

OPERATION PEGASUS



(1.0) BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL COMMENTARY

Beginning in January, 1968, the North Vietnamese 325C Division and 304 Division moved into South Vietnam from Laos and the DMZ. Khe Sahn Combat Base, occupied by units of the 9th and 26th Marines, had been constructed on a low ridge overlooking Highway 9 to block such infiltration, and was quickly encircled and besieged. During the Tet Offensive (January-February) the siege was tightened, and the Base assaulted on several occasions. Elements of the NVA Divisions constructed conventional defenses blocking Highway 9. The American news media warned the public to prepare for a long and very bloody operation. The North Vietnamese Army had created a situation to which the Americans had to react, and they were convinced that the long drive up Highway 9 would at least run up the American casualties, and possibly defeat them and force the abandonment of Khe Sahn, just as similar tactics had forced the abandonment of smaller Special Forces Camps at Lang Vei and in the A Shau Valley.

The North Vietnamese, however, had not counted on the 1st Cavalry Division, with its revolutionary helicopter tactics. The Cavalry had not been in Vietnam for very long, and none of their operations had been as dramatic as Pegasus would be. In seven days, with extremely light casualties, the 1st Cavalry cleared the roads and lifted the siege. They did so by landing to each side of the road and attacking inward, driving the NVA out of the forest and into the open valley. Faced with such tactics, the NVA simply pulled up stakes and left.

In many ways, Operation Pegasus represents what went "right" about the Vietnam War. Pegasus was conventional warfare, not the guerilla style conflicts that seldom turned out as expected. It was a victory, and moreover a victory of the "American" way of doing things over the "old" way of doing them. The offensives of 1966-68 had been a long range plan to steal the two northernmost provinces of South Vietnam and formally annex them to North Vietnam. The relief of Khe Sahn, coupled with the immediately following drive into the A Shau Valley, marked the end of that campaign.

(2.0) INTRODUCTION TO THE GAME

(1.0) OPERATION PEGASUS is a historical simulation game of the siege and relief of the Khe Sahn Combat Base during April of 1968. Some of the scenarios cover other military actions that occurred, or could have occurred, from January to April of 1968. The various unit counters (playing pieces) represent the units that took part in those actions.

(2.11) A complete copy of the game OPERATION PEGASUS includes one rules book, one 16x20 inch playing map, 108 die-cut counters (playing pieces), and Casualty Record Sheets. Not included but necessary for play is one six-sided die and some writing materials. Players are advised to take great care with the Casualty Record Sheets as they are required for each playing of the game. The sheets can be placed inside plastic page protectors and marked with a "grease pencil", or players may produce copies to use, discarding them after each playing (but keeping the originals intact). Permission of the publisher to reproduce the Casualty Records Sheets by any convenient method is granted to purchasers of this game for their own private use.

(2.2) One player represents the Americans (his forces include four South Vietnamese companies, but for convenience all of his units will be referred to as "American"). He is referred to as the "American", "US", or "US/ARVN" player and will maneuver playing pieces representing the historical units available to the American Commander. The other player is referred to as the "NVA player". He will use the NVA playing pieces.

(2.21) Both players will maneuver their units, engaging in combat with enemy units, attempting to fulfill the Victory Conditions. During the course of the game the players will perform various other functions including artillery fire, airstrikes, ambush and counter-ambush, supply and spotting. All of these functions are defined by the game rules, which describe the game mechanics. The rules have been extensively cross indexed for the convenience of the players.

(2.3) Each hexagon (hereafter "hex") on the map represents an area about 500 meters across. Each turn represents one day. Unit counters represent Rifle companies, Artillery batteries, and Tank platoons.

(2.4) UNIT TYPES

The die-cut playing pieces represent the military units in the game. The playing pieces are referred to as "units", "unit-counters", or "counters". Also included are various "markers", such as the Turn marker, the four Helicopter Status markers, and the six Dummy markers. These counters are not military units, and for the sake of clarity will be referred to as "markers". The NVA Sniper units and the American Helicopter units are "unit counters" but function somewhat differently.

The various unit counters do not include movement or combat factors as similar counters do in other wargames. Most unit counters include only a single letter or number designation. The American and ARVN units have a three part designation including company, battalion and regiment. A typical counter is shown below: