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VAN VLECK REVISITED-THE RCS (RADAR CROSS SECTION) OF THIN WIRES

M. T. Tavis

Aerospace Corporation

Prepared for:

Space and Missile Systems Organization

1 July 1973

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VAN VLECK REVISITED - THE RCS OF THIN WIRFS

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SPACE AND MISSILE SYSTEMS ORGANIZATION AIR FORCE SYSTEMS COMMAND LOS ANGELES AIR FORCE STATION Los Angeles, California

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FOREWORD

This report is published by The Acrospace Corporation, El Segundo, California, under Air Force Contract No. F04701-73-C-0074. This report was prepared by the Electronics and Optics Division, Engineering Science Operations, at the request of the Reentry Systems Division, Development Operations.

This report, which documents research carried out from July 1972 through April 1973, was submitted for review and approval on 9 August 1973 to Ronald L. Adams, ist Lt, USAF.

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Publication of this report does not constitute Air Force approval of the report's findings or conclusions. It is published only for the exchange and stimulation of ideas.

Ronald/L. Adams, 1st Lt, USAF Pen Aids Project Officer Maneuvering Vehicle Division System Engineering Directorate

ABSTRACT

The approximate theory of radar reflection from thin wires by Van Vleck, et. al., gives very good average radar cross section (RCS) results and good angular RCS results except end-on. In this paper, the nature of this end-on discrepancy is examined. It is found that, if the complete expressions derived by Van Vleck, et. al., are utilized without the approximations made to simplify calculation of the average RCS over all angles of incidence, then very accurate RCS results are predicted for nearly all angles of incidence and for all the wire length-to-wavelength ratios between 0.45 and 50. Comparisons with the numerical results of a source distribution technique (SDT) computer program and with the results due to Ufimtsev are shown.

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I. INTRODUCTION

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In a previous report (Ref. 1), predictions of the radar cross section (RCS) of long, thin wires by several authors were compared with experimental data. It was found that the predictions of Van Vleck, et al., (Ref. 2) were of greater validity than had previously been believed; however, the RCS of thin wires for end-on incidence was considerably in error. This error was believed to be due to the approximations made by Van Vleck, et al., to simplify the calculation of the average RCS over all angles of incidence.

To confirm this belief, the theory of Van Vleck, et al., is examined in detail in Sec. 2 of this report. It is shcwn that, without some of these simplifying approximations discussed above, the general theory derived by Van Vleck, et al., does indeed give a cross section that goes to zero at endon incidence. The general theory is used to calculate the RCS of thin wires of various lengths. These results are compared with data generated by BRACT^{*}, a source distribution technique (SDT) computer program, to verify the fact that use of the general theory instead of the approximate theory (Ref. 2) has not degraded the overall angular RCS results.

The approximate theory of Van Vleck, et al., is also compared directly with the general theory and with BRACT to determine the differences among the results. Note that results obtained using the theory of Ufimtsev (Refs. 1 and 3) have also been compared with the BRACT results. These comparisons are presented in Sec. 3 of this report. A brief discussion follows (Sec. 4).

The BRACT computer program, which solves the thin wire integral equation of the complete electromagnetic scattering problem for arbitrary wire structures, has been validated through extensive use and is considered as have an accuracy of better than 1.4B (Refs. 1 and 4).

II. THEORY

Consider a plane wave incident on a thin wire of length 2*t*, as shown in Fig. 1.



Fig. 1. Plane of Incidence

The angle of incidence is θ , and the angle between \overrightarrow{E}_{0} (the electric field vector) and the plane formed by the wire and the propagation vector $\overrightarrow{\beta}$ is ϕ . The CGS system of units is used throughout this paper. Then, for the scattered field $(\overrightarrow{E}^{\mathcal{E}})$, from Maxwell's homogeneous equations

$$\vec{E}^{s} = - \vec{\nabla} \phi^{s} - \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial \vec{A}^{s}}{\partial t}$$
(1)

where \overrightarrow{A}^{S} is the scattered vector potential and ϕ^{S} is the scattered scalar potential. If the Lorentz gauge is used

$$\overrightarrow{\nabla} \cdot \overrightarrow{A} + \frac{1}{c} \quad \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial t} = 0 \tag{2}$$

