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MEMORANDUM REPORT NO. 1452
JANUARY 1963

EFFECTIVENESS OF UNAIMED SMALL ARMS FIRE

Arthur D. Groves

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ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, MARYLAND



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Arthur D. Groves

Weapons Systems Laboratory

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EFFECTIVENESS OF UNAIMED SMALL ARMS FIRE

ABSTRACT

Mathematical models are presented for computing the lethal area and the probability of incapacitating a soldier when a round of small arms ammunition is fired into a target area but not at a particular soldier in that area. It is assumed that soldiers are uniformly but randomly distributed throughout the target area, and provision is made for varying the terrain and troop posture.

INTRODUCTION

Small arms are frequently employed in an unaimed fire role. That is, they are fired into a target area, but not at a particular target element within that area. It is therefore of interest to devise mathematical techniques for evaluating the effectiveness of small arms weapons when employed in this manner. Two measures of effectiveness will be considered in this report, and mathematical formulae will be generated allowing computations of each of these measures to be made. The concept of the lethal area of a round of small arms ammunition was introduced in BRL Memorandum Report 998, "The Lethal Areas of Small Arms", by Theodore E. Sterne. The discussion there suggested the first effectiveness measure to be discussed, a lethal area model applicable to a small arms round. The second model to be devised is one which allows for the computation of the probability of incapacitating a target element (usually a soldier) when a round is fired into the target area.

ASSUMPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

For both models it will be assumed that the target consists of soldiers uniformly but randomly distributed throughout the target area with density δ men per unit area. The target is of depth D measured parallel to the line of fire, and is of sufficient width that a round cannot miss the target to the side. The soldiers are assumed to be in such a posture and on such a terrain that each presents area A_p to a bullet falling into the target area with angle of fall θ . In this posture the height of each soldier is H . Thus the target can be thought of as a volume having depth D , height H , and essentially infinite width. While the round is not aimed at any individual soldier, it is aimed at some point in relation to the entire target volume. Let this point be on the front of this target at a height Y above the ground. Let σ be the standard deviation of total vertical delivery error at the front of the target, and assume that, within the target volume, all trajectories are straight lines and are parallel to the line defined by the angle of fall θ . Let y indicate the height above the ground at which the bullet passes the front of the target. This height, of course, will be variable, having a normal distribution with mean Y and standard deviation σ . Let $d(y)$ denote the horizontal distance traveled within the target volume by a bullet passing the front of the target at height y . Now define the "endangered area" to

be $\frac{A_p d(y)}{H}$, where $\frac{A_p}{H}$ is an approximation to the average width of a

soldier in the posture assumed. Let the density function for the distribution of y be given by

$$f(y) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma} e^{-\frac{(y-Y)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

DERIVATION OF MODELS

The desired lethal area, A_L , will be the average value of the product of the probability that a soldier becomes a casualty when hit (P_{HK}), and the endangered area, the average being taken over the distribution of y . It is assumed that P_{HK} is a constant throughout the target volume. Actually, P_{HK} varies slightly as the projectile passes through the target due to P_{HK} velocity fall off. This change in P_{HK} is small, however, for target sizes of interest, and can be ignored without introducing significant error. Thus

$$\begin{aligned} A_L &= \int_{y=-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{P_{HK} A_P d(y)}{H} f(y) dy \\ &= \frac{P_{HK} A_P}{H} \int_{y=-\infty}^{\infty} d(y) f(y) dy \\ &= \frac{P_{HK} A_P}{H} \bar{d}, \end{aligned}$$

where $\bar{d} = \int_{y=-\infty}^{\infty} d(y) f(y) dy$ is recognized as the average value of

$d(y)$, the horizontal distance traversed by the bullet within the target volume.

