

After Action Report for CWC Vietnam game 'Operation Cedar Falls' on 12/27/08

Hey, it has been a while since I put up an 'After Action Report' (AAR) for a miniature game. Well, I finally got in a game and also had my camera. So grab an icy cold one, crank up the soundtrack to "Platoon" or "Tropic Thunder" and enjoy the report!

Basic general gaming information and over view:

The game was run at B&B Games in Eureka, MO, on 12/27/08. While B&B Games is not a miniature gaming store (it specializes in card games and multi-player on-line games), the owner is extremely nice and has allowed us and other miniature gamers to use a part of us store for running games. THANK YOU, B&B GAMES!!!! (http://bandbgameshop.com/)

This was the second Vietnam game that Combatcolours and I have done using the 'Cold War Commander' rules. The first game was many, many, many months ago and it was more of an experiment to try out the rules and see how things would work with the different rules from 'Blitzkrieg Commander'. Afterwards, we realized that we may have mis-understood some rules, but overall this game ran pretty smooth for understanding the rules. One thing that we both agreed upon prior to the game was that the VC Breakpoint would be done for a normal battle group, instead of that for guerrilla battle groups as his forces were all Main Force Viet Cong. There are things that we will discuss about for the rules later, but overall, we are very happy with the system.

The table and terrain was laid out and own by Combatcolours, but the three Vietnamese buildings were mine from Time Cast. Combatcolours hand made the roads, rice paddies, and the Viet Cong (VC)'s trenches which shown up later in the game. The colorful hidden markers or blinds that look like a VC flag were made by me and are smaller than the one that is pictured in one of my previous post. I have also made smaller versions of the hidden markers and will probably use them in the next 'Nam game.

The miniatures are both Combatcolours and mine. Combatcolours provided all of the VC stands for the game. They were all painted and landscaped by him. Combatcolours also provided the 4 UH-1 Huey "Slicks" which are the pre-painted Furuta Choco Egg collectibles, as I don't have any helicopters finished yet. The US Army stands are mine. All of the figures are from either the 10mm Pendraken or Minifigs Vietnam Wars lines, unless noted later in the blog.

The rules used, as mention earlier are 'Cold War Commander' (CWC) and are a very playable set. We were using the "Search and Destroy" scenario from the rules. The game was inspired by 'Operation Cedar Falls' in January, 1967. The US Army was 2000 pts and the VC had 1000 pts. Each stand equals one vehicle or one squad.

While we never designated North or South for table orientation, for the purpose of this AAR, the road edge the US forces coming in on will be the East edge. That means in the pictures, the village is to the west of the US entry side, the rice paddies are west of the village and the LZ is northeast of the village.



The game table with the South edge being on the left and North on the right side of the picture.



The game table looking from the opposite direction

The darker green areas with the tall palm trees are jungle with high canopies where the helicopters could not land or take off if their flight path was perpendicular to the terrain.

Operation Orders – US Army:



The US Army Players: Sapper Joe, Gunslinger, and Red

1st Infantry Division's commanding officer has decided to launch a battalion size search and destroy operation of a village of Long Bien Dein (fictional). Battalion (BN) has made arrangements for mobilizing the various companies for this operation, as well as providing engineer, artillery, and close air support assets. Due to the reduced manpower strength of the various line companies, the weapons platoons were broken up to bring the line platoons to strength.

Alpha Company (A Co.) will be air lifted to the valley just north of the village and create a blocking screen to prevent the Viet Cong (VC) from escaping from the village. (This company is off board and not part of the game.)

Bravo Company (B Co.) will be air lifted to secure a flank of the village and move in to engage in the search and destroy operation. One platoon will be flown in on UH-1s to secure the Landing Zone (LZ). The remainder of the company will be air lifted in on CH-47s after the LZ has been secured. Attached to the company will be Scout Dog team for locating VC formations.

Charlie Company (C Co.) will be ground mobile with one platoon mounted in M113s and the remaining two platoons mounted in 2-1/2 ton trucks. The BN CO will be with this mobile column, as well as the engineering assets.

Delta Company (D Co.) will remain at base camp to provide base security for the artillery command. (This company will not be in the game, but the base camp is where the off-board artillery is located.)

Engineering assets will include one squad of engineers with a M113 and one M132 flamethrower.

Artillery assets will include one battery of two sections of 105mm howitzers.

Close Air Support assets will be provided by an UH-1 gunship.