Eq. (1) becomes

$$\frac{\partial \vec{E}^{s}}{\partial t} = c \vec{\nabla} \vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{A}^{s} - \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial^{2} \vec{A}}{\partial t^{2}}$$
(3)

- If all time dependence appears at a single frequency as $e^{-i\omega t}$, then Eq. (3) becomes

$$-i\omega \vec{E}^{s} = c \vec{\nabla} \vec{\nabla} \cdot \vec{A} + \frac{\omega^{2}}{c} \vec{A}$$
 (4)

Now, if only the tangential component of the field at the surface of the wire is considered and if it is assumed that the wire is a perfect conductor lying on the z axis, $E_z^s = -E_z^i$ (\vec{E}^i is the incident field) and Eq. (4) becomes

$$\frac{\partial^2 A_z}{\partial^2 z} + \beta^2 A_z = i\beta E_z^i$$
(5)

where the superscript s has been dropped. The incident field is given by

$$\vec{E}_{o} e^{i\vec{\beta}\cdot\vec{X}} - i\omega t$$

If the time component is neglected (Fig. 1)

$$E_{z}^{i} = E_{o} \cos \phi \sin \theta e^{i\beta z \cos \theta}$$
(6)

$$\frac{\partial^2 A_z}{\partial^2 z} + \beta^2 A_z = i\beta E_0 \cos \phi \sin \theta e^{i\beta z \cos \theta}$$
(7)

The homogeneous solution of Eq. () is

A
$$\cos\beta z + B \sin\beta z$$
 (8)

and the inhomogeneous solution is

$$iE_{o}\cos\phi\sin\theta\int_{0}^{z}e^{i\beta\xi\cos\theta}\sin\beta(z-\xi)\,d\xi$$
$$=\frac{iE_{o}\cos\phi}{\beta\sin\theta}(e^{iqz}-\cos\beta z-i\cos\theta\sin\beta z) \qquad (9)$$

where $q = \beta \cos \theta = 2\pi/\lambda \cos \theta$.

Recall from Maxwell's inhomogeneous equations that the vector potential due to a current distribution is given by

$$\nabla^2 \vec{A} - \frac{1}{c^2} \frac{\partial \vec{A}^2}{\partial t^2} = -\frac{4\pi}{c} \vec{J}$$
(10)

which has a general free space solution

$$\vec{A} = \frac{1}{c} \int \frac{\vec{J} \,\delta[t' + (|\vec{x} - \vec{x}'|/c) + t]}{|\vec{x} - \vec{x}'|} \,dt' \,dx'^{3}$$
(11)

or

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If $J = J(\vec{X}) e^{-i\omega t}$ and if it is assumed that the current flows only along the z' direction and resides at the axis of the wire, while the vector potential is wanted at the surface of the wire

$$A_{z}(z) = \frac{\pi a^{2}}{c} \int_{-1}^{1} \frac{J e^{-i\beta r}}{r} dz' \text{ and } r = \sqrt{(z - z')^{2} + a^{2}}$$
(12)

Or, if $J = I/\pi a^2$ and if the vector potential solutions of Eqs. (7) and (12) are equated

$$\int_{-l}^{l} \frac{I(z') e^{-i\beta r}}{r} dz' = A_1 \cos \beta z + B_1 \sin \beta z + \frac{i\omega E_0 \cos \phi}{\beta^2 \sin \theta} e^{iqz}$$
(13)

This is identical to Eq. (1) in Ref. 2; note that the coefficients of the sine and cosine terms of Eqs. (8) and (9) have been combined. Equation (13) is an integral equation that must be solved for the current on the wire, subject to the boundary condition that the current vanish at $\pm I$. Further, the current should vanish for $\theta = 0$, i.e., the right-hand side of Eq. (13) should vanish at $\theta = 0$.

In order to solve for Eq. (13), assume that the current I(z) is given by

$$I(z) = \alpha e^{iqz} + Y_i \cos \beta z + iY_2 \sin \beta z \qquad (14)$$

where α , Y_1 , and Y_2 do not depend on z. Note that Eq. (14) is just an approximation to the current and that a more accurate expression would require an iterative solution (to be discussed below).

