A Description of Combat Rifle Squads

on the Korean MLR During the Winter of 1952-53

by

Rodney A. Clark and Martha B. Myers

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A description of combat rifle squads on the Korean MLR during the winter of 1952-53.

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**Address:** 300 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

**Report Date:** June 1954

**Number of Pages:** 59

**Security Classification:** Unclassified

**Abstract:**
A research team from HumRRO conducted a study of squad effectiveness in the 40th Infantry Division from December 24, 1952, to February 7, 1953, on the Main Line of Resistance (MLR) in Korea. This report is a graphic description of riflemen in 78 rifle squads based on questionnaire data and personal interviews.
A DESCRIPTION OF COMBAT RIFLE SQUADS
ON THE KOREAN MLR
DURING THE WINTER OF 1952-53

by

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Technical Report 7
June 1954
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A DESCRIPTION OF COMBAT RIFLE SQUADS
on the Korean MLR
During the Winter of 1952-53
INTRODUCTION

This report is a graphic description of riflemen in 78 rifle squads on the Korean front lines during the winter of 1952-53. Future reports will analyze the factors involved in the interaction of squad members as individuals and the squad’s performance as a group; the present report simply presents data on riflemen’s civilian backgrounds, training, and attitudes. Descriptive attributes of squads and squad members are also presented.

A research team from Army Field Forces Human Research Unit No. 2 conducted a study of squad effectiveness in the 40th Infantry Division from 24 December 1952 to 7 February 1953. The 40th Division occupied positions from the Mundung-Ni River, across Heartbreak Ridge, holding Sandbag Castle and the rim of the Punch Bowl. While the troops were in these positions on the Main Line of Resistance (MLR), the researchers visited one platoon in each rifle company in the 160th Regiment (the only regiment to face both the North Koreans and the Chinese), the 224th Infantry Regiment, and the 5th Regimental Combat Team. From these regiments a sample of more than 80 rifle squads was interviewed and given questionnaires and tests; this study is based upon 78 squads for which data were reasonably complete. Information was obtained from all English-speaking squad members who were present at the time of the researchers’ visit. This permitted obtaining test-questionnaire data from 386 riflemen and recording lengthy interviews with 350 of these men.

The graphs in the succeeding pages are based upon the data obtained from the test-questionnaires and interviews. The first group of charts deals with characteristics of the civilian backgrounds of squad members and is based upon information obtained in the questionnaires. The second group of graphs is concerned with descriptive attributes of squads and squad members; the first four figures in this section are based upon information obtained from the recorded interviews, and the remaining 10 figures reflect the data obtained in the questionnaires. The third section, on training, includes three charts based upon questionnaire data and a fourth chart based upon scores received on a written infantry weapons test. In the fourth section of the report, dealing with riflemen’s attitudes, the first two figures are based upon attitude questionnaires, and the remaining nine drawings reflect material obtained in the recorded interviews. The final section of the report is mainly composed of the summary statements which appear under each chart throughout the report.
Civilian Background of Squad Members
AGE OF SQUAD MEMBERS

Major Range = 18.5 to 74.5 years
Number of Men = 381
Average Age = 21.55 years
Standard Deviation,* = 2.00 years

*A measure of the amount of spread in the data. The formula used to compute it was:

\[ \sigma_{est} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum X}{N}\right)^2} \frac{N}{N-1} \]

Figure 1

Half of the riflemen on the front line are 21 or 22 years old.
The educational backgrounds of front-line riflemen are relatively low. In many squads, the variation in background within the squad is large.
More than 60 per cent of the front-line riflemen did not complete high school.
OCCUPATION BEFORE ENTERING THE ARMY

Most of the riflemen have had civilian experience working for others.
Almost one-fifth of the squad members serving on the front line are first-generation Americans.
EVEN THOUGH half of the riflemen on the front line have Northern European ancestry, there are six minority groups and minority combinations. Each of these groups has its own immediate and potential problems of integration.
The proportion of minority group members in a squad varies markedly from squad to squad. What distribution and proportion is best for "integration" and good interpersonal squad relations is open for speculation and study.
The Negro population is not evenly distributed among front-line squads.
More than half of the wage-earners in the families of the front-line squad members were unskilled workers.
Most of the squad members come from homes which were shared with several brothers and sisters.
MARITAL STATUS OF SQUAD MEMBERS

![Graph showing marital status of squad members]

Figure 11

Most of the front-line riflemen have not yet assumed family responsibilities.
STATE OR COUNTRY FROM WHICH SOLDIER CAME

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Islands</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12

The 30th Division had been a California National Guard Division, but by the winter of 1952-53 its personnel came from all parts of the country.
Attributes of Squads and Squad Members
TYPICAL SQUAD MEMBER

