

MEMORANDUM REPORT BRL-MR-3735

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NUMERICAL SIMULATION AND MODELING OF A MUFFLER

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JANUARY 1989

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1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) BRL-MR-3735			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION U.S. Army Ballistic Research Laboratory		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) SLCBR-LF	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21005-5066			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION U.S. Army Ballistic Research Laboratory		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) SLCBR-DD-T	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21005-5066			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO. 62618A	PROJECT NO. 1L1 62618AH80	TASK NO.
					WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) Numerical Simulation and Modeling of a Muffler (U)					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Cooke, Charlie H., and Fansler, Kevin S.					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Memorandum Report		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1989 January	
15. PAGE COUNT 26					
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	Gun Attenuators Impulse Noise Computational Fluid Dynamics Unsteady Euler Computations		
19	04				
20	04				
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) The problem of attenuating the noise from weapons firing was studied, experimentally and numerically. As a possible method of attenuating the noise significantly, a silencer with no internal baffles was attached to the M242 cannon. The internal pressures at selected locations inside the muffler were measured. The near field overpressures outside the muffler at various polar angles were also measured. A numerical simulation of the flow through the muffler was performed, using Harten's shock capturing method to solve the Euler equations of ideal compressible flow. The numerical simulation yields a detailed picture of the flow field as displayed by the pressure and Mach contours. Pressure-time curves obtained at selected locations are compared with experimental data. There is good agreement except that the numerical simulation generates more vigorous oscillations with higher peak values. As an aid to understanding the early flow processes in the muffler and as a design tool requiring little computational effort, a one-dimensional analytical model was constructed.					
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT ☐ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☒ SAME AS RPT ☐ DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Dr. Kevin S. Fansler			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 301-278-4365		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL SLCBR-LF-F

Acknowledgment

Mr. Douglas Savick, Mr. John Carnahan, Mr. Donald McClellan, and Mr. William Thompson all helped in setting up for the experiment and obtaining the data. We are also grateful for the suggestions made by Mr. James Bradley and Dr. Ameer Mikhail.

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I. Introduction

The firing of gun weapons often generates objectionable levels of noise. Different methods or combinations of methods can be used to attenuate the noise. One possible response is to develop muzzle devices that attenuate the blast in all directions. These muzzle devices are referred to as noise attenuators, silencers, or mufflers and are sometimes used with small-caliber rifles and pistols. They suppress gun muzzle blast by reducing the rate of propellant energy being released from the exit hole.^{1,2,3,4} No adequate model exists for the flow internal to the muffler; this flow is very complicated and, for the larger mufflers, is significantly modified by energy transfer of the propellant gases to the body of the muffler. In general, the muffling of the noise increases with the size of the muffling device; attenuation levels up to 40 dB have been claimed. However, the weapons producing the objectionable noise may be larger caliber guns, such as the 25 mm M242 automatic cannon. It is not practical to scale up the noise attenuators designed for small-caliber guns to the size required for the 25 mm cannon, as the added bulk could compromise system performance by making the larger weapon unwieldy. Although mufflers with many bore and chamber volumes have been investigated, work on smaller mufflers has been neglected because generally higher noise attenuation is desired than can be thus achieved.

The immediate objective of this study is to simulate a small muffler adequately by a particular numerical technique. The flow field inside the silencer during the firing cycle is simulated and then measured by experiment for validation of the scheme. A total variation diminishing (TVD) shock-capturing scheme is employed, with sufficient grid density to yield the necessary flow details.⁵ Fluid property contours and pressure-time curves at selected locations are generated. Corresponding free-field blast overpressures and internal pressures within the muffler are obtained for comparison with the computational results. Guided by the results of the experiment and the simulation, a one-dimensional model for the peak energy efflux exiting the muffler projectile hole was developed. The peak energy efflux is the maximum rate of the sum of the propellant gas's kinetic energy and potential energy that passes through the muffler projectile hole. Results from the one-dimensional model are compared with those from the experiment and the simulation.

Comparisons of blast overpressure in this report will generally be given in terms of dB levels. The sound pressure level attenuation is

$$\text{dB}_{\text{pk}} = 20\log_{10}(P_2/P_1) \quad (1)$$

Here, P_2 is the new value of peak overpressure and P_1 is the value of the reference peak overpressure.

¹Fansler, K. S., and Schmidt, E. M., "The Relationship Between Interior Ballistics, Gun Exhaust Parameters and the Muzzle Blast Overpressure," AIAA Paper 82-0856, AIAA/ASME 3rd Joint Thermophysics, Fluids, Plasma and Heat Transfer Conference, St. Louis, MO, 7-11 June 1982.

²Heaps, C. W., Fansler, K. S., and Schmidt, E. M., "Computer Implementation of a Muzzle Blast Prediction Technique," ARBRL-MR-3443, U.S. Army Ballistic Research Laboratory, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, May 1985. (AD A158344)

³Fansler, K. S., "Dependence of Free Field Impulse on the Decay Time of Energy Efflux for a Jet Flow," *Proceedings of the 56th Shock and Vibration Symposium*, U. S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 22-24 October 1985.

⁴Smith, F., "A Theoretical Model of the Blast from Stationary and Moving Guns," *First International Symposium on Ballistics*, Orlando, Florida, 13-15 November 1974.

⁵Harten, A., "High Resolution Schemes for Hyperbolic Conservation Laws," *Journal of Computational Physics*, Vol. 49, 1983, pp. 357-393.

