

Carry, by Nathan Paoletta

Carry

By Nathan Paoletta
Hamsterprophet Productions
For the 2005 Iron Game Chef Competition
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Time Period: The Vietnam War (approx. 1968-1975, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos)
Ingredients: Accuser, Invincible and Companion
Rules Restrictions: There is no character sheet. All playable characters are fixed.
Chairman's Challenge: None

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Introduction

Son, why do you want to know about that old stuff? What happened in 'Nam stays in 'Nam.

Carry is a role playing game that explores the tensions among, and their psychological ramifications for, soldiers in the Vietnam War. It is not about the war or actual combat itself, except as a backdrop to the human drama created by a group of men forced together under some of the most stressful circumstances imaginable. Some inspirations for this game include the book The Things They Carried, by Tim O'Brien, and the movies Platoon and, to a lesser extent, Full Metal Jacket, and the game possesses the same slightly romanticized view of the war contained in these sources. The title of the game refers to O'Brien's book. The soldiers he wrote about all carried something meaningful in addition to their normal gear. Here, it also means the burdens and problems that the soldiers carry, as well as the need to carry each other through the conflict.

The requirements to play this game include: At least four players (the more the better), one of whom will be the Game Master (GM); a good amount of dice of 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 sides; a copy of these rules; and a willingness to take the subject matter seriously – **Carry** will not work as a light-hearted romp. **Carry** assumes some experience with roleplaying games in general, including a knowledge of common terms (like GM, scene, etc.)

All of the players other than the GM will take on the role of one soldier in a squad of U.S Marines serving in Vietnam. The squad consists of three fire teams, each of 4 soldiers and Corporal, as well as a Sergeant who leads the squad. There are a total of 16 characters to choose from. Over the course of the game, those characters that are not chosen by players will be whittled down, until only the player's characters are left. The game will then enter Endgame, putting each character to the test and determining their fate. The GM's job is to provide stressful situations for the characters that will test the limits of their ability to cope, as well as portray all characters not taken by the players.

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The Squad

Jerry, Doc, Gunner – those were the guys I got close to. I go put flowers on their graves every year.

There are no character sheets for **Carry**, and the only decision to make is which of sixteen members of the squad you want as your character. If two players want to play the same character, tough. Settle it amongst yourselves. Each character is presented with the following information:

Name: Their name, including their nickname/call sign.

Rank: Their rank. Whoever has the highest rank in any given Action scene is the ranking officer (see page 10). From lowest to highest, the rank order in the USMC goes like this: Private (Pvt), Private First Class (PFC), Lance Corporal (LCpl), Corporal (Cpl), Sergeant (Sgt). The highest ranked officer that you can choose to play in **Carry** is Sergeant.

Months In: The number of months he's been in 'Nam as part of this squad. Also the number of dice you get to begin the game, and whenever your Profile changes. Those that have been in the war longer are tougher and more effective, but more settled in to their Profile. Those who have been in a short amount of time are not as skilled, and are much more subject to abrupt psychological changes. Also, whether the soldier volunteered for the war or was drafted.

Vitals: Vital stats, including their ethnicity, weight, height, eye and hair color, and age.

Description: A very brief description of the character. Use this as a jumping off point for your Characterization. Keep in mind that change is expected in the jungles.

Starting Profile: The Profile that he starts with. Profiles are detailed in the next section (page 6).

Squad Leader

Name: Ramsey "Ram" Capello

Rank: Sergeant

Months In: 10. Volunteer.

Vitals: Italian. 5'7", 192 lbs. Brown hair and eyes. 32.

Description: Ram doesn't look like much until you see his eyes, but his hard, determined stare is enough to command respect from anyone. A career soldier, he doesn't take any shit, and takes his duties very seriously.

Starting Profile: Soldier

Fire Team Alpha (Snakes)

Name: David "Anaconda" Steinbeck

Rank: Corporal

Months In: 8. Volunteer.

Vitals: Caucasian. 5'10", 185 lbs. Brown hair, hazel eyes. 28.

Description: A lithe man, his call sign comes from his deceptively strong upper body. Anaconda is confident without being obnoxious, and probably the most popular non-com amongst the entire squad.

Starting Profile: Warrior

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Name: Elmo “Saint” Smith

Rank: Lance Corporal

Months In: 6. Draftee.

Vitals: Scandinavian. 6’1”, 198 lbs. Blue eyes, blonde hair. 23.

Description: Elmo is anything but a saint. He always manages to dig up the substances that soldiers aren’t supposed to have, which makes him popular amongst his comrades. He falls over himself to stay in line when someone in command is around, to keep out of trouble.

