par this time.
C. How many men did you have?
B. I think I had anywhere from 26 to 29 people.
C. How were they organized?
B. I had it broken down into two squads. Previously I had three, but due to my casualties, I had to break my platoon into two squads.

C. And each squad had how many men? Do you remember?
B. Each squad had about ten men.
C. And where were your machine guns?
B. I had the guns attached, one to each squad.
C. And what other weapons did they have besides their rifles?
B. We had LAWs within the platoon, and these LAW-men were integrated into the different squads. LAW-men usually carried anywhere from three to five LAWs.

C. So you had two ten men squadrons, and about eight left of the LAW-men and communicators. Do you want to break down the others; How many riflemen, how many machine gunners, and how many did carry LAWs in addition to rifles?
B. We carried, now there, you had LAW-men, the squads run from nine to ten and you have only one or two rocket men attached to each squad, and in my particular instance, I had three LAW-men.

C. That's what you call rocket men.
B. Three rocket men.
C. You had three rocket men in your platoon.
B. In my platoon. And two machine gun teams. My gun teams were two men each, and the ammo operators had moved up to be gunners because the gunners got hit previously. And I had my platoon CP and my radioman--bright guy, was acting platoon sergeant also and myself, and we had two corpsmen. 

C. All the rest of them were in the squads.
B. We had one corpsman.

C. Now if I recall your figures correctly, you had, in platoon headquarters, you had yourself, a radioman, and one platoon sergeant
and one corpsman, that's four; and then you had three rocket or LAW-
men, four machine gunners, and then about sixteen riflemen making up
your platoon.

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I think I've asked you before about the enemy units. Do you want to
give me another estimate, or an estimate on what you think was in here?

B. Well, the type weapons we'd encountered, we received, well, the
previous night, we received 82mm mortars, but this particular day, on
the 1st, we received machine gun fire, AK-47 fire, and sniper fire with
the rifles, and rifle grenades, and B-40 rockets, and we got a couple of
chicoms grenades also. So, I felt that, with the rate of weapons, it
was at least a company, at least a reinforced company we were up against,
and possibly bigger.

C. Can you estimate how many machine guns were in there?

B. There were three known machine guns that we received fire from.

Three know machine gun positions. Not pinpointed, but three different
areas we were getting machine gun fire from.

C. Now, did you have any mortars that you remember?

B. We were too close to employ our mortars to the enemy, and I
think he felt the same way because we didn't get any incoming mortars.

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C. Now, I'm going to ask you the impressions of the performance
of the infantry units. Now, how fast can a company--I'm going to relate
this to a company--move administratively or nontactically in the type
of terrain and ground cover found in this battle area. Now, this is
pretty level, as I recall--maybe it's underwater though, isn't it?

B. Yes sir, it was definitely pretty wet.

C. Well, can you move about 1 mile an hour? 20-25-30 meters a
minute? How do you remember it?

B. Well, the normal rate of march for the foot soldiers is about
2-1/2 miles per hour, but due to the wet and muddy area, and discounting
any enemy fire, I guess you'd move about 1-3/4 to 2 miles per hour;
about 1-3/4 per hour I'd say.

C. O.K. If you're sweeping through this area, if you're patrolling
this area, and you're pretty darn sure there was an enemy element in
the area, how fast would you move?

B. Well, then, definitely, we'd move more cautiously; and our rate
of march would be a lot slower. We'd be lucky to cover half as fast,
because you've got your point out, and you're checking areas out.

C. It would be closer to one-third as fast?

B. Right, approximately.

C. O.K., now, how fast could you advance in attack on a known enemy
position in the area?

B. I guess it'd depend on the situation, mainly, and the terrain,
due to the fact that you'd be taking advantage of the cover and conceal-
ment in approaching the known enemy position. And I think this would
be a very slow procedure.

C. Five meters a minute? or is that fast?

B. Well, I'd say approximately about that.

C. I don't want to give you answers.

B. That'd be pretty slow. It's pretty hard to say. This would
definitely depend on the terrain situation, if you had a covered route
of approach, and how fast the enemy was firing.

C. We're not talking about when you get up to your final coordi-
nation line. You're no longer a part of it, you turn it over to your
squad leader. I'm talking about when you're moving them up to the
final coordination line. I realize that Vietnam isn't that type of
war, where you do have this deliberate movement, but I'm just trying
to find out your opinion. Now, you didn't get any incoming bombs, artil-
illery or mortar rounds. You got some small arms fire? Now, did incom-
ing reduce your rate of movement at any of those times?

B. Definitely, it did.

C. How much, on the average? In thinking how you'd normally
move through that area, how much did that incoming small arms reduce
your rate of movement?