The value of α is determined by substituting the e^{iq^2} term of Eq. (14) into Eq. (13) and by equating with the e^{iq^2} terms

$$\alpha \int_{-l}^{l} \frac{e^{iqz'} e^{-i\beta r}}{r} dz' = \frac{i\omega E_0 \cos \phi}{\beta^2 \sin \theta} e^{iqz}$$
(15)

The integral on the left-1 and side is broken into three terms for easy evaluation (Ref. 5)

$$\int_{-l}^{l} \frac{e^{iqz'} e^{-i\beta z}}{r} dz' \equiv e^{iqz} \int_{-l}^{l} \frac{\cos \beta r}{r} dz' + \int_{-l}^{l} \frac{(e^{iqz'} - e^{-iqz})}{r} \cos \beta r dz'$$

$$- i \int_{-l}^{l} \frac{e^{iqz'} \sin \beta r}{r} dz'$$
(16)

Let

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$$\int_{-l}^{l} \frac{\cos \beta r}{r} dz' = Z(z) = \int_{-l}^{l} \frac{1}{r} dz - \int_{-l}^{l} \frac{(1 - \cos \beta r)}{r} dz \quad (17)$$

The second term on the right-hand side of Eq. (17) will not go to zero for r = 0; therefore, we may replace r by |z - z'| for this term and for the two right-hand terms in Eq. (16). By a change of variables in Eqs. (16) and (17) and by use of the sine and cosine integrals

$$\operatorname{Cin} x = \int_0^x \frac{1 - \cos t}{t} dt$$

Si
$$x = \int_0^\infty \frac{\sin t}{t} dt$$

Equations (16) and (17) are evaluated as

$$Z(z) = \log \left[\frac{\left[(l+z)^2 + a^2 \right]^{1/2} + (l+z)}{\left[(l-z)^2 + a^2 \right]^{1/2} - (l-z)} \right] - \operatorname{Cin} \beta(l+z) - \operatorname{Cin} \beta(l-z)$$
(18)

$$K(z) e^{iqz} = \int r^{-1} e^{iqz'} e^{-i\beta r} dz'$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} e^{i\frac{2}{2}} \{ 2Z(z) + 2Cin \beta(l-z) + 2Cin \beta(l+z) - Cin(\beta+q)(l-z) - Cin(\beta-q)\{l+z\} - Cin(\beta-q)(l-z) - Cin(\beta+q)(l+z) - Cin(\beta+q)(l-z) + Cin(\beta+q)(l-z) - Cin(\beta+q)(l+z) - Cin(\beta+q)(l-z) + Cin(\beta+q)(l-z) + Cin(\beta+q)(l-z) - Cin(\beta+q)(l-z)$$

Since

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$$\alpha K(z) e^{iqz} = \frac{i\omega \cos \phi E_o e^{iqz}}{\beta^2 \sin \theta}$$
(19)

and since α should be independent of z, an average over the wire is taken

$$\overline{Z}(x) = 2 \left[\log(2\ell/x) + \log 2 + a/2\ell - \operatorname{Cin} 2\beta\ell - \frac{\sin 2\beta\ell}{2\beta\ell} \right]$$

$$\overline{K}(x) = 2 \log(2\ell/x) + 2 \log 2 + a/\ell - \operatorname{Cin} 2(\beta + q)\ell - \operatorname{Cin} 2(\beta - q)\ell - \frac{\sin 2(\beta + q)\ell}{2(\beta + q)\ell} - \frac{\sin 2(\beta - q)\ell}{2(\beta - q)\ell} - \frac{\sin 2(\beta - q)\ell}{2(\beta - q)\ell} - \frac{\sin 2(\beta - q)\ell}{2(\beta - q)\ell} \right]$$

$$- i \left[\operatorname{Si} 2(\beta + q)\ell + \operatorname{Si} 2(\beta - q)\ell + \frac{\cos 2(\beta + q)\ell - 1}{2(\beta + q)\ell} + \frac{\cos 2(\beta - q)\ell - 1}{2(\beta - q)\ell} \right]$$

$$(20)$$

$$\alpha = \frac{i\omega\cos\phi E_o}{\overline{K}\beta^2\sin\theta}$$
(21)

Similarly, Y_1 and Y_2 are related to A_1 and B_1 by

$$A_{1} = LY_{1} \text{ and } B_{1} = iLY_{2}$$
 (22)

where

$$L = 2 \log(2l/2) + 2 \log 2 + a/l - Cin 4\beta l - \frac{\sin 4\beta l}{4\beta l} - 1$$

- i (Si 4\beta l + \frac{\cos 4\beta l - 1}{4\beta l}) (23)

Note that when q goes to β or when θ goes to zero, the value of \overline{K} approaches the value of L. The use of the complete expressions for \overline{K} and L differs from Van Vleck's usage in that he uses the asymptotic values of the Cin and Si functions for large argument. The usage is incorrect when $\beta \pm q \rightarrow 0$.

In order to determine A_1 and B_1 or Y_1 and Y_2 , the boundary conditions on the current are applied. However, if they are applied directly to Eq. (14), the results would give an infinite current for $\beta = \pm n\pi/2$; n = 1, 2, 3 \cdots and is identically zero for $q = \pm \beta$. Instead, the integral in Eq. (13) is broken into three terms, as in Eq. (16)

$$I(z) Z(z) = -\int_{-\ell}^{\ell} r^{-1} \left[I(z') - I(z) \right] \cos \beta r \, dz' + i \int_{-\ell}^{\ell} r^{-1} I(z') \sin \beta r \, dz' + \left(\frac{i\omega \cos \phi}{\beta^2 \sin \theta} \right) E_0 e^{iqz} + A_1 \cos \beta z + B_1 \sin \beta z$$
(24)

It has previously been mentioned that a more accurate representation of the current would require an iterative solution. Equation (24) would be the basis for such a solution, with the previous solution (e.g., Eq. 14) for the current used in the right-hand side of Eq. (24). The averaged value of Z(z) would be used in performing any integrations past the first iteration to the current. Instead of iterating, Eq. (24) is forced to obey the boundary conditions $I(\pm t) = 0$ by using the zeroth approximation to the current (Eq. 14) in the right-hand side of Eq. (24) to determine γ_1 and γ_2 . This leads to Eqs. (25) and (26)

$$Q e^{iq\ell} + A_{i} \cos \beta \ell + B_{i} \sin \beta \ell = \alpha D e^{iq\ell} + (\gamma_{i}/2) \left(E e^{i\beta\ell} + F e^{-i\beta\ell} \right) + (\gamma_{2}/2) \left(E e^{i\beta\ell} - F e^{-i\beta\ell} \right)$$
(25)

$$Q e^{-iq\ell} + A_1 \cos \beta \ell - B_1 \sin \beta \ell = \alpha G e^{iq\ell} + (\gamma_1/2) \left(E e^{i\beta\ell} + F e^{-i\beta\ell} \right)$$
$$- (\gamma_2/2) \left(E e^{i\beta\ell} - F e^{-i\beta\ell} \right)$$
(26)

where

$$Q = \frac{i\omega\cos\phi E_o}{\beta^2\sin\theta}$$
(27)

and

$$D = \operatorname{Cin} 2\beta l - \operatorname{Cin} 2(\beta + q)l - i \operatorname{Si} 2(\beta + q)l$$

$$G = \operatorname{Cin} 2\beta l - \operatorname{Cin} 2(\beta - q)l - i \operatorname{Si} 2(\beta - q)l$$

$$E = \operatorname{Cin} 2\beta l - \operatorname{Cin} 4\beta l - i \operatorname{Si} 4\beta l$$

$$F = \operatorname{Cin} 2\beta l \qquad (28)$$

From Eq. (22), the following solutions are obtained for Y_1 and Y_2 .