Starting Profile: Accuser

Name: Julien “Jewel” Abromowitz

Rank: Private

Months In: 4. Draftee.

Vitals: Jewish. 5’8”, 173 lbs. Brown hair and eyes. 19.

Description: Almost stereotypically Jewish looks give some of the others plenty of ammunition for “good-natured” ribbing. Julien doesn’t like it, but most of the time is too intimidated to speak up. He wants to get along with everyone, but has a hard time doing so, due to both external and internal obstacles.

Starting Profile: Soldier

Name: William “Big White” White

Rank: Private

Months In: 5. Draftee.

Vitals: African-American. 6’3”, 207 lbs. Brown eyes, shaved head. 25.

Description: A black man from Alabama, he knows what living in fear means. The leveling effect that Vietnam has on racism means that he gets along just fine with his squad, but it doesn’t mean that he takes it easy. He’s a very good soldier, and is respected for it.

Starting Profile: Invincible

Name: Shirley “Temple” Jenkins

Rank: Private

Months In: 3. Draftee.

Vitals: Caucasian. 5’7”, 155 lbs. Blue eyes, blonde hair. 19.

Description: The most recent recruit to the squad, he still looks and acts like a weedy college student, not a soldier. He doesn’t talk much and usually tries to get out of the way. He just wants to go home.

Starting Profile: Companion

Fire Team Bravo (Condors)

Name: Rocky “Raven” Alongi

Rank: Corporal

Months In: 7. Draftee.

Vitals: Italian. 5’10”, 206 lbs. Hazel eyes, shaved head. 28.

Description: Stocky and with a perpetual sneer, he oozes intimidation. He doesn’t talk about his past, but he had plenty of scars even before arriving in Vietnam.

Starting Profile: Brawler

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Name: Tommy “Skid” Bunting

Rank: Private First Class

Months In: 5. Volunteered.

Vitals: Caucasian. 6’1”, 169 lbs. Brown hair, blue eyes. 21.

Description: Young, but extremely confident, he doesn’t as much deal with his surroundings as ignore them. He always has something to say. Sometimes its right, but sometimes its dead wrong.

Starting Profile: Invincible

Name: Jared “Jesus” Trujillo

Rank: Private First Class

Months In: 6. Draftee.

Vitals: Latino. 5’11”, 183 lbs. Brown hair and eyes. 22.

Description: Jared gets his nickname from his shaggy hair and peaceful bearing. He doesn’t let very much rattle him, and seems a lot older than he is. He always has a kind word, even for the idiots in the squad.

Starting Profile: Warrior

Name: Willard “Coyote” Williamson

Rank: Private First Class

Months In: 4. Draftee.

Vitals: African-American. 6’, 180 lbs. Black hair, brown eyes. 23.

Description: Lanky and dreadlocked, Coyote’s nickname comes from his habit of howling when he gets excited. He has a lot of energy, most of it nervous, and can get on the others nerves fairly easily.

Starting Profile: Companion

Name: Wendell “Professor” Kettridge

Rank: Private

Months In: 6. Draftee.

Vitals: Irish. 6’3”, 226 lbs. Blue eyes, red hair. 23.

Description: His nickname come from his real name, not his big, stocky body – though he does wear glasses. Probably the most muscled man in the squad, he’s interested in little but telling dirty jokes, fighting, and staying alive.

Starting Profile: Brawler

Fire Team Charlie (Spartans)

Name: Daniel “Locker” Jones

Rank: Corporal

Months In: 9. Volunteer.

Vitals: Caucasian. 6’1”, 187 lbs. Black eyes, blonde hair. 27.

Description: One of the more outstanding members of the squad due to his ghoulish appearance, Locker is both an exemplary soldier and well educated. His ambition aims much higher than dying in some swamp in Vietnam.

Starting Profile: Accuser

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Name: Eddie “Cowboy” Riley

Rank: Lance Corporal

Months In: 4. Draftee.

Vitals: Caucasian. 5’9”, 191 lbs. Blue eyes, brown hair. 20.

Description: A farmhand from Texas, Eddie plays up his drawl and mannerisms just to stand out. He sees soldiering as an opportunity, not a dead-end, and his arrogance about it gets him into trouble more often than not.

Starting Profile: Brawler

Name: Ryan “Deadwood” Alder

Rank: Private First Class

Months In: 7. Volunteer.

Vitals: African-American. 5’9”, 170 lbs. Hazel eyes, brown hair. 19.