B. I'd say anywhere from 60 to 80 percent.
C. O.K., and that was all small arms. Now, if you'd had bombs, or mortar rounds coming in--this is just an iffy question--if you have incoming stuff, what causes you--could cause the reduction of movement? The noise, the concussions, the men around you being hit, or what makes you slow down, if you are slowed down?

B. I think the worst incoming is the mortar rounds because generally you don't hear them coming till the last minute; they kind of swish over there and I think your reaction is to take cover somewhere and get down.

C. In other words, get the hell out of here, uncontrolled, huh?

B. That's about it.

C. You don't notice whether people around you are getting hit, you just notice that something came in, huh?

B. I think it's a normal reaction to get down, if you get incoming mortars or artillery. And, of course, the correct thing to do is to watch and try to spot the infantry in the defensive position; that's in fact the procedure we set up previously; it's one way in the defensive position of getting incoming mortars, one man out of every hole keeps his head above ground and watches for the infantry assault which normally will follow a mortar attack.

C. As a platoon leader, how many rounds of incoming would make a platoon take cover or a squad take cover? Want to give me a figure?

B. Well, I think it'd depend on how accurate they were and the casualties sustained. But if it was just incoming mortar rounds, and we weren't taking heavy casualties, the best thing to do would be to move through them, and it'd be best to keep moving if we couldn't move through them.

C. How many casualties in a squad will really make you really hit the deck? or would they?

B. Well, this would depend on the mission, I think, because if it were assaulting a position--

C. All right, before you get to the assault, when you're just moving up, you're still under control, you, as the platoon leader still have control of the thing.

B. Well, if we should get incoming mortars and we take several casualties, of course, we'll have to take care of our casualties, and if
we're far enough away from the final coordination line, we can stop and rearrange, and continue moving, if we're not at a point where we can't take time to do this.

C. In a squad of ten men, we'll say, what percent of men would you have to lose one man every eight minutes, or every ten minutes--in order to knock you down, and make you stay there for a short time, a few minutes?

B. Yes, I think if you did take casualties, two or three out of a squad, you'd definitely have to stop and take cover, if they were coming in accurate, I mean the casualties would be medevacs, you know, now not just frag wounds.

C. Now, we're going to come up to the next one. Can you relate a slack in your unit's normal advance rate to the casualties you took?

B. Is that one of your questions?

C. Yeah, I'll let you read it. You read it, 63. Read it. Just think back over the time. Now you're a platoon leader and you're just moving in any configuration you want to think of, you took one casualty, two casualties, how much did it cut your speed, if it did cut it? Did it cut you down 5 percent?

B. Well, it does, if you have to replace a unit leader, and they're not as aggressive as the previous unit leaders, so it does slow you down, especially when you lose key personnel. Rate? I can't estimate a rate.

C. Well, for example, will the loss of two men in the squad cut speed by 15 percent? In an attack and assault? In an attack?

B. I don't think it's really noticed that much in an attack, unless these people are the squad leader, or the radioman or somebody important.

C. Would it cut it in half?

B. No, I don't think so.

C. Well, did incoming bombs, artillery, or mortars ever slow your speed?

B. Yes, because, you're slower, like I said in the fact that you do notice them, where they come from, and a couple of other things.

C. O.K., now I'm going to try you on another one. Now, do casualties have more effect on your rate of advance, or does incoming
have more effect? Let's say, you start one or the other, then tell me which you think has the most effect and what the relationship is.

B. Well, the incoming fire, or mortars, I think have a little more effect, in the sense that they can pin a unit down, whereas the casualties, if you don't lose over a certain number, where you become ineffective, you can still continue your mission.

C. How many can you take before--what percent of casualties can you take before you really start slowing the others down?

B. Well, I'd say, maybe at 15 to 20 percent casualties, you have to stop and regroup.

C. I was going to ask you that question later, you answered it too soon! O.K., but what I'm really asking--you say you stop and regroup--but do you stop all of a sudden?

B. No, you've got to slow down the forward movement, and I guess you've got to yell and shout and wave and order.

C. But there is a gradual slowing, until you finally stop.

B. Yes.

C. You reorganize, I think you call it. Have you lost any communicators, so that you could find out what effect the loss of one of your radiomen would have?

B. Yes, on this particular operation, we lost a radioman and the effect that it had at the time was that we lost contact with the lead squad which was in heavy contact with the enemy at the time. And this could have caused havoc right quick, because we didn't have communications with the unit in order to find out what they'd run into, or how to best aid them.

C. I'm going to hit you with answer one now. O.K., now you've got 15 percent casualties; now, would this take another 10 percent off the lines of fire, or how many would it take off the line?