$$Y_{1} = - \frac{Q}{\overline{K}}T_{1}$$
$$Y_{2} = - \frac{Q}{\overline{K}}T_{2}$$

$$I(z) = \frac{Q}{\overline{K}} \left[e^{iqz} - T_{i} \cos \beta z - iT_{2} \sin \beta z \right]$$
(29)

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where

$$T_{1} = \frac{\left[2\overline{K} \cos q \boldsymbol{l} \cdot (D e^{iq \boldsymbol{l}} + G e^{-iq \boldsymbol{l}})\right]}{\left[2L \cos \beta \boldsymbol{l} - (E e^{i\beta \boldsymbol{l}} + F e^{-i\beta \boldsymbol{l}})\right]}$$
(30)

$$T_{2} = \frac{\left[2 \ i\overline{K} \ \sin q\ell - (D \ e^{iq\ell} - G \ e^{-iq\ell})\right]}{\left[2 \ iL \ \sin \beta\ell - (E \ e^{i\beta\ell} - F \ e^{-i\beta\ell})\right]}$$
(31)

The current thus correctly goes to zero for $q = \pm \beta$.

The vector potential in the far field is then given by

$$\vec{A}(\vec{X}) \cong \frac{1}{c} \quad \frac{e^{i\beta r}}{r} \left(\int_{-\ell}^{\ell} I(z') e^{iq'z'} dz' \right) \vec{k}$$
(32)

where \vec{k} is the unit vector in the z direction and $q' = \beta \cos \theta'$, with θ' the received angle.

The far field scattered \vec{E} (from Maxwell's equation) is written as

$$\vec{E} = \frac{i}{\beta} \vec{\nabla} \times \vec{\nabla} \times \vec{A} \cong \frac{i\beta}{c} \frac{e^{i\beta r}}{r} \sin \theta' \int_{-l}^{l} I(z') e^{iq'z'} dz'$$
(33)

Assume that the monostatic cross section is desired and that the polarization angle of the detector is the same as that of the transmitter. The scattered field detected is then

$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{-\mathbf{E}_{0} \mathbf{e}^{i\beta\mathbf{r}}}{\beta\mathbf{r}\mathbf{\bar{K}}} \cos^{2}\phi \left[\frac{\sin 2q\boldsymbol{\ell}}{\cos\theta} - [\mathbf{T}_{1} + \mathbf{T}_{2}]\frac{\sin(\beta + q)\boldsymbol{\ell}}{1 + \cos\theta} - [\mathbf{T}_{1} - \mathbf{T}_{2}]\frac{\sin(\beta - q)\boldsymbol{\ell}}{1 - \cos\theta}\right]$$
(34)

The RCS of the wire is defined as

$$r(\theta, \phi) = \frac{4\pi r^2 E^2}{E_0^2} = \frac{\lambda^2 \cos^4 \phi}{\pi \overline{K} \, \overline{K}^*} E_1 E_1^*$$
(35)

where E_1 is the quantity in brackets in Eq. (34).

III. COMPARISON OF RESULTS

The expressions given in the previous section have been programmed, and calculations have been performed for the cases listed in Table 1.

		Folarization ^a			
Case No.	Wavelength, m	Transmitted	Received	βa	β1
i	1.00	Linear	Linear	3.14×10^{-2}	1.415
2	0.227	Circular	Circular	4.2×10^{-3}	4.44
3	1.00	Circular	Circular	3.95×10^{-2}	17
4	0.69	Linear	Linear	9.1×10^{-3}	34.6
5	0.02	Linear	Linear	4.78×10^{-2}	157
	h_=				L

Table 1. Thin Wire Parameters

^{*}Circular transmitted and received RCS are 6 dB lower than linear transmitted and received RCS.

