

The weather couldn't have been

more appropriate for opening registration day of NJ-NAM 2007. With temperatures reaching into the high 90's, the oppressive humidity was a perfect replication of Vietnam's tropical climate. In Williamstown, New Jersey, at the Cross Keys airfield, over 1,000 American and Viet Cong players registered to spend a weekend recreating the tensions and challenges of the Tet Offensive in a 26-hour scenario game.

The G.I. militia and the VC. guerillas had plenty of available space in which to bivouac; there were over 500 acres that comprised the field, campsite, airstrip, and parachute-landing site. The expansive, level, grassy field lent itself beautifully to the needs of those camping out through the weekend. Overhead, Free Fall Adventure skydiving students entertained spectators with their graceful falls earthward as they landed under billowing chutes in the open clearing midway between the runway and the campgrounds.

The Viet Cong insurgents and American grunts were to face off the following morning, after a sweltering evening of securing campsites and accommodations. It was well into registration night that the temperatures finally seemed to break and, along with it, came a collective relief sighed by the players wilting under the day's brutal heat and humidity.

As night settled in, American Team Commander, Daniel Alamo, aka;

time by gathering, en mass, at their team-specified insertion points.

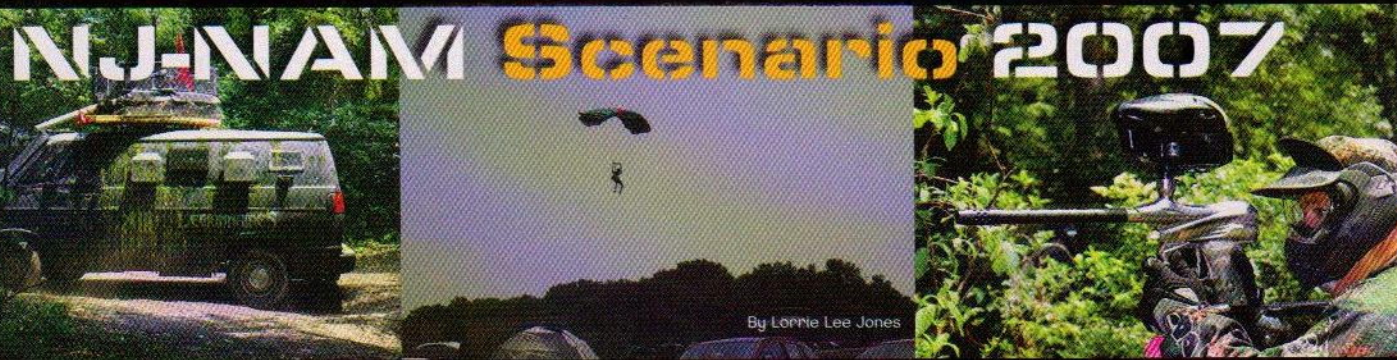
There was no telling how the day would play out, as both teams were squared off in even numbers of players and armaments; including a noteworthy showing of tank firepower. All in all, over 79 teams registered for the 2-day scenario.

"It was a very evenly matched number of people for both sides, about 500 per team," states Chuck. "In terms of artillery and manpower, I had no call to interfere and influence one side or the other like I've had to do in other games. It couldn't have been more perfectly balanced."

For the Americans, Tri-State Special Ops Command, had specific orders to engage in running troops consistently throughout the game, and supplying manpower to deliver a constant push against the VC, and making good use of their collective militia experience.

Blues Crew managed a strong presence on the American side, offering a resurgence of energy when the troops' spirits waned and inserting aid when the VC. was overriding their ground. Their drive and support placed immeasurable stress on the VC.

The Reservoir Dogs had a strong positioning with the Americans to keep the VC. From gaining any real estate, and they used their tank efficiently



"Barney," of RT Raiders, along with Brian Reph of Ambush Alpha serving as his Executive Officer, briefed the Americans of their battlefield expectations. Likewise, Viet Cong Team Commander Doug Decker of the Red Raiders, along with Scott Schreck, aka; "Shanghai," of the Dead Ringers serving as his Executive Officer, met under the stars to discuss their initiatives for the upcoming day.

"I tell you," Chuck Stone of Pyro Paintball Productions, the co-organizer with partner Jim Raymond, of NJ-NAM 2007 says, "I couldn't have asked for better people to command these two teams. They were above reproach and showed a lot of class in recruiting, controlling and executing their duties. They were stellar in involving new players and their primary focus was on making sure everyone was having a good time rather than just winning. We certainly picked the right people. They were stars."

Later that night a cooling rain shower fell upon the campsite and it seemed to sooth temperaments among the campers and restore their energies and concentrations for the next day's requirements. It was going to be another hot day when the games officially opened on the morrow, and playing under such intemperate conditions would place incredible demands on the player's physical and psychological constitutions.

Saturday morning broke with the predicted temperatures already climbing well into the 80's. Players were up early and prepared for action; breaking fast, putting on their gear, adjusting their equipment and chronicing their markers to the field-specified 270 fps. While skydivers landed in the nearby field, the players anticipated the noontime starting

to flush out the enemy. Supplying manpower and tank backup, the team threw the VC's hold on American territory several times throughout the weekend.

The VC. had the unsurpassable aid of the Dead Ringers team and Knight Stalkers, whose drive and vivacity swung the battle to the communist's advantage more than once during the two-day conflict and gave them ground superiority. Their sustained drive proved a constant annoyance to the Americans.

