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CRITICAL INCIDENTS AS REPORTED BY VETERANS OF ARMORED COMBAT. (U)  
JUN 75 J A BOLDOVICI, R E KRAEMER, J R REEVES DAHC19-73-C-0004

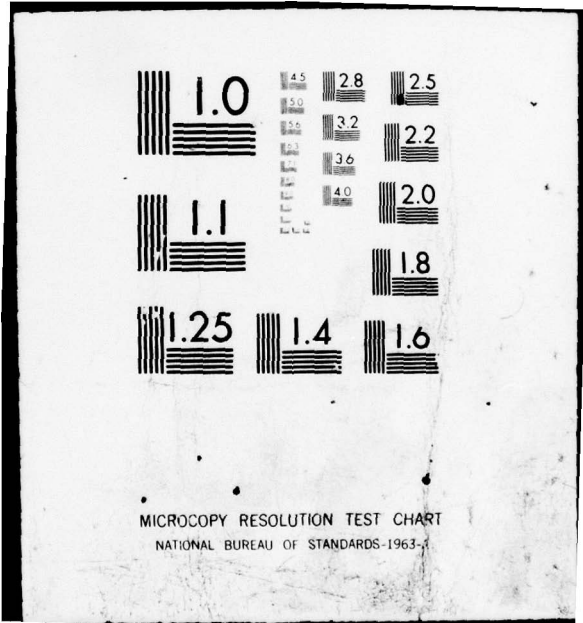
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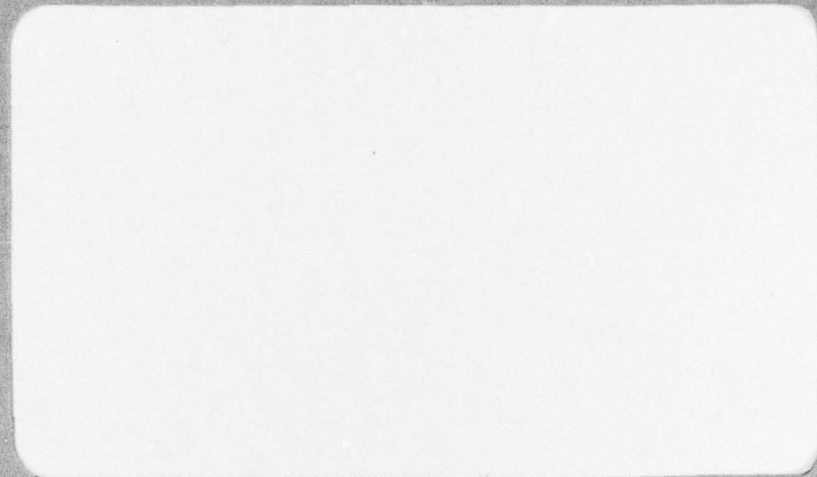
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9 Final Report

6 CRITICAL INCIDENTS AS REPORTED  
BY VETERANS OF ARMORED COMBAT

10 John A. Boldovici  
Ronald E. Kraemer  
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Human Resources Research Organization  
(HumRRO)

Fort Knox, Kentucky

11 June 1975

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18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES This is noe volume of a two-volume Final Report. The other volume is, "Specifying and Measuring Unit Performance Objectives," by John A. Boldovici and Ronald E. Kraemer. Research performed under Work Unit PRETAC.		
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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) This is one volume of a two-volume report on work to identify and begin solving problems associated with specifying and measuring unit (team) performance. This volume contains examples of extremely effective and of extremely ineffective combat behavior, as reported by veterans of armored combat. Unit, support, location, terrain, position, time, and enemy force size are specified for each example. Brief descriptions of the problem, the attempt to solve it, and the results are presented. The effectiveness of the action taken is evaluated for each example.		

THIS IS ONE VOLUME OF A TWO-VOLUME FINAL REPORT. THE OTHER  
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Boldovici, J.A. and Kraemer, R.E., Specifying and Measuring Unit  
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## PREFACE

↙ This is one volume of a two-volume final report for a project to identify and begin solving problems associated with specifying and measuring unit (team) performance. This volume contains narratives of examples of extremely effective, and of extremely ineffective combat behavior, as reported by veterans of armored combat. The other volume describes the work performed on the project, and summarizes and presents conclusions based on the critical incidents. ↙

The work was conducted by the Human Resources Research Organization at Fort Knox, Kentucky, under Contract No. DAHC 19-73-C-0004, with the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI).

The Contracting Officer's Technical Representative was Angelo Mirabella. The Project Director was John A. Boldovici.

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<sup>1</sup> Boldovici, J.A. and Kraemer, R.E., Specifying and Measuring Unit Performance Objectives. Fort Knox, Kentucky: Human Resources Research Organization, 1975.

SECURITY  
Advance Guard

Effective  
Critical Incidents

1. Unit: Tank platoon (Crew) Position: TC  
Support: None Time: April 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Encountered a stream to cross during movement to contact.

Action Taken: Cut down coconut trees. Had trees thrown into the stream bottom.

Results: This action kept the tanks from nosing into the stream bottom and created a firm crossing site.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been to call for Engineering Support.

- 
2. Unit: Tank platoon (Crew) Position: TC  
Support: None Time: April 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Encountered a stream to cross during movement to contact.

Action Taken: Moved the tank parallel to the stream bank and neutral steered.

Results: The bank gradually collapsed, lessening the angle of entrance into the stream and allowing easy crossing.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been to call for Engineering Support.

- 
3. Unit: Tank Platoon (Crew) Position: TC  
Support: None Time: March 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Movement to contact; encountered streams.

Action Taken: Used dozer blade on tank to dam stream.

Results: Crossing could be made downstream without creating a gummy crossing site.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been trying to cross the stream without fording.

---

4. Unit: Tank Platoon (Crew) Position: TC  
Support: None Time: March 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Movement to contact; encountered stream.

Action Taken: Used HE or HEP to fire at the opposite river bank to reduce bank and improve approach.

Results: This reduced the exit angle of the bank and permitted ease of exiting.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been to call for Engineering Support.

---

5. Unit: Tank Platoon Position: TC  
Support: None Time: April 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Movement to contact. After some hours of experience, the tank crews learned which rice paddies could be negotiated with their tanks. (As long as the black murky soil was not present, they were sure they could negotiate terrain).

Action Taken: Applied some simple rules, such as no tracking, no stopping, no sharp turning, and keeping the accelerator to the floor.

Results: After experiencing the ease with which tanks could cross rice paddies, the tank commander would not hesitate to cross.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been not crossing the rice paddies.

---

6. Unit: Tank platoon Position: TC  
Support: None Time: March 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with stream

Situation: Movement to contact -- required resupply.  
Used tanks in the platoon to move over area  
to clear for LZ. The tracks and hull would level  
the bush and trees.

Action Taken: Flattened and cleared an area 100-150 meters.

Results: LZ was established and parts and POL were flown in.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been  
moving to another area of operations (AO).

---

7. Unit: Platoon (Crew) Position: TC, M48  
Support: None Time: Unknown  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Two tanks went into action, firing their caliber  
.50 machineguns. The TC of the left tank spotted  
flashes from two of the 57mm recoilless firing  
positions.

Action Taken: The TC stated that he could look through his  
rangefinder and see (with the help of flares)  
two enemy recoilless rifles firing.

Results: Within minutes, both recoilless rifle positions  
were destroyed by firing HE from the main gun.

Evaluation: Good. To have continued to fire caliber .50  
would have been foolish.

---

8. Unit: Troop Position: TC, M551  
Support: AVLB section Time: April 1969  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle with river crossings

Situation: Movement to contact. Encountered tributary of the  
Saigon River. Requested AVLB be emplaced to cross  
the 60-foot gap. As last vehicle crossed over,  
bridge collapsed into river. Had barely moved from  
the crossing site when enemy hit us with small arms  
fire, RPGs and tear gas.

Action Taken: Returned the enemy's fire, charging headlong into  
the enemy emplacement.

Results: NVA Soldiers retreated, leaving behind 13 dead.

Evaluation: The rapid decision to attack the enemy's position was good, causing us to move out of the deadly ambush and cross-fire of the enemy. Poor from standpoint of AVLB.

A more effective action would have been to have provided security for the AVLB bridge team after crossing.

A less effective action would have been not to counter-attack or to counter-attack less quickly.

---

9. <u>Unit:</u>	Reconnaissance platoon	<u>Enemy Force</u>	
<u>Support:</u>	Reconnaissance troop (-)	<u>Size:</u>	Reinforced company; rifle company with crew-served anti-tank weapons; deployed with a blocking position to the front and anti-tank weapons along the side of a road.
<u>Location:</u>	Bavaria, Germany		
<u>Terrain:</u>	Small highway through a mountain pass		
<u>Position:</u>	Platoon leader		
<u>Time:</u>	1 May 1945, 0700 hours		

Situation: While proceeding on an advanced guard mission, the platoon was taken under fire by machinegun, mortars, and crew-served anti-tank weapons.

Action Taken: Platoon leader moved from the second to the lead vehicle and made an "on-the-spot" reconnaissance and rapid estimate of the situation. He deployed the entire platoon and directed its fire on known enemy position.

Results: Effective fire was brought to bear on the enemy and the enemy withdrew.

Evaluation: Good. a) A rapid and effective decision was reached because the platoon leader was well forward in the formation.  
b) Enemy resistance was reduced. To have hesitated in bringing all effective fire on the enemy and to have been less responsive in a critical situation could have caused defeat.

10. Unit: Cavalry troop Position: Troop commander  
Support: Field artillery, battalion and close air support Time: 14 May 1967, 0645 hours  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Battalion; Infantry, Organized ambush of a highway  
Terrain: Highway through the jungle

Situation: The armored column was ambushed during movement to contact.

Action Taken: Assumed a defensive position with the lead platoon, and counter-attacked with the second and third platoons.

Results: Enemy was forced to withdraw, leaving 9 dead.

Evaluation: Moderately good. The enemy was forced to withdraw, but was not pursued. A better solution would have been pursuit of the withdrawing enemy and completion of his destruction.

---

11. Unit: Tank Company Enemy Force Size: Battalion, Infantry with anti-tank weapons; Ambush on both sides of a road and a blocking position to the front  
Support: Armored cavalry squadron minus  
Location: Cambodia  
Terrain: Burned-out area in the jungle.  
Position: Company commander  
Time: 1 May 1970, Daylight (1600 hours)

Situation: Tank company was closing into an assembly area when the enemy opened fire on the front and both flanks of the tank column.

Action Taken: Deployed the company on a line facing in three directions and fired cannister and machineguns at the enemy. Cobra gunships were called in to strafe the enemy.

Results: Enemy withdrew, leaving 52 dead. Two soldiers from the tank company were killed.

Evaluation: Very good. Prompt action by the tank company undoubtedly saved many lives. An ineffective solution would have been to hesitate in employing all available fire power.

12. Unit: Tank company Time: 1 May 1970,  
Support: Cavalry squadron Daylight  
(minus) Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Location: Vietnam Infantry with  
Terrain: Improved road anti-tank  
through a jungle guns; Prepared  
Position: Company commander ambush on both  
sides of a road

Situation: The tank company was fired on from both sides of the road by small arms and anti-tank guns during movement to contact.

Action Taken: Immediately took up a herringbone formation, unleashing all available fire power. All tanks were then buttoned-up and an air strike called in.

Results: Enemy opposition was silenced and the column moved on.

Evaluation: Very good. Quick, decisive reaction by the tank company destroyed the enemy ambush. An ineffective solution would have been not to react as quickly with all available fire power.

---

13. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank Commander  
Support: None Time: May 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: When attacking an objective, most of our vehicles (tanks) sustained hits on the front slope.

Action Taken: On M113A1 APC the trim vane on the front was lowered. This allowed a degree of standoff protection against anti-tank munitions.

Results: Tank and personnel were more likely to continue in the attack. Tanks/vehicles were not totally destroyed.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been to do nothing.

---

14. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank Commander  
Support: None Time: May 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: When attacking an objective most of our vehicle (tanks) sustained hits on the front slope.

Action Taken: Used PSP or pieces of chain link fence on front slope to reduce the probability of penetration.

Results: Tank and personnel were more likely to continue in the attack. Tanks/vehicles were not totally destroyed.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been to do nothing.

---

15. Unit: Platoon/ACAV Position: Section leader  
Support: None Time: August 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle-soft muddy ground

Situation: The track vehicles often became mired in soft ground beyond the reach of recovery vehicle TOW cables.

Action Taken: The platoon leader had each track place two pieces of pierced steel planking on each side. This made the PSP available when needed and also afforded some degree of protection against RPG and AP munitions.

Results: Vehicles were more easily recovered and the PSP did seem to provide some degree of protection.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective solution would have been to do nothing or to have wasted men and time in recovering vehicles.

---

16. Unit: Reconnaissance platoon Enemy Force Size: Infantry with anti-tank guns;  
Support: Cavalry troop (minus) Established roadblock  
Location: France  
Terrain: Unimproved road through a wooded area  
Position: Platoon leader  
Time: October 1944, Daylight

Situation: Conducting a route reconnaissance at the head of a task force when the reconnaissance unit encountered a road block and was taken under fire.

Action Taken: Established a base of fire with all elements of the platoon, except the scout section. Led the scout section around the left flank of the enemy and took the enemy under infilade fire. Called for artillery fire on the roadblock.

Results: The roadblock was reduced in less than 30 minutes, leaving 10 enemy dead and wounded behind.

Evaluation: Very good. Prompt and decisive action reduced the resistance in a minimum of time. A less effective action would have been to spend unnecessary time on a ground reconnaissance of the roadblock.

---

17. Unit: Platoon Position: ACAV commander  
Support: None Time: July 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Lightly armored vehicles offered little protection for the driver against AP ammunition. Anti-tank mines and RPGs also could have been lethal to the driver.

Action Taken: Used discarded flak jackets or unserviceable flak jackets. Attached jackets to the interior of the vehicle hull.

Results: Drivers became more aggressive during search and destroy missions. Also, a decrease in wounded drivers was noted.

Evaluation: Good.

---

18. Unit: Tank Platoon Position: Tank commander  
Support: None Time: April 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Armor units in combat were often required to take passive measures to reduce casualties to commanders.

Action Taken: There were to be no special markings on the leader's vehicle. False antennas or wooden poles to appear as antennas were attached so that all vehicles would appear to carry the same number of radio antennas.

Results: I don't think I was ever singled out by the enemy as the leader.

Evaluation: Good. An ineffective solution would have been to do nothing. All commander vehicles are marked with a 6 or their callsign has a 6 in it, making them easily identified by the enemy.

19. Unit: Reconnaissance platoon Time: April 1944,  
Support: Reconnaissance troop (-) Daylight  
Location: Germany Enemy Force  
Terrain: Mountain valley with Size: Unknown;  
intermittent streams Infantry  
Position: Platoon leader with anti-  
tank guns;  
Occupying  
delaying  
position

Situation: In the process of bypassing a destroyed bridge over a stream, we captured three enemy soldiers along a mountain trail. It appeared as though the bypass trail had been mined. The enemy soldiers said it was not mined.

Action Taken: Directed the enemy soldiers to precede the friendly armored column on foot. The enemy soldiers then admitted that the trail had been mined. Mines were probed out and removed.

Results: The cavalry troop moved out promptly and suffered no casualties.

Evaluation: Very good. Information from captured personnel cannot be accepted at face value. Its validity must be confirmed. To have accepted the prisoners' statements and proceeded blindly into the minefield would have resulted in friendly casualties.

20. Unit: Cavalry troop Time: May 1945,  
Support: Infantry battalion Daylight  
task force with D/S Enemy Force  
artillery Size: Primarily  
Location: Germany and Austrian infantry  
border with SP  
Terrain: Valley through the anti-tank  
Alp mountains guns; Fighting  
Position: Troop commander a delaying  
action

Situation: The task force was following a mission order to pursue an enemy battalion to the south in Germany who were headed for a major city in Austria. The enemy, instead of continuing south, turned to the west and withdrew up a mountain pass.

Action Taken: Left one platoon to continue the advanced guard mission to the south and turned the cavalry troop (-) to the west in pursuit of the enemy battalion.

Results: The enemy battalion was forced into a "cul de sac" in the mountain pass and forced to surrender. The cavalry troop (-) then rejoined the detached platoon and continued its advance guard mission.

Evaluation: Very Good. Although the mission did not include following and capturing the enemy, the troop commander took advantage of a situation in which the enemy was trying to escape. Less effective action would have been strict compliance with the original mission order, commanding all platoons to the south.

---

21. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: Fall 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Leader could almost always be identified on the battlefield by the number of radio antennas or the number 6 on his vehicle and call signs.

Action Taken: Squadron SOP was to mix up numbers and call signs frequently. Dummy radio antennas were used to make other vehicles look similar to the command vehicle.

Results: During my year with the unit, the squadron lost less platoon leaders than any other squadron in the regiment.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective action would have been not changing the call signs or not using dummy radio antennas.

---

22. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: 1969, Fall  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Numerous accidents with small arms. People shooting themselves or their buddy accidentally while at base camp or during movement to contact.

Action Taken: Reemphasized safety when handling small arms and crew-served weapons. Magazine must be removed from all weapons when in base camp. In movement to contact safety must be in an "on" position on all weapons.

Results: Accidents were reduced.

Evaluation: Good.

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23. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: Fall 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Numerous premature firings with the caliber .50 machinegun. No safety on the weapons. Weapons were loaded when moving.

Action Taken: A caliber .50 round was wedged under the butterfly to prevent it from firing.

Results: Accidents and premature firing were reduced.

Evaluation: Good.

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24. Unit: Tank Platoon (minus Position: Platoon leader,  
2 tanks) (Crew) TC  
Support: None Time: Spring 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: 1 or 2 Bn  
Terrain: Jungle NVA; RPGs  
auto weapons

Situation: Ambushed by NVA. My tank received three hits from RPGs. Fire started in turret. This was my first firefight. My loader was a sergeant E5 who was on his second tour and who had been under fire on numerous occasions.

Action Taken: Appealed to the more experienced sergeant for help.

Results: Sergeant calmly put out the fire and continued to load the main gun while I fired.

Evaluation: Good. I possibly might have panicked if a less experienced man had been in the turret.

25. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: Fall 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: On occasion during combat operations, the cannister round (152mm) would not fire from the M551. Movement with a round in the chamber would cause the primer to become defective.

Action Taken: Rounds were loaded into the chamber after contact with the enemy had been established.