Commander's Intent (Victory objectives): The Primary objective is to break the VC force and route them out of the village (VC Battle group must fail their Break Point roll); failing that, Division expects that the BN will be able to have high body count to show that victory is certain (Inflict 25% or more stands lost of the VC Battle group.)

Break down of fixed formations for the game:

BN CO – 1 (Battle group's Break Point is 13)

B Co.: 1st Plt - HQ-1, Infantry -3; 2nd Plt - HQ-1, Infantry -4; 3rd Plt - HQ-1, Infantry -4; also available are 1 Scout infantry (Dog team) Recce and 1 LAW upgrade. (Please note that 1st Plt is one infantry short compared to the others.)

B Co's Airlift: UH-1N – 4; CH-47D – 2; Air Assault Assets – 4 (Note: in this game, the cargo capacities for these helicopters are halved for what is stated in the CWC's stats. It just makes more sense for the numbers.)

C Co.: 1st Plt - HQ-1, Infantry -4; 2nd Plt - HQ-1, Infantry -4; 3rd Plt - HQ-1, Infantry -4; also available is 1 LAW upgrade.

C Co's transportation: M113's – 4, 2-1/2 ton trucks – 4 (Note: in this game, the cargo capacities for the M113's are halved for what is stated in the CWC's stats. It just makes more sense for the numbers.)

Engineer Asset: Combat Engineer - 1; M113 - 1; M132 Flamethrower - 1

Artillery Asset: 105mm Howitzer (towed) – 2

Close Air Support Asset: UH-1D gunship – 1

Total points: 2015 points

Orders from the 165th Regiment – Viet Cong:



The Viet Cong Players: Timmy!, and Combatcolours

With fortune, we were able to be made aware of a large American offensive against our District. We have moved and hidden our heavy weapons and supplies caches, but we must show some fight against the imperialistic Americans. As such, your under strength battalion has been selected to give a fight to the Americans. Remember our teachings of guerrilla warfare, “The guerrilla wins if he does not lose.” (Major Victory: if the VC inflicts twice or more casualties than taken; Minor Victory: if the VC inflicts more casualties than taken.)

VC Battle group:

CO – 1 (Battle group’s Break Point is 6)

HQ’s – 2

Main Force VC – 12

Sniper – 1

RPG upgrades – 6

Anti-personal booby traps – 6

Anti-tank booby traps – 3

Trenches – 9

Total points: 1000 points

Turn 1 of 12:

The BN Commander, (me... 'Sapper Joe'), decided that Bravo Company's commander (Pat C., 'Gunslinger') would make the final decision on where he was going to designate his Landing Zone (LZ) and I would decide from what route would be the best for the Charlie Company (Mike D., 'Red') and the engineering assets to move in and secure the village and still be able to provide support to Bravo Co. if needed.

'Gunslinger' used his 1st Platoon with the Dog Scout section and landed just northeast of the village. As he had pre-coordinated the landings with the Light Helicopter Company, there was no scattering of this command (Air Assault Assets per CWC). Gunslinger order the platoon to advance towards the woods to his west as there were expected VC forces in there (the hidden counters).



[Gunslinger's ride](#)

Mean while, 'Red' drove in Charlie Company's 1st Platoon in the attached M113's down the road from the Assembly Area. Prior to entering the Area of Operations (AO), 'Red' instructed the platoon to drive off the road and parallel just off the road. So far, no fire from the Viet Cong had occurred. The BN Commander, 'Sapper Joe', decide to wait until more elements of Charlie Company was in the AO, prior to bring up the engineering assets as well as the BN's M577.



Timmy! is pondering if he should defect and become a Kit Carson Scout.

Turn 2 of 12:

Gunslinger decided that better bring in the rest of Bravo Co., so the 1st Platoon's leader calls in the 2nd Platoon to land in the same location that the 1st Platoon did. While this platoon was to be flown in on a Chinook, due to some engine failures (ie., the models were not finished in time for the game) the platoon was flown in on Huey 'Slicks'. The 'Slicks' were off a little bit, but still were able to land where they were needed. 2nd Platoon was on the ground and they were to start moving to the woods to the west.



Ride of the Valkyries

Back with 'Red', Charlie Company's 1st Platoon was order to move farther down parallel road. Closing on an expected enemy position, 'Red' ordered them to dismount from their tracks. Suddenly, an anti-personal mine booby trap exploded on the 2nd squad near where they

dismounted the M113 and wounding a man. As 'Red' radioed orders to advance on the VC's position, confusion from the explosion caused a major blunder of cross fire from the M113's .50cal machine guns and rifle and grenade fire from 3rd and 1st squad that 2nd squad was riddled to pieces from the friendly fire. While the other squads also took some wounds, 2nd squad had several dead and the rest wounded so that they had to be pull out of the line. (This was an ugly command blunder roll!) The Americans now have one stand towards their Breakpoint.