II. Theory and Numerical Simulation Technique

1. Prediction of Blast Overpressure

Investigators have found it difficult to develop a comprehensive theory for noise suppression in mufflers. Usually, they have first examined the theoretical flow details within the silencer and then proceeded to develop prediction methods for the overpressure around the gun. However, with the exit properties of the weapon assumed known, the blast field overpressure can be predicted in a quite simple way.^{1,2,3} A method is used whose theoretical foundations depend upon blast wave scaling theory for variable energy deposition rates, coupled with the theory of blast waves generated by asymmetrically initiated charges.⁴ More precisely, these particular scaling relations were developed from the assumption that a primary parameter for the gun blast phenomena is the rate of energy deposit into the ambient air. To minimize the peak energy deposition rate from the weapon and thereby the peak overpressure at a point in the field, the model shows that the exit hole diameter for the silencer, the maximum exit pressure from the silencer, and the exit propellant gas velocity should all be minimized.

2. Overview of the Numerical Scheme

The Harten scheme⁵ is a TVD, second-order accurate, and upwind-biased method for solving the Euler equations of compressible flow in one dimension. The concept of operator splitting, placed on an analytical foundation by Strang,⁶ permits application to higher dimensions and axisymmetric flow problems. Strang's work has been extended to allow the incorporation of source terms into the splitting, while at the same time preserving the second-order accuracy of the method.⁷ The resulting shock-capturing algorithm is well-documented,⁸ with clarifying background material provided.⁵

3. Cannon and Muffler Description

The simulation is performed for the 25mm cannon with the silencer attached. Figure 1 shows a schematic of the muzzle device tested. The inside cylinder of the muffler is threaded to permit varying the internal length of the muffler. For this experiment, the internal length of the silencer chamber is 7.7 calibers; the exit hole of the silencer is 1.14 calibers in diameter; the exit wall thickness is 0.7 caliber; and the computational domain extends approximately 1.7 calibers downstream of the silencer exit. The cannon's bore length is 80 calibers. Two gages were inserted into the muffler to obtain pressures for comparison with results from the numerical simulation. The free-field blast overpressure is measured using an array of static transducers located in an arc with its plane vertical and at a distance

⁶Strang, G., "On The Construction and Comparison of Difference Schemes," *SIAM Journal of Numerical Analysis*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Sept. 1968, pp. 506-517.

⁷Cooke, C. H., "On Operator Splitting for Unsteady Boundary Value Problems," *Journal of Computational Physics*, in press.

⁸Cooke, C. H., "On Operator Splitting of The Euler Equations Consistent with Harten's TVD Scheme," *Numerical Methods for Partial Differential Equations*, John Wiley and Sons, Inc, New York, 1985.

of 50 calibers from the projectile exit hole. At the time equal to zero, the back of the projectile exits the muzzle. All time before the projectile exits the muzzle is given as a negative quantity.

4. Precursor Flow and Blast Wave Initialization

When the gun is fired, the inbore projectile pushes a column of air with a shock front and constitutes the precursor flow from the barrel. For the numerical simulation it is thought sufficient to assume that the precursor wave inbore is generated by a piston traveling at a constant rate. This results in a pressure of 1.73 MPa and Mach number of 1.92 with, of course, the inbore precursor's fluid velocity being equal to the projectile velocity. The projectile is simulated by a cylinder three calibers long. The gasdynamic quantities behind the projectile were obtained using Lagrangian interior ballistics and the experimentally measured pressure at projectile exit from the cannon muzzle. A one-dimensional Harten code was used to calculate the flow inbore. Upon projectile exit, flow values at the muzzle were:

$$p_e = 33.4 \text{ MPa}$$

$$V_e = 1050 \text{ m/s}$$

$$M_e = 1.52$$

III. Numerical Results and Comparisons with Experiment

Flow in the silencer was simulated on a VAX-8600 computer system. Initially, a grid density of 41 points per caliber was employed. Results shown in this report were obtained, for the most part, on this grid. For a feasibility study of calculations on finer grids, a much larger computer is necessary. However, a short run on an 81-points-per-caliber grid was accomplished, to assess the numerical accuracy. Although some improvement appears to result, the pressure trends were much the same.

As mentioned earlier, the precursor flow for the numerical simulation scheme is treated initially as a uniform mass of gas having the velocity of the projectile, which determines its pressure and density. Figure 2 shows the pressure contours just before the precursor shock wave hits the front baffle. The time as given at the top of the plot is $-150 \mu\text{s}$. The position of the inward-facing shock is clearly delineated. The shape of the shock front is a slightly curved line; this curvature is attributed to reflection of the waves from the cylinder walls. Figure 3 shows the pressure contours just after the front of the precursor shock wave impinges on the front baffle and is reflected. These pressure contours occur at $-87 \mu\text{s}$.

Figure 4 shows contours of pressure immediately after the shock wave, which is driven by the propellant gas, reaches the front baffle. Figure 5 shows Mach contours; the presence of the projectile slows the progress of the inward-facing shock at the positions close to the axis. The Mach contours also delineate the shear layers in the flow.

In the experimental setup, internal pressures were obtained at $x = 0.5$ caliber on the cylinder side and at $r = 1.5$ caliber on the exit baffle. Here, x is the distance forward from the internal rear face of the muzzle plate and r is the radial position from the axis. Figure 6 shows the comparisons between experimental and numerical overpressures obtained at position $x = 0.5$ caliber on the side of the cylinder. Good agreement between experiment and simulation is obtained, for the times from zero to 0.4 ms. Agreement is encouraging until approximately 0.7 ms; after this time the simulation yields more vigorous pressure oscillations. The large pressure jump at 0.5 ms occurs when the reflected wave from the front baffle reaches this position. Figure 7 shows the comparison between experiment and simulation for the front baffle. Comparison could not be made near 0.4 ms because experimental data were not received correctly, probably because of severe signal cable movement. The reflected overpressure for the precursor wave is slightly higher for the experiment, due possibly to propellant gas blow-by around the projectile while in bore. The simulation gives much more pronounced peaks; these peaks have a frequency that is approximately what one might expect for waves traveling from the cylinder walls to the center and back. For later times, the simulated values are clearly greater than the experimental values. This disagreement may occur partly because the output of the pressure transducers is reduced by prolonged exposure to the high-temperature propellant gas. Also, almost one-tenth of the propellant's internal energy is transferred to the muffler in the form of heat energy, thus lowering the pressure for the longer times. Yet another possibility is that the inviscid method may not model the separated flow at the exit hole correctly. The simulated region of recirculation at the hole may be too large, thus restricting the flow from the muffler. Figure 8 shows the variations in the pressure at two radial positions on the baffle as obtained by simulation. The initial peak values differ drastically; waves traveling in the radial direction could generate such differences in peak values.