In deriving the model for computing the probability of incapacitating a soldier under the assumed conditions, the following reasoning was followed: The probability of hitting a soldier given a particular y and hence a particular "endangered area" is simply the probability that at least one soldier is found within that "endangered area." (Here it is assumed that if the bullet hits a soldier, it completely spends itself and cannot pass through that soldier and hit a second behind him.) According to Poisson

probability theory, the probability of exactly i soldiers being in the "endangered area" is

$$P_i = \frac{e^{-E(y)} [E(y)]^i}{i!} ,$$

where $E(y)$ is the expected number of soldiers in that area. Then the probability of at least one soldier being there is

$$1 - P_0 = 1 - e^{-E(y)} .$$

Of course, $E(y)$ is simply the product of the "endangered area" and the density of troops within the target area. Thus

$$E(y) = \frac{\delta A}{H} \frac{d(y)}{H} .$$

Since $1 - e^{-E(y)}$ is the probability of hitting a soldier as a function of y , the probability of incapacitating a soldier as a function of y is

$$P_K(y) = P_{H_K} \left[1 - e^{-E(y)} \right] ,$$

where P_{H_K} is, as before, the probability that a soldier will be incapacitated if he is hit. The desired result is then the average value of $P_K(y)$ taken over the distribution of y . Thus P_K , the desired result, is given by

$$P_K = \int_{y=-\infty}^{\infty} P_K(y) f(y) dy .$$

Before either this integral or the one defining \bar{d} in the derivation of the lethal area can be evaluated a specific definition of the function $d(y)$ must be given. Initially two cases will be given, although it will be shown that these can be combined into a single result. The two cases are defined by the following inequalities:

$$\text{Case 1} \quad D \tan \theta \geq H$$

$$\text{Case 2} \quad D \tan \theta < H$$

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the conditions represented by these cases. As can be seen, Case 1 applies when no bullet can enter the target so as to traverse the full depth D within the target, while Case 2 applies when the full depth D can be traversed by a bullet. In either case, a falling bullet may enter the target through any one of three zones, with the zones being defined according to how the distance $d(y)$ is computed for a bullet entering through that zone. The following defines the zones and specifies $d(y)$ for each zone.

$$\text{Case 1} \quad (D \tan \theta \geq H)$$

Zone 1	$0 \leq y < H$	$d(y) = y \cot \theta$
Zone 2	$H \leq y < D \tan \theta$	$d(y) = H \cot \theta$
Zone 3	$D \tan \theta \leq y < H + D \tan \theta$	$d(y) = D + (H - y) \cot \theta$

$$\text{Case 2} \quad (D \tan \theta < H)$$

Zone 1	$0 \leq y < D \tan \theta$	$d(y) = y \cot \theta$
Zone 2	$D \tan \theta \leq y < H$	$d(y) = D$
Zone 3	$H \leq y < H + D \tan \theta$	$d(y) = D + (H - y) \cot \theta$

In both cases, $d(y) = 0$ if $y < 0$ or if $y > H + D \tan \theta$. Now notice that a single definition of the three zones and distance functions suffices for both cases, as follows:

Zone 1	$0 \leq y < \min(H, D \tan \theta)$	$d(y) = y \cot \theta$
Zone 2	$\min(H, D \tan \theta) \leq y < \max(H, D \tan \theta)$	$d(y) = \min(D, H \cot \theta)$
Zone 3	$\max(H, D \tan \theta) \leq y < H + D \tan \theta$	$d(y) = D + (H - y) \cot \theta,$