A beginning to a bad day for 2nd squad.

However as bad as that was, 'Red' gained control and the rest of Charlie Company's 2nd and 3rd Platoons came on and dismounted from their trucks.

Break Point: US 1/13 – VC 0/6

Turn 3 of 12:

Again, 'Gunslinger' decided to risk bring in the 3rd Platoon as well and had them in the same location. There was a slight deviation, but again they had an uneventful landing. 3rd Platoon moved out to scout out the expected VC position in the woods to the east the LZ.

As 1st Platoon moved in through the woods, there was an explosion and the report of AK-47 fire...the Viet Cong finally came out to fight! 1st Platoon counterattack with deadly return fire and destroyed the VC squad. The 1st Platoon advanced a little more cautiously after that.



Another booby trap and finally a confirmed sighting of the VC!

To the south and east of the LZ, Charlie Company pushed on. The expected VC position near the booby trap that led to the 2nd squad's combat ineffectiveness, turned out to be an old campsite and nothing of any real interest was found. So 'Red' pushed the M113's forward, but the 2nd and 3rd Platoons made no head way towards the village as rumors of the bloody friendly fire incident caught their attention.

The BN command and the engineering assets entered the AO and were bottled necked by the 2nd and 3rd Platoons milling around.



The end of Turn Three

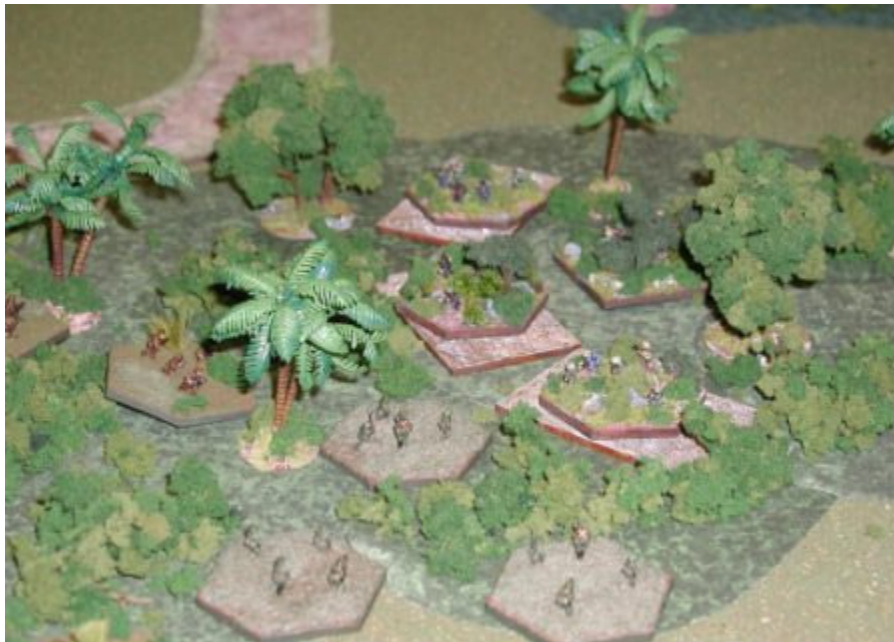
Break Point: US 1/13 – VC 1/6

Turn 4 of 12:

Bravo Company continued to fan out from the LZ and ran into VC on both sides of the LZ! Worst yet was that they were entrenched and waiting for a fight! For the next several turns Bravo Company found itself in a serious firefight and just could not get any where.



Entrenched Viet Cong!



More entrenched Viet Cong!

Charlie Company was rather slow in advancing to the village. It appears the men were rather reluctant to take commands after the friendly fire incident. This also went on for a couple of turns of poor command dice rolling for 'Red'.

Break Point: US 1/13 – VC 1/6

Turn 5 of 12:

While Bravo Company slugged it out with the entrenched VC and Charlie Company moved forward slowly, the actual results were very little. The only major thing was that the VC in the village decided to finally fight and started shooting at soldiers from 3rd Platoon as well as a VC sniper took a couple of crack shots at the US forces. An anti-tank booby trap exploded near the M132, but it only angered the engineers.