The energy efflux from the muffler is calculated as part of the numerical simulation. A log function of an energy efflux ratio is shown in Figure 9, the ratio consisting of the temporal energy efflux from the exit hole of the muffler divided by the peak energy efflux from the gun muzzle. For the prediction method which uses the scaling approach,^{2,3} the scale of the muzzle blast is determined by this peak energy efflux from the muzzle. It is assumed that the energy efflux values from the muffler would also determine the scale of the associated blast wave although the peak value might not determine the scale, especially if the duration of the wave were very short compared to the exhaust time of the muffler. The greatest values of the function plotted in Figure 9 represents an approximation of the attenuation in dB's expected for the muffler compared to the bare muzzle value. At first, the value of the function represents the energy efflux from the precursor wave. The blast wave generated by the propellant gas reaches the exit baffle between 0.1 and 0.2 ms. The first maximum values are associated with the reflection of the initial shock wave at the exit baffle. The general upward movement of the energy efflux values with time occurs because the rate of mass flow from the muzzle into the muffler exceeds the mass flow rate from the projectile hole of the muffler, thus bringing the general pressure level up everywhere in the muffler. However, the amount of upward movement from the initial reflected values is small. Thus, longer cylinders or inlet lengths should result in very little improvement in noise attenuation as the sound levels would then depend upon the value for the reflected pressure from the baffle. Experiment confirms this as shown in Figure 10. There is little difference in attenuation values between the shortest and

the longest configurations. The shortest muffler would be the most attractive from the standpoint of weight.

IV. One-Dimensional Model and Comparisons

The length of the silencer compared to its width suggests modeling the early flow processes by one-dimensional gas dynamics. The simulation shows that the shock front for the blast wave in the silencer forms an almost straight line. Moreover, the early processes for the simulated flow resemble the start-up processes of one-dimensional flow. The model is most easily explained for the case of a blast wave exiting the bore in the absence of a projectile. As the gas exits the muzzle into the silencer, it is free to expand to supersonic conditions. An inward-facing shock immediately forms, which raises the pressure above ambient. The shock front of this higher pressure gas travels toward the baffle front and is reflected toward the muzzle. The gas behind the reflected shock is then free to exit the front baffle's projectile hole at the sonic velocity and with a stagnation pressure that depends on the strengths of the shocks that have passed through the propellant gas. This phase can be readily modeled employing one-dimensional gasdynamics. Initial conditions inside the muffler are assumed to account for the air pushed out of the bore ahead of the projectile.

Comparisons are made with the one-dimensional model at early times after the projectile leaves the muzzle, thereby releasing the propellant gas to flow into the muffler. The one-dimensional model would not be expected to give as good results for propellant flow as for the precursor flow, unless the precursor flow is modeled well. The complicated precursor flow precedes the propellant flow, whereas the precursor flow empties into ambient air. For the propellant flow, we make the rough approximation that the air in the barrel is isentropically compressed and not moving. The propellant gas is then assumed to empty into the muffler with no resident projectile; i.e., no modeling is attempted of the projectile's interaction with the propellant gas flow.

In Figure 11 the one-dimensional processes are schematically indicated by means of an $x-t$ diagram, with the gas exhausting through the exit hole modeled as a porous-wall boundary condition. Here, it is seen that the reflected shock front travels back toward the muzzle and impinges on the contact surface. The contact surface velocity is reduced to a much smaller value and shock waves travel away from the interacted contact surface in both directions. The shock wave reflected from the contact surface that impinges upon the wall further increases the wall pressure. The resulting shock wave traveling away from the contact surface and the wall interacts with the inward-facing shock, generating a shock traveling to the left and a rarefaction wave traveling back toward the wall. The unfilled circles denotes the trajectory of the contact surface that stems from the interaction of these two shocks. The second reflected shock coming off the baffle interacts with the contact surface denoted by the filled circles. The resulting left moving shock then interacts with the right moving expansion wave referred to before. The resulting contact surface trajectory is delineated by the filled squares. Essentially, as these shocks travel back toward the muzzle and interact, increasing regions behind the shocks have a reverse flow. The region for high-speed right moving flow retreats as these shocks traverse the propellant gas.

Figure 12 shows the pressure contours obtained by simulation at 350 micro-seconds. The shock has traveled back to a position close to the muzzle. Comparison with Figure 11 shows that extrapolation from the wave diagram to a time of 350 micro-seconds yields a shock position further from the muzzle. The inward-facing shock positions of the two models do not agree well for smaller times. This occurs partly because the flow nearer the cylinder wall goes through an oblique shock and then propagates pressure waves down toward the axis, thus retarding the speed of the inward-facing shock near the axis. Also, the exit conditions for the simulated two-dimensional flow are changing to lower pressure and velocity values, which would slow the shock speed as compared to the one-dimensional model. The presence of the projectile also retards the movement of the inward-facing shock. In the two-dimensional case, the shocks are curved, and from Crocco's theorem, the region between the inward-facing shock and the exit baffle should be filled with recirculating flows, which indeed it is, as seen from the velocity vector plot of Figure 13.