Results: Fire could be brought to bear on the enemy more quickly because the defective round did not have to be removed. As a result, the enemy probably suffered more casualties.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective action would have been continuing to load a round too soon, allowing the primer to become loose, and the round defective.

---

26. Unit: Platoon (minus 2 Position: Platoon leader  
tanks) (crew) Time: Spring 1968  
Support: None Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Location: South Vietnam  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Shortage of personnel and replacements.

Action Taken: Operated with three-man crew -- driver, loader, and myself or TC.

Results: When required, I was able to fire from the TC's position and could bring effective fire upon the enemy.

Evaluation: Good. An ineffective action would have been not performing the mission due to lack of personnel.

---

27. Unit: Tank platoon (minus Position: Platoon leader  
1 tank) Time: 18 Sept. 1944,  
Support: None immediately Daylight  
available Enemy Force Size: Platoon; 5 Mark  
Location: Rebincourt, France IV tanks;  
Defending the  
forward edge  
of a treeline

Situation: Platoon was moving up a hill when an enemy tank was seen in the woods only 30 feet away.

Action Taken: Changed formation and immediately engaged the enemy tank at point blank range. The enemy tank was hit, setting it on fire. The light of the fire disclosed that four more enemy tanks were there. These tanks were also quickly engaged.

Results: All five enemy tanks were destroyed. Only one friendly tank was knocked out.

Evaluation: Very Good. A five-to-one ratio. A less effective action would have been having a platoon which was not trained to react as quickly or successfully.

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28. Unit: Platoon/ACAV Position: Section leader  
Support: None Time: May 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle - with narrow water obstacles

Situation: Combat operations in an area whose small streams and narrow obstacles were present without the use of an AVLB.

Action Taken: Usually the major problem is getting the first vehicle across so it may assist the rest of the unit. We used the "pushboard" technique. A 6x6 plank or pole is placed between the lead vehicle and one to its rear on solid ground.

Results: The vehicle on solid ground helps push the lead vehicle across the water onto solid ground. The lead vehicle then uses its tow cables to pull the remaining vehicles across.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective action would have been requesting the use of an AVLB.

SECURITY  
Advance Guard

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

29. Unit: Tank platoon Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: May 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Heavy jungle

Situation: Armor movement through jungle often obliterates indications of enemy presence (i.e., small trails, footprints cannot be identified by mounted personnel).

Action Taken: The platoon working on our left flank had decided to use dismounted patrols. However, all mounted personnel in tanks were not notified.

Results: As a result of the above, two members of the dismounted patrol were wounded from friendly fire from the supporting tanks.

Evaluation: Poorly executed. All members of the parent unit should have been alerted and particularly personnel in adjacent units, when dismounted patrols were moving away from the vehicle.

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30. Unit: Tank Platoon Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: May 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Heavy jungle

Situation: Armor movement through jungle often obliterates indications of enemy presence (i.e., small trails, footprints cannot be identified by mounted personnel).

Action Taken: Because of closeness of tanks, radios were not carried by dismounted patrol.

Results: On one occasion this became a serious problem when enemy contact was made, since as little as 50 meters of jungle could become a serious barrier to any outside help. No one was injured and the mistake was not made again.

Evaluation: Poorly executed. It should have been imperative that dismounted personnel always have communication with supporting tanks.

31. <u>Unit:</u>	Tank platoon	<u>Position:</u>	Tank
<u>Support:</u>	None		commander (M48)
<u>Location:</u>	South Vietnam	<u>Time:</u>	July 1967
<u>Terrain:</u>	Jungle	<u>Enemy Force Size:</u>	Company size, or larger; Small arms & anti- tank weapons; Entrenched

Situation: Movement to contact in jungle area. Platoon SOP was to have cannister for battlesight ammunition. Encountered enemy in hamlet bunker complex.

Action Taken: Instructed gunner to unload cannister and to load HE ammunition. However, basic load (quantity) of HE was limited due to cannister being the tank's primary round.

Results: Each individual tank was not able to bring effective fire on the bunkers for a sustained period of time. Changed unit SOP and loading plan for main gun rounds of ammunition.

Evaluation: Poorly executed. The type of main gun ammo carried in the chamber should have been dictated by the operation and terrain during the mission.

---

32. <u>Unit:</u>	Platoon & attached infantry	<u>Position:</u>	Tank commander
<u>Support:</u>	None	<u>Time:</u>	October 1968
<u>Location:</u>	South Vietnam	<u>Enemy Force Size:</u>	Company, or larger; Small arms & anti- tank weapons
<u>Terrain:</u>	Dense jungle		

Situation: Maneuver to the flank of the VC company. Killed several VC with cannister and caliber .50. Suddenly, VC appeared all around, firing both automatic weapons and rifles.

Action Taken: Continued to fire into suspected enemy area as infantry dismounted from M113s. The infantry dismounting proved a serious mistake since when the infantry was mounted and moving the VC had been unable to fire well-aimed shots.

Results: Dismounted, the infantry lost their advantage. The TC, who knew the terrain, moved to higher ground resulting in numerous casualties to friendly infantry.

Evaluation: Poorly executed. Infantry should have remained mounted until tanks had reached objectives and dismounted on higher ground.

33. Unit: Platoon (crew) Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: June 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Ambushed during movement to contact. While returning enemy fire, caliber .50 failed to fire.

Action Taken: Fired coax and main gun but was unable to fire caliber .50.

Results: Unable to fire caliber .50. Head space and timing not set properly.

Evaluation: Poor. Precombat checks should have been made. Never forget that you are always an instructor. Ensure that your people are completely familiar with their crew-served weapons.

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34. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: Spring 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: One of the vehicles in the column set off a mine during movement to contact. Personnel wounded.

Action Taken: Requested MEDEVAC. While waiting for the chopper, my driver detected a wire near the damaged track running off the road into the jungle. I told him not to touch it. I had called for assistance from the engineers' platoon.

Results: After personnel had been evacuated, driver became inquisitive about wire and disobeyed my instructions. Consequently, while I was busy on the radio, he tripped the boobytrap, killing himself and wounding me.

Evaluation: Poor. Driver should have followed orders and waited for engineer platoon.

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35. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: Fall 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Platoon or larger; Auto-  
Terrain: Jungle weapons;  
Bunkers

Situation: Contact with the enemy made; heavy resistance met from the enemy.

Action Taken: Called for gunship. Cobras arrived on station with rockets and HE explosive.

Results: The ordnance of the gunships was ineffective. The jungle was too dense, which smothered the fragmentation effect.

Evaluation: Poor. It would have been more effective to request WP from supporting artillery.

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36. Unit: Tank Platoon (- 2 tanks)                      Position: Platoon leader, TC  
Support: None    Time: Spring 1968  
Location: South Vietnam                              Enemy Force Size: 1 or 2  
Terrain: Jungle    Bn NVA; ROGs  
auto weapons

Situation: Infantry company made contact with the enemy. Too much to handle; called for assistance from tank platoon.

Action Taken: My CO ordered me to assist the infantry company in contact. I requested two tanks guarding bridge to assist. Request denied. Moved my three tanks to point of contact.

Results: I am sure the VC conducted the assault on the infantry to draw my platoon into action where they were waiting to ambush us. My tank received three RPG rounds but was not badly damaged and continued to fight. Beat off ambush and was able to assist infantry company.

Evaluation: Poor. I should not have taken the obvious route to assist the infantry company.

SECURITY  
Search and Destroy

Effective  
Critical Incidents

37. Unit: Platoon (tank) Position: Platoon  
Support: Air upon request leader  
Location: Vietnam Time: 1967-68,  
Terrain: Jungle - Road Night  
Enemy Force Size: Squad to  
platoon;  
Infantry;  
Ambush

Situation: Enemy ambushed platoon along route.

Action Taken: Platoon turned lights on, maneuvered against enemy. Enemy was highly surprised to have lights on them, which caused blindness and allowed platoon time to maneuver.

Results: Enemy withdrew. The platoon accomplished their mission. Lights were crossed on lead ACAV. Upon turning lights on, the beam went to both sides of the road instead of going straight ahead. This placed immediate light on enemy without changing direction of movement.

Evaluation: Very good. The platoon passed the ambush, returned to tactical formation and routed the enemy.

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38. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: Helicopter gunships upon call leader  
Location: Vietnam Time: 1967,  
Terrain: Jungle Summer &  
Fall, Day  
& Night  
Enemy Force Size: Infantry  
and artillery

Situation: Search and destroy, using a ground-mounted and dismounted element, while conducting a search in the jungle with only a platoon.

Action Taken: Using this technique, my platoon was able to locate and fix the enemy in the jungle. The enemy was surprised 90% of the time. This was probably the first time the enemy encountered dismounted elements and mounted elements on such a small scale.



Situation: Armor units operating in thick, jungle-type areas are often required to construct landing zones quickly in order to be resupplied.

Action Taken: Crushing terrain by tanks is the fastest and best method unless large trees are present. In most cases, crushing can be accomplished quickly without vehicular damage, while large trees in the area are being prepared for demolition or cut by hand.

Results: Quickly cleared jungle area and constructed landing zone.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective action would have been moving to a different area for the LZ. Time would have been wasted using machetes and demolition.

---

41. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: June 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Personnel in platoon wounded; requested dust-off.

Action Taken: Double checked to make sure medics had properly tagged the wounded and had marked any drugs which were administered. Dust-off would not give the wounded additional morphine, knowing that they had already received one shot. As a double check, I would also tell the pilots which wounded had received morphine.

Results: All wounded received proper medication.

Evaluation: Good. Less effective method would have been not to have marked the wounded and the drugs.

---

42. Unit: Cavalry troop Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: Attack helicopter Infantry  
Location: Vietnam with anti-  
Terrain: Heavy jungle tank guns;  
Position: Troop commander Occupying  
Time: 29 April 1971, defense  
Daylight bunker  
complex

Situation: While on a land clearing operation, Rome plows ran into an enemy-defended bunker complex.

Action Taken: Cavalry troop was brought up on line and bunker complex was attacked and overrun with support of gunships.

Results: Enemy was driven from their bunkers, leaving 26 dead. No friendly troops were killed.

Evaluation: Very good. Troop took full advantage of its mobility and fire power. A less effective unit would not have taken decisive action.

---

43. Unit: Cavalry troop                      Enemy Force Size: Company;  
Support: Field artillery and                      Rifle  
Cobra gunship                                      company  
Location: Vietnam                                      with anti-  
Terrain: Heavy jungle                                      tank guns;  
Position: Troop commander                                      Deployed in  
Time: 29 April 1971,                                      defensive  
Daylight    bunkers

Situation: Cavalry troop was providing security for a land clearing operation when the Rome plows came under fire from enemy troops in bunkers.

Action Taken: Elements of the cavalry troop were committed to move in and provide a shield so that the Rome plows could be extricated.

Results: Troop successfully evacuated the Rome plows with operators and then assumed a line formation, attacking and destroying the enemy with the support of artillery and gunships.

Evaluation: Very Good. Immediate response to the crisis was responsible for saving lives. A less effective decision would have been not taking positive action.

---

44. Unit: Cavalry troop                      Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: Cavalry Squadron                      Infantry  
(minus) field                                      with anti-  
artillery & gun-                                      tank guns;  
ships    Defending a  
Location: Vietnam                                      woodline  
Terrain: Wooded                                      from prepared  
Position: Troop commander                                      bunkers  
Time: 17 April 1971,  
1700 hours

Situation: Enemy troops were discovered and heavy close-in fighting took place.

Action Taken: Rifle squads were dismounted and supported by Sheridans and ACAV. Enemy was routed from its bunkers by the dismounted troops.

Results: Enemy withdrew, leaving 29 dead, at the cost of 3 American lives.

Evaluation: Very good. Decisive action was taken when necessary. A less effective unit would have hesitated when positive action was required.

---

45. Unit: Cavalry troop                      Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: Two infantry companies                      Infantry  
Location: Vietnam    with anti-  
Terrain: Jungle    tank guns;  
Position: Troop commander                                      Occupying  
Time: 18 May 1970,    prepared  
Daylight    bunkers

Situation: A cavalry troop in an area reconnaissance role as part of a search and destroy mission came upon an enemy battalion occupying a series of bunkers.

Action Taken: Moved the troop on line and attacked the bunkers with 152mm cannister and all available machinegun fire.

Results: Enemy was routed from the bunkers and withdrew into a blocking position established by friendly infantry companies. Friendly infantry companies destroyed the enemy.

Evaluation: Very good. The fire power and mobility of the cavalry was fully utilized. A less effective unit would not have taken advantage of the fire power and mobility of the armored cavalry troop.

---

46. Unit: Cavalry troop                      Time: 15 January  
Support: Brigade minus    1971,  
Location: Vietnam    Daylight  
Terrain: An improved road                      Enemy Force Size: Two  
through dense    battalions;  
jungle; off-road    Infantry  
maneuverability of    with anti-  
track vehicles    tank guns;  
was impossible    Deployed in  
Position: Troop commander    an ambush  
    along both  
    sides of a  
    road

Situation: Cavalry troop on search and destroy was ambushed. Lead vehicle was struck by anti-tank weapons and caught fire.

Action Taken: Lead vehicle, even though on fire, continued to move through the ambush until clear of the area. This allowed the balance of the cavalry troop to move into the area and employ all of their weapons against the ambush.

Results: Burning vehicle in the lead blew up, killing the crew, but by their decisive action the balance of the troop was able to move into the area and destroy the enemy.

Evaluation: Very good. The entire troop was able to engage the enemy. A less effective unit might have allowed the lead vehicle to halt when it caught fire, thus blocking the employment of the rest of the troop.

---

47. Unit: Cavalry troop Position: Troop  
Support: Cavalry squadron Commander  
(minus) Time: 13 May  
Location: Cambodia 1970,  
Terrain: Jungle Daylight  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Troop was leading a search and destroy mission. Intelligence from locals indicated the location of a large enemy supply depot just outside the area of operations.

Action Taken: Based on intelligence reports, the troop deviated slightly from the assigned area of operations.

Results: A cache was uncovered, which included tons of ammunition, Quartermaster supplies, fuel and spare parts for vehicles.

Evaluation: Very good. Troop commander seized upon the opportunity to use current intelligence, even though it did not fall within his assigned area of operations. A less effective unit commander would have adhered to the strict confines of his area of operations.

48. Unit: Platoon-company Position: TC, M48  
Support: None tank  
Location: South Vietnam Time: May 1969  
Terrain: Jungle-off road Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: (Nov 68 - May 69) 75% of all tank losses were caused by mines. Failing to completely prevent the enemy from employing mines forced us to find and detonate the mines. Caused the individual crewman to take action to prevent injury.

Action Taken: The floors of the tracked vehicles were often lined with sand bags (ration boxes, or discarded flak jackets to prevent mine blast penetration). Riding on top of the tracks also helped to prevent serious injury.

Results: This effort saved many lives and prevented what could have been numerous injuries.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective unit would have done nothing.

---

49. Unit: Platoon/company Position: Company  
(crew) commander/  
Support: None platoon  
Location: South Vietnam Time: May 1969  
Terrain: Jungle-off road Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: (Nov 1968 - May 1969) 75% of all tank losses were caused by mines. Tanks (M48s) survived damage much better than M113s or M551 Sheridans.

Action Taken: Special "belly armor" kits started to arrive in Vietnam during 1969.

Results: This added protection gave an added confidence to the armored crewman. This effort saved many lives.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective solution would have been not applying belly armor.

---

50. Unit: Company Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: February  
Terrain: Jungle 1969  
Enemy Force Size: VC Bn;  
RPGs, heavy  
MG, and auto  
weapons;  
Dug-in

Situation: The NVA had one RPG team attached. Its own opening round was to be the signal for the entire unit to open fire with their machine-guns. The NVA RPG team took aim and pulled the trigger. "Misfire" -- as a result no signal was given and the NVA unit panicked.

Action Taken: The platoon just drove right in and killed or captured all but three men in the unit.

Results: Captured two caliber .51 machineguns and several enemy back packs.

Evaluation: Good. To have hesitated, knowing that the enemy was prepared for an attack would have been a mistake.

---

51. Unit: Tank Platoon (crew) Position: TC  
Support: None Time: March 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Movement to contact; encountered streams.

Action Taken: Used dozer blade on tank to dam up stream.

Results: Crossing could be made downstream without creating a gummy crossing site.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective unit would have tried to cross the stream without fording.

---

52. Unit: Tank platoon (crew) Position: TC  
Support: None Time: March 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Movement to contact; encountered stream.

Action Taken: Used HE or HEP to fire at the opposite river bank to reduce bank and improve approach.

Results: This reduced the exit angle of the bank and permitted ease of exiting.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective unit would have called for Engineering Support.

53. Unit: Tank platoon (crew) Position: TC  
Support: None Time: April 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Movement to contact; encountered a stream to cross.

Action Taken: Cut down coconut trees and had them thrown into the stream bottom.

Results: This action kept the tanks from nosing into the stream bottom and created a firm crossing site.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective unit would have called for Engineering Support.

---

54. Unit: Tank platoon (crew) Position: TC  
Support: None Time: April 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle, with streams

Situation: Movement to contact; encountered a stream to cross.

Action Taken: Moved the tank parallel to the stream bank and neutral steered.

Results: The bank gradually collapsed, lessening the angle of entrance into the stream and allowed easy crossing.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective unit would have called for Engineering Support.

---

55. Unit: Tank platoon Position: TC  
Support: None Time: March 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: A combined tank-infantry attack during a search and destroy mission.

Action Taken: Did not commit tanks with searching force because the size and sound of the tanks made them easy to detect at a distance. Established dismounted ambushes into positions along likely routes of withdrawal, then drove a tank force rapidly into the area.

Results: In avoiding the armor, the enemy tended to neglect precaution in favor of faster movement, therefore increasing his vulnerability to ambush.

Evaluation: Good. It would have been useless to use tanks without setting up ambushes.

---

56. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank  
Support: None platoon  
Location: Phan Thiet area, leader  
Vietnam Time: March 1968  
Terrain: Open Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: An enemy force emplaced an ambush for 3 weeks for a tank platoon operating in the area before the tanks came their way.

Action Taken: Reconnaissance party located enemy ambush.

Results: In spite of this preparation, the tank platoon inflicted a decisive defeat on the enemy force without losing a man or a tank. Based on this, tank platoons welcomed direct contact with the enemy forces anywhere.

Evaluation: Good.

---

57. Unit: Platoon Position: TC, M48  
Support: None Time: May 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Requested fighters and gunships on enemy's position. As a result, a caliber .51 started firing at the aircraft. The TC could see 3 caliber .51 firing positions due to muzzle flash.