Break Point: US 1/13 – VC 1/6

Turn 6 of 12:

The Winds of Fortune started to blow in favor of the US Army! The VC in the village were holed up in one building and in some trenches under the buildings raised platforms. But this is a little too late as two of the three buildings in the village have already been secured by the Army. The combat engineer squad dismounts and secures the northeast hootch and prepares to flush the VC out of the village.



Viet Cong decided to fight for the village (with an unfinished combat engineer stand moving into the hootch.)

While things are looking good in the village, again 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company just can't break the VC's positions. While they are delivering massive firepower, they just can't seem to do enough to make a real difference. On the other side of the LZ, 1st and 2nd Platoon can't seem to crack the VC positions either.



3rd Platoon, Bravo Company is giving better than they got, but still can't crack the VC

Break Point: US 1/13 – VC 1/6

Turn 7 of 12:

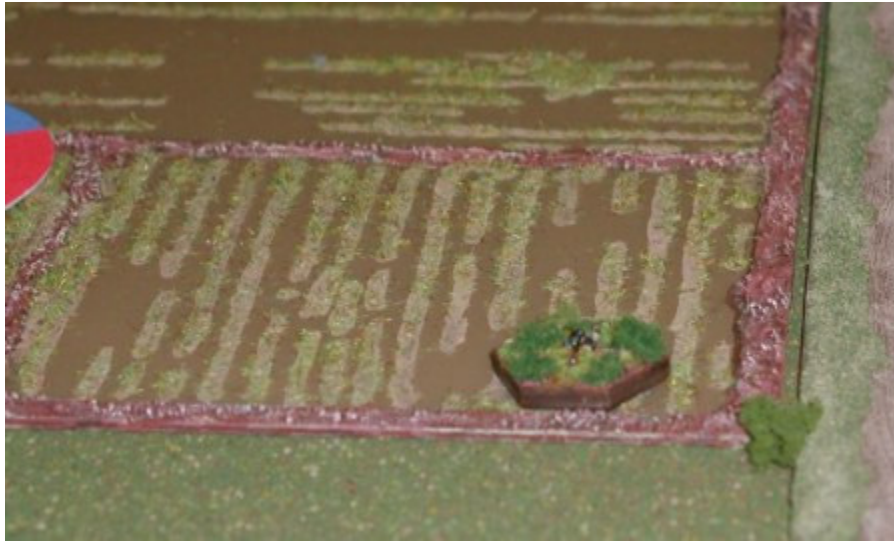
“Victory is ours!” cried the BN commander after receiving the reports from Bravo Company’s firefight and the combat engineer squad in the village.

In Bravo’s firefight, 2nd Platoon was finally able to suppress the eastern flank VC squad and overrun the position. With combined rifle and grenade fire from the 1st and 2nd Platoons, the center trench collapses and exposing the VC’s command center. They VC commander and the political officer escaped to hide with the remaining VC squad in what is left of that trench line.



1st and 2nd Platoons finally start rolling up the VC positions

The M113's from Charlie Company laid down a deadly barrage of machine gun fire on the VC squad in the trench in the village. This fire was very successful in inflicting hits and suppressing the VC squad. The combat engineer squad, being supported by their M113, close assaulted the VC trench works after taking some fire from the other two VC squads. With satchel charges and bayonets, the engineers made short work of the VC squad and seized the trenches. The VC squads realized that they were doomed and made a run for it into the rice paddies.



The lone sniper, Long Poo, rushes forward to cover the retreating VC squads from the village.



Viet Cong trying to escape the US Army

Break Point: US 1/13 – VC 4/6

Turn 8 of 12:

Bravo Company was still trying to crack the VC to the east of the LZ and was not getting anywhere. The remaining VC squad to the west of the LZ was still holding out.

Back in the village, two of the M113's moved across the north/south road and another anti-tank booby trap went off, but no damage was done.

The M132 was order to move up and flame the VC squads as they flee in the rice paddies. It made short work of them.



The village is secured

With the VC finally reach their breakpoint, Timmy! was given the honors of rolling to see if they broke and ran or stand and try to make an orderly escape...for those not familiar with Timmy!'s dice rolling...the FOW's Soviet dice seems to really, really hate him (see my blog entry on 3/18/08 about Timmy!'s past experiences with the Soviet dice). That is why I had to include this next picture!



The Soviet dice stays true to their feelings towards Timmy! as he rolled for the VC's breakpoint.

Finally, I am including some pictures of Combatcolours' Viet Cong stands...beautiful, are they not?



The Viet Cong CO stand next to a relic from the war with the French



One of the Viet Cong's Headquarters



One of the Main Force VC's stands



Some more of Combatcolours' Viet Cong Main Force stands