Table 1 below summarizes and compares the peak overpressures obtained on the exit baffle of the silencer.

Table 1. Reflected Overpressure (MPa) on Exit Baffle

Phase	Experiment	Simulation	1-D Model
Precursor	2.0	1.5	2.3
Propellant(1.5 cal)	11.4	17.0	26.0
Propellant(0.8 cal)		37.0	

The precursor experimental values are in fair agreement with simulation and the one-dimensional model but the propellant simulated value is grossly higher at the point 0.8 caliber from the axis. If it is assumed that the propellant gas exits the muzzle into the muffler with atmospheric pressure, the 1-D model yields approximately 19 MPa. With both assumptions, the 1-D model gives values that are too high. Nevertheless, the model can give guidance about the general levels of pressure to expect on the baffle in the inlet chamber of a muffler.

The one-dimensional model can also explain why the blast from some mufflers is attenuated more when the weapon is fired on automatic mode. The one-dimensional model predicts lower reflected pressures when hot gases initially fill a muffler at normal atmospheric conditions. If the minimum length requirement is met for the hot gas conditions, the muffler will produce a greater attenuation than for a cool gas. If not, the maximum pressure inside the chamber will exceed the reflected overpressure.

Comparisons can also be made for earlier times. Figure 2 shows the pressure contours corresponding to a time before the shock hits the front baffle. The maximum pressure shown here is 662 kPa. The one-dimensional model yields 560 kPa, a significantly lower value. However, the one-dimensional model assumes that the flow passes through a normal inward-facing shock, whereas the numerical simulation shows some of the flow passing through a weaker oblique shock.

V. Summary and Conclusions

A numerical simulation scheme was utilized to compute the flow inside the muffler configuration that had no internal baffles and the shortest internal length. These results were compared with pressure histories recorded 0.5 caliber from the rear internal disk on the muffler cylinder wall and 1.5 caliber from the axis on the inside surface of the front baffle. The numerical results for the cylinder agree well for the first part of the flow process on the cylinder but show larger variations in pressure than the experimental data. For the front baffle, simulation results show large oscillations compared to experiment. These excessive oscillation levels might be attenuated by taking viscosity into account. At both probes for the later times, the simulated pressures are larger. This indicates that the separator flow at the projectile hole is not well modeled by the inviscid scheme. To test these conjectures and in an attempt to obtain more accurate results, a viscous simulation scheme will be developed that includes viscous terms.

A one-dimensional model for the flow was also developed, to a crude level of sophistication. The one-dimensional model yields high pressure values compared to experiment. Nevertheless, the 1-D model should prove useful for designing the baffle in the inlet chamber of mufflers. It also aids in our understanding of why the internal lengths did not appear to be a significant parameter for the prediction of free-field blast overpressure. As long as the muffler has a minimum internal length, the propellant gas exhausting from the barrel will not raise the baffle exit pressure high enough to produce a significantly higher energy efflux than is produced by the initial pressures resulting from the shock first reflected from the front baffle.

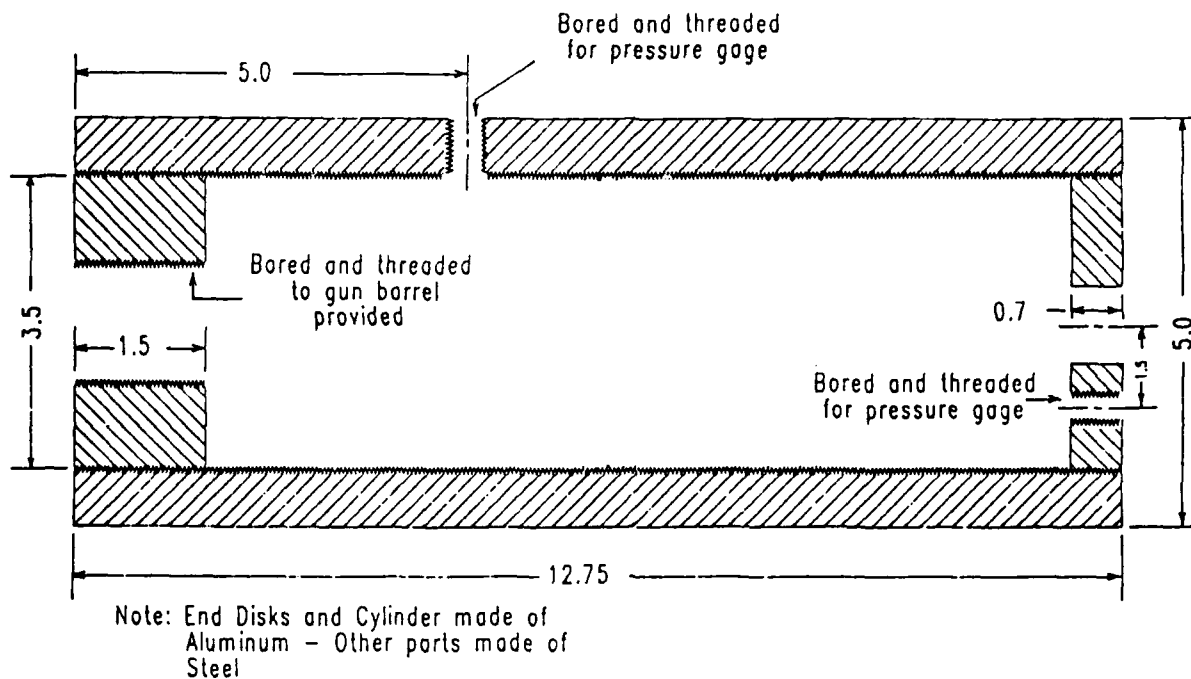


Figure 1. Schematic of BRL Muffler.