Description: An idealistic college student, his optimism is being steadily worn away by the harsh realities of the war. He tries to soldier on, but finds himself caring less and less about his own situation, let alone that of the other men.

Starting Profile: Soldier

Name: James “Bull” Toren

Rank: Private

Months In: 2. Draftee.

Vitals: Caucasian. 6’6”, 242 lbs. Brown eyes, shaved head. 25.

Description: The build of a bull and the brains to match give him his nick-name. While Vietnam is a better option for him than the meatpacking plants in Chicago, he still hates it, hates his own stupidity, and hates anyone who calls him on either.

Starting Profile: Accuser

Name: Efram “Chameleon” Osgood

Rank: Private

Months In: 7. Draftee.

Vitals: African-American. 5’8”, 179 lbs. Brown eyes, shaved head. 21.

Description: The best point man in the squad, he tends to blend into the background even when not on patrol. He’s rarely vocal, and makes his opinions known with actions, not words.

Starting Profile: Warrior

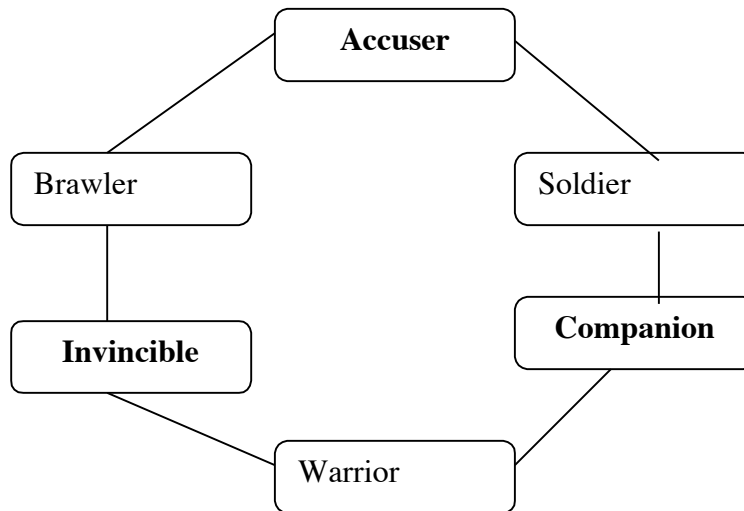
Once all the players select a character, everyone gets a pool of dice. Starting with the character with the least Months In (break ties by lowest rank, then by low d12 roll) each player chooses a dice from d4 to d12. Once one of each is in play, start again. Once the character with the least Months In has a full dice pool, the rest of the players can fill their pools with any combination of dice. The GM selects a number of dice equal to twice the number of players (he gets 4 dice for 2 players, 6 for 3, etc). The GM has a record sheet with all of the characters pertinent information on it (see page 14). Each player needs only their dice pool to begin play.

Profiles

I'm not the same. It's something about being in that jungle, even if you don't get shot or blown up or fragged. Something that makes you go crazy.

Profiles are the heart of **Carry**. Each character begins with one of the six Profiles detailed below. A Profile is both a description of general psychological state and a guide to how a character with the Profile generally behaves. There are three Cardinal Profiles (Accuser, Invincible, and Companion) and three Transition Profiles (Soldier, Warrior, and Brawler). Characters with Cardinal Profiles are more unstable but more intense, while those with Transition Profiles operate at levels we're more familiar with.

In play, your Profile affects the amount and kind of dice that you can roll for conflicts. This is covered specifically in the section on conflicts (pages 8-9). The only way for your Profile to change in play is for your dice pool to drop to zero. When this happens, you must immediately choose a Profile adjacent to your current Profile in the arrangement shown below – so, if you currently are a Soldier, and you lose all the dice in your pool, you have to choose to become either an Accuser or a Companion. Your Profile, and your changes from Profile to Profile, should generally shape your role play.



Accuser: Nothing is your fault. When a branch hits you in the face, it's because the guy in front of you didn't hold it. When your feet get wet, it's because your boots are defective. When you get hungry, it's because you aren't given enough food. And when more serious shit goes down – well, you're always in the right place at the right time. It's not your fault that the gooks are so goddam awful, now is it? When confronted by something that's obviously your fault, you get really pissed, and make every excuse in order to deflect the blame.

Brawler: Violence isn't just the best answer, it's the only answer. You've been so desensitized to violence that you don't even think twice about pulling the trigger – which can get you into trouble when you're dealing with the guys who are supposed to be on your side. You scare a lot

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of people, which is fine. You're also mortally afraid of getting capped. You've seen how easy it is to kill a man, and your opinion is that he who shoots first lives longest. When put in a situation where violence is obviously not a choice, or it's going to get you killed, you freeze up.

Invincible: Nothing can hurt you. You've been out on hundreds of missions, and haven't even been scratched. You're so smart, lucky and tough that you're willing to do anything. You also look down on lesser men. Those who show fear earn your contempt. You don't want to baby anyone – if they can't deal with the life, that's their problem, not yours. You're just going to keep racking up that kill count. You work alone – you don't need anyone. If (and when) you do get seriously injured or presented with impossible odds, you don't accept it. Even if your guts are all over the ground, you'll try to keep going, because nothing can hurt you.

Warrior: You have a code of ethics. This isn't necessarily something that will help you out in the jungles of Vietnam. While willing and able to bring righteous retribution to your enemies, you need to rationalize your anger to yourself, if no one else, in order to continue on. Others don't understand, and get in your way because of it. The strong, silent type, you suffer their foolishness while trying to get everything to make sense in your own head. When presented with a situation where you can't justify your violence, even (or especially) if the violence is necessary, you often drop the ball.

Companion: You don't accept responsibility. You don't feel that you can be in charge in anything, because you're sure that you'll fuck it up. You put yourself in a position of subservience, at the right hand of whoever gives the orders, to give yourself a layer of protection from being put in charge of anything. The sad thing is, if you are put in a leadership position, your lack of confidence self-fulfills, and you fuck it up. In any case, the other guys can't stand you because you're such a suckup.

Soldier: You're here to do a job, and you're going to do it. You force yourself to fit into the soldier stereotype. You fulfill your orders to the letter, regardless of the appropriateness to the situation. You have little patience for anything, or anyone, that makes your job harder. You can handle responsibility, but operate clearly within the lines. When confronted with contradictions or obvious breaches of military procedure or rules, you have a hard time rationalizing it.

Conflicts

We always had to be ready to fight, son, and not always against the gooks. Your squad is like your family, but hairier, smellier and with more guns. Lots more guns.

Carry calls for general techniques of aggressive scene framing and conflict resolution¹. The GM is responsible for scene framing, though players can ask for a scene if they wish. There are two kinds of scenes: squad scenes, and action scenes. Squad scenes utilize conflict resolution in the manner explained below. Action scenes, while also resolving conflict, have a different set of resolution mechanics, and are addressed in the next section (page 10).

Tension runs high under the circumstances your characters find themselves in, and conflict between members of the squad is the norm. The squad doesn't exist in a vacuum (for most of the game – see page 11), and can come in contact with other squads, commanders, civilians and the Vietnamese themselves. Any scene that doesn't involve actual combat is a squad scene. The GM should frame scenes in order to produce conflict, but there doesn't necessarily have to be a conflict in every scene.

Once a conflict has been identified (and this can be done by anyone, even if their character isn't involved), everyone involved needs to establish the stakes. What does your character want out of the conflict? What does he stand to lose? Next, decide your characters Approach to the conflict. There are four general classes of Approach in **Carry**: Violent, Strategic, Tactical or Peaceful. In addition to describing your characters attitude, your characters Profile determines the highest size dice you can roll for the conflict for each Approach. The four Approaches are described below, followed by a chart showing the die size limits by Profile.

Violent: Your approach to this conflict is confrontational, if not outright violent. Shouting, threats, pushing, physical violence and threatening with or using weapons all fall under this category. You want to come out on top. Examples: An officer dressing down a soldier for dereliction of duty; two soldiers getting in a fight over who fell asleep on guard duty; a soldier hitting his breaking point and assaulting someone.

Strategic: Your approach to this conflict is as one step towards a greater goal. It's not whether you win or lose, but how it sets you up for whatever your real aim is. If the conflict is going to have a lot of negative fallout for you, you're willing to give it up – there's probably another way to get what you want. Examples: Talking your buddies into fragging the sergeant; setting up traps to protect the bivouac; letting an officer discipline you in order to gain cred with other soldiers.

Tactical: You are concerned with the conflict itself, and not necessarily its subject matter. Often, these kinds of conflicts involve challenges that you set for yourself, with the other parties as a secondary consideration. You want to succeed at the challenge in order to succeed at the challenge, without caring about other effects it might have. Examples: Needling the new recruit

¹ For the purposes of the Iron Game Chef competition, I feel it is unnecessary to define these terms. The full version of **Carry** will explain them in more detail.

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to see how long it takes him to lash out; trying to get your shot-to-kill ratio in combat as low as possible; trying to outlift another soldier when exercising.

