

Woodcutter Bait?

The Setup

The mission starts at 1700 hours with clear skies and good weather. The enemy activity in the area is low but their posture has been aggressive. The battleground was arranged as shown below.



View of the table from the south. 1st Squad is inserted SW corner (lower left) of the table. A huey gunship is located in the NE corner of the table.

Background Story

Corporal Anthony Smith is sitting aboard his slick in bound to assist in the mop up operations of an earlier mission completed by his company, Echo Company. The rest of his platoon is ahead of him and almost to the company's LZ. Corporal Smith is the squad leader of 1st squad of the 2nd platoon. His squad is pretty green with a few cherries but he'll have to work with what he has. He's listening to the radio traffic on the spare headset in the helo when something catches his ear.

“To any loaded slicks in the area this is 'El Torro' we have civilians in a free fire zone that might need to be checked out and we are heading back to base for rearming.” Corporal Smith wonders why the civilians are in a free fire zone but it doesn't surprise him. He listens to the radio traffic between Echo Company's commander and his platoon leader. Then it's decided that since 1st Squad is last in the flight line they will be diverted to check out and possibly snatch these civilians for questioning.



El Torro watches the woodcutters suspiciously.

Turn 1

US - 4 / VC - 6

Corporal Smith lands in the LZ, picked by the slick pilots, in the lead Huey with the rest of his squad in the second bird behind them. As the squad unloads from their slicks and hit the ground they stay to check out the surroundings. Specialist James Murphy who was on the second slick decides it's better to get to some cover and heads for a nearby termite mound but only makes it part way there. Private Markus Wexler and Private Sebastian Griffiths, the squad's radio operator also run from the first slick to the nearest cover which is a section of scrub brush. While 1st Squad is inserted 'El Torro' hovers around the woodcutters to watch their movement.



1st Squad taking cover

Turn 2

US - 1 / VC - 5



VC exiting tunnel behind 'El Torro'.

'El Torro' slowly circles the woodcutters who seem to be ignoring the gunship. The rest of 1st Squad follows their squad mates idea and start heading for cover also. The men from the 1st slick head for the scrub brush while the men from the 2nd chopper head for some termite mounds. As 'El Torro' starts circling again two VC who were watching the enemy gunship from a tunnel opening pop out of the tunnel now that 'El Torro's back is to them. The VC platoon leader who has been hiding in an abandoned hootch sees 1st Squad landing but pass 0d6 on his In Sight test.

Turn 3

US – 6 / VC – 2

'El Torro' goes back into a hover and continues it's watching of the woodcutters, who seem to care less that they are being watched, and 1st Squad stops to check out the scenery. The VC NCO and VC Runner decide that they need to get out of the hootch and get some distance from 1st Squad who was closing in on their position. The VC medic in the hootch decides he'll take position in the hootch doorway and waits for the enemy readying his pistol. Meanwhile the VC platoon leader takes aim at the three closest Americans with his Thompson and fires a burst at them. Private Adalrico Olivares, carrying the squad's M60 is hit in the stomach and knocked down. Luckily for him the round hit some of his gear and he's not hurt just stunned. Specialist Murphy takes a grazing wound to the left thigh and goes down also. The woodcutters hear the gunfire and decide maybe it's time to get out of the area but don't run being afraid that the enemy gunship would tear them to pieces. Seven more VC emerge from the hidden tunnel from behind 'El Torro'. One of the VC has a RPG and sees



An easy shot for the VC?

his opportunity to do great harm to the enemy invaders and fires at 'El Torro's' rear. He fires but the rocket barely misses it's target. The pilot of 'El Torro' sees the smoke trail of the RPG round fly past his side window and decides since they don't have any ammo that he will get the hell out of Dodge.

Turn 4

US – 5 / VC – 5

1st Squad is shocked at the luck of the crew of 'El Torro' but don't take it's leaving the area very encouragingly and look at each other like they are confused on what to do. The VC medic continues to hold his fire waiting for the enemy to get closer. The two VC that exited the tunnel first Fast Move towards the woodcutters area. The other VC squad groan at the near miss of a prime opportunity to destroy an American helicopter but are glad it's leaving.

Turn 5

US – 3 / VC – 4

Private Olivares and Specialist Murphy get back up and continue towards the termite mound to take cover with Specialist Joshua Dixon. All three men fire their weapons at the hootch window where the gunfire came from. Corporal Bill Shuster, the squad's assistant leader, Fast Moves to a termite mound that's closer to the hootch. Private Olivares fires his M60 at the window and two rounds snap near the VC platoon leaders head. Specialist Murphy and Specialist Dixon fire their M16's at the window also

but miss. The rest of squad moves to cover. Private Wexler who has taken cover behind a tree by the scrub brush fires his M16 at the hootch also striking the hootch wall missing his target. The VC platoon leader panics at all the incoming fire and decides to Runaway. The VC medic continues to hide in the hootch waiting for his opportunity. The VC runner freezes just around the corner of the hootch at the sound of the volume of gunfire while the VC NCO takes cover behind a garden fence but can't fire because the VC Platoon leader is in the way.



Move you idiot!!!