Action Taken: TC called CO to get permission to fire at the 3 caliber .51 positions. The CO cleared this request with the Bn CO because of the possible danger of friendly fire to the fighters.

Results: Permission was granted. The tank then silenced two of the three caliber .51 anti-aircraft guns.

Evaluation: Good.

58. Unit: Platoon Position: TC of  
Support: None tank hit  
Location: South Vietnam by mine  
Terrain: Jungle Time: April 1969  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: The lead tank struck what was estimated to be two plastic mines, stacked one on top of the other. The explosion threw tank tracks 300 meters from the vehicle. A recovery vehicle working to pull the damaged tank out was hit by an RPG, causing it to explode and burn.

Action Taken: All removable equipment was stripped from the damaged tank and recovery vehicle. They were left in the river bed overnight and evacuated the next day.

Results: Enemy was unable to remove or use equipment on disabled vehicles.

Evaluation: Good. Equipment was quickly removed to prevent capture by the enemy. Too often equipment was abandoned and later used by the enemy. Not to have stripped usable equipment from the vehicles would have been foolish.

---

59. Unit: Company plus Position: CO, tank  
Support: None company  
Location: South Vietnam Time: April 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Reconnaissance in force for a sustained period of time (40-50 days).

Action Taken: Requested total air resupply of the task force due to the large area (50 km from nearest friendly unit) being received by the unit.

Results: An average of 15 Chinook loads per day kept the task force supplied, and everything the task force used, from fuel to candy bars, was transported to them.

Evaluation: Good. The task force demonstrated its flexibility and the fact that no area was inaccessible. Proved that an armor/infantry task force could be resupplied from the air. To have been resupplied by land would have been almost impossible and very time consuming.

60. Unit: Platoon/company Position: Company  
(crew) commander/  
Support: None platoon  
Location: South Vietnam Time: May 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: (Nov 68 - May 69) 75% of all tank losses were caused by mines.

Action Taken: Instructed personnel to be more alert for suspected mine emplacements. Became familiar with terrain. Anticipated where VC would emplace mines.

Results: More road mines were spotted by alert crewmen than were found by mine detectors, some estimates of the percentage of detection by visual means run as high as 90% with the norm being 60-70%.

Evaluation: Good. Continuing to use mine detectors or restrict tank movement would have been less effective.

---

61. Unit: Platoon/company Position: Company  
Support: None commander/  
Location: South Vietnam platoon  
Terrain: Jungle Time: May 1969  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: (Nov 68 - May 69) 75% of all tank losses were caused by mines.

Action Taken: Requested use of the mine/tunnel detection dogs which had arrived in Vietnam the previous month.

Results: The dogs performed their mission well. After the first 90 days, they found 45 mines. The heat of Vietnam, however, restricted the use of the dogs in open areas. They worked better on trials and open roads.

Evaluation: Good. Trying to use other mine detector equipment would have been less effective.



64. Unit: Tank company Position: Tank  
Support: None commander,  
Location: South Vietnam bulldozer  
Terrain: Jungle, cross-country tank  
Time: July 1967  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Cross-country movement involving crossing streams to continue search and destroy mission.

Action Taken: Used the bulldozer blade to make an entrance and exit to streams.

Results: Greatly increased the mobility of the tank platoon while moving cross-country.

Evaluation: Very good. The tank dozer blade has proven invaluable when moving cross-country. Not to have used the dozer capability of the platoon would have been foolish.

---

65. Unit: Tank company with Position: Tank  
engineer mine commander  
sweeping team attached Time: July 1967  
Support: Engineer mine sweep Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
team  
Location: South Vietnam  
Terrain: Dense jungle

Situation: Moving in an area that the platoon had previously moved through. Tracks which were used before by the platoon were again being used. One tank hit a mine.

Action Taken: Instructed my driver to avoid driving in tracks previously made.

Results: No other tanks were damaged by mines. Engineer mine sweep team found several mines in old tank tracks.

Evaluation: Good.

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66. Unit: Tank company with Position: Company  
engineer mine commander  
sweeping team Time: July 1967  
attached Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Support: Mine sweeping team  
Location: South Vietnam  
Terrain: Dense jungle



Situation: Enemy discovered defending along dikes. Decision was made to cordon off the enemy and destroy it.

Action Taken: Encircled the enemy position and assaulted. Overran and completely destroyed all enemy.

Results: Approximately 100 enemy troops were killed or captured, and the area was cleared.

Evaluation: Very good. Encirclement was complete, and no enemy escaped the trap. It would have been ineffective to be less decisive and not as vigorous in the assault.

---

69. Unit: Tank-heavy team                      Position: Company  
Support: D/S artillery & mortars                      commander  
Location: Vietnam                      Time: 3 March  
Terrain: Jungle with organized bunkers prepared                      Daylight  
Enemy Force Size: Battalion; Infantry; Enemy organized defensive position in bunkers

Situation: An area search disclosed the location of enemy occupied bunkers.

Action Taken: An attack was launched against the bunkers with all available fire power. Tanks led the attack, followed by a platoon of infantry in APCs.

Results: Enemy was completely routed, although many enemy soldiers escaped. All enemy supplies were captured.

Evaluation: Fairly well executed attack. It would have been better to completely cordon off the enemy so that none of them could have escaped.

70. Unit: Cavalry troop Position: Troop commander  
Support: Cavalry squadron (-) Time: 21 Jan. 1970, 0700 hours  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Battalion; Infantry; Defending rubber plantation  
Terrain: Sparse jungle area

Situation: Cavalry troop ordered to conduct ground reconnaissance of a rubber plantation. Upon reaching the plantation, the troop was taken under fire.

Action Taken: Enemy displayed poor fire discipline by firing too soon. Cavalry troop located enemy bunkers, took them under fire, and overran them. Sheridans and ACAVs crushed the bunkers.

Results: Aggressive action by the cavalry troop commander forced the enemy to disclose his position too soon.

Evaluation: Very good. Hesitation on the part of the cavalry troop commander would have resulted in less successful attack.

71. Unit: Tank company Position: Company commander  
Support: Infantry company Time: 8 Jan. 1970, Daylight  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Battalion; Infantry; Defending slopes of a hill  
Terrain: Sparse jungle area

Situation: Friendly force (tank company) was utilized to sweep a hillside and destroy the enemy. Enemy forces defended stubbornly and would not vacate the area.

Action Taken: Fired white phosphorous (WP) and caliber .50 fire into enemy-held bunkers and caves and dislodged the enemy.

Results: Enemy broke contact, leaving many dead.

Evaluation: Very well executed. Aggressive determination by the tank company was effective in causing the enemy to withdraw. Less aggressiveness on the part of the friendly force would not have been as effective.

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72. Unit: Cavalry troop Position: Troop commander  
Support: Cavalry squadron (-) Time: 20 January 1970  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Battalion; Infantry; Defensive position  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Helicopter was shot down and an attempt to evacuate the pilot was prevented by the enemy.

Action Taken: Cavalry troop reconnoitered and crossed a stream with Sheridans, neutralized bunkers with HE fire and caliber .50 machinegun, and was able to rescue the downed pilot.

Results: Pilot was rescued, enemy-defended bunkers were neutralized, and the enemy departed the area.

Evaluation: Very well executed. Quick reaction on the part of the cavalry troop was the deciding factor in driving. A less effective action would have been hesitation on the part of the squadron commander to commit a troop and poor reconnaissance that would not have discovered a good place to cross the stream.

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73. Unit: Cavalry troop Time: 28 April 1967, 1100 hours  
Support: Scout platoon & rifle company Enemy Force Size: Battalion; Infantry; Deployed in bunkers  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Very dense jungle vegetation  
Position: Troop commander

Situation: Movement to contact, when fired on by snipers and then ambushed by command mines and grenades.

Action Taken: Conducted mounted attack, utilizing a combination of tanks and mechanized infantry firing from APCs. Aeroscouts were used to pinpoint bunkers and other targets.



Results: Enemy withdrew from the area, leaving six dead.  
Enemy bunkers were destroyed.

Evaluation: Very good. Aggressive action was taken by the troop. Hesitation on the part of commanders at all levels might have resulted in failure.

---

76. Unit: Vehicle crew Time: 5 May  
Support: Tank company 1970,  
Location: Cambodia Daylight  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Two (2)  
Position: Crew commander men; Caliber  
.51 machine-  
gun crew;  
Set up in  
front of a  
bunker

Situation: Crew was riding outside of a vehicle when aerial observer warned them that an enemy caliber .51 machinegun was located 10 feet away.

Action Taken: Did not have time to get into the vehicle, so the crew rolled off the side of the vehicle onto the enemy machinegun crew and physically attempted to grab the enemy machinegun crew. Enemy threw grenade and vehicle commander threw a grenade back at the enemy.

Results: One enemy soldier was captured, one enemy soldier was killed, and the vehicle commander was slightly wounded.

Evaluation: Very good. Quick reaction by the vehicle commander saved the lives of the vehicle crew.

---

77. Unit: Tank company Time: 3 May  
Support: Cavalry squadron (minus) 1970,  
Location: Cambodia Daylight  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Position: Company commander

Situation: Tank company was leading a cavalry squadron through the jungle when it discovered enemy communications wire.

Action Taken: Instead of following the preplanned direction of movement, the tank company followed the enemy communications wire.



79. Unit: Cavalry troop Enemy Force  
Support: Tactical air & gunships Size: Battalion;  
Location: Vietnam Infantry with  
Terrain: Rubber plantation with anti-tank  
with jungle weapons;  
surrounding it Deployed in  
Position: Troop commander a defensive  
Time: 10 March 1970, Daylight position  
around a  
rubber  
plantation

Situation: Cavalry troop was reconnoitering a rubber plantation when the lead platoon was taken under fire by anti-tank weapons and small arms.

Action Taken: Lead platoon returned fire and continued to engage the enemy, while the troop minus maneuvered to a flank of the enemy position. Troop minus attacked the enemy with support from tactical air and gunships.

Results: Cannister rounds from the Sheridans and caliber .50 fire from the ACAVs broke the will of the enemy to resist. Enemy retreated into the jungle, leaving 90 dead.

Evaluation: Very good. The combination of fire and maneuver between the two elements was responsible for overcoming the enemy resistance. Tactical air and gunships were not effective because of the proximity of the enemy to the friendly force. A less effective action would have been to rely on air support and not maneuver against the enemy.

80. Unit: Cavalry troop Enemy Force  
Support: Tactical air & gunships Size: Two companies;  
Location: Vietnam Infantry with  
Terrain: Rubber plantation with anti-tank  
some jungle, but not too weapons;  
dense. Defensive  
Position: Troop commander position with  
Time: 2 March 1970, Daylight bunkers

Situation: Lead elements of a cavalry troop on a reconnaissance mission were ambushed by the enemy.

Action Taken: Entire troop was moved up on line and committed in the attack. Enemy bunkers were discovered and tactical air and gunships were called in. All available fires were brought to bear on the enemy.



Results: A portion of the enemy battalion was dislodged from its position.

Evaluation: Very good. The second in command maintained the momentum of the attack after his leader had been killed. To have hesitated when the leader was killed might have been disastrous.

---

83. Unit: Armored cavalry platoon      Time: 14 Feb. 1970,  
Support: Aerial rocket & field      Daylight  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Sparse jungle      Enemy Force  
Position: Platoon leader      Size: Company;  
Infantry;  
Defending  
a wood-  
line

Situation: While on a search and destroy mission, the lead elements of an armored cavalry platoon were taken under fire with RPGs (anti-tank weapons).

Action Taken: Immediately deployed the cavalry platoon and called for artillery and aerial rocket fires.

Results: The enemy was dislodged from its position and withdrew, leaving 7 dead.

Evaluation: Very good. Quick reaction on the part of the platoon leader. A less effective situation might have resulted if the leader had been slower in developing the situation.

---

84. Unit: Platoon      Time: May 1970  
Support: None      Enemy Force Size: Regiment;  
Location: South Vietnam      RPGs and  
Terrain: Rubber plantation      auto;  
Position: TC, AR CAV      Located in  
bunker  
complex

Situation: A night mechanical ambush was set up. The next day, a dismounted party from ACAVs entered the ambush area to search for the enemy. The enemy opened fire.

Action Taken: Hit the ground and returned fire from a drainage ditch while the platoon ACAVs returned fire over their heads.

Results: No one in the dismounted party was injured by friendly fire, although a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire was directed over their heads.

Evaluation: Good. The months of training in battle drill, to include armed fire and fire discipline, had paid off. To have lost fire control and fire discipline might have been disastrous.

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85. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: June 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Adjustments must be made on gunships to perform air strikes on enemy position.

Action Taken: Commander calmly and correctly identified position of platoon and enemy by determining range and azimuth.

Results: Effective fire was brought to bear on the enemy's position.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective situation might have developed had the leader become excited. He might have forgotten to pop smoke, and called for fire 50 meters from your front when he meant 150 meters.

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86. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: June 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Adjusting artillery fire on enemy position.

Action Taken: Compensated for bursting radius of rounds while adjusting fire toward the platoon's position.

Results: Artillery rounds were placed where I wanted them. The enemy was repelled and friendly losses were minimal.

Evaluation: Good. To have forgotten bursting radius of supporting fires requested could have been very dangerous.

87. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: June 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Personnel in platoon wounded; requested dust-off.

Action Taken: Told the dust-off pilot that the PU area was (hot) receiving fire and the direction of the enemy.

Results: Pilot was able to fly into (PZ), avoid enemy fire, and pick up wounded. Mission was able to continue.

Evaluation: Good. Not to have informed pilot that (PZ) was under enemy fire might have proven disastrous.

---

88. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: June 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Personnel in platoon wounded; requested dust-off.

Action Taken: I had my wounded ready to load the moment the chopper touched the ground. Litter cases first, walking second, and dead last.

Results: All wounded personnel were treated quickly and survived. Mission was able to continue.

Evaluation: Good. To have been less well-organized or unprepared might have caused loss of life.

---

89. Unit: Cavalry section Time: March 1945,  
Support: D/S artillery Night, raining  
Location: Germany Enemy Force Defending along  
Terrain: Sparsely wooded Size: a ridgeline  
Position: Platoon leader

Situation: Cavalry section was ordered out on the mission on a dark rainy night, making night land navigation almost impossible.

Action Taken: Arranged to have the artillery fire one round every half hour, 1000 yards in front of the patrol, thus marking the route in and out of enemy-held territory.

Results: The patrol was successful in moving in behind the enemy, capturing a POW and returning with him to the friendly position.

Evaluation: Very good. An ingenious method of land navigation was utilized in order to accomplish a mission. A less aggressive leader might have lacked imagination because of the terrain and bad weather, and considered mission accomplishment impossible.

---

90. Unit: Cavalry troop Time: May 1944,  
Support: Infantry Bn task force following the cavalry troop Enemy Force Size: May 1944, Night  
Location: Austria & Italy Size: Route was lightly defended, but the frontier town (Brenner) was heavily defended  
Terrain: Improved road through a mountain pass  
Position: Troop commander

Situation: Was informed that speed was most important to seize the town and link up with the friendly force moving north out of Italy.

Action Taken: Turned on the headlights of all vehicles and sped up the mountain pass and captured that half of the town (Brenner) in Austria. Secured permission to cross the international boundary leaving the European theater and entering the Mediterrean theater to secure the south half of Brenner and proceed south.

Results: Permission was granted and the troop secured the other half of Brenner. It then proceeded south and linked up with friendly forces 30 km into Italy.

Evaluation: Very good. Complete surprise was achieved by the speed in conducting the operation and getting permission to extend the mission across the international boundary. A less aggressive leader might not have turned on the headlights, proceeded at a slower pace, and not obtained permission to extend the mission across the international boundary between two theaters of operation.

91. Unit: Tank platoon (crew) Position: Tank  
Support: None commander  
Location: South Vietnam Time: January  
Terrain: Jungle 1969  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Tanks/vehicle personnel moving through heavy jungle or wooded areas were getting wounded because of tripping tree-high boobytraps. (Personnel on top tank/vehicle).

Action Taken: Tied down vehicle antennas. (NOTE: Should not be done at the expense of good communications).

Results: Decrease in wounded personnel from boobytraps.

Evaluation: Good. Not tying antennas would have caused friendly casualties.

---

92. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: Artillery battalion leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: Fall 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: HE was normally fired into an area before conducting a search and destroy mission. HE would have little effect in dense jungle.

Action Taken: Requested that WP be used to prep the search area. The HE and fragmentation were being stopped by the dense foilage.

Results: Much better than HE because of the incendiary characteristic. More could be destroyed, depriving the enemy of shelter. As a result, the artillery carried more in their basic load.

Evaluation: Good. To continue to use HE ammo might have been ineffective.

---

93. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: June 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Search and destroy contact with enemy. Enemy tried to escape because he did not want to fight the cavalry.



95. Unit: Cavalry troop Time: Fall 1969,  
Support: Heavy gunship team Daylight  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Approxi-  
Terrain: Open rolling with 6' mately  
high brush, interlaced one platoon;  
with trails. The Guerillas  
area had been Rome  
plowed about 3 years  
before & the brush  
was secondary growth.  
Position: Flame platoon and  
escort for command  
group.

Situation: The mission was to surround and capture or des-  
troy a local guerilla platoon. Their hiding  
place had been made known to the squadron. The  
unit moved in quickly and tried to surround  
the guerillas. The enemy set up a hasty  
ambush.

Action Taken: Upon the start of the ambush the platoon  
sergeant directed his platoon through  
the ambush and killed all of those involved  
while still managing to complete the encircle-  
ment of the enemy.

Results: VC: 15 KIA, 5 WIA, 5 POWs; US: 0 KIA, 2 WIA, 0 POW.  
The hasty movement by the two troops involved  
through the difficult terrain coupled with the  
actions of the ambushed platoon sergeant insured  
success. The local guerilla unit was effectively  
destroyed and the majority of its equipment  
captured.

Evaluation: Very good. Correct analysis and planning  
preceded the action, allowing the subordinate  
units to act immediately upon reaching the area  
of operation. Proper reaction to the ambush  
allowed the troop to complete its assigned  
task, encirclement, while reacting to the ambush.  
The result was the destruction of that particular  
guerilla platoon. A less effective platoon  
might not have followed the SOP set for ambush.  
Delay in the ambush might have delayed encircle-  
ment & thus the destruction of the enemy.