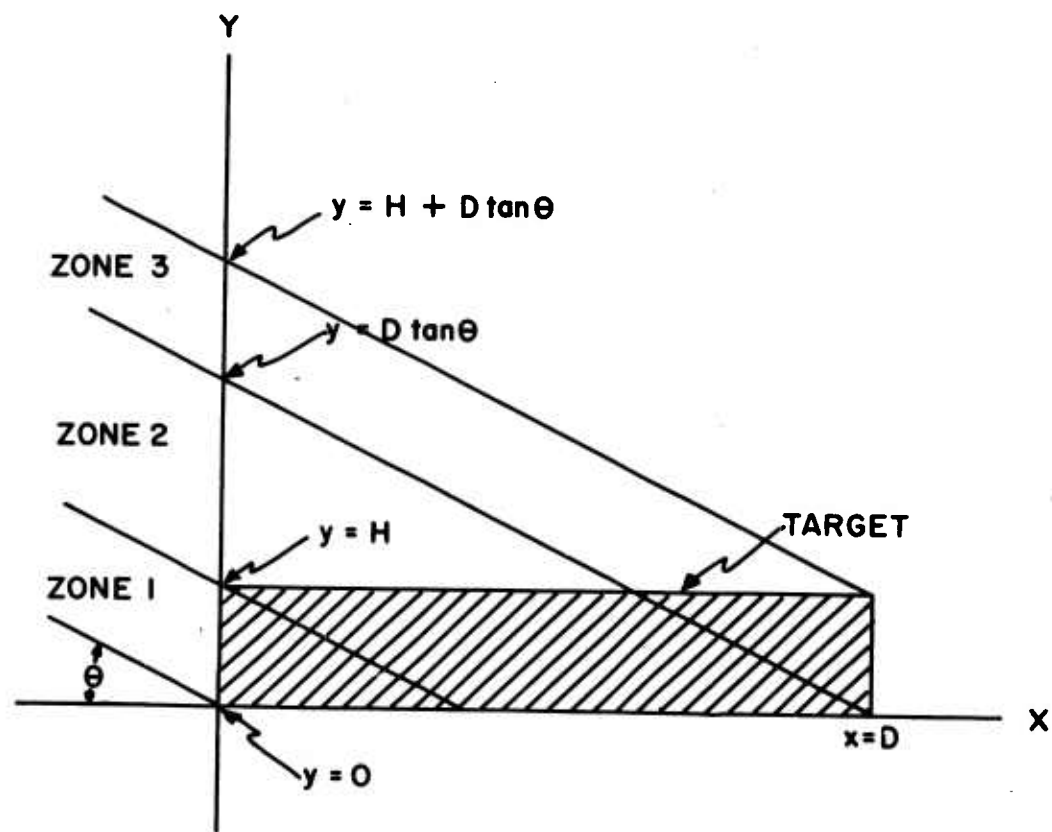


FIGURE 1 CASE I $D \tan \theta \geq H$

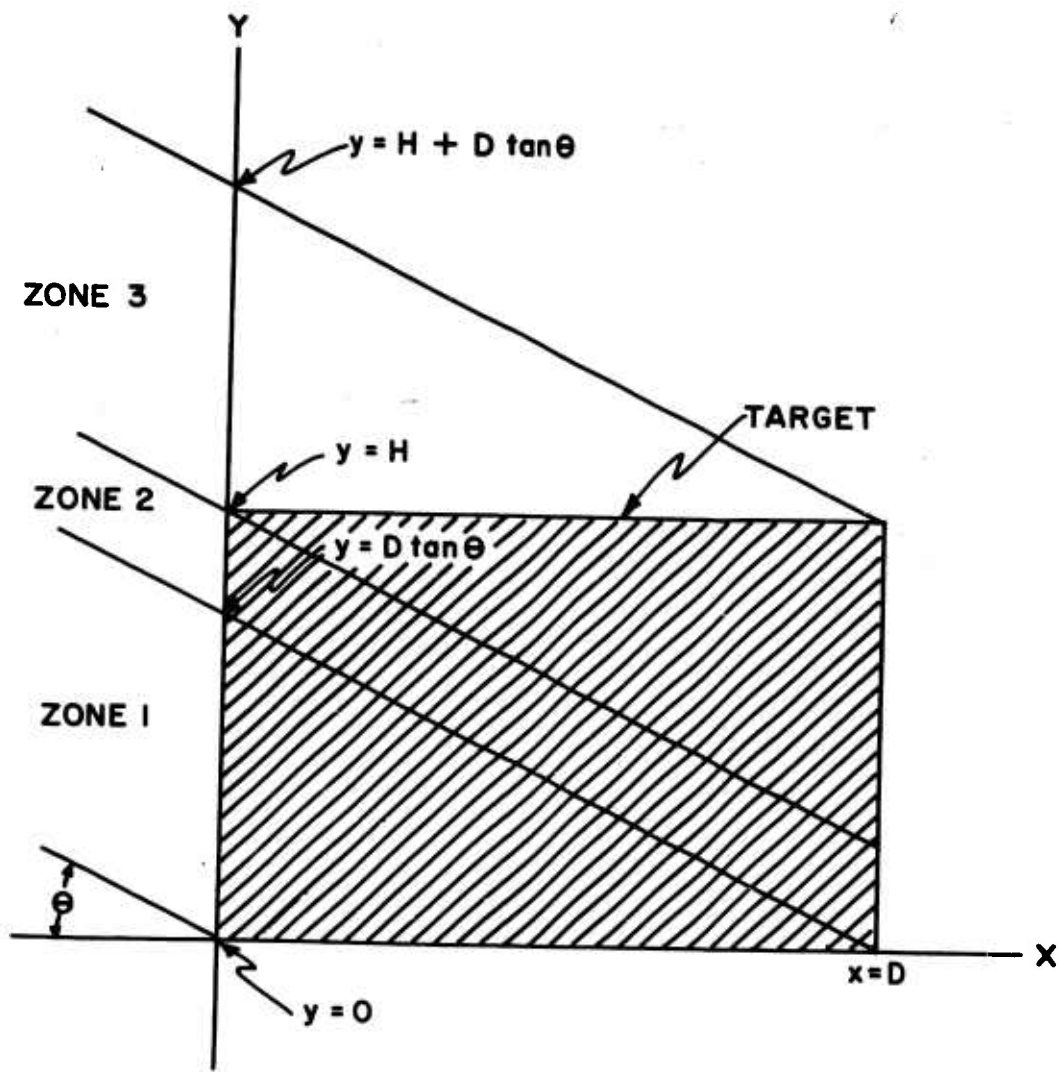


FIGURE 2 CASE 2 $D \tan \theta < H$

where $\min (H, D \tan \theta)$ means the smaller of the two quantities H and $D \tan \theta$, and $\max (H, D \tan \theta)$ means the larger of those two quantities. Based on this composite definition, the general definition of $d(y)$ can be given. For simplicity, denote

$$a = \min (H, D \tan \theta),$$

and $b = \max (H, D \tan \theta).$

Note that

$$H + D \tan \theta = a + b,$$

$$\min (D, H \cot \theta) = a \cot \theta,$$

and $D + (H - y) \cot \theta = (a + b - y) \cot \theta.$

Thus

$$d(y) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } y < 0 \\ y \cot \theta & \text{if } 0 \leq y < a \\ a \cot \theta & \text{if } a \leq y < b \\ (a + b - y) \cot \theta & \text{if } b \leq y \leq a + b \\ 0 & \text{if } y > a + b \end{cases}$$

Applying this definition in the lethal area model,

$$\bar{d} = \int_{y=-\infty}^{\infty} d(y)f(y)dy = \cot \theta \left[\int_0^a yf(y)dy + a \int_a^b f(y)dy + \int_b^{a+b} (a+b-y)f(y)dy \right].$$

In the model for computing the probability of incapacitating a soldier, the further simplification

$$M = \frac{\sigma A_p \cot \theta}{H} \quad \text{is introduced.}$$

Then

$$P_K = P_{H_K} \left\{ \int_0^a f(y) \left[1 - e^{-\frac{\delta M y}{\sigma}} \right] dy + \int_a^b f(y) \left[1 - e^{-\frac{\delta M a}{\sigma}} \right] dy + \int_b^{a+b} f(y) \left[1 - e^{-\frac{\delta M (a+b-y)}{\sigma}} \right] dy \right\}.$$