Turn 6

US - 3 / VC -4

Corporal Shuster sees the VC platoon leader running out of the hootch and fires his M16 but misses badly. Specialist Murphy Fast Moves towards Corporal Shuster to take the fight to the enemy and get a little payback. Private Olivares continues to fire his M60 at the hootch window to suppress any enemy inside and runs out of ammo. Specialist Dixon Fast Moves towards a gnarled tree while Private Chan Tien Fast Moves towards Private Olivares to take him more belts of ammo. The squad's medic, Specialist David Powell also decides to move and runs towards Olivares as well. The VC platoon leader continues to runaway from the fight while the VC runner hides around the corner of the hootch wall.. The VC medic finally gets his chance to fight the Americans and fires his pistol at Corporal Shuster but the round hits the top of the termite mound and causes dirt and sand to hit the Corporal in the face. Corporal Shuster Hunkers Down at the unexpected close call. The VC NCO finally has a clear shot with his M3 Grease Gun and fires at the Corporal also but his gun jams. One of the first two VC to exit the tunnel takes position in a hidden bunker by where the woodcutters were working and his partner is right behind him. The other group of VC from the tunnel seem confused on what is going on and don't move or react.

Turn 7

US – 4 / VC – 3

The VC medic takes aim again with his pistol this time at Specialist Murphy who is running to join Corporal Shuster. The medic fires hitting Murphy in the left hip putting him out of the fight. The VC runner also sees Murphy and fires his M3 Grease Gun but misses. The VC NCO is having trouble clearing his jammed weapon as the fight continues. Both VC to exit the tunnel first take positions in the hidden bunker in case the Americans decide to come their way. The other group of VC from the tunnel Fast Move up the rice paddy berm. Corporal Shuster is still hunkered down behind the termite mound watching Murphy roll on the ground in pain calling for a medic. Private Wexler runs from behind the tree he's behind towards the hootch and fires his M16 at the VC NCO but hits a fence post. The VC isn't phased and continues to work on his jammed weapon.



The VC squad decides to join the fight.

Turn 8

US – 5 / VC – 5

1st Squad stops what they are doing to gather themselves as well as most of the VC forces.

Turn 9

US – 4 / VC – 4

Private Wexler fires his M16 at the VC NCO again. His first round hits the VC in the left foot ripping his sandal off his foot and knocking him down. Private Griffiths yells at Corporal Smith to do something as he extends his arm with the radio handset. The determined VC NCO gets back up and continues working on his jammed gun.



Private Olivares view of the situation. Specialist Murphy lies wounded.

Turn 10

US – 2 / VC – 1

The VC runner sees Private Wexler running in the open and fires a burst from his M3 hitting the private in the left chest killing him instantly. The VC platoon leader flees the battlefield never to be seen again. The VC squad runs through the rice paddies to join their comrades in fighting the Americans. Specialist Dixon fires his M16 at the VC runner, who just killed Wexler, hitting the hootch wall. The runner returns fire but his M3 jams. Private Olivares fires his M60 at the VC medic in the hootch doorway and the VC runner but all rounds miss their target. Specialist Powell, the medic, runs into the open to treat Murphy and get him out of the open. Corporal Smith sees the VC squad running towards them in the rice paddies and calls for an artillery strike but is told to “Wait one.”



"Wait one? What the hell?"



Corporal Smith's view of inbound trouble.

Turn 11

US – 3 / VC – 6



Take that Chuck!

The VC stop what they are doing seeming confused on what to do next. Specialist Powell starts pulling Specialist Murphy from the killing zone so he can treat him. Private Olivares fires his M60 at the VC medic and runner again but his gun jams. Specialist Dixon decides it's time to neutralize the threat in the hootch and Fast Moves to the hootch window with a grenade readied. Corporal Smith and Private Griffiths try calling for artillery again and are told to prepare for a spotting round next turn. Specialist Dixon reaches the hootch and tosses his grenade

through the window. The VC medic doesn't have a chance and is killed instantly and violently. The blast catches the VC runner by surprise and he Hunkers Down around the corner of the hootch.

Turn 12

US – 2 / VC – 4

The artillery spotting round lands long and the VC in the rice paddies freeze at the incoming round. Specialist Dixon fires his M16 through the hootch window for good measure. Specialist Powell gets Murphy to cover and starts to tend his wound. Privates Olivares and Tien Fast Move towards Corporal Shuster while Corporal Smith and Private Griffiths make corrections to the spotting round, "Fire for effect!" The VC NCO finally has cleared his jammed M3 and fires at Olivares and Tien but all rounds miss. Private Tien is shaken by the incoming rounds and turns to go for cover to Hunker Down. Olivares returns fire with his M60 but misses.



Oh hell that can't be good.

Turn 13

US - 4 / VC - 4

US artillery screams overhead and impacts in the center of the VC squad in the rice paddy killing 4 VC and putting 2 out of the fight. Since the number of casualties are mounting and with the arrival of US artillery the VC decide to call off the fight and fight another day.



The deadly result of accurate artillery.

Turn 14

US – 1 / VC – 5

Private Olivares takes position next to Corporal Shuster behind a termite mound and fires his M60 at the fleeing VC runner hitting him twice. The VC falls to the ground dead with hits to the left shoulder and left side. Specialist Dixon peeks around the corner of the hootch to see the dust and debris settling in the rice paddy from the artillery round.

Conclusion

Corporal Smith calls for extraction and sends out men to recover weapons and possible intelligence material from the wounded and dead enemy. He looks over at the poncho with Private Markus Wexler's body and shakes his head. "Three weeks in country and this is how it ends." He says to himself.

Aftermath

VC KIA – 6

VC WIA – 2

US KIA – 1

US WIA – 1

The VC platoon leader ran away while the VC NCO and the 2 VC that were in the bunker escaped also. The woodcutters that caused the fight also escaped unharmed.



VC in the open!!! Easy shot.