Peaceful: You want to avoid violence and conflict. Oftentimes, this kind of approach leads to mediation attempts, or talking down someone who's more confrontational than you. This doesn't mean that you're a pushover, it just means that your main aim is to solve the problem at hand, rather than necessarily win. Examples: an officer getting his men to stop yelling at each other and concentrate on the operation; a soldier talking his buddy out of fragging the sergeant; a soldier trying to keep his dying friend alive.

	Accuser	Brawler	Invincible	Warrior	Companion	Soldier
Violent	D8	D10	D10	D8	D8	D8
Strategic	D12	D6	D12	D6	D6	D4
Tactical	D10	D8	D8	D10	D10	D10
Peaceful	D6	D4	D6	D4	D12	D6

While players choose an Approach, the GM has no restrictions. In addition, conflict can arise between a character and their surrounding environment, as well as between characters. In this case, the GM represents the environment.

Once all participants have determined their Approach, everyone secretly chooses one die from their pool up to the max size allowed for the Approach and Profile. Then all reveal their die and roll them. The highest roll wins the conflict. Break ties by highest die size, and then by largest remaining dice pool. Once a player rolls a die, he or she must immediately give it to anyone, player or GM, that is *not* involved in the conflict. When the GM rolls a die, he or she must place it out of play. Once everyone has rolled, anyone can choose to push the conflict and roll another die. Roll it, add the score to your original score, then give your die to someone not in the conflict. Everyone involved in the conflict can push it, until they run out of dice. Once everyone is done pushing, the conflict resolves, with the highest total winning.

The only ways for both the GM and the players to gain more dice are to be given them by other players from their conflicts, or by changing Profile (for players). If everyone at the table is involved in the conflict, then dice are placed out of play. When you change Profile, you gain a new pool of dice equal to your Months In, taken from the dice that are out of play. If the GM runs out of dice he cannot gain any more until a player in a conflict gives him some. If you get into a conflict with a GM-played character and the GM has no dice, you win the conflict, but you must give one of your dice to the GM. If you have dice in your pool and cannot spend them due to your Profile, you lose the conflict.

Use the dice you spend to reward your fellow players and the GM for behavior that you find deserving of recognition. Of course, the definition of "good behavior" is different from group to group – but one constant is that you should probably treat your superior officers well. The next section details why this is.

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Action

I don't want to talk about it.

An action scene is any scene where the squad sees combat, from a firefight to a mortar attack to a set of booby traps in an abandoned tunnel. The GM frames the scene, explaining the situation. Then, the ranking officer present has to make decisions (remember the rank progression: private, PFC, lance corporal, corporal, and sergeant. If there are multiple characters of the same rank present, the one with the most Months In gives the orders). The ranking officer gives the other characters orders. The other players have to choose two things: whether their character obeys the order, and whether their character agrees with the order. If the character obeys, state that you follow the order. If he doesn't, state what he does instead. If he agrees with the order, take any dice from your pool and give it to the ranking officer. If he does not agree with the order, take any dice from your pool and give it to the GM. You can obey and disagree, or disobey and agree.

After all the players have indicated their response, the GM narrates the progression of the scene. The ranking officer can then give another set of orders, and the process repeats. The GM and ranking officer keep collecting dice from the other players until the GM decides that its time to resolve the action. The GM and ranking officer each can choose to add one die from their respective pools to the pool in front of them, though they don't have to. They can only add a die up to the largest die size already in the pool. Finally, both roll and add together all die in their action pool. If the ranking officer has the highest total, then the squad is victorious (in whatever context the specific scene dictates). If the GM has the highest total, the squad fails. If there's a tie, go through another round of orders, roll the resulting die and add those. Continue until someone wins.

Subtract the lowest total from the higher. The winner of the action (ranking officer or GM) has that many points to spend on the following effects. All points must be spent.

- Spend 1 point to wound an unplayed character from the squad.
- Spend 2 points to shell shock an unplayed character from the squad.
- Spend 3 points to seriously wound an unplayed character from the squad.
- Spend 4 points to shell shock a played character from the squad.
- Spend 5 points to kill an unplayed character from the squad.
- Spend 5 points to wound a played character from the squad.
- Spend 7 points to seriously wound a played character from the squad.

Everything that happens to unplayed characters is background color. Narrate anything you want – grievous wounds, dying last words, simple disappearance, anything. If a played character is shell shocked, remove any d4 or d6 from their die pool, if they have one. If they are wounded, remove any d4, d6 or d8. If they are seriously wounded, remove any dice from their pool. You cannot kill played characters.