96. Unit: 1 Infantry company with 1 recon platoon attached  
Position: Scout squad leader  
Time: 1966, Daylight  
Support: 4.2 mortar & artillery  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Jungle  
Enemy Force Size: Infantry; In Bunkers

Situation: Unit was deployed in the edge of a jungle area, the reconnaissance platoon on line with the infantry to our rear. We were facing an open area with jungle on the other side.

Action Taken: We put mortar and artillery fire on the jungle area across the opening and immediately moved across the open area placing direct fire on the jungle area to our front. We moved through the jungle area and deployed on line when we reached the other side and provided security for the infantry while they made a detail search of the area the armor had moved through. The unit moved in the same manner across the open to the next jungle area and continued the same way all day.

Results: The unit did accomplish its mission because effective fire was brought to bear on the enemy, causing him to withdraw.

Evaluation: Very good. The accurate artillery and mortar fire kept the enemy's head down while we moved rapidly across the open area. Placing accurate small arms fire on the enemy made him withdraw. Also, the infantry moving behind the armor were protected from boobytraps while moving through the jungle. Enemy was pushed back and the area secured by the armor. The Infantry destroyed many bunkers and enemy base camps in the area.

97. Unit: Cavalry Platoon  
Support: DS artillery and air  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Rubber plantation  
Position: Platoon sergeant  
Time: February 1959, Daylight  
Enemy Force Size: Battalion plus; Infantry RPG mortars and recoilless rifles

Situation: The NVA was dug-in with bunkers from which to fire. All firing came from straight up the rubber tree lanes. We were attacking up the lanes and were stopped cold, due to RPG in the trees.

Action Taken: The troop commander of one unit established the base of the fire, while the other one attacked from the flank. There were no firing position from which the enemy could be seen.

Results: The unit accomplished its mission. It proved that fire and maneuver is still the best method of attack. We overran the enemy, destroying his position by attacking from the flank. The whole battalion was completely wiped out.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective unit would have continued the attack, and many men would have been lost by making a frontal attack.

---

98. Unit: Armor platoon and one squad of infantry      Time: April 1968, Daylight  
Support: Helicopter gunships, mortars      Enemy Force  
Location: Vietnam      Size: Company plus, Infantry with  
Terrain: Jungle, swamp-like      RPGs; Dug-in,  
Position: Platoon sergeant      in trenches and bunkers

Situation: Tank platoon and one infantry squad was conducting a search and destroy mission when a bunker complex was entered. We received fire at close range from the front flanks and some from the rear.

Action Taken: The tank platoon fired with HE delay and HEAT at bunkers. The infantry squad leader quickly dismounted his squad and moved up from the rear, throwing hand grenades and firing on the enemy that were in trenches. The infantry continued to move forward on line with the tanks to clear the trenches and spider holes.

Results: The unit did accomplish the mission; approximately 180 enemy were killed, many of which were not seen until after the fire fight.

Evaluation: Excellent. The situation was handled in an outstanding manner. We received gunship and mortar support immediately. We realized we were in a bad situation, because we were receiving fire from about 360 degrees. I think a less effective platoon would have tried to back out of the complex, and in doing so, would have lost more lives and equipment.

---

99. Unit: Company Time: 1968 March,  
Support: Gunship, air force, artillery Daylight  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force  
Terrain: Open area with small village Size: Infantry, heavy  
Position: ACAV, track commander village

Situation: Company on line on open area. Received heavy fire from the village to our front.

Action Taken: Our troop commander gave us a fire mission. We opened fire on the village. Support fire was called in.

Results: Mission was accomplished. We captured the village, 87 body count. We lost two people WIA. Successful because our troop commander could control the whole troop and support fire. Captured the village and ran out the enemy.

Evaluation: Good. I think there was no other way the situation could have been handled.

---

100. Unit: Crew Position: Tank  
Support: Infantry, tac air support commander  
Location: Vietnam Time: June 1969,  
Terrain: Jungle Daylight  
Enemy Force  
Size: Company;  
Infantry;  
unknown  
(with snipers)

Situation: Seek out as tank crew and destroy. Make room for infantry to locate caves or weapons which were under cover.

Action Taken: Enemy withdrew with sniper fire.

Results: Some weapons and ammo were located with enemy withdrawal. Mission was accomplished. Area was cleared for a time with only small amounts of sniper fire. Successful due to strict on line control from all units involved. Held down areas while clearing each part of the area.

Evaluation: Good. Command effectively cleared the area when dense jungle prohibited good vision.

---

101. Unit: Tank company Time: Summer 1969,  
Support: None Daylight  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force  
Terrain: Open rolling Size: Village  
Position: Platoon sergeant occupied by  
approximately  
one platoon;  
Infantry;  
Occupied village

Situation: Company was given a mission to search and destroy a village.

Action Taken: The unit moved very quickly and effectively, executing all orders.

Results: The mission was successful. Responsive action, rather than slow drawnout preparation. Company captured approximately 10 NVA.

Evaluation: Good. Responsive action by the company and the platoons who had a thorough knowledge of the mission resulted in success. Had the order come through the regular channels, security might have broken, and the enemy would be given more time to evacuate.

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102. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank commander  
Support: Mortar; Locate & Time: Spring 1966,  
destroy known reserve Daylight  
of enemy food supply Enemy Force  
Location: Vietnam Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Swamp like

Situation: My unit was to search out a known area of enemy support activities. My platoon successfully located a larch cache of rice and a small supply of small arms ammunition.



104. Unit: Tank platoon Enemy Force Size: Platoon  
Support: Artillery gunships; Air with mortar  
rifle platoon & recoilless  
Location: Vietnam rifle; Basi-  
Terrain: Mountain area cally in-  
Position: Tank commander fantry;  
Time: February 1969 Ambush

Situation: We were attempting to open Highway 1 by mine sweeping and reconnaissance by fire of the woodline. The enemy ambushed us.

Action Taken: We immediately opened fire and moved off the road in the direction of the enemy. The ambush failed, and we were able to continue the mission.

Results: As a direct result of opening fire and moving in that direction, the enemy had to break and run.

Evaluation: Good. We had already anticipated the situation and the platoon driver/platoon sergeant told us exactly what each tank would do, therefore there was no unnecessary talk on the radio, and no confusion. A less effective unit might have stopped, causing a lot of confusion on the radio by the platoon 1 driver trying to direct his tanks.

---

105. Unit: 2 reconnaissance, 1 Enemy Force Size: RPGs, auto-  
tank platoon matic weapons;  
Support: None Enemy troops  
Location: Vietnam in these  
Terrain: Built-up area buildings  
Position: Tank platoon sergeant  
Time: Winter 1968, Daylight

Situation: We started at the end of a 3-block section with a reconnaissance platoon dismounted to clear the buildings. The enemy opened fire on the reconnaissance platoon after it got to the middle of the first block.

Action Taken: The tank platoon continued firing point blank into the building. The first tank would fire at the second floor, the second tank would fire at the ground floor. The tank platoon kept firing while moving. The second reconnaissance at the rear was joined by ARVN infantry and cleared the buildings.

Results: The buildings were cleared with few losses, and the area was secured.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective platoon would not have continued up the street with the possibility of RPG fire that close. Tanks might have been stopped without infantry support.

---

106. Unit: Troop Enemy Force Size: Battalion  
Support: DS artillery; Air force size; In-  
on call fantry;  
Location: Vietnam Dug-in  
Terrain: Open rolling  
Position: Platoon sergeant  
Time: 1967, Day & Night

Situation: Platoon was sent in to area to reconnaissance while the rest of the troop waited on beach. Platoon made contact, then the rest of the troop came up and opened fire on the enemy. The enemy was dug in on the side of a hill. The troop commander withdrew the troop and regrouped in order to conduct a coordinated attack. Artillery was called on the enemy and after a short time the troop conducted an attack, but had to pull out because of heavy fire.

Action Taken: Air force was called in which made airstrikes. Then the troop went back in and destroyed the enemy.

Results: Because a fast decision was made to bring up the rest of the troop, the enemy was destroyed.

Evaluation: Good. A delayed decision would have resulted in heavier casualties.

SECURITY  
Search and Destroy

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

107. Unit: Platoon Enemy Force Size: Company,  
Support: Attached infantry consisting  
Location: Vietnam of rockets  
Terrain: Swamp-like & tank kill-  
Position: Tank commander er teams;  
Time: Summer 1967 dug-in, in  
defensive  
positions

Situation: My platoon was moving along a small road in column, with infantry personnel on our back deck, to occupy area of operations. Several of us tank commanders noticed something was unusual about a small village.

Action Taken: We informed our platoon leader who was new in country; he chose not to take our opinion on the village. Our platoon, along with the infantry, was nearly wiped out.

Results: The platoon, after three days of heavy fighting, finally accomplished the mission.

Evaluation: Very poor. I believe that had the platoon leader been better trained before assuming command, we would have not suffered as many casualties. He should have taken the advice of more experienced combat veterans, and reconned the area.

---

108. Unit: Troop Time: Spring  
Support: Mortar, gunships on 1969  
hand to assist Enemy Force Size: Company,  
Location: Vietnam RPG small  
Terrain: Open rolling arms, recon  
Position: Tank section leader area for  
enemy posi-  
tion

Situation: Contact was made with enemy force. Word was issued not to engage enemy force until situation could be checked by squadron commander who was flying overhead in his helicopter. During this time the troop was hit by an enemy force, causing mass confusion.

110. <u>Unit:</u>	Platoon	<u>Position:</u>	Platoon
<u>Support:</u>	8", 155, Cobra, Tac		leader
	Air	<u>Time:</u>	Spring 1971
<u>Location:</u>	Vietnam	<u>Enemy Force Size:</u>	Battalion
<u>Terrain:</u>	Open terrain interspersed with small plots of shrubs and trees		(NVA, 101st); Infantry; prepared position

Situation: Troop was conducting area recon when it abruptly ran into enemy battalion in bunkers. Several friendly casualties resulted and the troop withdrew to regroup.

Action Taken: While regrouping, artillery support, both 8" and 155, was requested and delivered. A subsequent assault on the same axis of advance as the first met with several more casualties. A final assault on a different axis was successful.

Results: On the final assault around the flank of the enemy position, the enemy withdrew from his position before he could be pinned down. Although the position was successfully taken, the enemy left no sign of having suffered even a single casualty.

Evaluation: Poor. Stereotype timing and attacking frontally on prepared position contributed significantly to the number of casualties the troop suffered. This, coupled with the enemy's escape and lack of casualties, seriously hurt morale. A more effective unit would have used all fire support available to pound the enemy before attacking him. Only then should the attack have been made, using a base of fire to pin the enemy in position until the maneuver element could move around his flank and attack him.

111. <u>Unit:</u>	Recon platoon	<u>Position:</u>	Platoon
<u>Support:</u>	D/S artillery		leader
<u>Location:</u>	Vietnam	<u>Time:</u>	Nov. 1970
<u>Terrain:</u>	Jungle	<u>Enemy Force Size:</u>	Squad, Infantry, ambush site

Situation: While searching a bunker complex, members of a platoon wandered off with a scout dog and handler to follow a trail.

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<u>Location:</u>	Vietnam	<u>Time:</u>	Nov. 1970
<u>Terrain:</u>	Jungle	<u>Enemy Force Size:</u>	Squad, Infantry, ambush site

Situation: While searching a bunker complex, members of a platoon wandered off with a scout dog and handler to follow a trail.

Action Taken: Tried to traverse turret and engage enemy with main gun cannister round could not fire until infantry either had dismounted or were free from the turret. Used the caliber .50 to return fire.

Results: Negative. By the time I was able to fire, the enemy had moved off into the jungle. Unknown number of tanks destroyed, along with some friendly KIA and WIA.

Evaluation: Poor. The infantry should not have been mounted on the tank and the caliber .50 should have been fired sooner. A better solution would have been for the infantry to have been dismounted to the rear of the tanks and walking in tank tracks.

---

114. Unit: Tank platoon (crew) Position: Tank  
Support: None Commander: commander  
Location: South Vietnam Time: July 1967  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Moving cross country to make contact with the enemy. My tank hit mine. Minor damage to tank, but loader was seriously injured because he was not wearing CVC helmet.

Action Taken: Instructed crew members always to wear their crash helmets when their vehicle is moving.

Results: Loader had to be evacuated.

Evaluation: Poor. Loader became careless and TC did not check his crew. TC should have insured that crew was wearing CVC helmets at all times while moving.

---

115. Unit: Tank platoon with Position: Tank  
infantry attached Commander: commander  
(crew) Time: July 1967  
Support: None Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Location: South Vietnam  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Tank platoon moving cross country in column. Tank hit mine and caught fire. No personnel injured.

Action Taken: Pulled fire extinguisher, but it did not work. Ordered crew to dismount vehicle. Tank burned for approximately eight hours. After fire, the crew and TC inspected tank to see what could be salvaged.

Results: Gunner picked up a heat round which was still hot from the fire, dropped it, killing himself and wounding the loader and TC.

Evaluation: Poor. An EOD team should have been called in to dispose of the tank ammo. Crew should have waited for EOD team or been instructed to avoid all ammunition and hand grenades.

---

116. Unit: Tank company                      Position: Tank  
Support: None    commander  
Location: South Vietnam                      Time: March 1968  
Terrain: Dense jungle                      Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Enemy contact made in a fortified bunker area. Infantry maneuvered through jungle to attack enemy's right flank, then laid down base of fire.

Action Taken: Returned enemy fire with coax and main gun ammunition.

Results: Two infantrymen were killed by friendly tank units who were assaulting the objective.

Evaluation: Poor. Lack of coordination of communication between tank and infantry commanders. Unit should have used both tank and infantry on a single attack route and painted easily identifiable numbers on tanks, designating radio call sign on the side and top of turret. This would have aided infantry commanders, both on the ground and in the air, in identifying and talking to TCs.

---

117. Unit: Tank company (crew)                      Position: Tank  
Support: None    commander  
Location: South Vietnam                      Time: July 1969  
Terrain: Open jungle --                      Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
village (fortified)

Situation: Moving through fortified bunker area in VC village. In order to throw the grenade quickly, retaining pin was bent to ease pulling pin.

Action Taken: To conserve main gun ammunition, hand grenades were used and thrown into grass huts and bunker openings suspected of housing the enemy.

Results: A small tree branch caught and pulled the pin of a grenade worn by the loader. Loader was killed and both gunner and TC were wounded and required evacuation.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have insured all grenade pins were bent tightly on grenades.

---

118. Unit: AC troop with infantry Position: TC, M551  
platoon attached AR CAV  
Support: None Time: April 1967  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: VC company  
Terrain: Heavy jungle (estimated);  
RPG - auto-  
matic weapons;  
bunkers

Situation: Movement to contact in an enemy bunker area. Area was infested with well-entrenched bunker-protected NVA soldiers who would fight to the death.

Action Taken: Fired 152mm canister rounds to destroy vegetation in order to see bunkers. Some bunkers were not noticed in heavy jungle growth. VC would wait until we passed and then renew the fight from our rear.

Results: These bunkers were finally destroyed, but they took a heavy toll on US personnel. At day's end 11 VC were found dead; however 14 US were killed and 16 wounded.

Evaluation: Poor. Bunkers should have been completely destroyed before moving through area. Should have used cannister to clear vegetation then HE to destroy bunkers. Also should have used dismounted infantry.

---

119. Unit: Platoon/company Position: Company  
Support: None commander/  
Location: South Vietnam platoon  
Terrain: Jungle -- off road leader  
Time: May 1969  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown



Results: As we moved to contact with the enemy, I had no communication with any of the tanks in the platoon. Fortunately, no contact with the enemy was made.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have conducted precombat checks and replaced the radio before moving out.

---

122. Unit: Platoon (crew)                      Position: Tank  
Support: None    commander,  
Location: South Vietnam    M48  
Terrain: Jungle    Time: May 1968  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Search and destroy mission.

Action Taken: Did not take time to test-fire machinegun.

Results: When ambushed by the enemy, the caliber .50 would only fire two or three rounds at a time because the gun had not been cleaned satisfactorily.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have cleaned weapons daily in the jungle and test-fired the weapon before moving out.

---

123. Unit: Platoon (crew)                      Position: Tank  
Support: None    commander,  
Location: South Vietnam    M48  
Terrain: Jungle    Time: April 1970  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: After conducting a search and destroy mission, the platoon pulled into an assembly area that night.

Action Taken: Reported to platoon leader to receive briefing for next day's operations. Failed to supervise crew in performing after-operations maintenance.

Results: While busting jungle the next day, my tank ran out of fuel in mid-morning. Had to take a little from each of the tanks in the platoon to complete the mission. Time consuming. All reduced one grade. Jeopardized members of the platoon.

Evaluation: Poor. Should not have assumed that crew could perform after-operations maintenance without supervision. They had always topped-off before.

124. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: June 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Search and destroy mission. Read a map to get to a particular objective. Many of the terrain features encountered did not show on the map. Sometimes, streams and soft ground show as high ground on the map.

Action Taken: Did not use compass enough to ensure my position.

Results: Got lost. Wasted valuable time in reaching the objective.

Evaluation: Poor. Map reading should have been practiced. Using the compass was a must, particularly in the jungle.

---

125. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: June 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Personnel in platoon wounded and request for MEDEVAC made (on dust-off).

Action Taken: As chopper arrived in the area, I told him over the radio that I was popping yellow smoke.

Results: VC monitoring my frequency -- threw yellow smoke also. Pilot started to land at VC (LZ). Mission was able to continue.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have maintained radio contact with pilot. When pilot requested smoke, he should have been allowed to identify the color of smoke.

---

126. Unit: Armored cavalry troop Terrain: Built-up  
headquarters area and  
Support: Mortars. LRRP Tm had jungle  
contact the night Position: Troop  
before outside peri- commander  
meter defense. Time: June 1968  
Mission was to pick up team, Enemy Force Size: Squad (+),  
sweep area for enemy infantry,  
casualties. hiding in  
Location: Vietnam bushes, some  
enemy were  
wounded



128. Unit: Cavalry section Enemy Force Size: Infantry in  
Support: D/S artillery prepared  
Location: Germany position,  
Terrain: Open rolling country, defensive  
sparsely wooded with positions  
a stream bed bisect- established  
ing the sector along a  
Position: Platoon leader small  
Time: March 1945 stream bed

Situation: Mechanized cavalry section moved out after dark.  
Mission was to return with a POW.

Action Taken: Section moved out, crossed the stream through  
enemy position, captured a prisoner and started  
to return over the same route when they were  
ambushed. A fire fight ensued between the two  
forces.

Results: Cavalry section managed to return to friendly position  
with two killed and three wounded. A POW was brought  
back.

