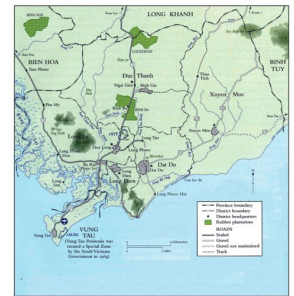




1 Australian Task Force in Vietnam: A Quantitative, Spatial and Temporal Analysis

Dr Bob Hall, Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society, ANU, spoke to the USI of ACT in Canberra on 15 May 2012

The USI of the ACT hosted a presentation by Dr Bob Hall, leader of a team conducting an analytical study of the effectiveness of the 1st Australian Task Force in Vietnam. The study centred on the creation of a series of databases, incorporating Geographic Information Systems and other quantitative data as well as a wide range of other contemporary data grouped in a manner that allowed longitudinal and lateral comparison with other studies. The work is ongoing, and is being constructed in a manner that allows for the import of new data to provide a wider and more refined set of information where a cohesive whole emerges greater than the sum of its parts, allowing for quantitative and qualitative analyses to be adduced or tested. It is intended that, in addition to the usual academic publication, that the study be presented in an on-line interactive format that would allow for others' input and experiences to be added. The audience was much energized by the presentation, seeing opportunities for lessons learned to be drawn, not only for the actions of the IATF, but for other forms of conflict (where data existed) this approach could be studied and applied.