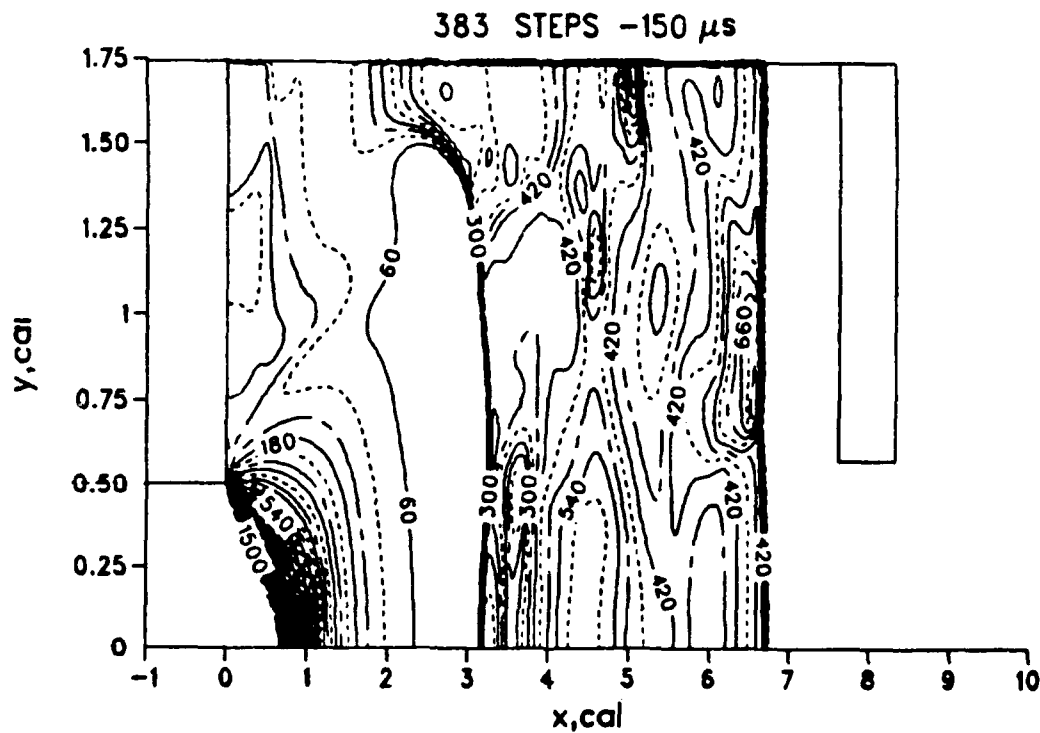


Figure 2. Pressure Contours (kPa) Obtained by Numerical Simulation of Precursor Flow.

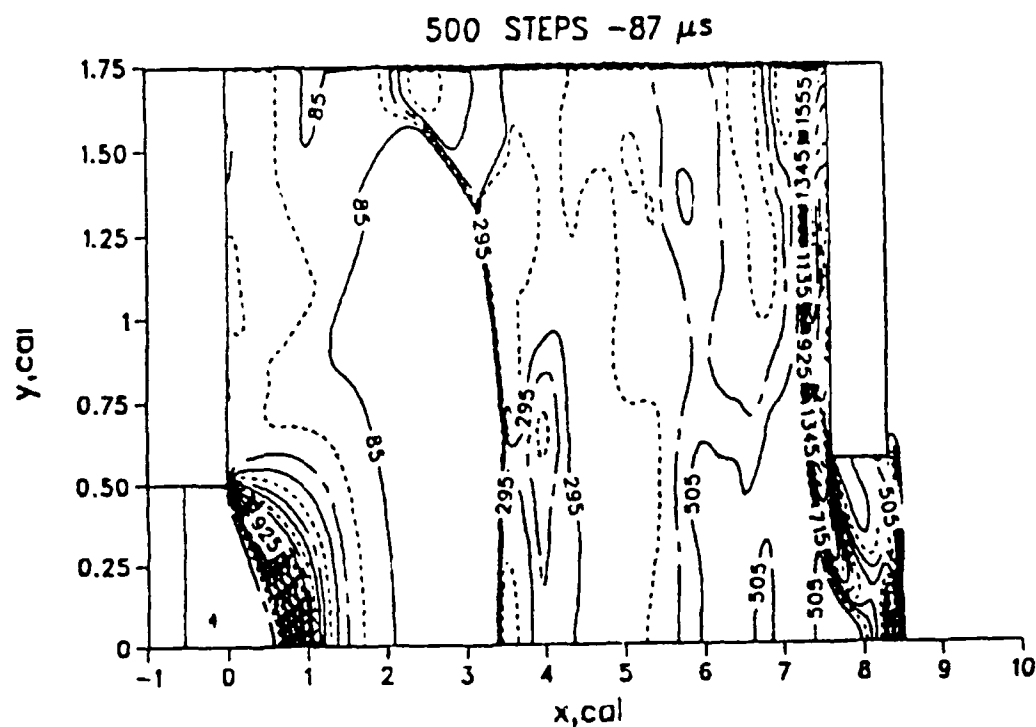


Figure 3. Pressure Contours of Precursor Flow at the Time When the Shock Front Hits the Wall.