EVALUATION OF LETHAL AREA INTEGRALS

It has been shown that in the lethal area model

$$\bar{d} = \cot \theta \left[\int_0^a yf(y)dy + a \int_a^b f(y)dy + \int_b^{a+b} (a+b-y)f(y)dy \right].$$

This can be rewritten

$$\bar{d} = \cot \theta \left[\int_0^a yf(y)dy - \int_b^{a+b} yf(y)dy + a \int_a^b f(y)dy + (a+b) \int_b^{a+b} f(y)dy \right].$$

Now, in general, for any A and B

$$\int_A^B f(y)dy = \Phi\left(\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}\right),$$

where
$$\Phi(X) = \int_{-\infty}^X \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{t^2}{2}} dt,$$

the cumulative normal probability function. In Appendix A it is shown that

$$\int_A^B yf(y)dy = \sigma \left[\Phi\left(\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right] + Y \left[\Phi\left(\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right]$$

where
$$\phi(X) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{X^2}{2}},$$

the normal density function. Thus

$$\int_0^a yf(y)dy = \sigma \left[\phi\left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right] + Y \left[\phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right],$$

$$\int_b^{a+b} yf(y)dy = \sigma \left[\phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right] + Y \left[\phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right],$$

$$a \int_a^b f(y)dy = a \left[\phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right], \text{ and}$$

$$(a+b) \int_b^{a+b} f(y)dy = (a+b) \left[\phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right].$$