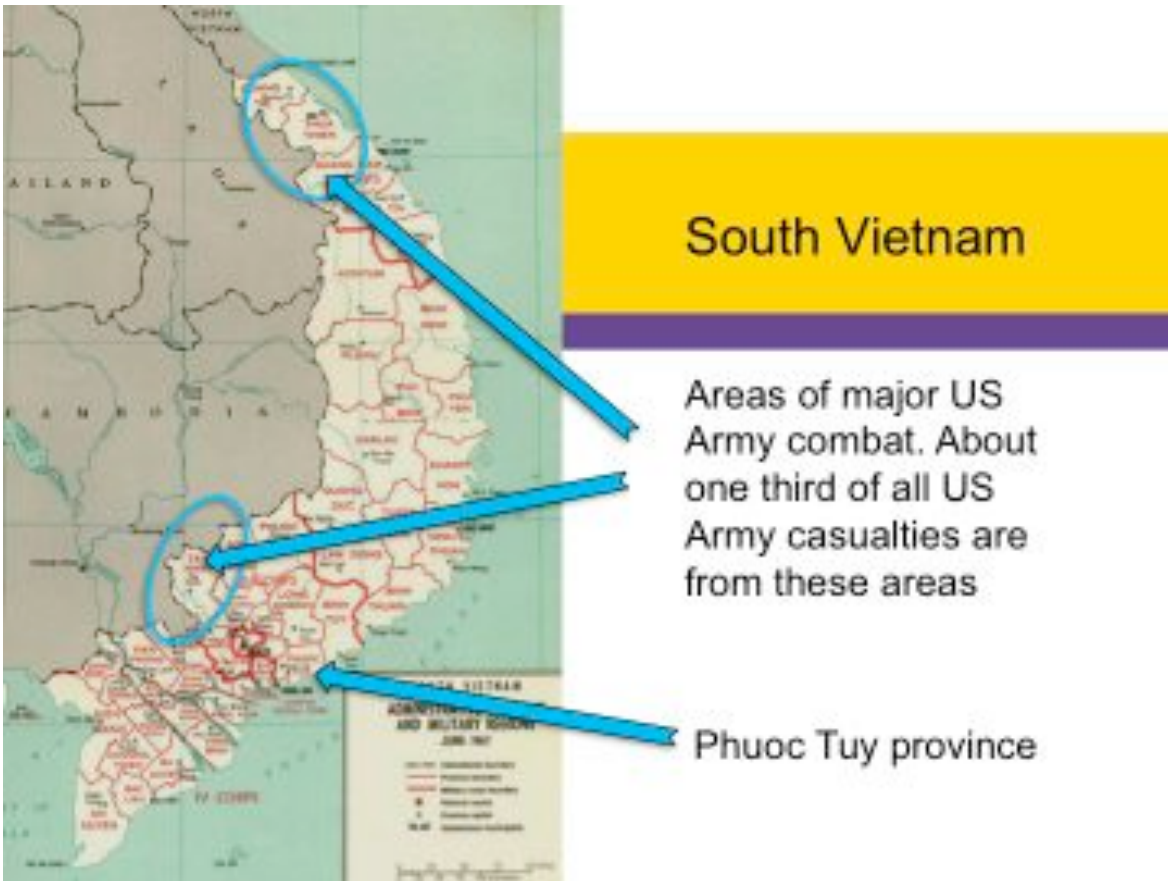


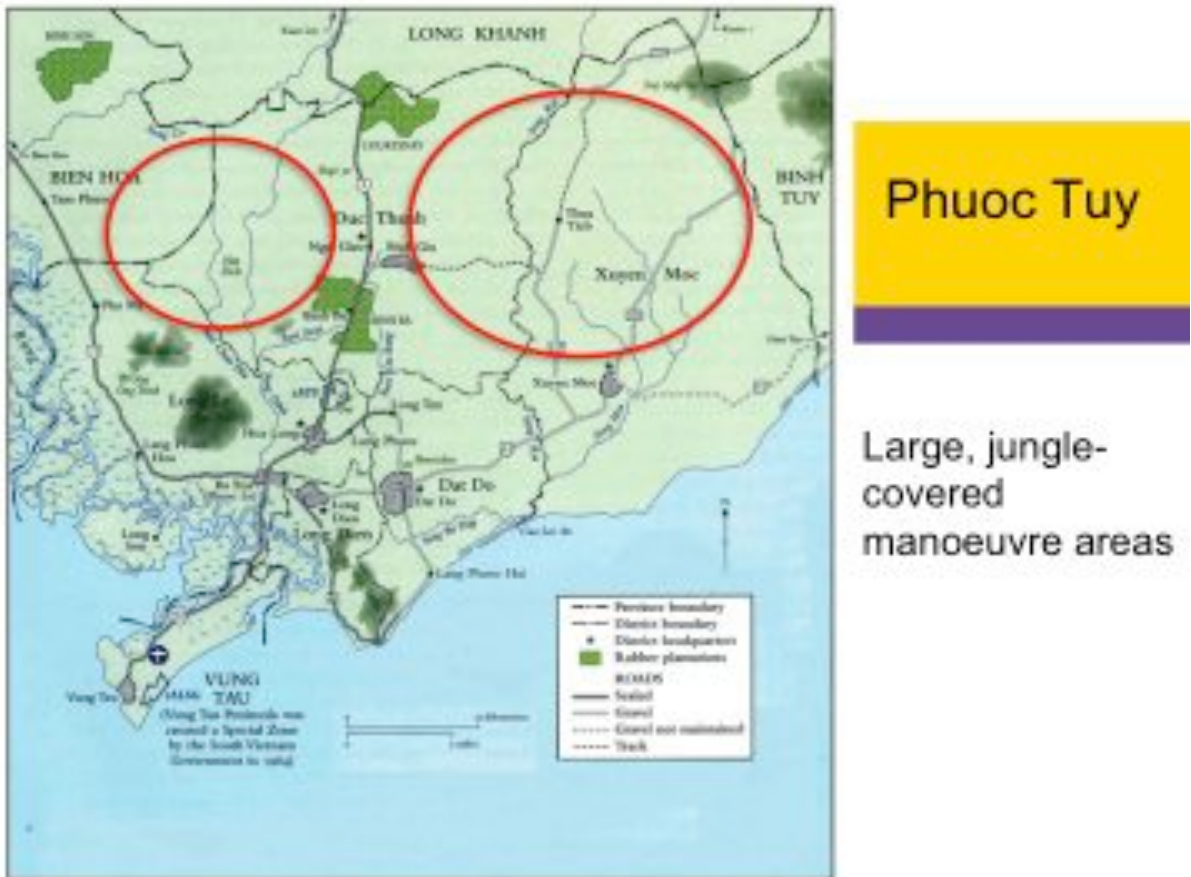
The presentation was supported by the following Powerpoint Presentation.



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Databases

Vietnam Combat Database

- 4500 combat incidents (3909 contacts)
- Up to 30 bits of info on each

Vietnam Intelligence Database

- 36,000 intelligence incidents
- Up to 6 bits of info on each

Vietnam Village Database

- 150 hamlets in Phuoc Tuy Province
- 80 bits of info on each