Evaluation: Very poor. Cavalry patrol returned over same route  
it went out on, allowing the enemy to establish an  
ambush. Patrol should have assumed that the  
friendly patrol's presence was known by the enemy, and  
should have returned over a different route.

---

129. Unit: Platoon Position: TC/ACAV  
Support: None Time: June 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Movement to contact with personnel riding inside  
vehicle. Vehicle hit mine.

Action Taken: None. Should have made personnel sit on outside  
of vehicle, but was preoccupied with mission.

Results: Two dead and one wounded.

Evaluation: Poor. When the threat of enemy mines is great  
it should be SOP that personnel ride outside  
on top of vehicle.

130. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank  
Support: None commander  
Location: South Vietnam Time: February  
Terrain: Jungle 1968  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: We were being ambushed almost everytime we traveled QL 19.

Action Taken: The platoon leader had us place Claymore mines on the left and right sides of the turret. If the enemy ambushed us we were to set off the Claymores.

Results: Luckily no one was hurt. When contact with the enemy was made and the Claymores went off, the back blast of the Claymore blew off four of tank's radio antennas. Communication was lost with other members in the platoon until after the action.

Evaluation: Poor. It seems to me that at least one out of the 20 tank crewmen would have known what would take place.

---

131. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: Fall 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Personnel being killed and wounded; vehicles being destroyed by mines.

Action Taken: Tanks would lead all formations because of its protective heavy armor. Other vehicles would follow in the tanks' tracks.

Results: This did not always preclude the damage of other vehicles. For some reason, as many as 10 vehicles could pass over the same point before mine would explode. They were not command-detonated.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have used an engineer mine sweeping platoon.

---

132. Unit: Company/troop Position: Troop  
Support: None commander  
Location: South Vietnam Time: Spring 1968  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: First platoon leader was told to recon a particular route to see if it could handle the weight of the vehicles.

Action Taken: First platoon leader moved to a bridge in his vehicle without checking bridge area for boobytraps.

Results: The enemy had set up a "garbage can Claymore mine." It detonated and killed the platoon leader, driver and two enlisted men riding on top of the vehicle.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have stopped the vehicle a sufficient distance from the bridge to provide cover for one man to inspect the bridge for boobytraps.

---

133. <u>Unit:</u>	Cavalry troop	<u>Enemy Force Size:</u>	Battalion,
<u>Support:</u>	Cavalry troop (-)		primarily
<u>Location:</u>	France		field
<u>Terrain:</u>	Open rolling, with		artillery,
	an improved road		in firing
	running along a		position
	ridge line		with good
<u>Position:</u>	Platoon leader		observation
<u>Time:</u>	February 1944		toward
			friendly
			position

Situation: When reaching a road exposed to enemy fire, the platoon was ordered to move rapidly across the 1000 meters of road, hoping that enemy artillery could not react rapidly or accurately enough.

Action Taken: Requested permission to bypass the exposed road and traverse the reverse slope of the ridge which was not under observation. Request was denied on the grounds that the bypass would be too time-consuming.

Results: When the platoon reached the middle of the exposed road, it was taken under fire by enemy artillery, which resulted in knocking out three vehicles and suffering six casualties.

Evaluation: Very poor. If permission to bypass had been granted, it would have taken 10 minutes longer, but the mission would have been accomplished without any casualties. Should have taken time to bypass the vulnerable portion of the highway.

---

134. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Platoon leader  
Support: None Time: Fall 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Movement through area searching for enemy. Came upon a dud 175mm howitzer round.

Action Taken: Continued mission with the intent of blowing mine before we departed the area. I did not leave a guard with the round.

Results: On way back from mission, round had disappeared.

Evaluation: Poor. Round should have been blown in place. Round was probably used later to damage or destroy vehicles.

---

135. Unit: Two tanks Enemy Force Size: Estimate  
Support: Two tanks on another bridge 10 to 12 men; One  
Location: Vietnam 37mm recoilless  
Terrain: Open rolling rifle, one  
Position: Tank commander mortar-rest  
Time: 1967, December, Infantry;  
Night Ambush

Situation: An ambush took place on top of a hill approximately a mile west of our bridge site. A civilian bus was hit by 37mm recoilless fire, while we received mortar fire.

Action Taken: We moved up the hill to aid the civilian bus. We could not move fast enough up hill to aid the civilians before the enemy had completed their mission.

Results: The civilian bus was destroyed and the people were shot-up. We reconned by fire until the other two tanks arrived. They swept the area while we attempted to give first aid to the wounded. As a direct result of this action, we found four bodies of NVA approximately 3 days after the action.

Evaluation: Poor. We were unable to react fast enough to aid the civilians caught in the ambush. Gunships should have been employed for flying the roads during the hours of darkness. Should have stopped the civilian bus at the bridge site and refused to let them continue.

136. Unit: Tank company with recon platoon attached  
Support: We were working with ARVN 10th CAV, who were supporting with automatic fire from APCs. Flamethrower APCs  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Flat, dry, rice fields with patches of jungle

Position: Tank platoon sergeant  
Time: Spring 1967, Day.  
Enemy Force Size: Two companies (estimated); Infantry with RPG and recoilless rifles; Bunkers-RPGs in teams

Situation: Company approached a suspected area in a column formation, then turned 90° to the right, broad-siding ourselves. I laid my gun on a suspected mound of dirt and logs. We were fired on by a large number of RPGs and recoilless rifles. The first and last tanks were hit. We were too far out for effective aimed fire from the RPGs, so they fired at us as fast as they could.

Action Taken: We started firing aimed fire using CP fuses with HE ammunition. We fired at anything that looked like a bunker. Company backed up about 1000 yards and assaulted the objective again.

Results: A large number of log and dirt bunkers were destroyed. 45 bodies were found. The mission was partially successful. However, we didn't get into the area until the next morning. There were indications that large numbers of troops had left their bunkers and returned to the jungle.

Evaluation: Poor. Not enough artillery was used. Mission would have been more successful if the CO had given us more information and used proper tactics. He could have used the flamethrowers and dismounted troops.

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137. Unit: Armored cavalry troop  
Support: Helicopter gunships  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Sparsely built-up and rubber plantation  
Position: Scout section leader  
Time: May, 1969, Daylight

Enemy Force Size: Estimated battalion; Infantry ambush position dug-in





SECURITY  
Convoy Escort

Effective  
Critical Incidents

140. Unit: Armored cavalry platoon  
Support: 2 Gunships; Artillery on call  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Jungle - clear  
200 meters each side of road

Position: Platoon sergeant  
Time: June 1968, Day  
Enemy Force Size: 30-40 NVA; Infantry; Ambush, dug-in along tree line

Situation: Convoy moving south on Highway 14. NVA ambushed convoy with automatic weapons, RPG, command detonated mines.

Action Taken: Armored cavalry platoon attacked from column. Platoon was in 3 teams. Each team had 1 tank (M48A3) and 2 ACAV (M113A1). Formation was 1 team leading, 1 team center and 1 team rear, leaving the platoon leader free to move with any team. Platoon leader led two teams in the attack. The PSG team kept the convoy moving and evacuated the ambush area.

Results: Surprised and overcame enemy fire within a few minutes. No losses to our unit or convoy. 14 NVA KIA.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective action would have been to allow the convoy to stop, taking time to issue attack commands. A less effective unit might not have moved out of the kill zone, making this mission difficult to accomplish.

---

141. Unit: Platoon  
Support: Artillery; Artillery available depending on distance of nearest support base  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Open rolling jungle. Open area along road with jungle anywhere from 10' to 500 meters from road

Position: Machinegunner on M113 track  
Time: September 1967, Daylight  
Enemy Force Size: Company; heavy weapons in-fantry; Dug-in, well hidden

Situation: Enemy forces took convoy under fire with automatic weapons and RPGs from both sides of road.

Action Taken: Platoon armor and infantry automatically went into a herringbone formation and took immediate action (return fire) with tanks/tracks in this formation. Trucks continued to move while armor supported and protected the route.

Results: Convoy continued to move safely out of battle area, sustaining few casualties.

Evaluation: Good. Truck drivers had been briefed prior to convoy to continue to move if they were hit. Good prior planning and immediate action made the mission a success.

---

142. Unit: Company  
Support: Air, artillery, infantry Tank company in reserve  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Open rolling  
Position: Platoon sergeant

Time: July 1967, Daylight  
Enemy Force Size: Platoon; Infantry; Anti-tank squads - infantry, dug-in covering minefield

Situation: Friendly forces were conducting convoy escort and encountered mines. Upon deploying, tanks and convoy received direct anti-tank fire and convoy received small arms fire.

Action Taken: Tank company deployed, taking anti-tank squads under fire. Convoy escorts and infantry dug-in, taking enemy infantry under fire. Reserve deployed, completely cutting off the enemy's retreat to south.

Results: Severe casualties were inflicted upon enemy, with no friendly losses.

Evaluation: Good. Incident was successful because of the manner in which the leaders made an immediate evaluation of the situation and deployed the tanks and infantry. A less successful leader might have had tanks deploy to overrun the enemy, rather than deploying and supporting by fire.

143. Unit: Platoon Time: Spring 1969,  
Support: Gunships Daylight  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Platoon;  
Terrain: Securing roads RPGs -  
Position: Tank section small arms  
leader

Situation: Convoy was ambushed by enemy force.

Action Taken: Platoon leader deployed the platoon so that maximum fire power was brought on the enemy force; called in gunships.

Results: The enemy force withdrew, but not before receiving a large number of casualties. Mission was accomplished with no friendly vehicle damage or casualties. Platoon was deployed with such quick reaction that the enemy was forced to withdraw.

Evaluation: Good. The platoon leader was in a position where he was able to make a quick estimate of the situation and deploy the platoon so that the enemy was forced to withdraw.

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144. Unit: 1 Tank, 1 Scout Time: October  
Vehicle (crew) 1969,  
Support: 4 tanks & rifle Twilight  
platoon Company;  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Infantry,  
Terrain: Built-up area Conducting  
(village) ambush  
Position: Tank commander,  
section leader

Situation: Three mortar tracks were ambushed in a village.

Action Taken: The scout track and my tank reacted to the support of the mortar tracks. Upon entering the village, I sized up the situation immediately and reacted by deploying the scout track where he could bring the most effective fire upon the enemy and still protect our rear. I laid down heavy fire to relieve the mortar tracks. Our support entered the village from the opposite end, catching the ambush in a deadly crossfire.

Results: The enemy broke the ambush and attempted to run, caught in the open under flares from "Moonshine," a C47 aircraft and our crossfire. The mission was completed by breaking up the ambush and routing the enemy. As a direct result of our immediate reaction to the ambush, not one American soldier was lost. 28 VC dead.

Evaluation: Very good. Without our immediate reaction, we could have lost 3 4.2 mortars and trucks plus 10-12 GIs. Heavy fire was brought upon the enemy in the shortest possible time. Failure to estimate the situation rapidly might have hindered mission success.

---

145. Unit: Cavalry platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: 105mm Towed; 22 2½ ton trucks with ammo fuel & Class I supplies Time: Fall 1970, Daylight  
Location: Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Platoon; Infantry;  
Terrain: Jungle and Mountain area Deployed in a woodline off road, 200m

Situation: Cavalry platoon in escort duty. Two tanks and two APCs leading, two APCs and mortar track mingled with column and tank and APC in rear. Received enemy fire on fuel truck which caught fire.

Action Taken: ACAVs brought immediate fire followed by mortar. All wheel vehicles continued to move. Leading tanks and rear tank closed with and dispensed enemy.

Results: The 21 remaining trucks reached their destination with minimum damage, and the fire base was resupplied. Three enemy were found; two dead and one seriously wounded.

Evaluation: Good. Because of a detailed OP order given to each wheel driver and to the escort platoon, the enemy was denied the advantage of confusion he sought. The enemy was eliminated and the supplies got through. A less effective unit might have failed to insure all personnel were thoroughly briefed on what to do in the event of enemy contact, thereby increasing the chance of confusion, in addition to friendly vehicle, personnel and equipment loss.

146. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank  
Support: None commander  
Location: Vietnam Time: February  
Terrain: Road - jungle and rubber plantation on each side Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Tanks hitting mines on road. Roads would be cleared by the engineers, but tanks would continue to hit mines. The VC were putting new mines out each night.

Action Taken: Company commander formed what he called a "thunder run." During the night one platoon would make a run down the road, firing coax, caliber .50, and main gun firing cannister. Later in the evening, another platoon would make a run.

Results: Mine incidents on the road were reduced during the remainder of the time we operated in the sector.

Evaluation: Good. A less effective and more costly solution might have been to continue the use of the engineer platoon.

147. Unit: Platoon Position: TC, M551  
Support: None Time: May 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Road - open jungle on each side of road

Situation: As the convoy arrived at a point 6 km from its destination, the lead Sheridan was rendered immobile by a command-detonated mine. At the same time, automatic weapons, RPGs and mortar fire raked the convoy.

Action Taken: My first response to the ambush was to return fire immediately in an attempt to achieve fire superiority. Then I notified higher HQ of the ambush immediately.

Results: Was able to move out of ambush kill zone and therefore, direct supporting fires to both sides of the road.

Evaluation: Good. Not to have returned fire immediately might have proved costly.

148. Unit: Platoon Position: TC, M551  
Support: None Time: May 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Road - open jungle on both sides

Situation: As the convoy arrived at a point 6 km from its destination, the lead Sheridan was rendered immobile by a command-detonated mine. At the same time, automatic weapons, RPGs and mortar fire raked the convoy.

Action Taken: Moved my Sheridan forward and pushed the damaged vehicle off the road. Then moved out of the ambush kill zone.

Results: The entire convoy was able to move out of the kill zone.

Evaluation: Good. To have tried bypassing the damaged vehicle by going off the road might have resulted in a second vehicle being damaged by a mine, causing mission failure.

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149. Unit: Cavalry troop Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: Field artillery battalion Infantry;  
Location: Vietnam Deployed as  
Terrain: Improved road an ambush  
Position: Platoon leader on both  
Time: 21 November 1966 sides of a  
highway

Situation: While passing through a village, the platoon leader was suspicious that the enemy might be occupying it. He was observing from flank to flank. Platoon leader turned in the tank commander's hatch, accidentally tripping the tank commander's override handle. Turret slued suddenly to the right and enemy prematurely fired a command-detonated mine approximately 10 meters in front of the tank.

Action Taken: Platoon leader rapidly alerted the platoon and brought all fire to bear on the enemy.

Results: The road bed exploded in front of the platoon leader's tank and he was hit by a small piece of shrapnel but was not seriously wounded.

Evaluation: Good. A lesser effective unit might have failed to rapidly alert the convoy of the enemy threat.

150. Unit: Tank section attached to mechanized infantry platoon (crew)  
Support: Mechanized infantry platoon and D/S artillery  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Improved road

Position: Platoon sergeant  
Time: 23 February 1967  
Enemy Force Size: Company; Infantry; Interdicting supply routes

Situation: Conduct search and clear operations of a highway.

Action Taken: Employed tank section at the head of a convoy in order to discourage the enemy from mining the road at night.

Results: Enemy was prevented from mining the highway at night.

Evaluation: Very Good. Reconnaissance by fire prevented the enemy from blocking the highway. Less decisive action on the part of the platoon leader might not have been as successful.

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151. Unit: Tank platoon  
Support: Cavalry troop (minus one platoon)  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Village located on flat terrain in Vietnam

Position: Platoon leader  
Time: 2 December 1966  
Enemy Force Size: Battalion; Infantry; Deployed as an ambush on both sides of village

Situation: The lead platoon was ambushed by the enemy.

Action Taken: The troop commander committed the second platoon. The second platoon moved into the "kill zone", halted in a herringbone formation, and raked the enemy with blistering 90mm cannister tank gunfire.

Results: Enemy withdrew, leaving 15 dead.

Evaluation: Very good. The TC rapidly employed combat power through an effective formation that delivered maximum fire power on the enemy. A less effective unit might have failed to commit all available combat power.

152. Unit: Cavalry troop Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: Cavalry squadron (-) Infantry;  
Location: Vietnam Deployed  
Terrain: Improved highway for am-  
Position: Troop commander bushing  
Time: 21 May 1967, a column  
0850 hours on the  
highway

Situation: A cavalry troop was conducting convoy escort (with tanks from the tank company leading the troop) when the troop was ambushed.

Action Taken: Troop immediately reacted. In engaging the enemy with all weapons, individual tanks supported each other and were able to neutralize the enemy using cannister ammunition.

Results: Enemy withdrew, leaving 10 dead.

Evaluation: Very good. Troop commander rapidly developed the situation and committed his resources. Hesitation on the part of the commander may have resulted in the enemy inflicting more casualties.

---

153. Unit: Cavalry troop Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: None Infantry  
Location: Cambodia and anti-  
Terrain: Road through a jungle tank guns;  
Position: Troop commander Prepared  
Time: 5 May 1970, Daylight ambush on  
both sides  
of the  
road

Situation: Cavalry troop was escorting eight disabled vehicles which were being evacuated forward to rejoin the squadron. They were ambushed.

Action Taken: Troop commander knew he could not tow all the vehicles through the ambush, so he ordered three vehicles set on fire, and continued to fight through the ambush.

Results: Cavalry troop with five vehicles in tow was successful in rejoining the squadron.

Evaluation: Very good. To attempt evacuation of all disabled vehicles forward might have resulted in total failure.

154. Unit: Troop of a squadron Position: Platoon  
Support: Organic air & artillery Time: leader  
21 July  
Location: Vietnam 1967, Day  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Regiment;  
Infantry

Situation: The enemy initially identified itself as friendly, then ambushed the two lead troops of the squadron.

Action Taken: The third troop moved against the ambush on the right side and air and artillery were used on the left side. The two troops in the kill zone had to remain in there until the maneuver elements of the third troop moved past them on the right. Then they moved against the enemy.

Results: The outcome was three fold: (1) the lead troop was unsuccessful, failed to accomplish its mission and lost a lot of men, (2) the third troop was highly successful, maneuvered well and moved the enemy force, (3) the enemy was successful in inflicting a large amount of casualties, but did not have staying power and had to withdraw.

Evaluation: Good. The enemy withdrew rather than defeating the friendly forces. Due to this ambush, the movement of units was divided more into short jumps.

SECURITY  
Convoy Escort

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

155. Unit: Tank Platoon                      Position: Tank  
Support: None    commander  
Location: South Vietnam                      Time: February  
Terrain: Jungle    1969  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Received RPG and small arms automatic weapons fire from a clump of trees on high ground surrounded by rice paddies.