Combining these,

$$\bar{d} = \cot \theta \left[\sigma \left\{ \phi\left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) + \phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right\} \right. \\ \left. - Y \phi\left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma}\right) - (a-Y) \phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) - (b-Y) \phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) + (a+b-Y) \phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right]$$

and thus

$$A_L = \frac{P_H A_p \cot \theta}{H} \left[\sigma \left\{ \phi\left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) + \phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right\} \right. \\ \left. - Y \phi\left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma}\right) - (a-Y) \phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) - (b-Y) \phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) + (a+b-Y) \phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right]$$

EVALUATION OF INCAPACITATION PROBABILITY INTEGRALS

It has been shown that the probability of incapacitation is given by

$$\begin{aligned}
 P_K &= P_{H_K} \left\{ \int_0^a f(y) \left[1 - e^{-\frac{\delta My}{\sigma}} \right] dy + \int_a^b f(y) \left[1 - e^{-\frac{\delta Ma}{\sigma}} \right] dy + \right. \\
 &\quad \left. \int_b^{a+b} f(y) \left[1 - e^{-\frac{\delta M(a+b-y)}{\sigma}} \right] dy \right\} \\
 &= P_{H_K} \left\{ \int_0^{a+b} f(y) dy - I_1 - I_2 - I_3 \right\},
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{where } I_1 = \int_0^a f(y) e^{-\frac{\delta My}{\sigma}} dy,$$

$$I_2 = \int_a^b f(y) e^{-\frac{\delta Ma}{\sigma}} dy, \quad \text{and}$$

$$I_3 = \int_b^{a+b} f(y) e^{-\frac{\delta M}{\sigma} (a+b-y)} dy.$$

$$\text{But } \int_0^{a+b} f(y) dy = \Phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma}\right)$$

$$\text{and } I_2 = e^{-\frac{\delta M a}{\sigma}} \int_a^b f(y) dy = e^{-\frac{\delta M a}{\sigma}} \left\{ \Phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right\}.$$

Now if a function $F(A, B, R)$ is defined to be

$$F(A, B, R) = \int_A^B e^{Ry} f(y) dy, \quad \text{then}$$

$$I_1 = F\left(a, b, -\frac{\delta M}{\sigma}\right) \quad \text{and}$$

$$I_3 = e^{-\frac{\delta M}{\sigma}(a+b)} F\left(b, a+b, \frac{\delta M}{\sigma}\right)$$

In Appendix B it is shown that

$$F(A, B, R) = e^{R\left(\frac{R\sigma^2}{2} + Y\right)} \left\{ \Phi\left(\frac{B-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{A-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}\right) \right\}$$

Thus

$$I_1 = e^{\frac{\delta M}{\sigma}\left(\frac{\delta M}{2} - \frac{Y}{\sigma}\right)} \left\{ \Phi\left(\frac{a-Y+\delta M\sigma}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{-Y+\delta M\sigma}{\sigma}\right) \right\}$$

and

$$I_3 = e^{-\frac{\delta M}{\sigma}\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma} - \frac{\delta M}{2}\right)} \left\{ \Phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y-\delta M\sigma}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{b-Y-\delta M\sigma}{\sigma}\right) \right\}.$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Thus} \\
P_K = P_{H_K} & \left[\phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma}\right) - e^{\delta M\left(\frac{\delta M}{2} - \frac{Y}{\sigma}\right)} \left\{ \phi\left(\frac{a-Y+\delta M\sigma}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{-Y+\delta M\sigma}{\sigma}\right) \right\} \right. \\
& e^{-\frac{\delta M a}{\sigma}} \left\{ \phi\left(\frac{b-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{a-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right\} - \\
& \left. e^{-\delta M\left(\frac{a+b-Y}{\sigma} - \frac{\delta M}{2}\right)} \left\{ \phi\left(\frac{a+b-Y-\delta M\sigma}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{b-Y-\delta M\sigma}{\sigma}\right) \right\} \right].
\end{aligned}$$

COMPUTATIONAL FORMS

These expressions for the probability of incapacitation and for the lethal area can be simplified somewhat for computational purposes.