Other databases

- North Borneo (Confrontation) Combat db (for comparison)
- Civil Affairs Projects db (being built by Barry Smith)
- VC/PAVN POW db
- Vietnam Military Offences db
- Vietnamese MIA db
- 9 Squadron RAAF operations db (we wish)



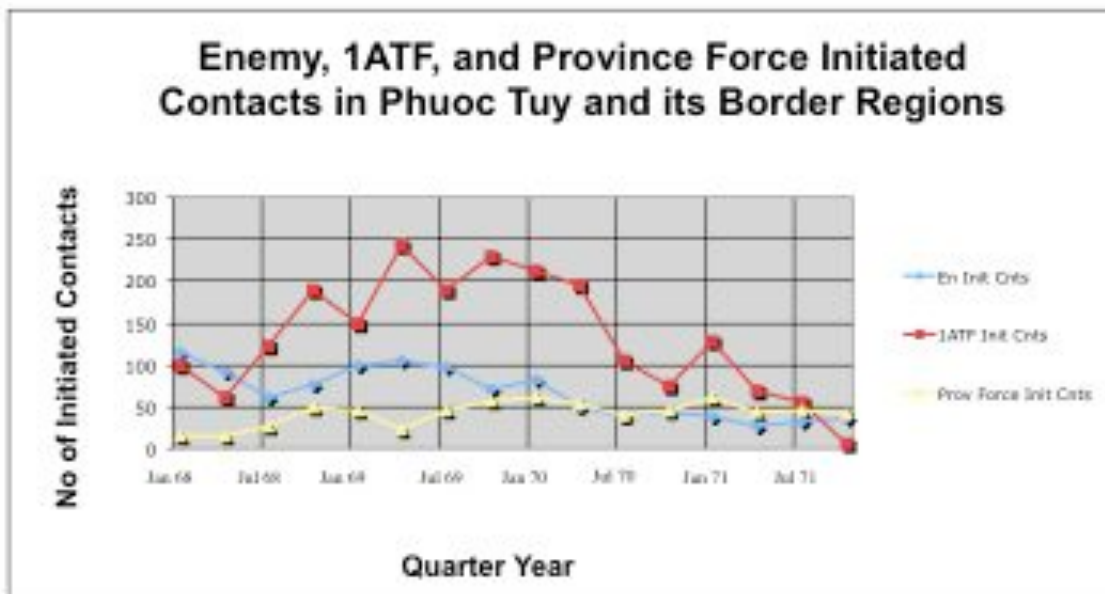
'Big battles' and the 'contacts' compared

'Big battles'

- Long Tan, Op Bribie, Baria/Long Dien, Long Dien 2, Coral, Balmoral, Binh Ba, Nui Le, etc.
- 16 'Big battles' in all.
- All initiated by the VC/PAVN.