Action Taken: Lifted supporting fires and attacked over 500 meters of open ground to the well-entrenched enemy's position.

Results: Enemy was able to withdraw without casualties.

Evaluation: Poor. Should not have lifted supporting fires until almost the last minute.

---

156. Unit: Tank Platoon                      Position: Platoon  
Support: None    leader  
Location: South Vietnam                      Time: November  
Terrain: Blacktop road,    1968  
cleared approxi-                      Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
mately 100 meters  
left and right of  
road.

Situation: Road march - unscheduled halt. Enemy fired RPGs and B-40s at trucks being escorted.

Action Taken: Quickly mounted my tank and tried to return fire. Machinegunner had not taken up a security position behind the caliber .50. Also noted that two other tanks did not have men manning the caliber .50.

Results: Enemy damaged two trucks. Enemy was able to hit and run without suffering any casualties.

Evaluation: Poor. A member of the tank crew should have been performing surveillance from the TC's position while at a halt.

157. Unit: Tank company                      Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: Direct support,                      Infantry;  
                 field artillery                      Ambush  
Location: Vietnam                              established  
Terrain: Highway through                      along a  
                 the jungle                                      highway  
Position: Company commander  
Time: June 1967, Daylight

Situation: Supply convoys in danger due to heavy mining of highways.

Action Taken: Tanks provided security by escorting each supply convoy.

Results: Safe passage was accomplished, but there was heavy wear on tanks, requiring excessive maintenance.

Evaluation: Poor. Organization of strong points along the highway would have provided the same security.

---

158. Unit: Cavalry                                      Position: Asst. RGT  
                 Regiment (-)                                      S2  
Support: Air, artillery, gun-                      Time: December,  
                 ships, ASA                                      Day  
Location: Vietnam                                      Enemy Force Size: Infantry  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: An infantry BDE (new in country) was to occupy a base camp. Travel to the camp was over an unsecured road. A cavalry regiment (-) was placed OPCON to an INF DIV to secure the road.

Action Taken: The regiment's plan called for an active program of sweeps throughout the area up to 10 km from the road, forcing enemy units in the area on the defensive. INF DIV disapproved plan and required armed vehicle to position themselves just off the road. Div. CG & ADC actually positioned vehicles from their helicopters.

Results: Mission was accomplished but not without incident. Suffered friendly casualties.

Evaluation: Poor. Success of the mission marred by misuse of armor, over-control by senior commanders and abandonment of the initiative to the enemy. A more successful solution would have been to aggressively patrol the area, controlling the initiative and forcing the enemy to react.

159. Unit: Armored cavalry platoon      Enemy Force Size: Company; Infantry with anti-tank capabilities; Dug-in at top of hill (bunkers)  
Support: None  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Jungle, mountain area  
Position: Platoon sergeant  
Time: 1971, Spring, Daylight

Situation: Area to be reconnoitered was out of DS artillery range.

Action Taken: Due to scarcity of parts reconnaissance was conducted dismounted, moving vehicles from CP to CP. Tanks were placed in the lead. Lead tank got stuck and ACAVs were sent forward toward high ground. Before reaching high ground, 1st ACAV received a direct hit. Platoon was split, placing tanks and mortar in the rear, ACAVs in front. APC had two M60 machine-guns mounted on it. Platoon leader withdrew to tank position, consolidated and pressed forward again with tanks.

Results: Reconnaissance of the area was delayed, enabling enemy forces to continue build-up of fortified areas. With the platoon split and under fire, communications and control were broken. Three ACAVs were destroyed; two by enemy fire, one by friendly. Enemy finally routed.

Evaluation: Very poor. A more effective unit would have secured the area where the lead tank was stuck and sent a dismounted patrol forward.

---

160. Unit: Platoon      Position: Tank Commander  
Support: Air (gunships)  
Location: Vietnam      Time: August 1969  
Terrain: Open rolling; built-up area (town, city); Jungle      Enemy Force Size: Two platoons of an infantry company including snipers.

Situation: Received mortar and sniper fire while on convoy escort.

Action Taken: Could not quickly deploy because mortar and snipers had neither good control nor coordination with air and ground support.

Results: Area to be cleared wasn't cleared. Lost needed supplies because of mine and mortar hits.

Evaluation: Unsuccessful. Forces were split and were too far apart to successfully control. Unit did not receive correct information relative to the actual situation. Should have rehearsed tactical platoon deployment SOP.

---

161. Unit: Platoon Position: Gunner  
Support: None Time: 1966 -  
Location: Vietnam Summer -  
Terrain: Mountain area Day  
Enemy Force Size: Infantry;  
Ambush

Situation: Platoon was moving on escort. Half of the people missed the convoy and the convoy moved ahead without full support.

Action Taken: Convoy waited, then moved ahead without full support.

Results: Convoy ambushed by VC. By the time the full platoon arrived, the battle was almost over.

Evaluation: Poor. Unit should not have moved out until they had full support.

---

162. Unit: Five tanks Position: Platoon  
Support: Mortars, machine sergeant  
gun jeeps Time: 1968, Feb.  
Location: Vietnam Day  
Terrain: Jungle; trail through Enemy Force Size: One platoon;  
jungle Infantry  
with RPGs;  
Dug-in

Situation: My tank platoon had the mission of convoy security from point "A" north and south at the same time. To do this, we had to split the platoon. The south mission was to secure approx. 50 supply vehicles.

Action Taken: Our lead tank was hit by a RPG, but continued to move, firing cannister, The second truck in the convoy was also hit, forcing the convoy to halt. Contacted Bn Commander for support. Bn commander ordered me to move into jungle on the left flank while mortars would be placed 400 meters off the road and behind enemy. This action was supposed to enable me to pin down the enemy between myself and the mortar fire.

Results: Enemy withdrew. Convoy got through at the expense of 3 trucks and 1 life lost.

Evaluation: Poor. Bn Commander was not well informed of my capability to destroy the enemy. Additional support should have been provided.

OFFENSIVE  
Coordinated Attack

Effective  
Critical Incidents

163. Unit: Troop Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: DS field artillery; Infantry,  
B52 airstrikes heavy  
Location: Vietnam weapons  
Terrain: Mountain area company  
Position: First sergeant  
Time: May 1959, Daylight

Situation: Troop attacked hill with cover from artillery  
airstrikes, B52s, and gunships.

Action Taken: The troop reacted immediately, returning  
fire and pinning down the enemy.

Results: Troop secured the hill. 200 enemy killed and wounded.  
No friendly losses.

Evaluation: Well executed. Experience and excellent leader-  
ship from senior NCOs were responsible for the  
mission's success.

164. Unit: Cavalry troop Position: Platoon  
Support: D/S artillery leader  
Location: Germany Time: April 1945,  
Terrain: Uphill open terrain Night  
with the objective Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
consisting of a  
barracks complex

Situation: While exploiting an attack around dusk, the troop  
came upon an enemy-defended officers candidate  
school. Since cover and concealment were not  
available for an uphill attack, it was decided to  
attack and seize the complex under cover of darkness.

Action Taken: The plan called for a rolling attack at midnight  
with all main guns and machineguns firing,  
supported by mortars. A line formation was  
used. The attack jumped off on time, setting  
the buildings on fire.

Results: The troop overran the barracks complex, seizing  
the objective and capturing the few remaining  
enemy soldiers. There were no friendly casualties.









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CRITICAL INCIDENTS AS REPORTED BY VETERANS OF ARMORED COMBAT.(U)  
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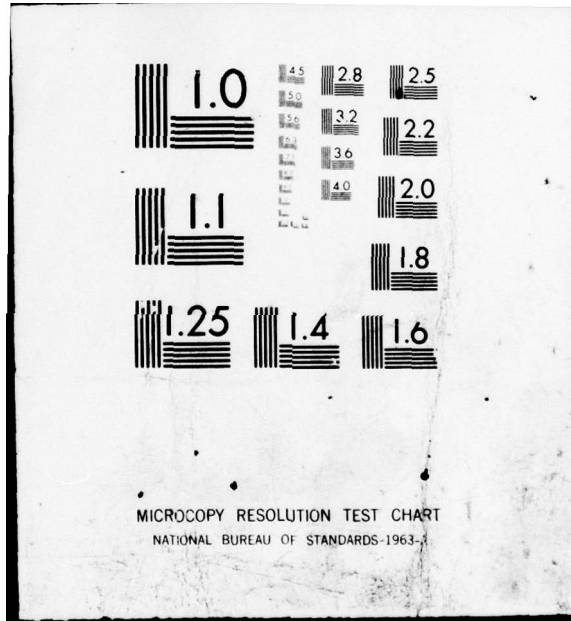
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Situation: A night ambush was set up by a cavalry troop, and approximately 100 enemy soldiers moved into the kill zone.

Action Taken: Ambush was so established that it was completely undetected by the enemy. 25-30 enemy were allowed to pass through the area before the enemy was engaged by all weapons, including Claymore mines, artillery and mortar fire.

Results: Tank cannister and machinegun fire completely destroyed the enemy force. Three friendly troops were wounded.

Evaluation: Very well organized. To have sprung the trap and opened fire too soon would have been a mistake.

---

172. Unit: Platoon (truck) Position: Tank commander  
Support: None Time: October 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Open with grass huts and bunker positions

Situation: Attack on fortified positions in village. Hand grenades were thrown by both TC and loader in close proximity of moving tank.

Action Taken: Threw grenades into straw house and bunker openings to conserve main gun ammunition.

Results: Proved very effective against bunkers and during the sweep of fortified villages.

Evaluation: Good. To have expended costly main gun ammunition would have been a waste of ammunition.

---

173. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank commander  
Support: None Time: October 1968  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Open jungle

Situation: Attack of a fortified area. Heaviest casualties were incurred during the initial phase of the operation until a foothold was established in the area.

Action Taken: A technique which has proven successful in the prompt treatment of casualties is to attach a medical aidman to each platoon.

Results: Wounded personnel were treated and evacuated quickly.

Evaluation: Good. To have aidman remain in HQ platoon would have endangered lives.

---

174. Unit: Tank platoon Position: Tank commander  
Support: None  
Location: South Vietnam Time: August 1968  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: During attack, received heavy small arms fires from adjacent hedgerow.

Action Taken: Called for assistance from flame tank.

Results: Flame tank spewed forth its stream of fire, completely consuming the hedgerow. Silence filled the air.

Evaluation: Good. To have tried to continue to use conventional tank-mounted weapons might have proven unsuccessful.

---

175. Unit: Two tanks & infantry Enemy Force Size: Suspected  
platoon (marine) (crew) VC regi-  
Support: None mental com-  
Location: South Vietnam mand post;  
Terrain: Jungle Located in  
Position: Tank commander bamboo  
Time: August 1965 hedgerows  
and huts

Situation: Charging the position, the tank's heavy volume of fire knocked out a caliber .50 and caliber .30 machinegun. Automatic fire was coming from a nearby hut.

Action Taken: Tank raced to get a shot at the house and was hit by recoilless rifle fire. Maneuvered to get a shot at the same hut. Was also hit by recoilless rifle fire, but managed to destroy house with fire from main gun, using cannister ammunition.



178. Unit: Reconnaissance platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: D/S artillery leader  
Location: France Time: 23 August  
Terrain: An island in the middle of a river which had two bridge approaches Enemy Force Size: 1944, 0600  
Battalion;  
Field  
artillery  
and brigade  
headquarters;  
Occupying  
an island

Situation: Intelligence information indicated that an enemy field artillery battalion was occupying the island.

Action Taken: A fast moving mounted attack was conducted, using all organic fire power supported by artillery.

Results: Two field artillery batteries and a brigade commander were captured.

Evaluation: Very good. Full advantage was taken of the element of surprise. To have hesitated and let the enemy better prepare his position would have been disastrous.

---

179. Unit: Tank platoon Enemy Force Size: 110 per-  
Support: Infantry platoon sonnel;  
Location: France German  
Terrain: Built-up area Gestapo  
Position: Platoon leader and SS  
Time: 21 August 1944, personnel;  
Daylight Defending  
a city  
block

Situation: Intelligence information indicated that an enemy brigade headquarters was located in a city block, and an attack was ordered.

Action Taken: Tanks were deployed in firing positions around the building. The tanks fired HE and AP into the building, setting them on fire. The infantry then attacked and drove the enemy into the open.

Results: 58 enemy dead and 50 prisoners taken; no friendly casualties.

Evaluation: Very good. Success due to close coordination between a tank and infantry platoon.

180. Unit: Tank company                      Enemy Force Size: Approx-  
Support: Infantry company,                      mately two  
Engineering Platoon,                      companies;  
Assault gun platoon                      Infantry  
& mortar platoon                      with anti-  
Location: Germany                      tank wea-  
Terrain: Steep hillside approaches                      pon  
to a major river                      Located  
Position: Company commander                      in tunnels  
Time: 7 March 1944, Daylight                      defending  
the far  
side of a  
bridge over  
a major  
water  
obstacle

Situation: Reconnaissance indicated that although much of the enemy had withdrawn, it had failed to destroy the bridge across the river.

Action Taken: The tank company boldly attacked and secured the town. Supported by fire, the infantry crossed the bridge intact and secured a bridgehead across the river. Two tank platoons then crossed the bridge in order to reinforce the infantry bridgehead.

Results: A bridge over a major water obstacle was taken intact.

Evaluation: Very good. The tank company seized the initiative by securing a crossing site and supporting the crossing by fire. To have hesitated and allowed the enemy to destroy the bridge as they withdrew might have been costly in friendly casualties.

OFFENSIVE  
Coordinated Attack

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

181. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank  
Support: None commander  
Location: South Vietnam Time: November  
Terrain: Open jungle 1967  
Enemy Force Size: Company,  
or larger;  
Dug-in

Situation: Enemy contact established in a fortified village.

Action Taken: Continued to fire HE at fortified positions.  
Would use three basic loads of 90mm and 7.62mm  
during a 4-5 hour battle.

Results: Expended basic load of HE ammunition. Late resupply.

Evaluation: Poor. Should not have maintained fire discipline.  
A request for ammunition resupply should have been  
initiated when initial contact was made.

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182. Unit: Platoon Enemy Force Size: VC regi-  
Support: None ment; RPG  
Location: South Vietnam automatic  
Terrain: Jungle weapons;  
Position: Tank commander Dug-in  
Time: February 1969

Situation: Supporting fires brought to bear on the objective.  
Lifted fires, attacked and overran the objective.

Action Taken: Observed the enemy. They fell back, allowing  
an easy frontal attack, but the NVA on the  
flanks continued to engage our force. Con-  
sequently, we were caught in a cross-fire in  
addition to receiving fire from the front.

Results: The enemy force was too large to be pushed off the  
hill. Our platoon slowly withdrew to our starting  
position.

Evaluation: Poor. A more effective unit would not have lifted  
supporting fires as soon or shifted fires to  
the flanks.

183. Unit: Armored cavalry troop Enemy Force Size: Unknown.  
Support: None Located  
Location: South Vietnam in bunkers  
Terrain: Rubber plantation and armed  
Position: Platoon leader with  
Time: March 1969 caliber .51  
and auto-  
matic  
weapons

Situation: Cavalry troop was to move in on left flank of enemy and the tank troop was to move in from right flank. Air cavalry or gunship were to block enemy's withdrawal.

Action Taken: Ensured all my vehicles were in exact location.

Results: Gunships mistook my troop for the enemy. Enemy was allowed to escape and my troop suffered several casualties.

Evaluation: Poor. My troop should have ensured that vehicles were marked properly with air panels.

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184. Unit: Reconnaissance platoon Enemy Force Size: Reinforced  
Support: Reconnaissance troop (-) composition;  
Location: Germany Infantry  
Terrain: Sparsely wooded, mostly with rifles,  
open, rolling terrain machineguns,  
Position: Platoon leader and anti-  
Time: April 1945 tank weapons;  
Occupying  
a small town

Situation: Platoon arrived at outskirts of the village at 1600 hours and observed a few enemy walking around.

Action Taken: Made daylight reconnaissance and waited until after dark to attack the village.

Results: Portions of the platoon got lost. The town was secured, but all enemy soldiers escaped.

Evaluation: Very poor. Too much hesitation on the part of the platoon leader. Platoon leader should have made a brief daylight reconnaissance and seized the village during daylight when there was a better possibility of capturing prisoners.



Situation: Platoon departed the AA prior to daylight and entered the jungle where they became disoriented.

Action Taken: Tanks were given only the general direction to their objective. The lead tank used its searchlight, but with no success.

Results: Mission unsuccessful. Two-thirds of the platoon never reached the objective. Three tanks were mired in the mud and had to be secured by two scout vehicles.

Evaluation: Very poor. No advance reconnaissance was made of the area of operation. A more effective unit would have reconnoitred and selected the best route for armor vehicles.

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187. Unit: 1 Reconnaissance; Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
1 tank company; Heavy  
1 company infantry weapons;  
Support: 4/2 Mortars; 1 Dug-in with  
battery; 105 artillery fast  
gunships (cobras) reinforcement  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Jungle; mountain area  
Position: Tank commander  
Time: January 8, 1970 - Day

Situation: Our tank company, accompanied by a company of infantry and a scout platoon, tried to conduct an assault on a small jungle hill top. The BnCO was flying overhead trying to conduct the attack. The enemy opened fire with mortars, .50 caliber machineguns, RPGs.

Action Taken: We were on line, with infantry spread between the tanks. When the firing started, we were ordered to stop to let the infantry and scout PCs fall back behind us. The fire was very intense.

Results: Mission was not accomplished. Four tanks were lost; CO and two platoon leaders dead. We had to withdraw to evacuate the wounded and dead.

Evaluation: Poorly executed. Assault should not have been stopped due to the intensity of the enemy's fire power. Although "by the book" formation was the infantry on line with scout vehicles in front, the BnCO should have considered the enemy's strength and assaulted with tanks.

OFFENSIVE  
Attack From a March Column

Effective  
Critical Incidents

188. Unit: Tank platoon                      Position: Platoon  
Support: None                                      leader  
Location: South Vietnam                      Time: September  
Terrain: Jungle                                      1969  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Movement to contact in the jungle was not always conducive to normally accepted methods (i.e., providing good all-around security, good control, rapid movement, and fast action).

Action Taken: By utilizing the T-formation, the tank team usually could accomplish its mission successfully in the movement to contact role, providing fast speed, reaction, and security.

Results: Five tanks provided good fire power to the front, rapidly locating a bypass and permitting rapid movement of the force. The command group emplaced directly behind the five tank front, allowing on-the-spot observation and quick reaction.

Evaluation: Good. To have used another type of formation probably would not have been as successful.