Is unmarried and white

Is 22 years old

Is from small town or rural area

Completed 10th year of school

Has three brothers and/or sisters

Is from lower socio-economic class

Has spent a total of 19 months in the Army

Has spent three months on MLR

Has spent three months in squad

Has 15 points toward rotation

Figure 13
TYPICAL SQUAD

LEGEND

- In squad six months
- In squad three months
- In squad less than three months

*Korean: Attached to the United States Army (KATUSA)

Figure 14
### TYPICAL DAY OF AVERAGE FRONT-LINE SQUAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>SQUAD LEADER</th>
<th>ASSISTANT SQUAD LEADER</th>
<th>A.M. MAN</th>
<th>A.M. MAN</th>
<th>ASSISTANT A.M. MAN</th>
<th>ASSISTANT A.M. MAN</th>
<th>RIFLEMAN</th>
<th>RIFLEMAN</th>
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<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Position Guard</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Position Guard</td>
<td>Ambush Patrol</td>
<td>Position Guard</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0600</td>
<td>Company CP Police</td>
<td>Company CP Phone Guard</td>
<td>Company CP Police</td>
<td>Position Guard</td>
<td>Position Guard</td>
<td>Surgery Room</td>
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<td>Company CP Guard</td>
<td>0700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ambush Patrol</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sleep</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ambush Patrol</td>
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<td>1200</td>
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<td>C Retreat</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Phone Guard</td>
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<td>Phone Guard</td>
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<td>0400</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*0630 to 0730 hrs., 100% alert 2300 to 0100 hrs.*

Figure 15
The pie chart illustrates the amount of time devoted by a squad to various daily tasks. The chart breaks down the time spent as follows:

- **Guard**: 9.8 hours
- **Sleep**: 4.3 hours
- **Meals**: 2.2 hours
- **Supervision and Administration**: 2.8 hours
- **Ambush Patrol**: 1.7 hours
- **1.1 hours**
- **0.8 hours**
- **"Sukoshi R"**
- **Combat Outpost**
- **Maintenance (Personal and Equipment)**

Each task represents a portion of the daily activities, with the largest portion dedicated to guard duty.
The proportions of enlisted and drafted men on the front line are similar to the proportions for the entire Army.
Three-fourths of the men have been in the Army less than 18 months.
TOTAL MONTHS IN KOREA

Number of Men = 371

Figure 19

Half the men have been in Korea less than four months.
TOTAL MONTHS ON MLR

Figure 20

Three-fourths of the men have been on the MLR less than four months.
TOTAL MONTHS AS MEMBER OF PRESENT SQUAD

Figure 21

Membership in squads changes so fast that more than half of the men have been in a squad less than three months.
MONTHS AS MEMBER OF PRESENT SQUAD

Number of Squads = 78
Average Number of Months as Member of Squad = 3.08 months
Standard Deviation = 1.44
Major Range = 0.0 to 6.7 months
Average Number of Months for Man in Each Squad With
Most Service = 7.35 months
Average Number of Months for Man in Each Squad With Least Service = 0.83 months

LEGEND

- Average number of months all men within a given squad have been a member of the squad

- Variation in number of months during which men have been members of the squad

In half of the squads the average man has been a squad member less than three months. Two-thirds of the squads have members who have been in the squad a month or less. Two-fifths of the squads have "old-timers" who have been in the squad more than six months.
RANKS OF SQUAD MEMBERS

Number of Men = 361

PER CENT

Private
Private First Class
Corporal
Sergeant
Sergeant First Class

RANK

Figure 23

Front-line squads are operating at not more than two-thirds' strength in NCO's.
Although on the average the men have been in the squad only three months, almost half have received a promotion.
TIMES WOUNDED SINCE BECOMING MEMBER OF PRESENT SQUAD

Number of Men = 386

Figure 25

These front-line squads have not had much contact with the enemy.
Company punishment is very rare on the front line.
Training
WRITTEN INFANTRY WEAPONS TEST

Number of squads = 78
Average Score of All Squads on Written Infantry Weapons Information Test = 58.02 points
Standard Deviation of Scores = 8.31 points
Major Range = 37.25 to 75.00 points

No squad averaged high scores and some scored quite low on a written weapons information test.
Squad Members Having Specialized Training Beyond Basic

Figure 28

Over 30 per cent of the men in front-line rifle squads have Army training past basic.
Riflemen do not have an equal opportunity to come in contact with squad-mates who have special training beyond basic.
The front-line riflemen have had little previous experience in any other combat situation.
Attitudes
On a questionnaire about ambition, a rifleman could score from low to high ambition. Over 80 percent of the squads had an average ambition score above the midpoint of the scale.
According to answers to the questionnaire used, in only three squads would the average reaction be to accept rules and orders without question. All of the other squads would tend to evaluate each new situation and decide whether or not to give unquestioning obedience to a rule or order. In no squad is there a strong tendency to flout orders.
The average squad member thinks that:

The North Koreans are barbaric and inhuman in treatment of prisoners.
The average squad member thinks that: Figure 34

The Chinese are cruel in their treatment of prisoners.
The average squad member thinks that:

The enemy attacks so fiercely because he is doped.
The average squad member thinks that:

![Diagram showing a soldier setting up an ambush](image)

Figure 36

The enemy is more patient than the G.I. in setting up an ambush.
The average squad member thinks that:

![Image of a soldier lying down with a mortar in the background.]

