

The Tide Turns: Khe Sanh, 1968

Prelude: Dien Bien Phu, 1954



Empty Fishhook: Cambodia, 1970



First Cracks: Quang Tri, 1972



CONFLICT IN VIETNAM

MICRO PROSE
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

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Into the Valley: Ia Drang, 1965

SUMMARY OF COMMANDS

CURSOR CONTROL

C-64/C-128 Keyboard: CRSR keys and SHIFT + CRSR keys (for faster movement use "<" up, ">" down, ">" left, ">" right).

Apple IIe/c Keyboard: Cursor arrow keys.

Apple II+ Keyboard: Left and right arrow keys, "P" upwards, "N" downwards.

IBM PC Keyboard: Four-direction arrow keys (with SHIFT for faster movement).

Atari 800/XL/XE Keyboard: White-framed arrow keys (with CONTROL for faster movement).

Joystick: On any machine this also controls cursor movement.

W = Who is reporting: Moves cursor onto the unit that sent the message.

INFORMATION

Fire Button/Space Bar = Unit Information: Gives information about the unit at the cursor.

G = General commanding the unit: Gives information about the general commanding that unit. Not available for Atari 800/XL/XE.

C = City & VP information: Gives name of locale (if any) and victory point value of the hex.

COMMANDS

A = Attack: Commands the unit under the cursor to attack.

D = Defend: Commands the unit under the cursor to defend.

M = Move: Commands the unit under the cursor to move.

R = Reserve: Commands the unit under the cursor to go into reserve.

H = Here: May be used after an Attack, Defend, Move or Reserve order to specify an objective.

UTILITIES

F = Freeze the clock: Freezes the game action, press "F" again to restart.

T = Terrain toggle: Removes units and displays terrain underneath, press again to restore.

U = Unit icons/symbols toggle: Changes unit display from symbols to icons, and back.

? = Casualty and victory status: Displays game status so far, including casualties, and victory level.

B = Flash-Back: Go to flash-back mode to review the last few "days" of game play.

Q = Change player roles: Used to change sides in a two-player game. Then press "T" (terrain toggle) to show troops.

> (+ on C64/C128) = Faster Realtime: Increases the speed of play.

< (- on C64/C128) = Slower Realtime: Slows down the speed of play.

S = Save game: Saves the current game situation to a disk. C64/C128 and Atari 800/XL/XE versions require a formatted disk already available. During the save game procedure you enter a save-game file name of 1-8 characters.

L = Load game: Reloads a game previously saved. You must first start a game with the same parameters, press L, then enter the proper file name when prompted.

UNIT TYPES: CAMBODIA, 1970

Nationality	Icon	Symbol	Troop Type	Mobility	Range	Supply
US			Cavalry Battalion	Heli	1 mi	Air
ARVN			Airborne Battalion	Heli	1 mi	Air
US			Armored Battalion	Gnd	1 mi	Air
US			Mechanized Battalion	Gnd	1 mi	Air
US/ARVN			Armored Cavalry Squadron	Gnd	1 mi	Air
ARVN			Infantry Battalion	Gnd	1 mi	Air
US			Air Cavalry Troop	Air	1 mi	Air
US/ARVN			Artillery (105mm) Battalion	Heli	8 mi	Air
US			Artillery (155mm) Battalion	Heli	12 mi	Air
US			SP Artillery (175-203mm) Bn	none	20 mi	Air
US			Aerial Artillery Battery	none	62 mi	Air
US/ARVN			Base Camp	none	none	Air
US/ARVN			Headquarters	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
US			Tactical Fighter Squadron	Sanc	62 mi	Air
US			Strategic Bomber (B-52) Wing	Sanc	62 mi	Air
NVA			Infantry Battalion	Gnd	2 mi	Gnd
NVA			Mortar Company	Gnd	4 mi	Gnd
NVA			Artillery Battalion (122-152mm)	Gnd	10 mi	Gnd
NVA			Base Camp	none	none	Gnd
NVA			Headquarters	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd

UNIT TYPES: QUANG TRI, 1972

Nationality	Icon	Symbol	Troop Type	Mobility	Range	Supply
ARVN			Ranger Battalion	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
ARVN			Infantry Battalion	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
ARVN			Marine Battalion	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
ARVN			RF/PF Battalion	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
ARVN			Armored Regiment	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
ARVN			Armored Cavalry Regiment	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
ARVN			Artillery (105mm) Battalion	Gnd	8 mi	Gnd
ARVN			Artillery (155mm) Battalion	Gnd	12 mi	Gnd
ARVN			Artillery (175mm) Battalion	none	26 mi	Gnd
ARVN			Headquarters	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
US/ARVN			Tactical Fighter Squadron	none	62 mi	Air
US			Strategic Bomber (B-52) Wing	none	62 mi	Air
NVA			Infantry Battalion	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
NVA			Tank Regiment	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd
NVA			Mortar Company	Gnd	2 mi	Gnd
NVA			Artillery (130mm) Battalion	Gnd	18 mi	Gnd
NVA			Headquarters	Gnd	1 mi	Gnd

KEY: US = United States military forces

ARVN = South Vietnamese military forces

NVA = North Vietnamese military forces

Gnd = ground movement or supply

Heli = helicopter airmobile "jump" moves possible

Air = high-speed air movement, or air transported supplies

Sanc = can airmobile "jump" bases from one sanctuary to another

mi = miles distance, one hex (map position) is one mile

Commanding the NVA

Your task is clear. You must attack the ARVN task force strongly, and if you cannot destroy it, you should at least cripple it. Then, perhaps leaving one battalion to block the road, you should move all available forces against Plei Me. You should accomplish these objectives as quickly as possible, for there is an American unit of unknown power moving into the region.

The US/ARVN

WARNING: In order to maximize the impact of the game, you should not read any further until you have played the variant as the NVA.

The US/ARVN Objective

Your objective is to hold Plei Me and defeat the NVA forces in the vicinity. This siege is believed to be the opening move of a major Communist offensive, so your performance may have a decisive impact on the course of the war.

Victory Conditions: You win if you can keep the NVA from gaining more than 10 Victory Points while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least four NVA for every one of your own. You cannot win an automatic victory, but you should remember that the NVA will win one if they take Plei Me.

US/ARVN Scenario Information

Start: 6 pm, October 23, 1965

End: 6 pm, October 27, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: Northeast