B. Well, for every man wounded that can't move, it takes about two to carry him.

C. You're telling me that 15 percent would really sock you right in the eye, huh? A little higher than 10 percent, then. O.K. You answered this question, I think. At what level of casualties would a company be unable to advance in an attack? Now, I'm talking about,
how many can you take before you have to stop to reorganize?

B. Well, when you lose 50 percent you have heavy casualties and you can almost become ineffective as a unit.

C. I'm going to ask you that one next. Remember, you stopped and reorganized, here a few minutes ago. What did you tell me, fifteen percent? Would make you stop, sort out your casualties, readjust the equipment and that sort of thing, fifteen percent, do you think?

B. Fifteen, twenty percent.

C. Fifteen, twenty percent would make you reorganize. O.K., now, you're in the attack. How many would it take you to really put you off your mission and would really make you stop, and take away from you the ability to continue the attack? We're talking about a company now.

B. Well, a company, when you lose half of your people, or take 50 percent casualties, you kind of become ineffective as a company, an organization, because you can't possibly cover the area a company would cover, if you lose half your people. So, actually, when you lose that 50 percent, you have the heavy casualties, you become ineffective as a fighting unit, although each man has the ability to continue to try to accomplish the mission—that's his job—but you're no longer a company.

C. How about for defense?

B. Defense is a different view, in that you can still man the positions even with, I think even with 50 percent losses. You can switch your personnel around, the men and the automatic weapons, the crew served weapons, and still be effective. But in the attack, I think it's 50 percent of your company.

C. What would it be in a platoon?

B. Well, a platoon has a smaller front, and a smaller objective force, but I think, again, if you take half casualties, you're probably ineffective as a platoon.

C. O.K. Do casualties among the machine gun crew reduce the guns' rates of fire?

B. Not as long as you've got a gunner and an a-gunner. Because
The ammo humpers can always move up to be a gunner or a gunner, and as long as you've got a gun and you've got two men on a gun crew to operate it, you can still put out effective fire.

C. What if you lose the gunner? Is the assistant gunner just as good?

B. He can still perform the job, and the point is that your machine guns will be kept in operation if the riflemen have to man them. So there'll always be a manned machine gun.

C. Does their effectiveness stay the same?

B. Maybe accuracy of the fire'll be not quite as good, but it'll be still an effective weapon.

C. If he knocks off the gunner, what's the relative efficiency of the assistant gunner?

B. I'd say the accuracy would drop maybe 5, 10 percent.

C. O.K., what if you knock him off and you have to do it with one of the riflemen or one of the ammo humpers?

B. Well, maybe 5, 10 percent, maybe, but if the weapon is an automatic weapon, the area of fire would still be good.

C. You're just telling me that their accuracy, the aiming error, probably increases as you go down the line of the troops. Thank you very much.
Sketch 1
Sketch 2

28 November 68

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(Sketch of a map showing a military operation on 28 November 1968, with various symbols and notes indicating movements and engagements, including marked areas for NVA positions, Light machine guns, and Snipers. The map includes grid references and notes on the topography and enemy positions. The text on the map includes details of troop movements and engagements, indicating the presence of enemy forces and the actions taken against them.)
Sketch 3
(See notes, p. 105)
Sketch 4

(See notes, p. 105)
NOTES

SKETCH 3: 1 DECEMBER 1968

0830 hrs--Started taking accurate sniper fire to the right front and left rear.

0900 hrs--1st and 2d platoons (right) are squads abreast.

0920 hrs--Both platoons took up squads columns.

0940 hrs--2d platoon hit with sniper fire from the northeast and northwest; 1st platoon hit with sniper fire from the north.

0940 to 1730 hrs--1st and 2d platoons heavily engaged.

1230 hrs--3rd platoon tried to move along river bank to 2d platoon. When it neared brick wall (at 1330 hrs), it got hit by machine-gun fire from the north and by enemy M-79s (4 or 5 rounds).

1400 hrs--2d platoon commander hit and radio contact lost; 1st platoon commander took over 2d platoon at 1415 hrs.

SKETCH 4: 1 DECEMBER 1968

(C) Scenario starts again with movement of 1st platoon to extract 2d platoon. 1st platoon had only two squads on 1 December 1968; established base of fire near 2d platoon Command Post at about 1500 hrs.

1500 to 1600 hrs--Removed about 5 WIA from area.

1500 hrs--Knocked out brick wall with M-79s and small arms.

1500 to 1700 hrs--Using OV-10 on machine gun to northwest, got 3 of 4 men who were separated from 2d platoon and were in vicinity of brick wall.

1730 hrs--Had 2d platoon withdraw to vicinity of 2d platoon Command Post.

1730 hrs--Lt. Overton in command of two platoons. Ordered to withdraw to south of phase line Bravo. Out by 1800 hrs.
REFERENCES