'The Contacts'

- Approximately 3890.
- On average they were against 6 enemy or less.
- Overwhelmingly initiated by 1ATF.



The shifting tide:

Enemy incidents	1970	1971
Food collection	89	241
Tax collection	87	245
Intelligence gathering	149	265

Shots per casualty analysis for 1ATF:

Weapon	Combat task			
	Patrol encounter	Ambush (of enemy)	Bunker system attack	Security or defence of position
7.62mm GPMG M60	619	495	1310	761
5.56mm M16	232	319	679	307
7.62mm SLR	187	222	517	174

The shifting tide:

Enemy incidents	1970	1971
Food collection	89	241
Tax collection	87	245
Intelligence gathering	149	265

- Shots per casualty analysis for 1ATF
- First to fire according to combat task

For the US forces:

- 50,000 to 200,000 shots per enemy casualty
- The enemy fires first in over 80% of contacts

What were the figures for 1ATF?

Shots per casualty analysis for 1ATF:

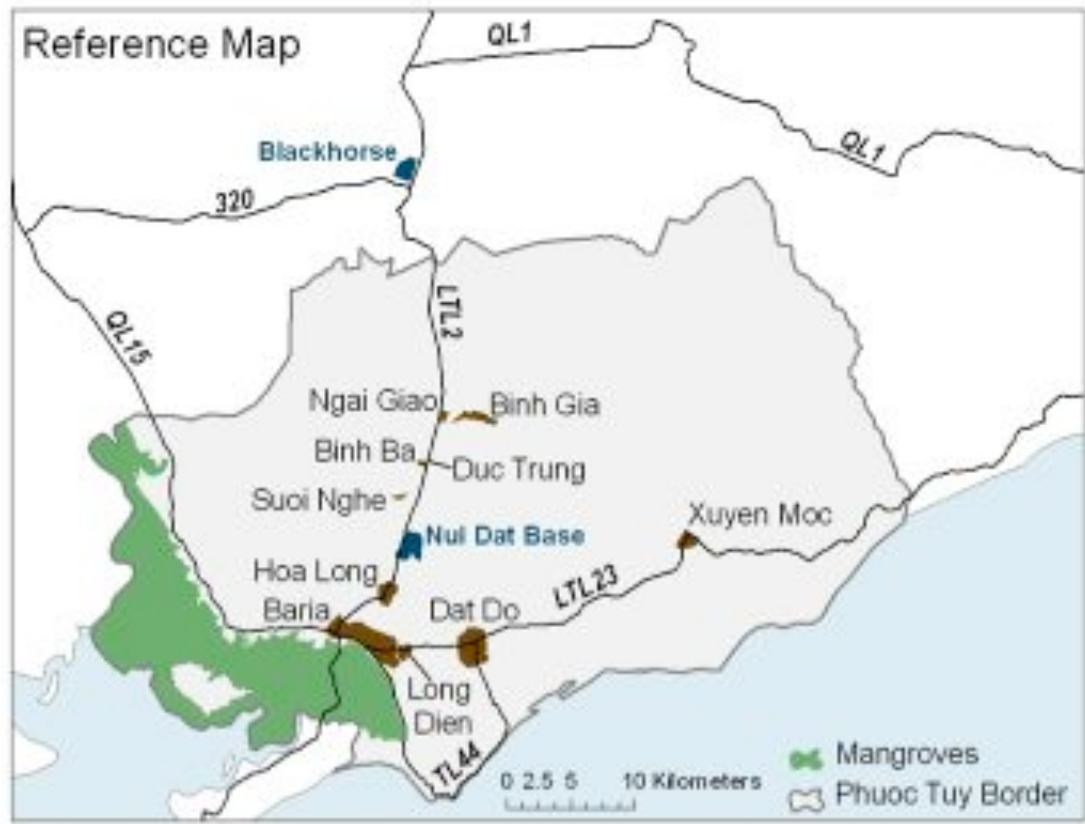
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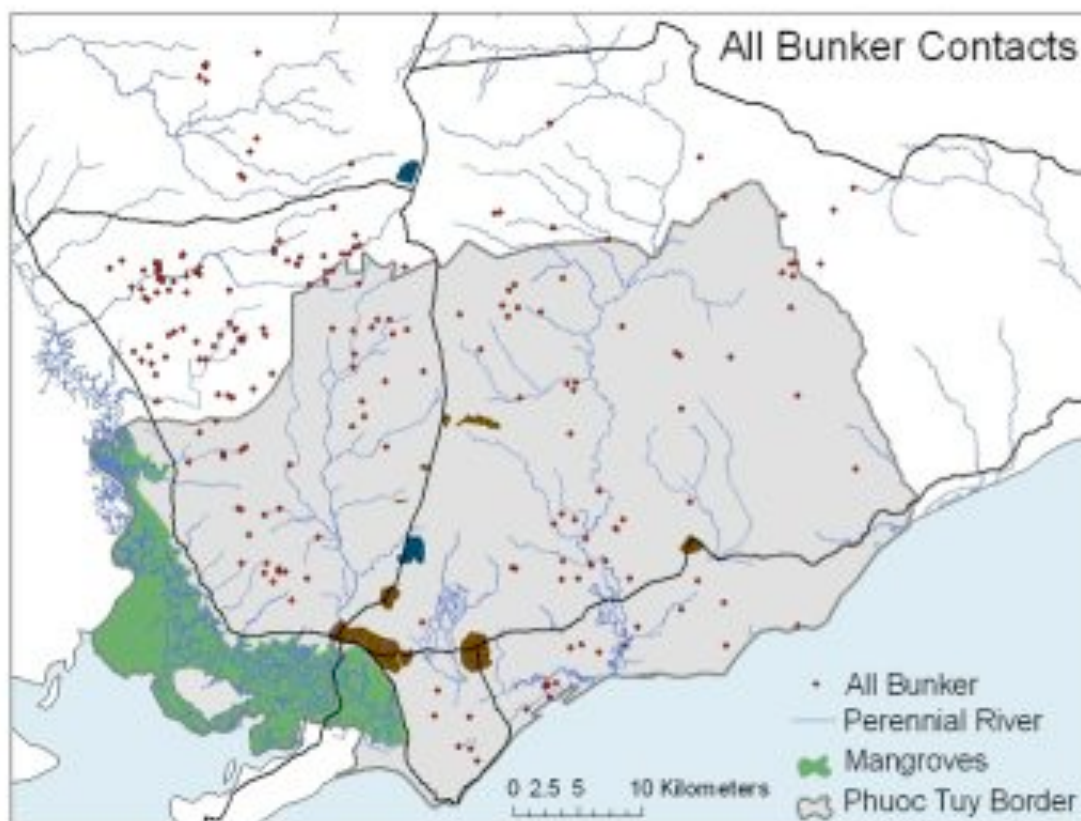
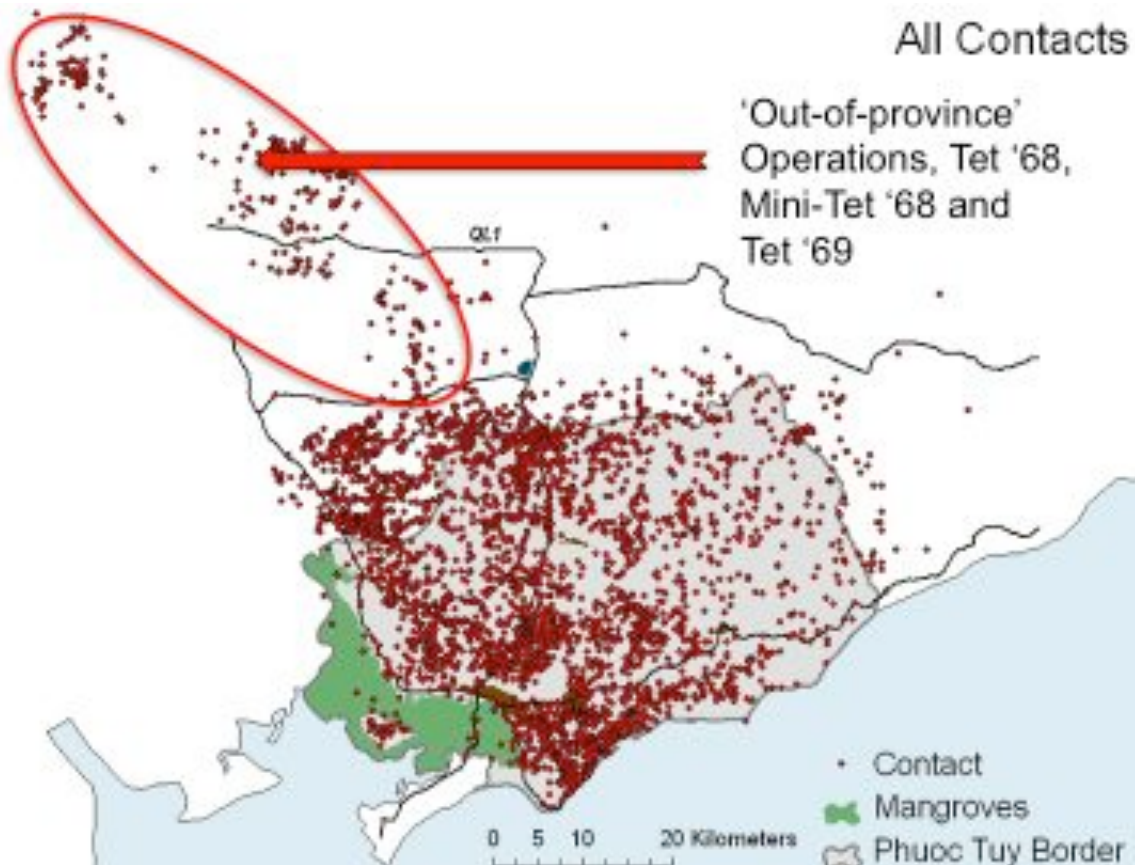
Shots per casualty – various battalions:

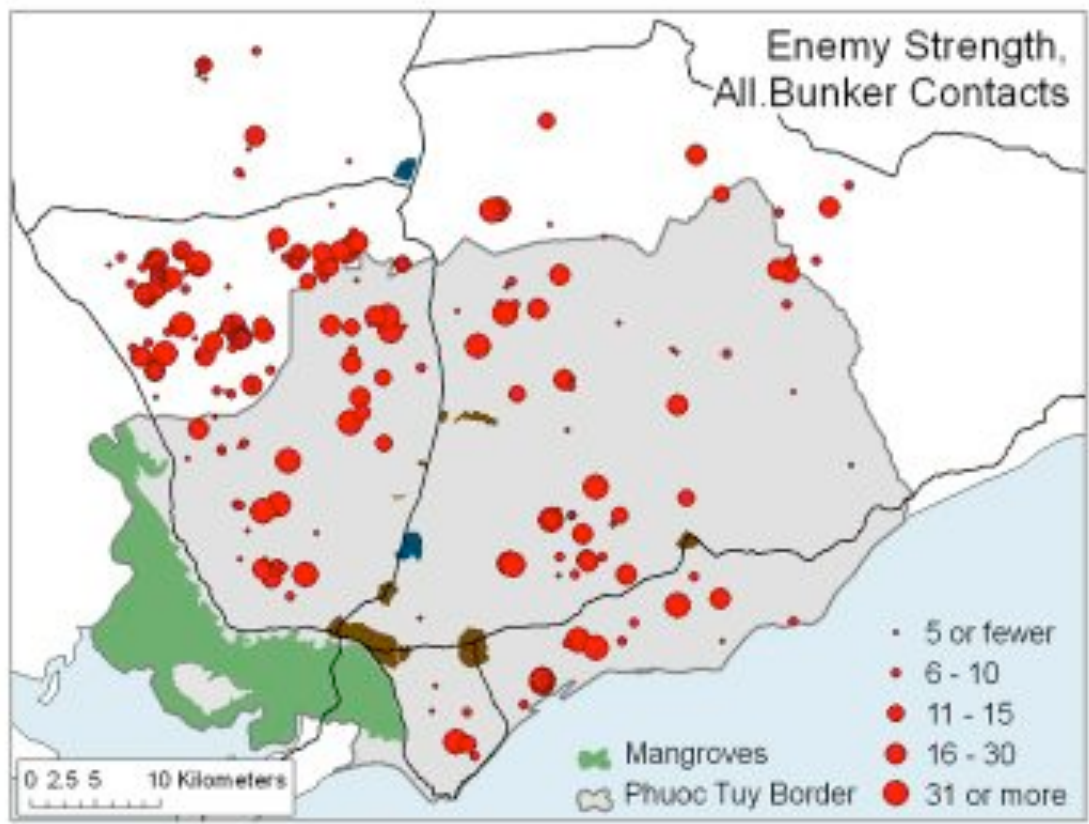
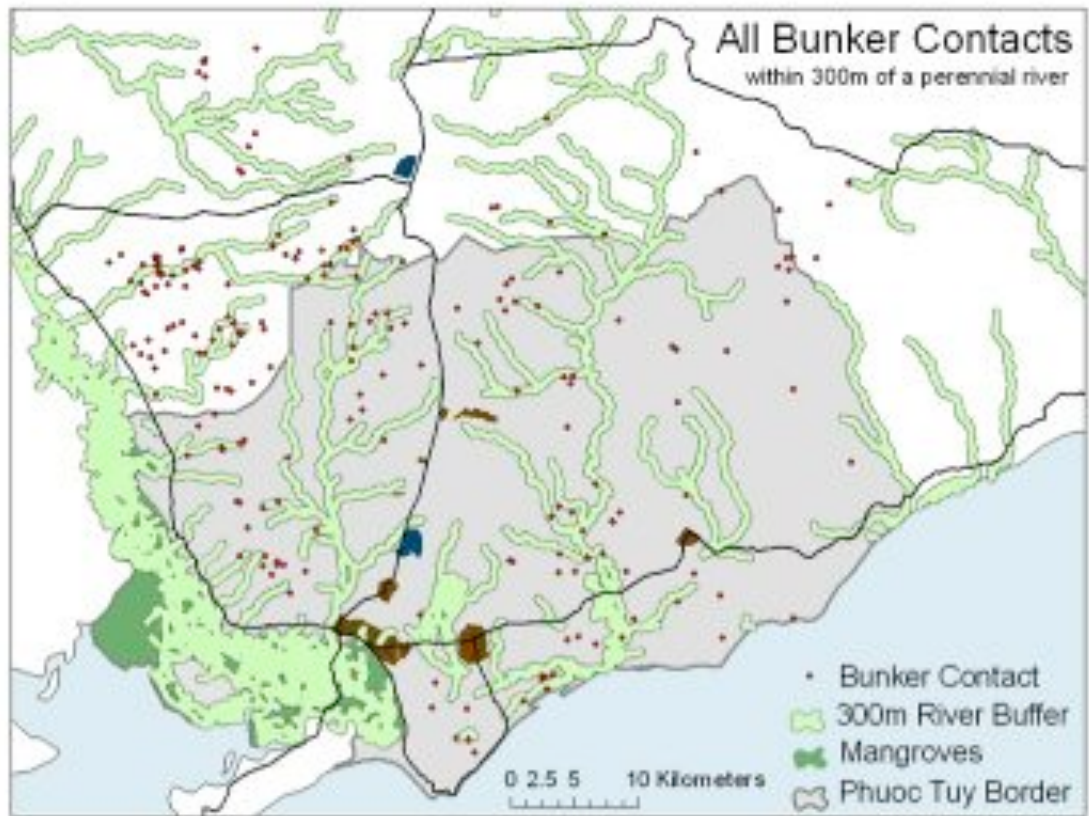
Battalion tours (all 2 nd tours except 3RAR)	Time in theatre		
	1 st 3 months	Middle 6 months	Last 3 months
7RAR (Feb 70 - Feb 71)	596	411	203
8RAR (Nov 69 - Nov 70)	668	547	176
2RAR/NZ (May 70 - May 71)	1371	486	364
3RAR (Dec 67 - Nov 68)	471	284	253
5RAR (Feb 69 - Feb 70)	305	490	646
6RAR/NZ (May 69 – May 70)	289	344	1305