Replacement Rate: 75 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

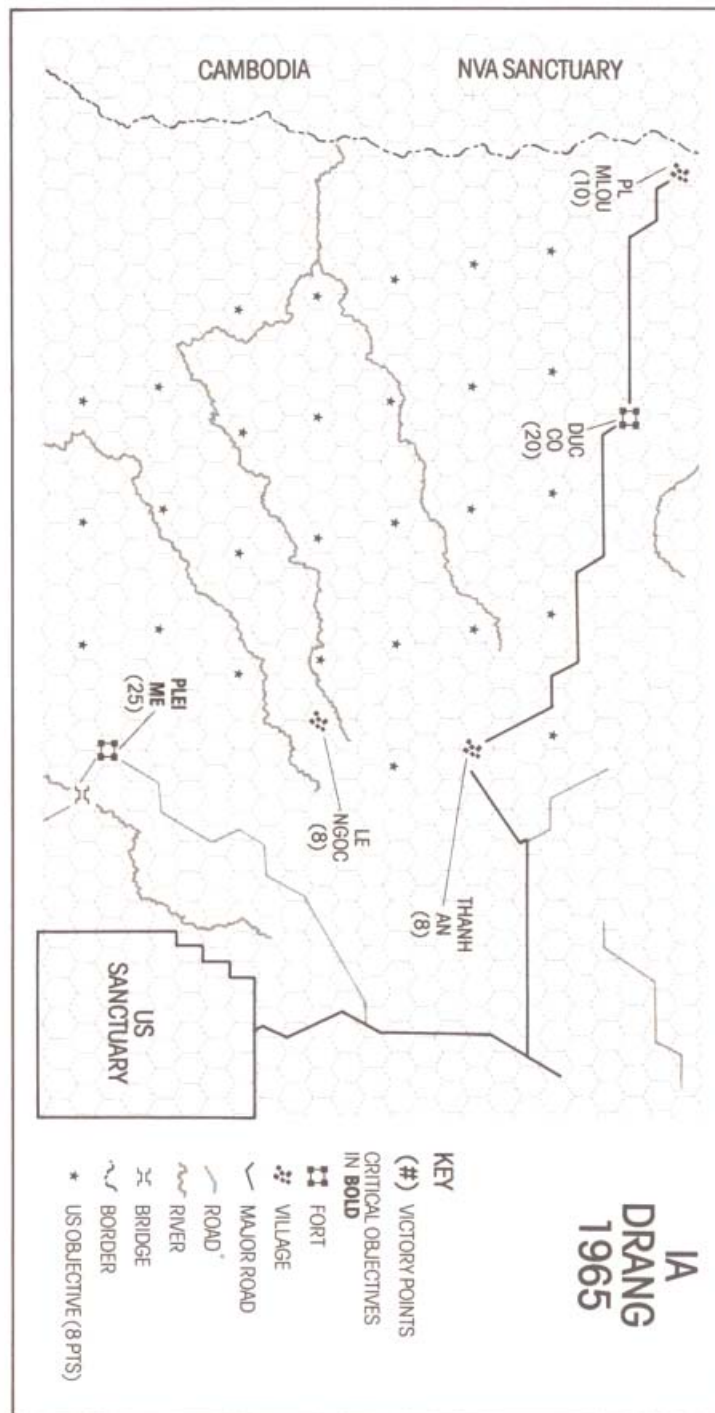
Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
10/23/65	m	2/19 Art Bn	US Sanctuary	100%
10/24/65	m	2/12 Cav Bn	Plei Me	100%
		1/12 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		1/8 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/8 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/17 Art Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		A/1/9 Air cav	US Sanctuary	50%
		B/1/9 Air cav	US Sanctuary	50%
		C/1/9 Air cav	US Sanctuary	50%
		1st TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		2nd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		3rd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		A/2/20 Aer Art	US Sanctuary	50%
		B/2/20 Aer Art	US Sanctuary </td <td>50%</td>	50%

Abbreviations:

Art Bn = Artillery Battalion
Cav Bn = Cavalry Battalion
Air cav = Air cav Troop

TFS = Tactical Fighter Squadron
Aer Art = Aerial Artillery Company
m, n = midnight, noon

Special Rules: None



Commanding the US/ARVN

As commander of the 1st Brigade of the 1st Air Cavalry division, you have at your disposal a force of unprecedented mobility and firepower. However, you will find that it is not as easy to use these assets properly as it may first appear. In fact, whether you are a novice or a veteran wargamer, you will probably find yourself uncertain exactly what to do with all this power. If you can move anywhere, how do you decide where to move? If you can hit anything, how do you decide what to hit?

Of course, as your forces appear, the operational situation will give you some clues. The 2/19 Artillery Battalion should clearly fire in support of the ARVN task force. The 2/12 Cavalry Battalion will have plenty to do around Plei Me, while the other cavalry battalions can be used to pursue the NVA retreating from their ambush positions. Your air cav should move in an arc up the river valley to scout out hidden NVA units in the jungle, although you may want to have one sweep the clear terrain to the east of the road, in case any NVA try to slip away in that direction. Whenever you encounter the enemy, try to surround them with your infantry and blast them with your artillery, gunships, and tactical air support.

VARIANT TWO

Air Cavalry In Action

Introduction

This variant presents the historical battle in its entirety. It begins like *First Blood*, but do not expect the NVA to be hidden in the same places! You will find that you use the entire map, which scrolls to the west and north. Whether you play the US/ARVN or NVA, you will find that the situation is wide open.

The US/ARVN

US/ARVN Objectives

Your initial objectives in this scenario are the same as in *FIRST BLOOD*: to relieve Plei Me and turn back the Communist offensive. Assuming you are successful in this, your task is then to sweep the Ia Drang valley, find the enemy, and destroy him.

Victory Conditions: The US/ARVN must gain at least 100 Victory Points more than the NVA while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least four NVA for every one US/ARVN casualty to win. There are no automatic victory conditions in this variant.