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189. Unit: Troop                                      Enemy Force Size: Reinforced  
Support: Gunships on call                      squad;  
Location: Vietnam                                      Small arms  
Terrain: Jungle                                      RPGs; L-  
Position: S-3 riding with Troop                      shaped  
CO    ambush  
Time: 1971, Rainy, Day

Situation: Enemy troops opened up, maintained contact for 15 minutes, then tried to break contact.

Action Taken: Friendly troops returned fire, maneuvering and dismounting swept area, while gunships/scouts made a few runs.

Results: Negative US casualties; 5 NVA/VC KIA; 3 AK-47's captured.



<p>192. <u>Unit:</u> Cavalry troop  <u>Support:</u> General support  artillery  <u>Location:</u> Germany  <u>Terrain:</u> Small town located  in the middle of a  sparsely wooded area  <u>Position:</u> Troop commander  <u>Time:</u> April 1945, Daylight</p>	<p><u>Enemy Force Size:</u> Battalion  (minus);  Infantry  with anti-  tank guns;  Establishing  strong-  points in  defense  of a  small  town</p>
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Situation: Troop proceeded to the south toward the objective area. They encountered stiff enemy resistance on the north edge of the town.

Action Taken: Left one platoon in contact with the enemy to engage him as heavily as possible. Bypassed the town to the west with the cavalry troop (minus), and attacked the enemy's rear from the south.

Results: The enemy thought they were surrounded and outnumbered. They surrendered shortly after the attack from the south was launched. 300 enemy prisoners were taken with only 3 friendly troops wounded.

Evaluation: Very effective. The mobility and fire power of the cavalry troop was maximized to the extent that the enemy was surprised and deceived. Less effective solutions would have been indecisive action or attempting to attack frontally with the major portion of the cavalry troop.

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<p>193. <u>Unit:</u> Armored cavalry  squadron  <u>Support:</u> Air, artillery, gun-  ships  <u>Location:</u> Vietnam  <u>Terrain:</u> Jungle and rubber  plantation  <u>Position:</u> Troop commander  <u>Time:</u> July, Daylight</p>	<p><u>Enemy Force Size:</u> Regiment;  Infantry;  Enemy in  base  camp</p>
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Situation: Two armored cavalry troops moving in parallel columns were ambushed by a company-size force.

Action Taken: Aggressive response by the two troops involved broke the ambush. A third troop was committed to block the retreating enemy. This force was also ambushed. The squadron's TK company was committed to the two original cavalry troops and the TK company joined and swept the area of the 20 degree ambush. This led to the discovery of a RGT-size base camp. The attack swept through the base camp, destroying it and the forces occupying it.

Results: Destroyed enemy regiment enroute to reinforce the TET; 68 attacks were destroyed.

Evaluation: Very good. Less effective unit would have called for supporting fire to soften the area of the initial ambush. This would have allowed the enemy regiment to escape and accomplish its mission.

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194. Unit: Cavalry platoon      Enemy Force Size: Company;  
Support: Air cavalry gunships      Infantry  
Location: Vietnam      with RPG  
Terrain: Wooded and open area      and B40s;  
Position: Platoon sergeant      (Ambush)  
Time: August 1970, Daylight      in position  
along right  
side of  
road

Situation: Came under fire while moving in column.

Action Taken: Platoon leader in third track from front of column brought platoon on line. Ordered mortar track to support from rear of line and moved behind the platoon in the attack. Ordered gunships to give air support.

Results: Overran the enemy, and took 8 POWs.

Evaluation: Good. Platoon leader's actions to bring the platoon on line, return fire, and attack were most effective. A less effective unit would not have reacted to the situation, moving out fast to get out of the line of fire.

OFFENSIVE  
Attack From a March Column

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

<u>195. Unit:</u>	Cavalry troop	<u>Position:</u>	Platoon leader
<u>Support:</u>	Tactical air		
<u>Location:</u>	Vietnam	<u>Time:</u>	Spring 1970, Daylight
<u>Terrain:</u>	Hilly type terrain, low hills with occasional heavy vegetation & cultivated areas. This was all in a valley between 400 meter mountains.	<u>Enemy Force Size:</u>	Unknown; appeared to be NVA regulars; Ambush

Situation: I was lead platoon for two cavalry troops moving toward a suspected enemy location. I was in the lead vehicle when we were ambushed. My vehicle and two others were damaged.

Action Taken: Through the use of tactical air support and the base of fire laid down by the vehicles behind me, all personnel were extracted from a very tight situation. Later, an infantry platoon leader attached to me said that the area we were headed for when ambushed was known to be a base camp for an entire NVA battalion plus. His battalion knew that it was occupied and what we would run into. I was with the squadron commander when he briefed the troop commander of the mission, but no force of this size was ever mentioned. Apparently, someone at a higher level was not keeping all concerned informed of the situation.

Results: Overall, the situation was unsuccessful as the mission was not accomplished.

Evaluation: Poor. Failure to disseminate information to personnel who need to know resulted in mission failure. Had the troop known what was ahead, appropriate support would have been directed against the enemy prior to moving into the area.







Situation: We occupied a night defensive position some 30 km southwest of point of action. We were called in to lend artillery fire support to a base that was being attacked by ground forces. Enemy broke through defenses by using Sappers and satchel charges on our positions within the defense perimeter.

Action Taken: Unit reacted and repulsed enemy. They conducted a sweep of the area outside the fire support base the next day, and then maintained defensive positions in support of the support base for several days until the artillery unit could re-equip and man its own defensive perimeter.

Results: The American unit lost 2 caliber .50 machineguns and two 155mm howitzers and several men killed with more wounded.

Evaluation: Good. Friendly units would have suffered more casualties had it not been for the immediate response of commander and crews plus the necessary fire line coordination. The troop would not have been capable of such quick reaction and the unit that was in initial contact could very well have been overrun.

OFFENSIVE  
Conduct Counterattack

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

202. Unit: Cavalry platoon                      Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Support: Field artillery                      Infantry  
& cavalry troop                                      with RPG  
Location: Vietnam                                      and re-  
Terrain: Open rolling, outside                      coilless  
of village    rifles;  
Position: Platoon sergeant                      Ambush,  
Time: May 1970, Daylight                      in positioned  
along both  
sides of  
road outside  
of friendly  
village, dug-  
in and well  
camouflaged

Situation: Enroute to support friendly forces, platoon was ambushed outside of friendly village.

Action Taken: Last two tracks in platoon took direct hits, receiving fire from both sides of road. Platoon leader's first order was to move out on the double and take up defensive position 300 meters ahead. We were cut off ahead. Platoon leader returned fire with cannister, and caliber .50. Enemy ground troops withdrew to tree line and returned heavy fire with RPG. One more track was hit, artillery support could not be used because of friendly village. ARVN infantry company was flown in and put on ground between our platoon and enemy. We could not fire because of friendly troops. There was mass confusion. Reorganized our troop and started returning fire. Again, enemy withdrew.

Results: Five American were killed and mission was not successful. Effective fire was put on the enemy, causing them to withdraw. We could have counterattacked, but were held in place. We were in a no fire zone.

Evaluation: Poor. Closer coordination between the ARVN, the company, and the platoon leader would have prevented ARVN from getting in the line of fire.

203. Unit: Company Enemy Force Size: Company;  
Support: Air, artillery, infantry -  
infantry Anti-tank  
Location: Vietnam weapons;  
Terrain: Jungle Dug-in;  
Position: Tank commander Supported  
Time: 1967, February- Dusk by artillery  
fire

Situation: Infantry company conducting a dismounted attack over open terrain received heavy fire and casualties.

Action Taken: Tank company was called in to support. Infantry battalion company ordered tanks, supported by dismounted infantry, to counterattack over open terrain to the jungle against enemy fortified positions.

Results: Enemy anti-tank gunners destroyed 33% of friendly attacking tanks, causing disruption of mission and heavy losses. Friendly forces withdrew, called in TAC air support with Napalm, and attacked and over-ran enemy position. Received additional support from armored cavalry platoon.

Evaluation: Poor. Incident was unsuccessful due to commander's poor evaluation of enemy situation. TAC air support and artillery neutralized the enemy's position, affording the "overall" successfulness of the mission, only after severe losses had been taken by the friendly elements.

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204. Unit: Company Enemy Force Size: Company;  
Support: Air, artillery Heavy  
Location: Vietnam weapons  
Terrain: Jungle infantry  
Position: Machine gunner on track well  
Time: May 1967, Day hidden

Situation: Helicopters spotted enemy positions.

Action Taken: Company commander would not let helicopters attack. He used his own ground forces which resulted in slaughter of his own troop.

Results: Many men lost, over half the tanks and tracks destroyed by RPG rounds.

Evaluation: The commander should have let the helicopters go in first, then have his ground forces finish what the helicopters missed. Let air make first attack to deploy and disrupt enemy.



206. Unit: One tank battalion  
33 tanks  
Support: Unsupported by Tac  
Air or artillery  
Location: Sinai Peninsula  
Terrain: Open rolling desert  
Position: After the fact observer  
Time: October 1973, Daylight

Enemy Force Size: One tank  
brigade -  
70% strength;  
T-62s, BTR  
50s, BRDMs,  
57-2mm ADA  
weapons;  
March column;  
This force  
was moving  
along one  
main road,  
preparatory  
to executing  
a counter-  
attack on  
the south  
flank of a  
penetration

Situation: Enemy T62 tank Bde moved in march column with a total lack of security to flank, and rear.

Action Taken: Friendly force, using terrain folds and slight elevations, hid one tank battalion block to the front and one battalion block to the flank and rear. They stopped the opposing force and then systematically destroyed it. Reaction of the T-62 Bde was to scatter and seek escape.

Results: Friendly - no casualties, no combat losses. T-62 Bde: Destruction and capture of the total force.

Evaluation: Very good. Highlights intelligent use of available terrain and excellent gunnery on the one hand, and lack of security and appropriate reaction on the other hand. A smaller force using the ground and its weapons properly can achieve kill ratios in defense which can overcome initial numerical superiority. A coordinated attack from march column could have penetrated the hasty defense.

DEFENSIVE  
Defend Perimeter

Effective  
Critical Incidents

207. Unit: Platoon Position: Gunner  
Support: None Time: 1966 Summer,  
Location: Vietnam Daylight  
Terrain: Some high hills and Enemy Force Size: Infantry  
wooded, except at the (or Cong);  
quarry, valley river Movement to  
contact

Situation: The Viet Cong, coming along the river, fired into the camp (quarry).

Action Taken: The platoon leader and NCOs directed people on the ground into foxholes and returned fire. The tanks were brought into position on the high ground and opened up with automatic weapons and main gun.

Results: Viet Cong were pushed back into the jungle. No friendly lives were lost.

Evaluation: Good. Quick thinking and action by the tank commander and platoon leader made the defense successful. A lesser trained unit may have panicked, and not reacted in time to get into firing position.

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208. Unit: Cavalry troop Position: Troop  
Support: Tank platoon commander  
Location: Cambodia Time: 28 June  
Terrain: Improved road through 1970, Daylight  
Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Infantry with  
anti-tank  
weapons; Pre-  
pared ambush  
on both  
sides of  
the road

Situation: An attempt was made by the cavalry troop to move up a road and remove an AVLB bridge. The troop was ambushed from both sides of the road.

Action Taken: Terrain was such that the troop was road-bound and could not maneuver off the road. Troop returned the fire in order to contain the enemy, and called for a flying crane to remove the AVLB (bridge).

Results: Bridge was successfully removed by the flying crane and the cavalry troop moved out of the area.

Evaluation: Very good. When it became obvious that it would be very difficult to get through the ambush, the troop commander decided to utilize the support of an available flying crane. A less experienced unit might have attempted to fight through, and then back out of the ambush area. This would have probably cost many lives.

---

209. Unit: Tank platoon                      Position: Platoon  
Support: None                                      leader  
Location: South Vietnam                      Time: Fall 1969  
Terrain: Open jungle                      Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Told to pull into night positions and organize positions for night firing. Keeping batteries operational for aiming stakes was almost impossible. Lights would never work and battery cables would become corroded.

Action Taken: Used red tape that would glow in the dark.

Results: Reference/aiming stakes could be quickly emplaced and were easily recognizable during the evening.

Evaluation: Good. To have continued to use batteries instead of being innovative would have been a poor solution.

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210. Unit: Platoon ACAV                      Position: Scout  
Support: None                                      section  
Location: South Vietnam                      leader  
Terrain: Jungle                                      Time: 1968-69  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Night attacks by VC using RPGs/B40s and B41s.

Action Taken: Each ACAV carried a roll of chain link fence. At night, the fence was placed around vehicles. This was called a standoff, and caused the RPG round to explode before it hit the track.

Results: During the initial part of the attack, the fence worked well and little damage was done to the vehicles.

Evaluation: Good.

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211. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: Fall 1969  
Terrain: Jungle (Night)  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: VC would observe location of vehicles when pulling into a night defensive position. Consequently, they knew from which direction to attack.

Action Taken: After dark, two 551s would be positioned close together. One would use white light and search the perimeter. The other would use infrared, following the WL.

Results: The VC would duck when the WL passed, then pop up to observe. The IR tank then would identify their position and direct machineguns.

Evaluation: Good. Not to have used WL and IR together to locate the enemy would have been much less effective.

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212. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: 1968 (Night)  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Before VC would conduct an all out night attack, they would slip into the defensive perimeter and turn Claymore mines toward our position. When they attacked and we set off the mines, the mines caused injury to our own personnel.

Action Taken: Painted a 2" wide stripe on the back of all Claymores with white illuminous paint.

Results: Claymores could be easily seen when pointed in the right direction (toward the enemy). Those that could not be seen were not detonated.

Evaluation: Good. Not to have placed Claymores on the perimeter or not to have taken action to determine if they had been tampered with would have been less effective.

213. Unit: Tank platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader  
Location: South Vietnam Time: July 1968  
Terrain: Jungle (night)  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: After a search and destroy mission, we pulled into a night defensive position.

Action Taken: Insured that one crew member of each tank was on guard in the tank commander's cupola at all times. A second man should sleep on the back deck. This man can be inside in a moment to act as a loader.

Results: During the night the enemy attacked. Due to a guard on each tank, rapid reaction time was accomplished and a volume of fire was delivered against the enemy.

Evaluation: Good. Not to have insured a man was on guard on each tank could have helped the enemy to infiltrate our perimeter at night.

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214. Unit: Cavalry troop Position: Troop  
Support: Mechanized infantry commander  
company, engineer Time: 10 March  
company, two field 1967  
artillery batteries Enemy Force Size: Battalion;  
Location: Vietnam Infantry;  
Terrain: Jungle Attacking  
the peri-  
meter of a  
base camp

Situation: Friendly force was defending an air field when it came under attack by the enemy.

Action Taken: Friendly force counter-attacked with all available fire power to a distance of 600 meters beyond the perimeter of the air field.

Results: Enemy withdrew after losing about 200 men.

Evaluation: Very good. The initiative was seized from the enemy. To have remained in a defensive position and not to have seized the initiative might have proven disastrous.

215. Unit: Company Position: Gunner,  
Support: None M48A3 tank  
Location: South Vietnam Time: March 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Armor and  
infantry

Situation: Heard sounds of clanking tracks and engine noise. Suddenly, an anti-tank mine exploded approximately 1200 meters away. Disabled by the mine, the enemy tank (PT76) fired on our position.

Action Taken: I had only his muzzle flash to sight on, but could not wait for a better target because his (the enemy's) shells were landing real close.

Results: The muzzle flashes proved to be enough for the tanker as the NVA vehicle turned into a fireball after my second round found its mark.

Evaluation: Very good. Able to sight enemy without the use of searchlights. To have taken no action -- or to have waited for illumination might have proven disastrous.

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216. Unit: Tank platoon with Position: Tank  
infantry attached commander  
Support: None Time: May 1969  
Location: South Vietnam Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
Terrain: Jungle

Situation: Cavalry platoon was to occupy the left flank, the tank platoon was to occupy the right flank. Air cavalry or gunship were to block enemy's withdrawal. Pursued enemy until nightfall. Pulled into night defensive positions.

Action Taken: Rubber plantation was too dense. Had TCs fire cannister to clear vegetation and to establish fields of fire.

Results: At 0200 hours the enemy attacked our position. The enemy was repelled and suffered 18 dead and numerous wounded casualties. US casualties numbered 2 wounded.

Evaluation: Good. Not to have established good observation positions and fields of fire during occupation of night positions might have proven disastrous.

DEFENSIVE  
Defend Perimeter

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

<u>217. Unit:</u>	Cavalry troop	<u>Position:</u>	Tank
<u>Support:</u>	Gunships, artillery, direct fire; In- fantry company	<u>Time:</u>	commander 1970, Sept., Night
<u>Location:</u>	Vietnam	<u>Enemy Force Size:</u>	At least one battalion;
<u>Terrain:</u>	Built-up area, fire base. There was jungle & rubber trees about 500-1000 meters on 3 sides. A mounting range about 700 meters on 4 sides.		Sappers with RPG/mortars support; Night attack on fire base

Situation: Cavalry troop was attached to a division for security of the LZ/fire base.

Action Taken: An infantry major was OJC of security. He placed the armor between the prepared position (BURN) and the third row of wire around LZ. When the Sappers went through the wire, they had already passed the armor. The infantry in bunkers spotted movement and set off illumination, thus lighting all the armor. The Sappers had rear shots and flank shots at the armor. The armor received fire from front and rear, both friendly and enemy.

Results: The LZ was secured and there was no penetration at the cost of 4 people and 9 APCs, 1 tank. The enemy suffered great losses. Although Sappers were able to attack the rear and flanks of the armor, they did not penetrate the perimeter, and the LZ was secured, Mission was accomplished.

Evaluation: Poor. The incident was critical because of the cost, in terms of both men and equipment. As a result of the armor crew's quick thinking to dismount and fight as infantry, there were as many men as possible engaging in close combat and getting away from the fire-drawing armor. A more effective unit commander would have never placed armor out front of a perimeter at night. The armor should have been placed on the perimeter with the bunkers and infantry.

218. Unit: Company Position: Tank  
Support: None commander  
Location: South Vietnam Time: March 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown;  
Armor &  
Infantry

Situation: Enemy attacking position with tanks (PT-76) and infantry, using RPGs.

Action Taken: Needed light up battlefield in order to see the enemy -- called for illumination round to be fired from the camp's mortar section.

Results: The first few flares dropped behind our tanks, clearly illuminating our tank emplacements. The NVA tanks took advantage of the situation and fired, killing the driver and loader of Tank #14.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have registered the mortars to insure illuminating rounds would have been fired outside our perimeter.