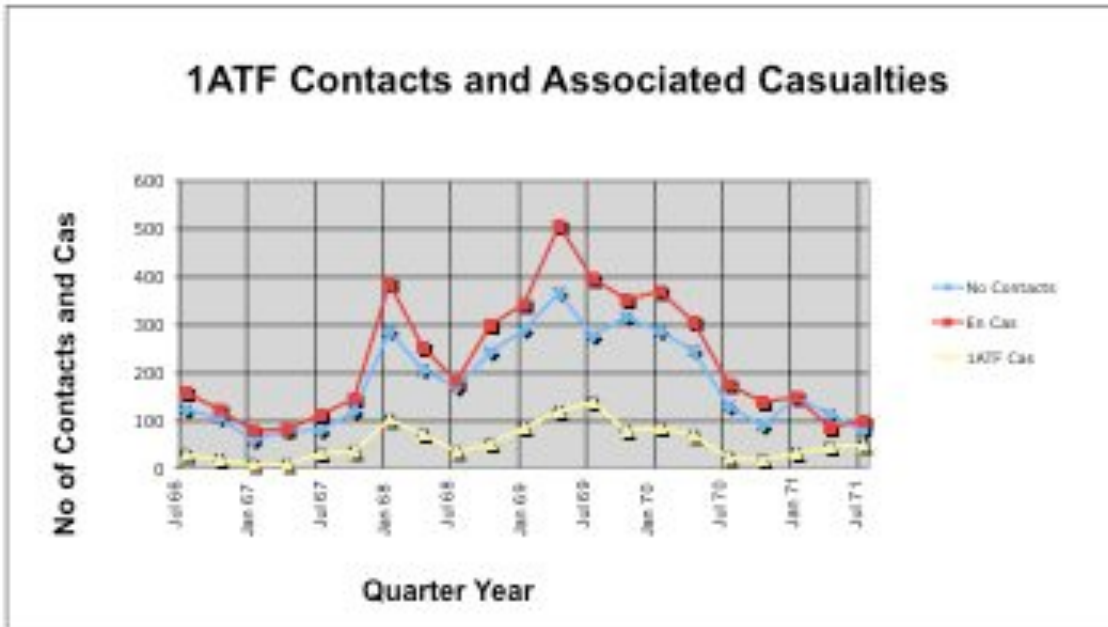
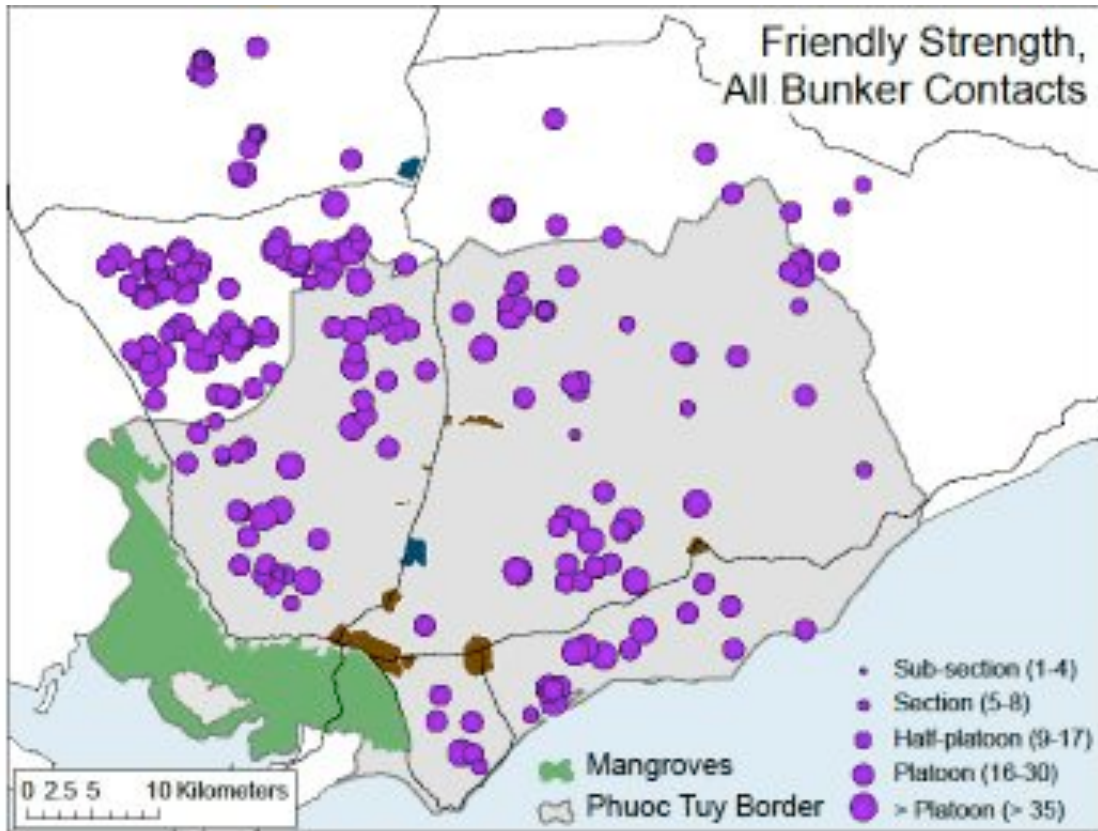
First to fire and Loss Ratio:

First to fire	% of first shot gained	Loss Ratio (en cas/friendly cas)	Shots per enemy cas (average)
1ATF	89.5	5.7:1	348
VC/PAVN	10.5	0.7:1	890



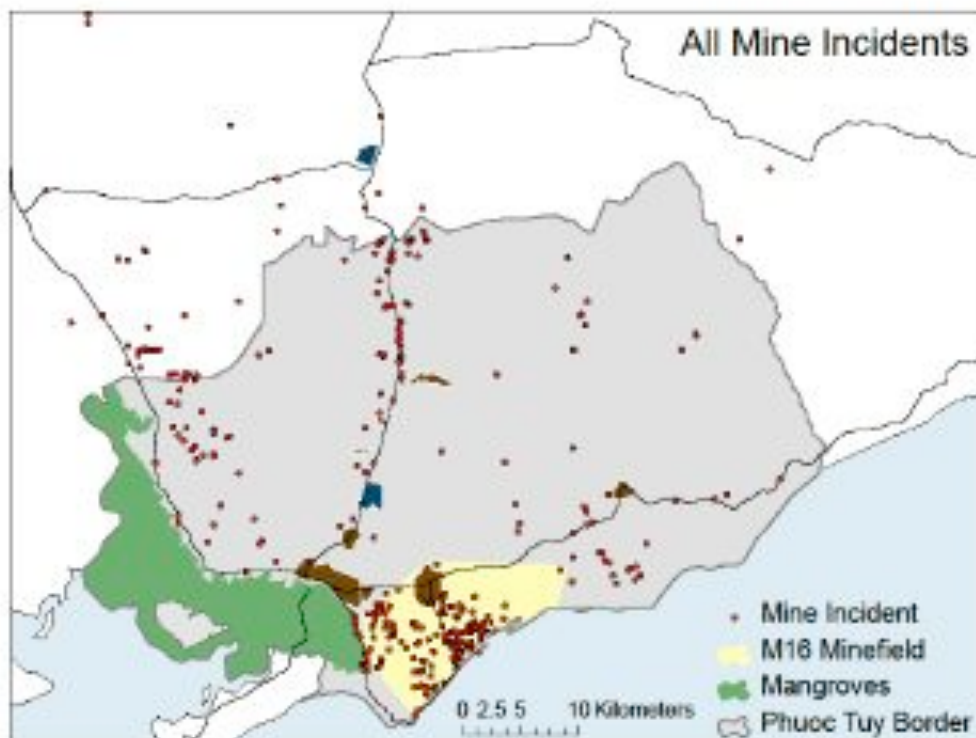


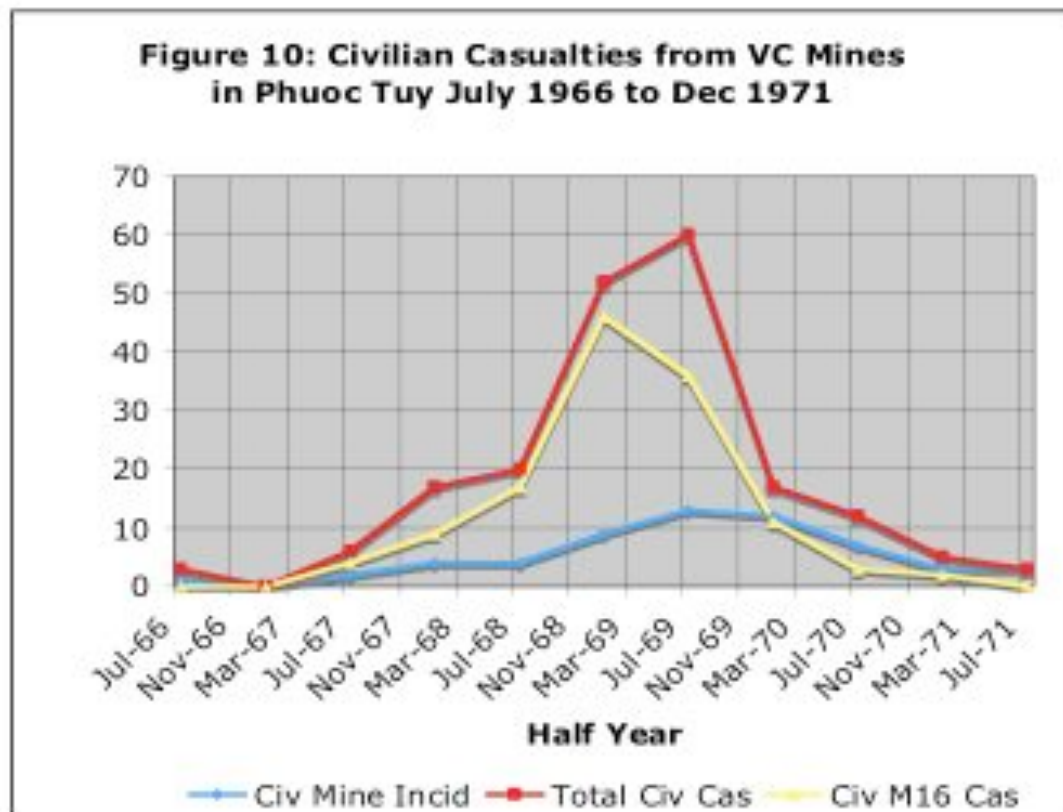
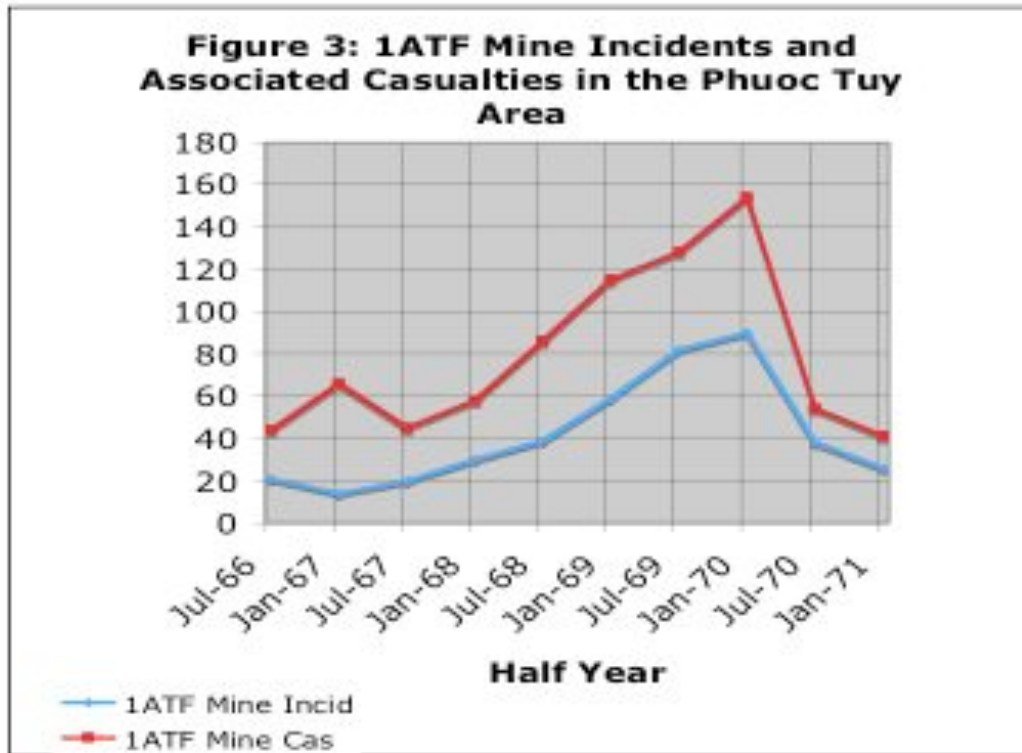




A powerful analytical tool:

- Contacts by wet and dry season
- Contacts according to the rice harvest
- Contacts of particular battalions compared with others
- Contacts in the lead-up to particular events (e.g., Vietnamese political events, Paris Peace talks, etc.)
- Contacts according to vegetation types
- Contacts according to proximity to villages
- ... Etc, etc.





Biography:

Dr Robert Hall graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1968. He served in Vietnam as an infantry platoon commander in the 8th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment. After further military service in Papua New Guinea, HQ 1st Division and Army Headquarters, Canberra, he left the Army in 1991 to pursue an academic career. His army career spanned over 20 years. He was formerly the Executive Director of the Australian Defence Studies Centre, UNSW@ADFA until 2003. In 2005 Bob was awarded a QEII Fellowship and an ARC research grant for a five-year project titled "Understanding Low-Intensity Conflict". Bob leads a research team of Dr Andrew Ross (HASS), Dr Amy Griffin (PEMS), Dr Michael (Spike) Barlow, and Mr Derrill de Heer in the project, which examines the operational effectiveness of the Australian army in Vietnam and Confrontation. His research interests are: the Australian army's role and performance in Vietnam and Confrontation, the Vietnam War, Confrontation and Combat effectiveness.

(Photo Courtesy UNSW)