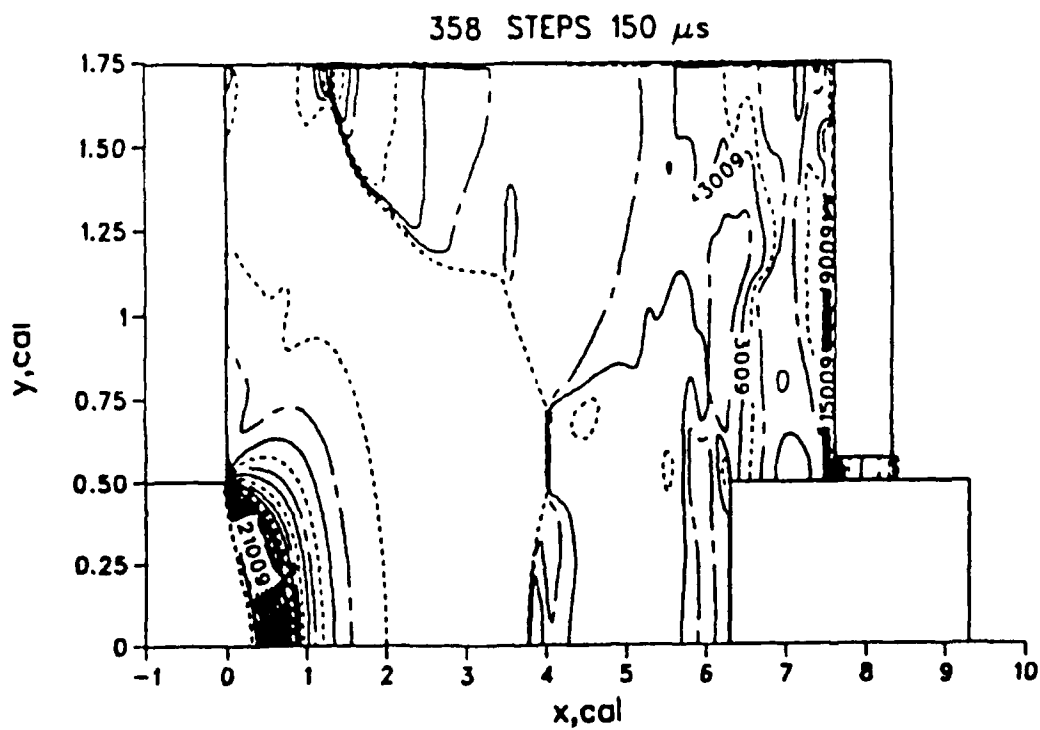
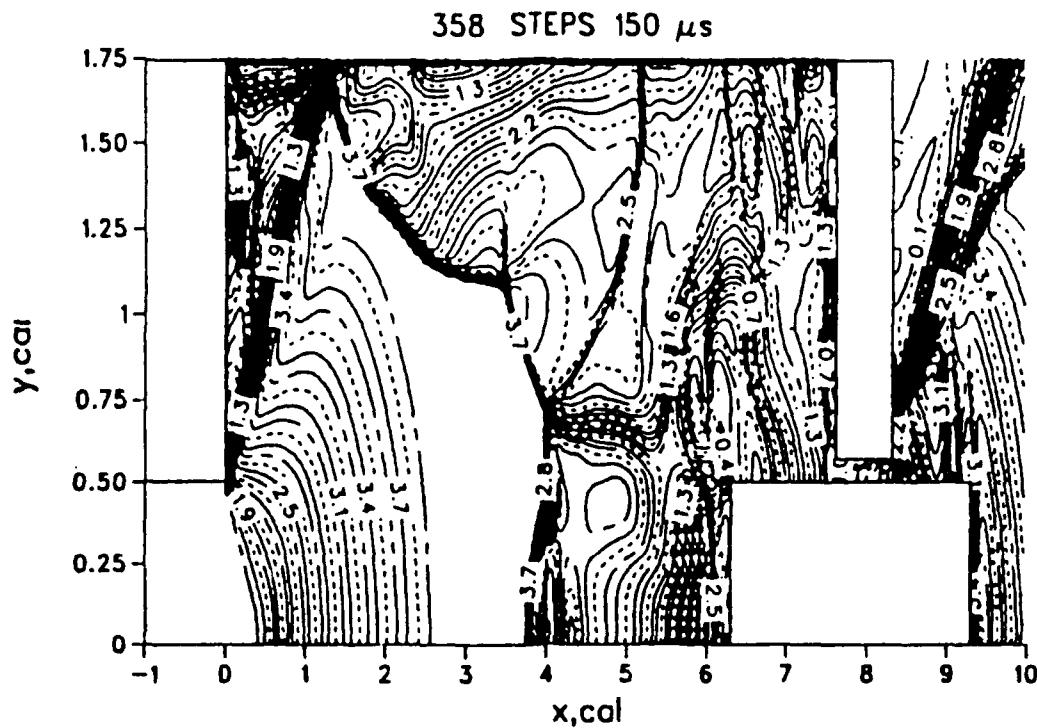


Figure 4. Contours of Propellant Flow at the Time When the Shock Front Hits the Wall. Pressure Contours (kPa).