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Endgame

The worst moment? Son, Vietnam was one big worst moment. But it's not the times when you faced the enemy in the jungle that you remember. It's the times that you found the enemy much closer.

Once all of the unplayed characters on the squad have been wounded, evac'd or killed, **Carry** enters endgame. All characters with Cardinal Profiles (Accuser, Invincible or Companion) become locked. They can no longer change Profile, even if they lose all their dice. Once a character gains a Cardinal Profile, they become locked in the same manner. Locked characters can no longer use certain Approaches to conflicts during Endgame: Companions cannot be Violent, Invincibles cannot be Peaceful, and Accusers cannot be Strategic. The dice caps remain on their other Approaches. Once all the characters have become locked, the GM must frame the final action scene.

The final action scene is where everything goes to shit. Tensions break, and the surviving members of the squad turn on each other. The actual action is background color, though it can be used by the players in their monologues (see below). At the beginning of the scene, each player secretly chooses another character as their target. Everyone rolls and adds all of their remaining dice, and then reveals their target. If you roll higher than your target, then you win, while if they roll higher than you, they win. Ties are broken by largest die pool, and then Months In. The winner in each pair gets a Monologue of Victory, and the loser a Monologue of Defeat. Anything can happen in these monologues, with the winner having control over all the physical happenings, while the loser can express thoughts and feelings, as well as anything allowed by the victor.

Once all Monologues have been made, the GM sums up the scene with the words “And the war continued on...” The game is over.

Sit around. Chat. Share what you thought about the game with the other players. Point out the stuff that you thought was great, and the stuff that could have been better. Talk about who had the coolest character, and who had the coolest ending. Decide if you learned anything. Decide if you had fun. It's a serious game, and it should make you think, but it should also have been fun.

And, if you did have fun, play again.

Examples

Basic training was a joke. The only way to learn was to be there.

Starting the Game (Page 5): Joseph, Greer and Daniel are players, and Anne is the GM. Joseph chooses to play Eddie “Cowboy” Riley, Greer chooses Julien “Jewel” Abromowitz, and Daniel chooses David “Anaconda” Steinbeck. They each talk a little bit about how they see the characters. The GM chooses 6 dice (twice the number of players), deciding on 3d6, 2d10 and 1d12. The players go around, starting with Greer (because Jewel is tied for least Months In and has the lower rank). She takes a d10. Joseph goes next and takes a d8. Daniel takes a d6, bringing it back to Greer, who takes a d4. Even though Transition Profiles can’t use them, Joseph has to take a d12. They continue around until Greer has a full pool, at which time Joseph also has a full pool, and Daniel chooses four more dice. Anne notes that with three characters with Transition Profiles, the games likely to start out fairly “normal” before ramping up the intensity.

Conflict (Pages 8-9): Anne frames straight to a conflict. “David. You return to the command outpost after being out on patrol, and can’t find the extra canteen that you left there. Upon questioning the soldiers in the area, you discover that Cowboy was the only one who was in the command post alone for a time.” Daniel narrates how he carefully double-checks his info and does another search for his property, just in case. He doesn’t find it, and seeks out Cowboy to ask him about it. Then Daniel and Joseph role play the beginning of the conversation. Once it becomes apparent that Cowboy isn’t going to admit to any wrongdoing, Anne states that it’s now a conflict. Daniel declares that David is being Peaceful – all he wants is his canteen back. His stakes are that if he wins, he finds the canteen, and if he loses, he doesn’t. Joseph declares that Cowboy is being belligerent, but Tactical. He wants to win because if he does, it means that David looks like an idiot in front of all the men. If he loses, he’s the one that looks like an idiot.

Once the stakes have been decided upon, they each roll. They choose a dice behind their hands, then reveal and roll it. Daniel rolls a d6, gets a 5, and gives the d6 to Greer. Joseph rolls a d8, also gets a 5, and gives it to Anne. Daniel declares that he wants to push, rolls another d6 (getting a 4, for a total of 9), and gives that one to Greer as well. He wants to set up Julien with some more dice, as the kid hasn’t been doing well so far. Joseph also pushes, rolling his last d8 and blowing it with a 1. He gives the dice to the GM again, as he liked the conflict that she set up, and says that he’s done. Daniel nods and says that he stares down the boy from Texas, then looks through Cowboy’s mess and finds the missing canteen. Julien narrates his characters outrage, and his promises that he’ll figure out who planted the canteen in his stuff. The question of whether Cowboy actually stole it is still unanswered – fodder for future conflicts.