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219. Unit: Company Position: Tank  
Support: None commander  
Location: South Vietnam Time: March 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown;  
Armor &  
Infantry

Situation: An attack by an unknown number of enemy tanks; later turned out to be two tanks and one APC.

Action Taken: Every weapon that could be brought to bear on the enemy was now firing final protective fires. The friendly tanks had expanded their basic load of HEAT ammunition and were firing HE ammunition with concrete fuze.

Results: Attacker's incoming rounds decreased; however, tankers were out of armor defeating grounds.

Evaluation: Poor. If additional enemy tanks were to attack, defenders would not have had ammunition. A more effective unit would have maintained fire control and fire discipline, thereby conserving main gun ammunition.

220. Unit: Platoon ACAV Position: Scout  
Support: None section  
Location: South Vietnam leader  
Terrain: Jungle Time: 1968-69  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Night attacks by VC using RPGs/B40s and B41s.

Action Taken: Each ACAV had a roll of chain link fence they carried. At night fence was placed around vehicles. This was called standoff, and caused the RPG round to explode before it hit the track.

Results: After the initial attack, caliber .50s would return fire toward the enemy. After the attack almost all chain link fences were destroyed by our caliber .50s. It would normally take several days before fence could be replaced.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have had better control of directed fire at night.

221. Unit: 2 Platoons Position: Platoon  
Support: Air elements from leader (not  
squadron involved)  
Location: Vietnam Time: Night  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Squad;  
Infantry

Situation: An aero rifle platoon had been conducting an area reconnaissance.

Action Taken: 1 platoon of ground troop (dismounted) joined them just prior to dark to reinforce overnight. One platoon leader went outside perimeter to investigate a cave. At this time, enemy opened fire, cutting this platoon leader off in the cave. All other troops took cover; no one assumed command of anyone. At this time at least 6 people were unaccounted for. At daylight, enemy again opened fire from positions assumed during night, before breaking contact and leaving area.

Results: Friendly -- 4 KIA; 5 WIA  
Enemy -- 0

Evaluation: Very poor. All personnel involved displayed a total lack of initiative. Everyone huddled in his hole and enemy was allowed to maneuver unhindered. The platoon sergeant was killed during engagement, but not until next morning. The platoon leader left perimeter during a critical time telling anyone what to do if he did not return. Platoon leader should have been ensuring that perimeter was being established properly. A squad leader or team leader could have checked out the cave. Someone should have assumed command when firefight started.

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222. Unit: Armored cavalry troop    Enemy Force Size: Battalion  
Support: Heavy fire (chopper)    infantry;  
                 team and Tal Air; One    Rockets;  
                 company of infantry    mortars &  
                 attacked    heavy  
Location: Vietnam    machineguns  
Terrain: Jungle; flanking road    support;  
Position: Senior adviser    Dug-in,  
Time: April 1969, Day    fortified  
                 positions,  
                 well fortified

Situation: Friendly troop commander dispatched a platoon-size force to clear the road.

Action Taken: Road was very long and force departed with no direct support. Enemy did not evaluate the situation fast enough or it would have completely destroyed the platoon before the remainder of the troop could come to their aid.

Results: One M-113 lost 4 support Infantry men KIA, and the mission to clear the road was not accomplished. The enemy gained a foothold and in less than a week an entire division was engaged in offensive operation in the immediate area.

Evaluation: Poor. The commander ignored intelligence that had been offered prior to the operation and under-committed his forces. Commander should have used intelligence and could have been able to exploit the enemy to the maximum by use of TAC air and DS artillery.

223. Unit: Tank platoon                      Position: Platoon  
Support: None    sergeant  
Location: Vietnam                                      Time: 1969 -  
Terrain: Jungle    Summer - Day  
Enemy Force Size: Squad (est.);  
Infantry;  
Attack

Situation: A tank platoon would provide security for the engineering unit.

Action Taken: The mission started with all elements operating from one hill. After about 10 days the NVA had time to attack and disperse.

Results: At least one tank and three crew members lost, plus equipment from the engineering unit. The mission was called off or at least delayed.

Evaluation: The whole detail should not have stayed on the hill or any one place for such a long period of time without securing the immediate areas. Reconnaissance parties should have been sent.

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DEFENSIVE  
Establish Ambush

Effective  
Critical Incidents

224. Unit: 5 APCs Position: Platoon  
Support: Cobra gunships on call leader  
Location: RVN Time: September  
Terrain: Open with no trees, 1970, Night  
but covered with Enemy Force Size: 8-10 men;  
shrubs and elephant Riflemen;  
grass 8' high. Dense Ambush site  
trees along streams

Situation: Friendly ambush force moved out after dark to occupy an ambush position.

Action Taken: The lead APC hit a mine -- possible command detonated -- and force received small arms fire and CS from the flank. Additionally, enemy troops behind the force threw trip flares to blind any armed fire and began burying mines behind the force in the direction from which a relief column would approach. All vehicles formed a herringbone and returned fire immediately by platoon SOP. Platoon leader immediately called for 81mm illumination, which was received and fired. The rear TC called the platoon leader to insure there were no friendly forces on the ground, then engaged those enemy sighted to the rear (burying mines) of the column.

Results: Effective fire superiority was immediately established over the enemy. Effective illumination was received within 30 seconds of the ambush being initiated. The enemy force was forced to withdraw. The friendly force returned to the NDP. The only two friendly casualties were two personnel with sprained ankles on the lead track that hit the mine.

Evaluation: Very good. A less effective unit might have hesitated to establish fire superiority, and could become disorganized when the lead track hit a mine and the PSG became injured.

225. Unit: Tank platoon Position: Tank  
Support: None commander  
Location: South Vietnam Time: May 1969  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Needed to provide a technique whereby tanks could be further utilized by placing it in an ambush.

Action Taken: Placed organic radar and tanks side by side just prior to dark, with radar and main gun laid on a common azimuth. Radar information is provided to tank commander, who indexed range, set fuze and lays on azimuth, using azimuth indicator. BEEHIVE is fired and detonates at the approximate range.

Results: On numerous occasions as many as 15-20 enemy bodies were found the next morning.

Evaluation: Good. Not to have employed the radar and tank main gun together would not have taken advantage of characteristics of both systems.

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226. Unit: 1 Tank and 2 (113) Position: Gunner  
scout tracks Time: 1966, Night,  
Support: Artillery, air Enemy Force Size: Unknown  
infantry  
Location: Vietnam  
Terrain: Mountain area

Situation: Friendly forces in defensive position. Enemy forces: they were there but we didn't know what size unit. There was no contact.

Action Taken: We sat there all night, using IR S/L running engine to keep batteries charged, and giving our position away with engine noise.

Results: Mission accomplished. The enemy never appeared because they knew exactly where we were, what we were doing.

Evaluation: Good. This area was critical, we went in with 57 tanks, came back a few days later with 13 running, and the mission was accomplished. A less effective unit might not have shown its presence, causing enemy to attack.

DEFENSIVE  
Establish Ambush

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

227. Unit: Platoon of Acavs. Position: Platoon  
Support: Mortars & Artillery Time: Sergeant  
Location: Vietnam Time: 1968 November,  
Terrain: Open rolling; built- Night  
up area (town, city) Enemy Force Size: Approximately  
3 RPG teams  
w/ak rifles  
& 1 mortar  
section;  
Locked pro-  
pelled grenade  
& mortars were  
split apart

Situation: My platoon set up a night ambush (mounted) during the period of darkness.

Action Taken: After a period of approximately 3 hours, my platoon leader took 5 track vehicles to another site approximately 3000 meters away from my location to try and deceive the enemy. Only one track at my position had power to move, and that one was mine. Approximately 1 hour after my platoon was split apart, I was taken under fire by RPGs and AK fire. I called my platoon leader to reinforce me as I could only move the one track. He then informed me that I was being taken under fire by a mortar and it would take some time to get to me. I called for mortar illumination and when it arrived, it was falling too short. I then called for a cease fire on the illumination. When my platoon leader arrived all firing had stopped. I advised him to move at this time, but he hesitated and two each batteries of 155mm landed behind our position. After that, we moved to another location.

Results: Unit mission was not accomplished. We were ambushed instead of doing the ambushing. Some damage was done to the tracks, but no damage to the enemy.

Evaluation: Poor. Tracks should not have been split apart, after setting up in one position. Resulted in confusion on our part.



Situation: We crossed the river at the wrong place and ended up out of our sector.

Action Taken: We pulled into the open and were immediately taken under fire by small arms and machinegun. Our platoon sergeant ordered suppressive fire -- trying not to hit any of the North Koreans.

Results: Our machinegun suppressive fire was sufficient to cause the enemy to withdraw from their positions, allowing us to withdraw back across the river into our own sector. This was the only time we were fired upon or took any type of hostile action against the North Koreans.

Evaluation: Good. The incident was critical because of the fact that we were in the wrong place. I believe my platoon sergeant did the right thing for the situation. The incident was successful in that we were allowed to withdraw to our own sector without any casualties or injuries to personnel on either side.

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230. Unit: Reinforced tank platoon Enemy Force Size: Company;  
Support: D/S Field artillery; Rifle Infantry-  
platoon (-), two, twin to rifles/  
area vehicles mortars;  
Location: Korea Strong  
Terrain: Open rolling point  
Position: Platoon leader  
Time: August 1951, Daylight

Situation: A tank/infantry team was sent forward of the MLR into the "Iron Triangle" to find the enemy but avoid decisive combat. Terrain to the front was not suitable for movement of tanks. The task force was road-bound. The enemy capitalized on this weakness by inserting mines in roads at positions that would not allow the tanks to maneuver to the left or right.

Action Taken: About four miles into "non-man's land," the lead tank was disabled by a mine. The enemy had picked an ideal spot to ambush a mechanized column. Steep banks on both sides of a narrow road, with rice paddies on either side, prevented the other tracks in the column from bypassing the lead vehicle. Reaction to the mine was quick. The infantry platoon leader quickly dismounted his troop and set up strong points. The tank platoon leader checked to insure tanks had sectors of fire that overlapped and provided 360 degree

coverage. The two twin 40s were given the mission to cover the flanks. The FO called for artillery fire on the suspected mortar position and the infantry followed up by sending a small patrol to scout the area. The patrol located the mortar position and a report of finding blood on the ground, which meant the artillery had done a remarkable job of firing at a suspected position which was masked from the FO. The tank platoon leader had kept the regimental S3 informed of the events that had occurred. A VTR with escort was dispatched to join up with the team and evacuate the disabled tank as the team returned to friendly lines.

Results: The tank/infantry team accomplished its mission.

Evaluation: Good. By following troop leading steps and capitalizing on the enemy's failure to properly cover a minefield, a tank/infantry team was able to extract itself from a minefield that it had been canalized into with minimum damage. Failure to immediately respond to a situation in which a tank is disabled in a minefield, could result in casualties.

RETROGRADE  
Conduct Withdrawal

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

231. Unit: Brigade Enemy Force Size: 3 Division  
Support: D.S./G.S. Artillery Force; 2  
Location: Golan Heights Infantry,  
Terrain: Open rolling; rocky 1 Armor  
with small hills (Tels) Division;  
Position: After the fact observer Attacking  
Time: October 1973, Day abreast;  
Attacking  
force  
achieved  
a pene-  
tration

Situation: Attacking enemy by-passed strong points and points of resistance.

Action Taken: Friendly Bde. Xo in his tank was by-passed. He expended his ammunition but remained in defilade position to direct artillery fire and report enemy movement.

Results: Enemy attack was halted, primarily due to physical and supply exhaustion and attrition. Bde. Xo then moved to rejoin his force, and was mistaken as enemy. Engaged by friendly tanks. His tank destroyed and he and his crew were killed.

Evaluation: Poor. Lacked positive identification as friend or foe. Battlefield identification in a fluid situation was critical.

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES  
Occupy an Assembly Area

Effective  
Critical Incidents

232. Unit: Armored cavalry troop Position: Scout squad  
Support: Artillery; Helicopter leader  
gunships Time: July 1969,  
Location: Vietnam Night  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: Company;  
Infantry;  
Movement  
to contact

Situation: Troop was lagged in its night position, maintaining guards on each vehicle. A North Vietnamese company opened fire on our position with mortars and rockets and propelled grenades, they followed this with small arms fire.

Action Taken: By the time we had effective fires on the enemy, the troop CO had artillery and helicopter gunships on the way. The artillery was effective in subduing the enemy's fire. When the gunships arrived, we marked suspected mortar and RPG positions with fire and they made their runs on these positions.

Results: The actions taken by the unit caused the enemy to withdraw and disperse.

Evaluation: Good. Fast action by the persons on guard and all other personnel to man their weapons, and by the troop CO to effectively employ artillery and air support, used the enemy to withdraw and disperse. A less alert troop might have been slower in bringing effective fires and supporting fires on the enemy.

233. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: DS field artillery sergeant  
Location: Vietnam Time: November  
Terrain: Open rolling 1969, Night  
Enemy Force Size: Platoon  
plus 30-40;  
Infantry

Situation. Reconnaissance platoon conducting night assembly area with an infantry squad of 9 men attached, deployed in a night ambush. The ambush called the platoon sergeant and told him enemy column of 30-40 personnel coming directly into our position.

Action Taken: I alerted the platoon, and told the ambush to wait until the platoon fired, then for them to fire. The ambush was out of our fire line, but could see the enemy. Artillery flares were called in and the platoon was moved out, closing with the enemy.

Results: The platoon captured 40 ruck sacks with rice and ammunition, several diaries and books, and several rifles. 16 enemy killed, 7 wounded. No casualties to friendly unit.

Evaluation: Good. The quickness of decision and coordination with the ambush patrol made this action possible. Enemy panicked and was destroyed. Use of the attached ambush patrol of the reconnaissance platoon was the key element of success in properly securing the assembly area.

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Action Taken: Troop was hit with mortars and rocket grenades first, then assaulted within the perimeter being breeched.

Results: Eight vehicles lost or damaged with 23 friendly. Mission was not accomplished. Troop commander wounded, artillery officer killed, one platoon sergeant wounded. Only one sergeant left to continue.

Evaluation: Poor. Unit was not large enough to effectively defend position without replacements. A more effective unit would have moved several times before dark, to confuse or disrupt enemy.

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236. Unit: 2 Platoons (Armored cavalry)      Position: Tank commander  
Support: None      Time: 1969,  
Location: Vietnam      Summer, Dusk  
Terrain: Open rolling; mountain area      Enemy Force Size: Company; Heavy infantry (NVA); Dug-in and underground

Situation: As the troop moved into the assembly area for the night, they made a night defensive position.

Action Taken: The 1st Platoon Sergeant and leader advised the troop commander that they were some 500 meters off their N.D.P. Troop commander disagreed. (Actually they were off some 500 meters). They had logged over and under ground in placement of NVA. The enemy came up in the middle of the logger and worked their way out. As result our troop was hit by surprise, 1/2 of the logger was wiped out. 1st platoon leader took over what was left and made a stand until help came from another unit.

Results: Heavy casualties to our troop; many dead and wounded. The troop, with help, finally did accomplish mission.

Evaluation: Poor. Troop commander was wrong. He should have at least listened and gone over the position on the map with his platoon leaders or sergeants to double check.

SUPPORTING OPERATIONS  
Conduct of a Road March

Effective  
Critical Incidents

237. Unit: Troop (-) Position: Troop  
Support: None commander  
Location: Vietnam Time: April 1968,  
Terrain: Jungle Daylight  
Enemy Force Size: Platoon;  
Infantry;  
Ambush;  
RPGs and  
MG weapons

Situation: Armored cavalry troop (-) conducting road march was ambushed by dug-in infantry platoon. Lead tank hit by anti-tank weapon (TC and loader WIA).

Action Taken: Troop commander dismounted, ran to front of column, and helped to carry men to safety. Remainder of vehicles directed fire on enemy; artillery called in on enemy.

Results: WIA were evacuated; enemy resistance eliminated.

Evaluation: Very good. Personal bravery and concern of commander inspired the troops to take action on their own. A less effective course of action would have been to hesitate to take swift action, thereby allowing enemy to gain the initiative.

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238. Unit: Platoon Position: Tank  
Support: Mortars commander  
Location: Vietnam Time: October  
Terrain: Mountain area 1968, Night  
Enemy Force Size: Platoon  
(estimated);  
Heavy  
infantry  
(APGs FCT)

Situation: Our platoon was making a tactical night road march from one camp to another. The platoon was taken under fire by the enemy.

Action Taken: Our platoon was very alert and immediately returned fire in the direction of enemy position.

Results: Within minutes, the enemy was eliminated with no losses on our part.

Evaluation: Good. To hesitate to return rapid fire in that situation would have been disastrous.

SUPPORTING OPERATIONS  
Sustaining Operations

Effective  
Critical Incidents

239. Unit: Tank Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: Maintenance; Cargo leader  
helicopter lift Time: April  
Location: Vietnam 1969, Daylight  
Terrain: Jungle Enemy Force Size: N/A

Situation: During movement, numerous maintenance problems occurred. Action had to be taken before reconnaissance could continue.

Action Taken: Requested to move in and secure an area for maintenance rather than to move back to base camp.

Results: Three days of maintenance was performed in cleared area. During this period, extensive maintenance was accomplished. All supplies and parts were brought in by helicopter to include 12 power packs and various other large vehicle parts; or, that total supply requirements can be met using helicopter delivery.

Evaluation: Good. To have returned to base camp to pull maintenance would have been a waste of time and effort.

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES  
Sustaining Operations

Ineffective  
Critical Incidents

240. Unit: Platoon Position: Platoon  
Support: None leader -  
Location: South Vietnam Reconnaissance  
Terrain: Jungle Time: May 1969  
Enemy Force Size: Unknown

Situation: Warning order - be prepared to move 40km bust  
jungle for 10km and conduct daily RIF for an  
unknown period of time.

Action Taken: After tracking the 40km, I only had one tank  
and three trucks left. Two trucks had caught  
fire because air cleaners were dirty. Engine  
over-heated, blew, and started a fire in its  
oil and trashed-filled engine compartment.

Results: Had to leave one vehicle to secure each vehicle  
that dropped out until parts were flown in. Also,  
the troop had to tie up 4 vehicles to secure my  
four, causing a loss of eight vehicles to the troop.

Evaluation: Poor. Should have insured before- and after-  
maintenance checks were performed. The M48 tank  
is quite forgiving when it comes to mountains --  
which can lull the crew into a false sense of  
well-being.