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EVENT REVIEW: OPERATION STAR-BURST, 25APRIL09, CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Review by Capt. Sal Zuniga.

All photos courtesy of ODA204 and GUNZ 4 HIRE



Teams present: TAMUCC ROTC, ODA 204, ODA 956/Bad Co, Gunz4Hire, Rogue Militia, Parade of Scars, Sweeper Team, DefconAirsoft, Force Recon, Collateral Damage

OPN STARBURST

25 April 09, Oso Creek, South Texas

Background Scenario: US Forces had finally stopped enemy Karankawa Forces along the Oso Creek. In an effort to break the deadlock along the river, Karankawa Forces attempted a "Hail Mary" play with commandos crossing the creek at the far Eastern end of the front. US aerial assets spotted the commandos crossing and the US Ground Command immediately sent forces to stop the crossing. Thus the stage was set for one of Corpus Christi's largest Airsoft games to date.

Sixty players, ranging from individuals and ten organized Airsoft Teams, from all over South Texas came to participate in Operation STARBURST. The event was hosted by ODA 204/1st SFAOC and DEFCONAIRSOFT.COM both based out of Corpus Christi, TX, with the goal to bring all teams and interested airsofters to a large scale MILSIM event. Prior to STARBURST most of the teams had never played in such a large game. Players and organized clubs/teams were task organized into two forces, the US Forces and Karankawa Forces, which each side having a Force Commander and Squad Leaders. Organized clubs/teams were kept together with their Team Leader serving as the Squad Leader, and in some cases, like the Team Bad Company/ODA 956, were large enough to form a small Platoon on the US side with two squads. A large number of active duty and reserve military personnel attended for the first time and were impressed with the organization and knowledge level of the players and clubs. "The Organized clubs impressed me with their load-outs, kit, and assigned positions," stated Stephen Z, a member of the Texas Army National Guard, playing for the first time.

Scenario Setup and Rules: This game was played using 1st Special Forces Airsoft Command Rules con-

cerning medic ropes (or lifelines) and dead rags. If a player was hit, he stayed at the location where he (or she) was hit, calling for medical assistance, any player on their team could approach them and untie the five knots in the "wounded" player's lifeline and the "wounded" player was back in play, get hit again and the player had to head back to the nearest spawn point.



The spawn points were marked with a 3 foot stake with two colored cups, if one side controlled the spawn point, then their color cup would be stacked on top of the other team's colored cup. The spawn points were also the objectives for the scenario with the Karankawa Army having to defend each of their 3 river crossing sites. The US Forces started with one spawn point and had the ability to place an additional one anywhere on the field, but once placed, it remained there throughout the day.



Karankawa Forces defending an objective (stake with their colored cup)

The Scenario was divided into 3x45 minute battles, in between each battle, there was a 30 minute break so that the sides could adjust plans and strategies. Each battle would then pick up where the last fight left off, meaning if a team had lost an objective in the last battle, it remained lost at the beginning of the next fight. Throughout the day a raffle was conducted, and prizes like a DBOY M4 and tactical eye protection were given away. The playing field was large (1 Square Kilometer) and had numerous trenches, wood lines, and concrete structures in addition to the creek bed area that allowed for teams to effectively employ snipers, support weapons, and even a compressed air bazooka! "This was not going to be a simple fight, even before the scenario started, looking at the objectives this was going to be a well coordinated, tactical effort on the part of both teams," remarked ODA 204/1stSFAOC Operations SGT Leal.

The Initial Battle: The Karankawa Army had the initial field position (indicated in Red below), and was given 15 minutes to array their forces on the field. With 28 members, they had to contend with holding their objectives and be able to counterattack if the situation called for it.



Numerous trenches offered the Karankawa Forces good cover, but the dense brush caused a lack of coordination by any other means other than radio. When the battle started, K Forces gave ground and established a line that eventually was pushed back to the beachheads. Two US squads from Texas A&M Corpus Christi ROTC and South Texas Gunz 4 Hire attempted an end run on the flank in order to find the crossing sites but the Karankawa Forces moved elements to block the effort. This battled end at this point and both returned to the Assembly Area to adjust their plans and tactics. Both teams had maps with a grid system to help coordinate their plans, this no doubt added to the MILSIM event with teams being able to battle track and use designated recon teams. The Karankawa Recon Team initially seized the US mobile spawn point, but US forces were able to deal with the rear area threat. One player Redz stated, "This was the first time that I have actually been able to play as being part of an organized unit. It was a whole new experience; moving, attacking, and defending as a coordinated unit. The communication line seemed to be an extremely vital role in

the outcomes of each of the scenarios."

Assault on the Crossing Sites: The second 45 minute battle picked up where the first left off, the Karankawa Army attempted to draw the US Forces into a "V" shaped engagement zone, and initially were successful in causing losses, delaying the US assault. The Karankawa Forces used snipers and supporting weapons in good defensive positions to block US assaults.



Bad Company/ODA956 attacking Karankawa Positions



Example of a Karankawa Defense Position

The US squads then began to focus on the flanks of the K Force defense, causing the Karankawas to withdraw to the shoreline. Gunz4Hire acting as a Recon Element for the US Forces engaged a Karankawa Recon Element while it completed its infiltration mission to flank the Western crossing site. Bad Company/ODA 956 pushed through heavy contact in the center seizing the center crossing site, taking sniper and small arms fire from the area South of the crossing site. ODA 204 and TAMUCC ROTC after a long struggle with a sniper and a fortified Karankawa trench complex, succeeded in pushing through to the shoreline. The battle ended as all three of the crossing sites were under US control.



The last game had the roles reversed with the US Forces defending the crossing sites and the Karankawa Forces attacking, that battle ended with US Forces successfully defending the field, despite taking heavy casualties.

Conclusion: "Well all I can say I had a very good time at the most organized event, it was planned out better than some OP's up north," said E2 of Gunz4Hire. Being that this was the first large scale organized MILSIM event for South Texas Airsoft Players that sentiment was shared by a great many players. Players throughout the area are looking forward to the next operation. "I gotta say, it was great to finally meet other teams and everyone played a helluva game!" stated Ironman from DefconAirsoft. OPN Starburst achieved the goal of bringing the South Texas Airsoft Community together and grow the sport.

-SZ



US Force Cdr directs troops to move out to the left



TAMUCC ROTC Squad on the attack with Gunz4Hire on the moveOOA



Bad Company/OOA 956



204, ROTC, and Gunz4Hire discuss strategy for next battle



Gunz4Hire



STARBURST Game Brief



ODA 204/2d Grp/1stSFAOC, Event Organizers