Action (Page 10) and Profile Change (Page 6): Anne frames from the earlier conflict to that night. “Half of the squad is on watch, and the other half is attempting to get some sleep. Suddenly, the silence of the night is ripped apart by mortar fire. Marching explosions come closer and closer to your bivouac. Daniel, you’re the ranking officer – start giving orders.

Daniel: I yell at the soldiers around me. “You three – Cowboy, Skid, White. Go around to the east. Jewel, come with me and Elmo. We’re going to the west, we’ll pincer around and aim for those mortars. Go.”

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Greer: I follow the order. (She takes a d6 and gives it to Daniel, signifying that her character agrees with the order.)

Joseph: I follow the order (He gives Daniel a d10).

Anne: The two groups separate and start moving through the jungle, attempting to keep clear of the explosions. Suddenly, rifle fire starts up from both sides.

Daniel: “Down! Everyone, dig in and return fire.”

Greer: I follow the order (She gives another d6 to Daniel.)

Joseph: Yah, I follow. (He gives his last dice, another d10, to the GM).

Anne: You’re out of dice. Profile change for Cowboy.

Joseph: Right. Ummm...Accuser. Especially with this whole canteen drama starting up.

Anne: Great. You get four new dice. (Joseph takes 4 dice from out of play). Now, you all dig in and start firing back. You’re either outnumbered or just bad marksmen, because the oncoming fire doesn’t slacken any.

Daniel: Ok. I tap the soldiers around me, including Jewel, to start a leapfrog advance. Once we start, I shout out for the other group to leapfrog in the same direction.

Greer: Again, I follow the order, though I’m pretty scared. Advancing into fire isn’t my thing. (She gives a d4 to the GM).

Joseph: I don’t hear him over the continuing fire, and stay in my position. (He gives one of his new d8s to the GM).

Anne: Ok. Time to roll. (Anne has a pool of 1d4, 1d8, 1d10. Daniel has a pool of 2d6, 1d10.)

Daniel: I’m going to add a die (he adds a d10 to his pool).

Anne: Ok, I am not. Roll. (They both roll. Anne gets a total of 12, while Daniel gets 20.) Great. The leapfrog advance works, focusing your field of fire. The incoming shots slacken, and you all note that the explosions have finished. By the time you get to the bushes you were ambushed from, only bloodstains and shells are left. Dan, spend your 8 points.

Daniel narrates that, during the conflict, Deadwood got an armful of shrapnel from a mortar shell (3 points, seriously wounding an unplayed character) and that Cowboy managed to get tagged through the meat on his shoulder (5 points, wounding a played character). He removes a d6 from Josephs pool and winks. The conflict between David and Cowboy continues to be fed.

Example of Endgame (Page 11): The entire squad has been killed or pulled out of action, and only David, Cowboy and Jewel are left, lost in the jungle with no communication gear. At this point in the game, all three have Cardinal Profiles (David and Cowboy are both Accusers and Jewel is a Companion), so Anne frames directly to the last action scene. The three start hearing rustles in the bushes, and seeing shapes moving – obviously, the VC wants to be seen, but there have been no shots fired as of yet.

Each player writes down their target on a scrap of paper. Daniel chooses Cowboy, Joseph chooses David, and Greer chooses Cowboy as well. They roll all of their remaining dice and reveal their targets. The totals are 17 for Daniel, 12 for Joseph and 10 for Greer. David wins over Cowboy, Cowboy loses to David and Cowboy wins over Jewel. Daniel gets a monologue of victory, Joseph gets a monologue of defeat at the hands of David and a monologue of victory over Jewel, and Greer gets a monologue of defeat at the hands of Cowboy. In brief, Jewel starts whining about their situation, Cowboy loses it and blows him away, and then David drops him as the Viet Cong closes in. Anne ends with “And the war continued on...” The game is over.

Carry, by Nathan Paoletta

History

Leave me alone. If you want to learn more, go read a book.

The political and diplomatic history leading up to the Vietnam War is well documented in a number of sources, none of which I have access to until after the end of the competition. However, a basic overview and facts can be found at <http://www.vietnam-war.info>, among others. The five-sentence synopsis: the United States started sending military “advisors” to South Vietnam after the French got kicked out of the region in the early-mid 1960’s. This developed into war with the Communist regime in power in North Vietnam, which was supported by the USSR. The US, in an effort to stem the spread of Communism, threw more and more troops into Vietnam, though they were opposed both by the North Vietnamese armed forces and a South Vietnamese revolutionary force that the Americans refer to as the Viet Cong, or VC. Most of the action romanticized by literature and pop culture is in the deep jungles of Vietnam, against the guerilla VC, or “gooks,” though the actual conflict was more diverse. Though both end dates of the War are hard to pin down, 1968-1975 is a fairly accepted range.