Let

$$\alpha = \frac{a}{\sigma} = \frac{1}{\sigma} \min(H, D \tan \theta)$$

$$\beta = \frac{b}{\sigma} = \frac{1}{\sigma} \max(H, D \tan \theta)$$

$$\gamma = \frac{Y}{\sigma}$$

$$M = \frac{\sigma A_p \cot \theta}{H}$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned}
A_L = P_{H_K} M & \left[\phi(-\gamma) - \phi(\alpha-\gamma) - \phi(\beta-\gamma) + \phi(\alpha+\beta-\gamma) - \gamma \phi(-\gamma) - \right. \\
& \left. (\alpha-\gamma) \phi(\alpha-\gamma) - (\beta-\gamma) \phi(\beta-\gamma) + (\alpha+\beta-\gamma) \phi(\alpha+\beta-\gamma) \right]
\end{aligned}$$

and

$$P_K = P_{H_K} \left[\Phi(\alpha+\beta-\gamma) - \Phi(-\gamma) - e^{-\delta M \left(\frac{\delta M}{2} - \gamma \right)} \left\{ \Phi(\alpha-\gamma+\delta M) - \Phi(-\gamma+\delta M) \right\} - e^{-\delta M \alpha} \left\{ \Phi(\beta-\gamma) - \Phi(\alpha-\gamma) \right\} - e^{-\delta M \left(\alpha+\beta-\gamma - \frac{\delta M}{2} \right)} \left\{ \Phi(\alpha+\beta-\gamma-\delta M) - \Phi(\beta-\gamma-\delta M) \right\} \right]$$

If $\theta=0$, these formulae cannot be used, since $\cot \theta = \infty$, making $M = \infty$. However, following the same logical development, but restricting θ to be zero, it can be shown that

$$A_L = \frac{P_{H_K} A_P D}{H} \left\{ \Phi \left(\frac{H-Y}{\sigma} \right) - \Phi \left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma} \right) \right\} .$$

In determining the probability of incapacitating a soldier, if $\theta=0$, it can be shown that

$$P_K = P_{H_K} \left[1 - e^{-\frac{\delta D A_P}{H}} \right] \left[\Phi \left(\frac{H-Y}{\sigma} \right) - \Phi \left(\frac{-Y}{\sigma} \right) \right] .$$

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APPENDIX A

$$\int_A^B yf(y)dy = \int_A^B \frac{y}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma} e^{-\frac{(y-Y)^2}{2\sigma^2}} dy$$

Let $t = \frac{y-Y}{\sigma}$ so that $y = \sigma t + Y$ and $dy = \sigma dt$

$$\text{Then } \int_A^B yf(y)dy = \int_{\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}}^{\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}} \frac{\sigma t + Y}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{t^2}{2}} dt$$

$$= \sigma \int_{\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}}^{\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}} \frac{t}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{t^2}{2}} dt + Y \int_{\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}}^{\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{t^2}{2}} dt$$

$$= -\sigma \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{t^2}{2}} \Big|_{\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}}^{\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}} + Y \left\{ \phi\left(\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right\}$$

$$= \sigma \left\{ \phi\left(\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right\} + Y \left\{ \phi\left(\frac{B-Y}{\sigma}\right) - \phi\left(\frac{A-Y}{\sigma}\right) \right\}$$

APPENDIX B

$$F(A, B, R) = \int_A^B e^{Ry} f(y) dy = \int_A^B e^{Ry} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma}} e^{-\frac{(y-Y)^2}{2\sigma^2}} dy$$

Let $y = \sigma t + R\sigma^2 + Y$ so that $t = \frac{y-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}$

and $dy = \sigma dt$. Then

$$F(A, B, R) = \int_{\frac{A-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}}^{\frac{B-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}} e^{R(\sigma t + R\sigma^2 + Y)} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\left(\frac{t+R\sigma}{2}\right)^2} dt$$

$$= e^{\left(R^2\sigma^2 + RY - \frac{R^2\sigma^2}{2}\right)} \int_{\frac{A-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}}^{\frac{B-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{t^2}{2}} dt$$

$$= e^{R\left(\frac{R\sigma^2}{2} + Y\right)} \left\{ \Phi\left(\frac{B-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{A-Y-R\sigma^2}{\sigma}\right) \right\}$$

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Small arms -
Effectiveness
Area fire - small arms

ERL Memorandum Report No. 1452

DA Project No. 503-05-005
UNCLASSIFIED Report

Mathematical models are presented for computing the lethal area and the probability of incapacitating a soldier when a round of small arms ammunition is fired into a target area but not at a particular soldier in that area. It is assumed that soldiers are uniformly but randomly distributed throughout the target area, and provision is made for varying the terrain and troop posture.

AD Accession No.
Ballistic Research Laboratories, AFG
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