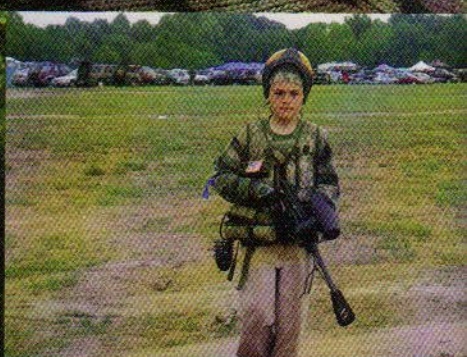
Team Prozac kept the heat on their US enemies, while team Psych Ward maintained an extraordinary resourcefulness in pinning the Americans at several field choke points.

The Old Man Militia showed the Americans exactly what they were made of, in terms of skill and knowledge, and their remarkable contribution to the successes of the VC's directive was without limits.

The site of the day's first skirmish took place on a major trail that intersected the route of forward guards from both parties. A few minutes into the game start, G.I.s and VC. were exchanging paint in an attempt to take control of the immediate area. With the path curving at a near 45-degree dogleg angle, precise clearance required players shift out from behind sheltered terrain into open territory for clear shots and, in effect, open themselves up to retaliatory fire.

Both sides fought valiantly; the exchange was harsh and rapid. The forest

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was peppered with the sounds of foliage absorbing excess paint splatter and with the cries of "Medic!" Players, wishing to reinsert themselves in the heat of action, were healed by their role-appointed team members and reengaged in the firefight. This was not an easy battle to walk away from. Unless a player ran out of paint or air, a majority chose to stay on and fight.

The VC. pressed hard, drawing out all the resistance that the Americans could muster: Being a first, early game, intensity was high and the battle's outcome weighed heavily on the minds of both teams. The Americans took the advantage and pushed the VC. back into their own bounds where retreat was the only alternative for the communist insurgents. Despite this setback, the VC. had a tenacity that was underestimated by their USA Foes; they came back en force to settle the score.

"The VC. had a strong control of the field," says Chuck. "On both days they gave the Americans a beating. But the Americans had the advantage

point-wise. They made good use of the Civilians (as represented by teams Dead by Dawn, Virginia Irregulars and Tyrell Corp.), and claimed most of their points in accomplished missions."

Two hours into the initial battle, the game was called to a halt owing to the stress of the day's heat having caught up with several players on both teams. A decision was made to take a break and give the game a 3-hour hiatus in consideration of the extreme temperatures, which, by now, were reaching into the mid-90s. The debilitating heat seemed all the worse under the strains of battle, especially under the layers of clothing and gear that players were wearing.

"I had no problems calling the game," says Chuck. "We couldn't live with ourselves if somebody got hurt out there on the field. If you're tucked-up and hidden in the brush somewhere and you happen to pass out from the heat, what's the chance you'll be found before too long?"

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The three on-site ambulances were kept busy hydrating players and providing a more temperate environment for those influenced by the heat exhaustion. Pyro Paintball also supplied cases of bottled water for the gamers. Most players came well prepared to play in such harsh conditions, however; the available water and medical attention proved invaluable for those who didn't.

After the sun had assumed a lower position in the sky and proved less tormenting to the players, the game was resumed. Refreshed from the respite, American and VC. players then headed back into the woods to settle their scores. At 10:00 pm, Team Commanders agreed to a cease-fire for the night. The day closed with no real clear-cut indication of which team was assured a victory.

Sunday morning arrived with a low-pressure front moving in. Players woke to cooler temperatures and the threat of rain in the forecast. Americans and VC. suited up early and headed back into their designated insertion points as a steel-gray sky loomed overhead.

Not far into the skirmish, the Americans were met with a surprise. Despite all the American's counter-attack efforts, the Viet Cong managed to push them back into their own territory and hold them steady. For several agonizing hours, the Americans were rendered immobile by the VC's successive attacks, and they found themselves unable to move beyond their own reinsertion point.

As a slow rain started to fall, the Americans commenced to muster up their forces. By midday, the Americans seemed to find their collective power and began pushing back hard against the Viet Cong. With consistent pressure, the Americans managed to regain their base and swung the pendulum in the opposite direction; the Viet Cong were now forced into retreating and defending their own base.

Sunday illustrated just how closely matched these teams were. For hours the Americans were placed on the defensive, and then alternatively they made a strong comeback on the offensive. In the morning, the Viet Cong held the Americans at bay until the latter part of the day when their offense crumbled and they were compelled to fall back to hold their base. By the time the games closed, both sides had uniformly won, and then lost, their possession of the field. Attack and guard strengths for opposing teams were mutually impressive.

Under a constant rainfall, the closing ceremonies of the 26-hour scenario recognized the valiancy of both the Americans and the Viet Cong. The overall victory for the 26-hour scenario went to the Viet Cong by a slim margin of only 50 points. Prizes and awards, contributed by Kee Action Sports, USMilitaryGear.com, FireFox, Dye, Techt Paintball, American Paintball Supply, Smart Parts, CrossFire Paintball, MI Paintball, STC Sports, Kingdom Paintball and DSP, were distributed to players.

Considering the objectives Pyro Paintball faced in securing and preparing the grounds, passing last minute surprise inspections, facing FAA regulators, controlling and organizing a game of this proportion, the weekend came off a complete success. As both the Viet Cong and the American teams proved at NJ-NAM 2007, optimism in the face of adversity is your best strategy.

So what do Chuck Stone and Jim Raymond at Pyro Paintball have planned for NJ-NAM 2008?

"It will be one of the best produced games the industry has ever seen," states Chuck with conviction. "I give my heart and soul to these players and events."