US/ARVN Scenario Information

Start: 6 pm., October 23, 1965

End: 6 pm., November 15, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: Northeast

Replacements: 75 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
10/23/65	n	2/19 Art Bn	US Sanctuary	100%
10/24/65	n	2/12 Cav Bn	Plei Me	100%
		1/12 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		1/8 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/8 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/17 Art Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		A/1/9 Air cav	US Sanctuary	50%
		B/1/9 Air cav	US Sanctuary	50%
		C/1/9 Air cav	US Sanctuary	50%
		1st TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		2nd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		3rd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		A/2/20 Aer Art	US Sanctuary	50%
		B/2/20 Aer Art	US Sanctuary	50%
11/10/65	n	1st ARVN Rng Bn	Duc Co	50%
		2nd ARVN Rng Bn	Duc Co	50%
		3rd ARVN Rng Bn	Duc Co	50%
		1st ARVN Recon	Duc Co	50%
11/11/65	n	7th Bomb Wing	US Sanctuary	100%

Abbreviations:

Art Bn = Artillery Battalion

Cav Bn = Cavalry Battalion

Air cav = Air cav Troop

TFS = Tactical Fighter Squadron

Aer Art = Aerial Artillery Company

Rng Bn = Ranger Battalion

Recon = Reconnaissance Battalion

Bomb Wng = Bomber Wing

m, n = midnight, noon

Special Rules:

1. On 11/16 the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry relieved the 1st Brigade. While the actual departure and arrival of the units is not carried out (the brigades were virtually identical), US Cavalry Battalions are automatically boosted to or near to 100% effectiveness on this date.

2. To reflect the capture of a map containing NVA deployments on November 1, most NVA units will briefly become visible to the American player on November 2.

Commanding the US/ARVN

As commander of the US/ARVN forces in this variant, you will face the same basic situation as in *First Blood*. If you have not read the "Commanding the US/ARVN" section of variant one, you are advised to do so now.

Since this variant lasts much longer, you will have much more opportunity to refine your techniques of search, envelopment, and bombardment. You will also begin to appreciate why, for all the power at their command, American officers found the war so frustrating. While your troops can go almost anywhere, they cannot do so instantaneously, and by the time reinforcements arrive you may find that the NVA has damaged your forces and slipped away. Even if your reinforcements do arrive on time, you will find the enemy extremely difficult to catch. You will rarely have enough units to surround him completely, and if you don't he is sure to slip through your fingers. Similarly, for all your fire support, you will find it difficult to bring the power of the guns and aircraft to bear. Once one unit fires on the enemy, he is likely to retreat and disappear, leaving your other units to blow up empty jungle (although you will not hear or see this in the game).

The only solution to these problems is careful planning, methodical execution, and, above all, patience. Once you push the NVA away from the western end of the map, line up your troops with two hexes between each, and move systematically and carefully up the valley. Don't be discouraged if you can't make contact for a while, or if the enemy constantly seems to escape. The Communists know that Americans like to get in there and fix things quick, and the whole basis of their strategy was to use that against us. Technology alone could not win this war; what the American commander must have is a degree of discipline and patience seldom found amongst the "hairy barbarians" from the West.

The NVA

WARNING: In order to maximize the impact of the game, you should not read any further until you have played this variant as the Americans.

The NVA Objective

Your original objective is to destroy the ARVN task force and capture Plei Me, but with the intervention of the air cavalry you will probably find that this is beyond your capabilities. If you do not succeed at these quickly, your objective becomes to punish the Americans as severely as possible while preserving as much of your own force as possible. You can also get credit for maintaining a presence in the Ia Drang valley.

Victory Conditions: You must prevent the US/ARVN from gaining 100 Victory Points more than you while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least one US/ARVN for every four of your own. No automatic victory is possible in this variant.