When these calculations are compared with data generated by the BRACT computer program (Ref. 1) for the same cases (Figs. 2 through 6), it is seen that the general Van Vleck calculations are nearly identical to those of BRACT. There is, however, a difference of at most 2 dB in the maximum RCS in the lobes between end-on (0 deg) and broadside (90 deg) for the $\beta l = 17$ and 157 cases. Further, the nulls for the general Van Vleck theory are much deeper than for BRACT for the larger kl values. A comparison of the general and approximate Van Vleck theories is presented in Figs. 7 through 11. Here it is seen that, except for end-on, the results are almost identical to those of Figs. 2 through 6. Note that the approximate



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Fig. 2. Generalized Van Vleck versus SDT Results; Monostatic Cross Section of a Dipole, Linear Polarization



Fig. 3. Generalized Val. Vleck versus SDT Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Circular Polarization, $2\ell/\chi = 1.4097$



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Fig. 4. Generalized Van Vleck versus SDT Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Circular Polarization, $2\ell/\lambda = 5.4113$



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Fig. 5. Generalized Van Vleck versus SDT Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Linear Polarization, $2\ell/\lambda = 11.0145$



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Fig. 7. Original Van Vleck versus Generalized Van Vleck Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Dipole, Linear Polarization

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Fig. 8. Original Van Vleck verbus Generalized Van Vleck Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Circular Polarization, $2\ell/\lambda = 1.4097$



Fig. 9. Original Van Vleek versus Generalized Van Vleek Sesults: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Circular Folarization, 21/5 5.4115

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Fig. 10. Original Van Vleck versus Generalized Var Vleck Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Linear Polarization, $2\ell/\lambda = 11.0145$



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Van Vleck theory agrees better with BRACT (Fig. 12) than does the general theory except for end-on incidence for larger βt values. This is seen by comparing Figs. 6 and 12. For the purpose of comparison, Ufimtsev's equations have been programmed and used to calculate the RCS of the thin wire cases given in Table 1. These calculations are presented, with the BRACT calculations, in Figs. 13 through 17. It is seen that the agreement with BRACT is not as good as the agreement between the general Van Vleck and the BRACT results for $\beta t < 35$; for these larger βt values, results obtained using Ufimtsev's equations generally agree more closely with BRACT than do the general theory results, expecially in the RCS nulls.



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Fig. 13. Ufimtsev versus SDT Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Dipole, Linear Polarization

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Fig. 14. Ufimtsev versus SDT Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Circular Polarization, $2\ell/\lambda = 1.4097$

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Fig. 15. Ufimtsev versus SDT Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Circular Polarization, $2\ell/\lambda = 5.4113$



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Fig. 16. Ufimtsev versus CPT Results: Monostatic Cross Section of a Wire, Linear Polarization, $2\ell/\lambda = 11.0145$



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IV. DISCUSSION

In this paper, the theory of Van Vleck, et al., has been reexamined in some detail to determine if the general results, without the approximations, are applicable for all angles of incidence. It has been found that up to $\beta I = 157$, the general theory agrees very well with the RCS results calculated by the BRACT computer program. At the largest βI value considered ($\beta I = 157$), the difference is less than 2 dB at the RCS maxima, though it is considerably larger at the nulls. The disagreement is smaller at the maxima for thinner wires. Calculations have been performed to verify these findings. When results obtained using the approximate and the general Van Vleck theories are compared, it is found that differences occur that cannot be accounted for by the neglect of angular dependence in the K, G', G'', H', and H'' terms of Van Vleck, et al. These further differences are due to the "small" terms dropped from the G', G'', H', and H'' expressions and not to the use of the asymptotic expressions for the Cin and Si functions. The correct expressions with these terms are

$$2\mathbf{G}' = \frac{\psi(\beta l) \left(1 - \frac{\pi}{2} \mathbf{F}''\right) - \frac{\pi}{2} \mathbf{F}' \Xi (\beta l)}{\psi^2 (\beta l) + \Xi^2 (\beta l)}$$
(36)

$$= \frac{\Xi \left(\beta l\right) \left(1 - \frac{\pi}{2} F''\right) + \frac{\pi}{2} F' \psi(\beta l)}{\psi^2 (\beta l) + \Xi^2 (\beta l)}$$
(37)

$$2H' = \frac{\psi\left(\beta l - \frac{\pi}{2}\right)\left(1 - \frac{\pi}{2}F''\right) - \frac{\pi}{2}F' \equiv \left(\beta l - \frac{\pi}{2}\right)}{\psi^2\left(\beta l - \frac{\pi}{2}\right) + \Xi^2\left(\beta l - \frac{\pi}{2}\right)}$$

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