For insight into the conceptual basis of and inspiration for the game, I heartily recommend Tim O’Brien’s The Things They Carried and the movie Platoon.

Some possible scenes for **Carry**:

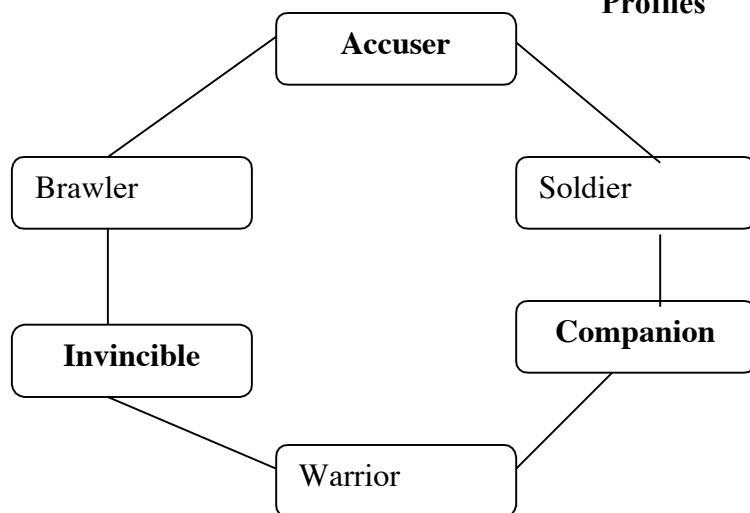
- The squad has uncovered a weapons cache in a village, and the Vietnamese aren’t saying anything. How do you find out what you need to know?
- A squadmate was mysteriously absent from guard duty.
- An officer finds the men smoking pot on guard duty.
- The squad gets separated on a night op.
- The men start trading stories from back home, dredging up painful memories.
- Another squad blunders into them on patrol, sparking a firefight.
- The Vietnamese capture some of the squad, and they need to be rescued.
- The Medivac chopper gets shot down, and a mortally wounded man needs to get carried to the nearest secure zone 10 miles away.
- An officer is so abusive that the men get together and plan to frag him, and another officer overhears.
- An officer can’t stand the insubordination of one of his men, and another soldier overhears his plan to frag his buddy.
- A VC soldier has a gun to your mans head and demands safe passage.
- One soldier comes across a squadmate, or a superior officer, raping a Vietnamese woman.
- Orders come down to cleanse a village that the squad has had friendly relations with.

Play Aid

Character	Rank	Months In	Status
Ramsey “Ram” Capello	Sergeant	10	
Daniel “Locker” Jones	Corporal	9	
David “Anaconda” Steinbeck	Corporal	8	
Rocky “Raven” Alongi	Corporal	7	
Elmo “Saint” Smith	Lance Corporal	6	
Eddie “Cowboy” Riley	Lance Corporal	4	
Ryan “Deadwood” Alder	PFC	7	
Jared “Jesus” Trujillo	PFC	6	
Tommy “Skid” Bunting	PFC	5	
Willard “Coyote” Nathanson	PFC	4	
Efram “Chameleon” Osgood	Private	7	
Wendell “Professor” Ketrtridge	Private	6	
William “Big White” White	Private	5	
Julien “Jewel” Abromowitz	Private	4	
Shirley “Temple” Jenkins	Private	3	
James “Bull” Toren	Private	2	

For Status, fill in “Played” if a player has chosen that character. Over the course of the game, fill in what happens to each unplayed character – wounded, evac’d, KIA, etc.

Profiles



Profiles in bold are Cardinal Profiles, those not in bold are Transition Profiles. The chart below details the highest die size that each profile can use with each kind of Approach to a conflict.

	Accuser	Brawler	Invincible	Warrior	Companion	Soldier
Violent	D8	D10	D10	D8	D8	D8
Strategic	D12	D6	D12	D6	D6	D4
Tactical	D10	D8	D8	D10	D10	D10
Peaceful	D6	D4	D6	D4	D12	D6

Action Fallout: 1 point to wound an unplayed character; 2 points to shell shock an unplayed character; 3 points to seriously wound an unplayed character; 4 points to shell shock a played character; 5 points to kill an unplayed character; 5 points to wound a played character; 7 points to seriously wound a played character.