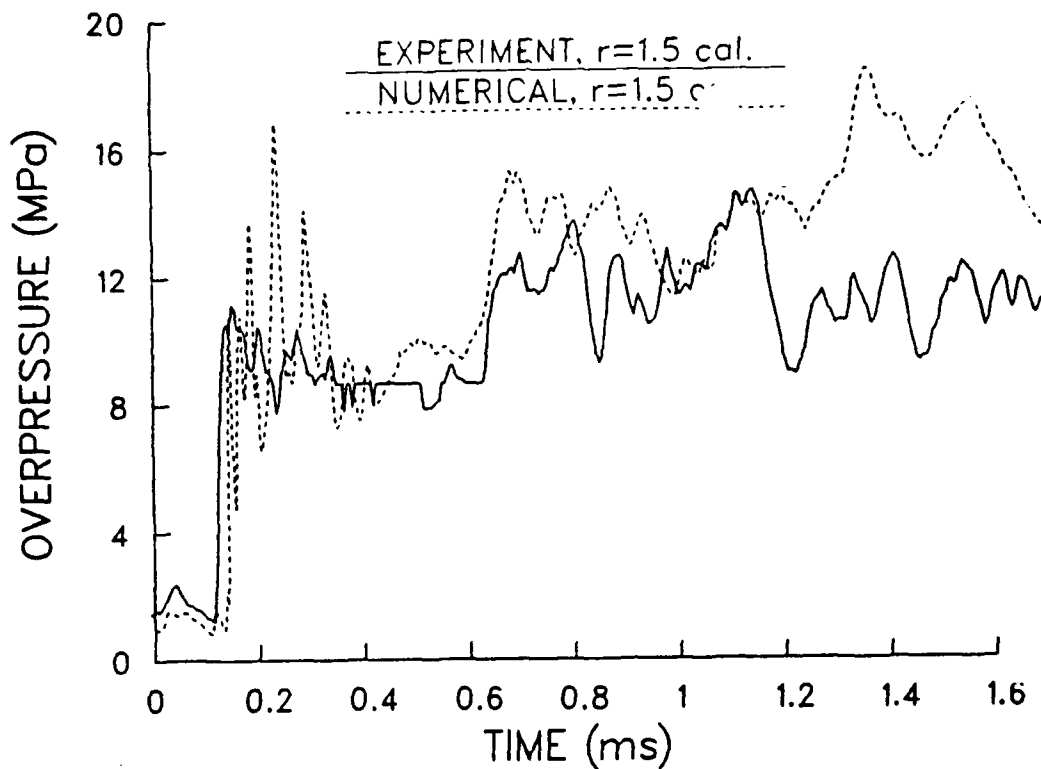


Figure 7. Pressure Comparisons at the Front Baffle. Numerical Simulation and Experiment at $r = 1.5$ Caliber.

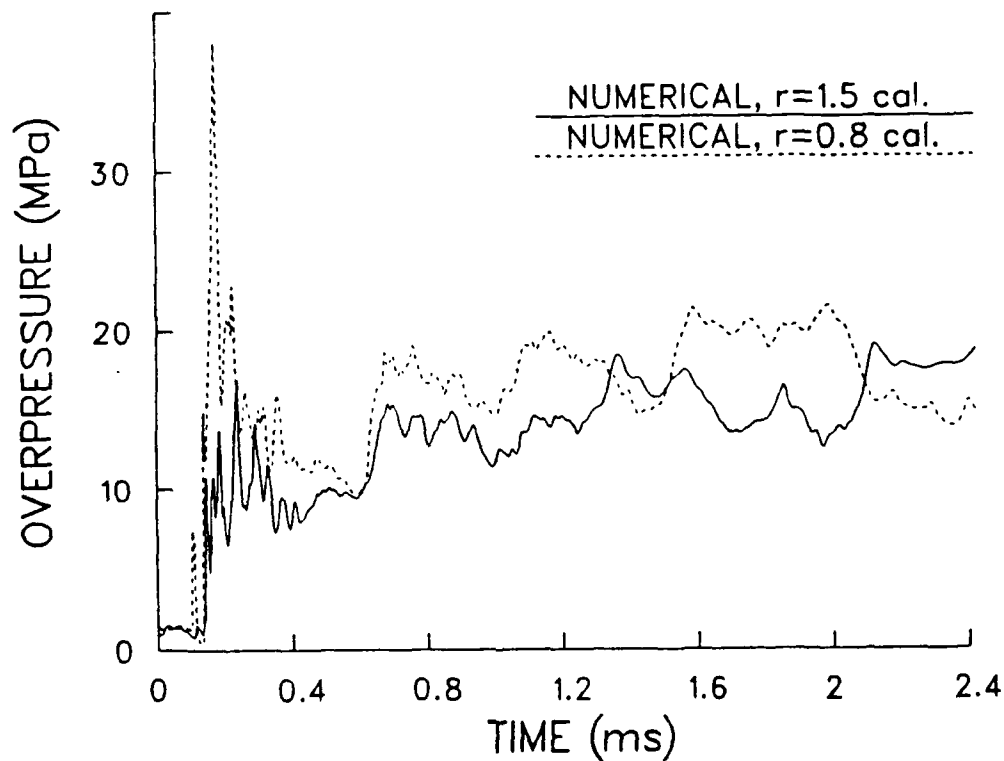


Figure 8. Pressure Comparisons at the Front Baffle. Numerical Simulations at $r = 1.5$ and $r = 0.8$ Caliber.

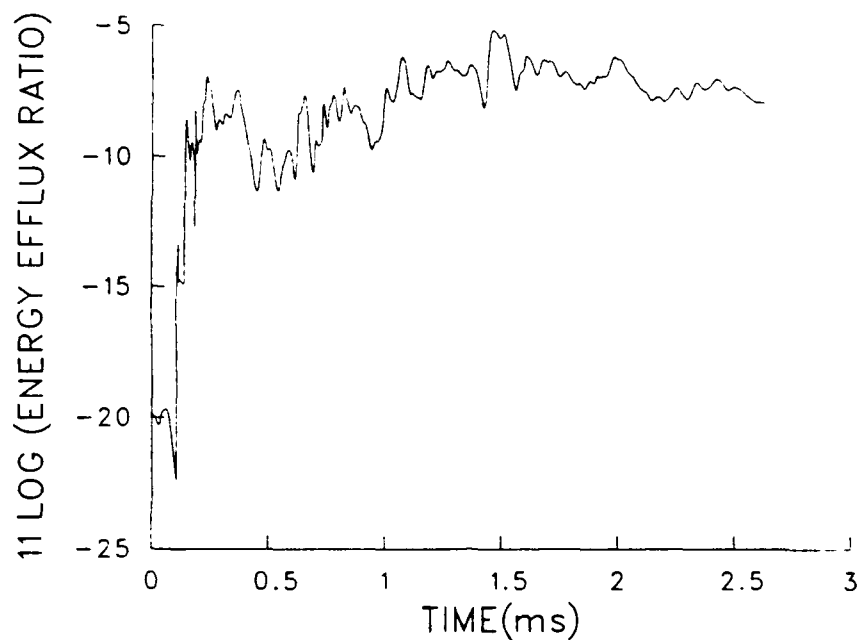


Figure 9. Energy Efflux from Muffler as a Function of Time.