Figure 37

The enemy is extremely accurate with mortar fire.
The average squad member thinks that:

The enemy is dug into impenetrable positions.
The average squad member thinks that:

Figure 39

The katusas sleep on guard.
The average squad member thinks that:

The Kutusa has superhuman strength.
The average squad member thinks that:

Figure 41

The Katama sees well in the dark.
Summary
SUMMARY

CIVILIAN BACKGROUND OF SQUAD MEMBERS

Most of the riflemen on the front line are between 18 and 29 years of age; half of them are 21 or 22 years old.

The educational background of front-line riflemen is relatively low; in most squads the variation in background within the squad is large.

More than 60 per cent of the front-line riflemen did not graduate from high school. The average grade completed was the tenth.

Over 75 per cent of the riflemen on the front line have had civilian experience working for others.

Almost one-fifth of the squad members serving on the front line have parents who were not born in the U.S.A.

Even though approximately half of the riflemen on the front line have Northern European ancestry, there are six minority groups and minority combinations.

Although some squads had no non-European minority group members, most of the squads had at least one or two such members, and in many squads over half of the men were minority group members.

The Negro population is not evenly distributed among front-line squads.

More than half of the wage earners in the families of the front-line squad members were unskilled workers.

Most of the squad members come from homes which were shared with several brothers and sisters.

Over three-fourths of the squad members were single.

The 40th had been a California National Guard Division, but by the winter of 1952-53 its personnel came from all parts of the country.

ATTRIBUTES OF SQUADS AND SQUAD MEMBERS

The typical squad is composed of nine men. Most of these men have been in the squad three months or less.

In the average squad twice as much time is devoted to guard duty as is allocated for sleep. The men average four or five broken hours of sleep in 24 hours.

The proportion of enlisted and drafted men on the front line is comparable to the proportions for the total Army.

Three-fourths of the men have been in the Army less than 18 months, and half of them have been in Korea less than four months.
Three-fourths of the men have been on the MLR less than four months.

Membership in squads changes so rapidly that more than half of the men have been in a squad less than three months.

In half of the squads the average man has been a squad member less than three months. Two-thirds of the squads have members who have been in the squads a month or less. Two-fifths of the squads have "old-timers" who have been in the squad more than six months.

Front-line squads are operating at not more than two-thirds' strength in NCO's.

Over 90 per cent of the squad members had not been wounded since being a member of the present squad.

Approximately half of the front-line riflemen had been promoted since becoming a member of their present squads.

Over 95 per cent of the riflemen had not received company punishment since becoming a member of their present squad.

TRAINING

No squad averaged high scores, and some scored quite low on a written weapons information test.

Over 30 per cent of the men in front-line rifle squads have Army training in addition to Basic, but riflemen do not have an equal opportunity to come in contact with squad-mates who have special training beyond Basic.

The front-line riflemen have had little previous experience in any other combat situation.

ATTITUDES

Over 80 per cent of the squads had an average level of aspiration score which was above the mid-point of the scale.

According to the questionnaire used, in only three squads would the average reaction be to accept rules and orders without question. All of the other squads would tend to evaluate each new situation and decide whether or not to give unquestioning obedience to a rule or order. In no squad was there a strong tendency to flaunt rules and orders.

According to the comments obtained in more than 350 recorded interviews it appears that the average squad member thinks that:

The North Koreans are barbaric and inhuman in treatment of prisoners.
The Chinese are civil in their treatment of prisoners.
The enemy attacks fiercely because he is doped.
The enemy is more patient than the G.I. in setting up an ambush.
The enemy is extremely accurate with mortar fire.
The enemy is dug into impenetrable positions.
The Katusas sleep on guard.
The Katusas have superhuman strength.
The Katusas can see well in the dark.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Appreciation is extended to the officers and enlisted men of the 40th Infantry Division who made it possible for the research team to gather data in a combat situation.

The staff members of Human Research Unit No. 2, OCAFF, who selected and prepared test materials for the study and gathered the data presented in this report were Drs. Robert L. Egbert, Morris Showel, and Rodney A. Clark. Capt. John B. Bennett, Jr., Department of the Army, was military chief of the research team.

The drawings are adapted from originals prepared by Mrs. Liese S. Rapozo. Other members of the project who participated in the preparation of the report are: Mr. Gilbert L. Neal, Pfc. Joseph N. P. Ruocco, and Mrs. Alice R. Lowrance.