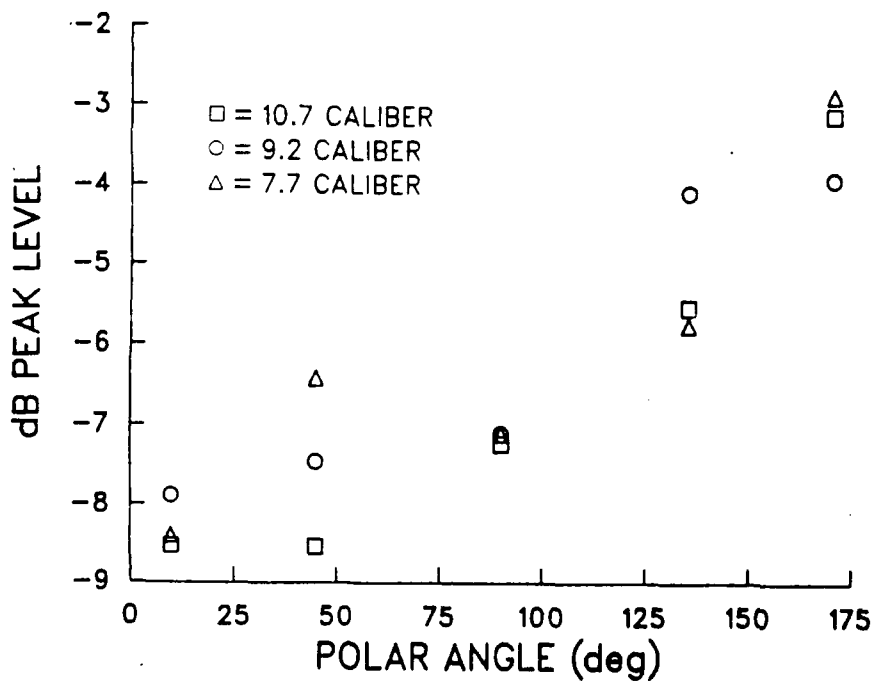


Figure 10. Peak Sound Levels (Referred to Bare Muzzle Values) for Smallest Muffler with Different Internal Lengths versus Polar Angle from the Firing Direction.

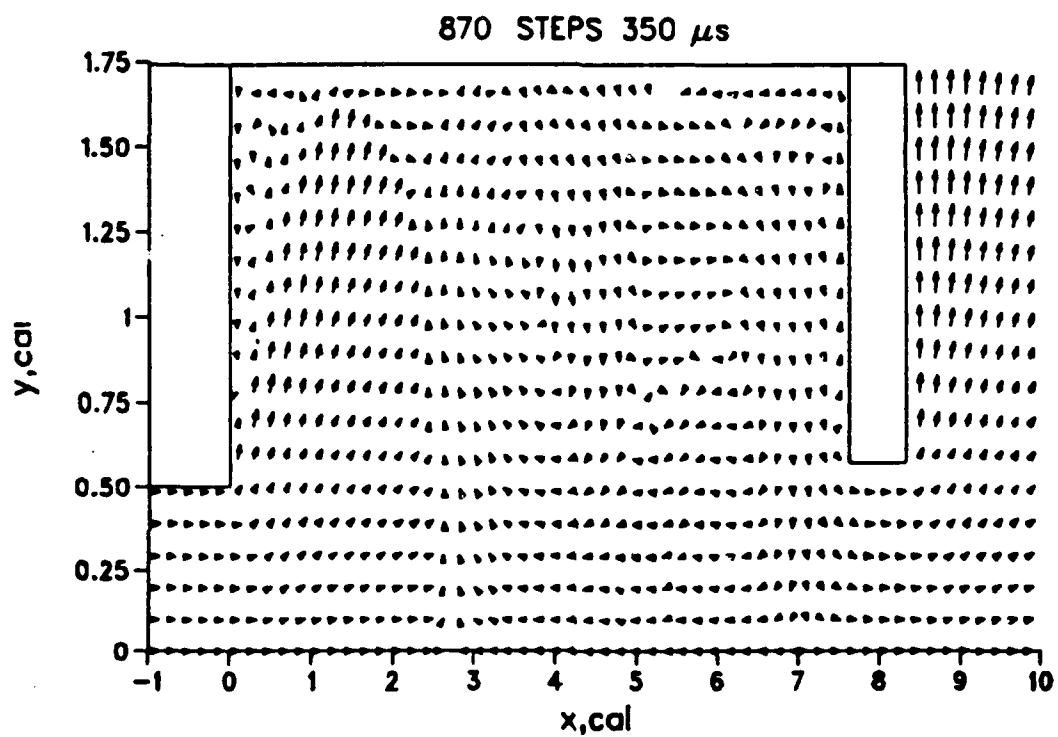


Figure 13. Flowfield at 350 microseconds. Velocity Vector Plot.

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1. Fansler, K. S., and Schmidt, E. M., "The Relationship Between Interior Ballistics, Gun Exhaust Parameters and the Muzzle Blast Overpressure." AIAA Paper 82-0856, AIAA/ASME 3rd Joint Thermophysics, Fluids, Plasma and Heat Transfer Conference, St. Louis, MO, 7-11 June 1982.
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