NVA Scenario Information

Start: October 23, 1965

End: November 15, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Sufficient

Off-map Supply: Northwest and West

Replacements: 150 men and 2 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
11/2/65	m	H-15 VC Inf Bn	W of Chu Pong	50%
11/7/65	m	1/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		2/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		3/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		66th Mort Co	Cambodia	50%
		Ind Mort Co	Cambodia	50%
		Ind AA Bn	Cambodia	50%

Abbreviations:

VC = Viet Cong

Inf Bn = Infantry Battalion

W = West

Mort Co = Mortar Company

Ind = Independent

AA Bn = Anti-aircraft Battalion

m = midnight

Special Rules: None

Commanding the NVA

You will almost certainly find that the US forces arrive too soon for you to defeat the ARVN and take Plei Me. Therefore, as a good guerrilla commander, you should be prepared to fall back quickly and avoid a stand-up fight you are bound to lose. Don't be proud: the waves may have to dash a thousand times against the rocky shore, but in the end they will reduce it to Waikiki Beach.

Once you have broken contact, you will be surprised how much you will have to do. The trick is to pick a relatively weak, isolated unit, hit hard and fast, and then get away quickly, before the Americans can bring their firepower to bear. If you find a particularly vulnerable unit, you can try and press home your attack, though this is a tricky business. Otherwise, you should hang back from American units, grabbing Victory Point hexes after the enemy has passed through, and sniping at enemy units from a distance. Remember to exploit the fact that your infantry can attack from two hexes away; this is invaluable in executing hit and run attacks. Finally, keep in mind that you can see the Americans, but they can't see you; the game is not as one-sided as it seems.

VARIANT THREE

The Light Infantry Option

Introduction

During the war, and ever since, commentators have treated America's wholesale adoption of helicopters as a foregone conclusion, and the performance of the machines as a notable success. The strength of this attitude is surprising, considering that America lost over 4000 of the machines, at several hundred thousand dollars a pop, while losing the war. Helicopters certainly had, and continue to have, tremendous military potential, but the overwhelming role they played was neither inevitable nor necessarily the best available option. Variants three and four posit two possible alternative forces that could have been deployed in place of the airmobile cavalry.

The *Light Infantry Option* assumes that during the years leading up to American intervention, the U.S. Army decided to combat guerillas not with the civic action approach of the Green Beret Special Forces or the airmobile tactics of the Air Cavalry, but instead adopted a solution that contained a little of both. Instead of a mechanical juggernaut, the First Cavalry has become an elite counter-insurgency force specially trained in jungle warfare. It uses helicopters to transport units into the general area of operations, but once there, the soldiers hump across country for the rest of the operation.

The division places less reliance on airborne reconnaissance, but is stronger in one type of helicopter: gunships. Since it relies on feet rather than helicopters as tactical transport, the division does not construct a series of firebases for airmobile artillery. Like other aspects of the force, this presents certain disadvantages, but it is interesting to see how these balance against its strong points. One in particular stands out: this force would have certainly been far less expensive, and thus it would have been economical to deploy more men.

The US/ARVN

US/ARVN Objectives

In this variant your objective is to encircle and destroy the NVA near Plei Me, and then move up the Ia Drang valley in order to bring the remaining enemy to battle.

Victory Conditions: The US/ARVN must gain at least 100 Victory Points more than

the NVA while maintaining a favorable loss ratio of at least four NVA casualties for every US/ARVN one. There is no automatic victory in this variant.

US/ARVN Scenario Information

Start: 6 pm, October 23, 1965

End: 6 pm, November 15, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: Northeast

Replacements: 75 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
10/24/65	n	1st Bde HQ	Plei Me Turnoff	100%
		1/12 Cav Bn	Plei Me Turnoff	50%
		2/12 Cav Bn	Plei Me	100%
		1/8 Cav Bn	NE of Plei Me	100%
		2/8 Cav Bn	N of Plei Me	100%
		1/7 Cav Bn	N of Plei Me	100%
		2/7 Cav Bn	NW of Plei Me	100%
		1st ARVN Recon	W of Plei Me	100%
		B/1/9 Aircav	Plei Me Turnoff	100%
		2/19 Art Bn	Plei Me Turnoff	100%
		2nd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		3rd TFS	US Sanctuary	33%
		A/2/20 AerArt	US Sanctuary	50%
		B/2/20 AerArt	US Sanctuary	50%
		C/2/20 AerArt	US Sanctuary	50%
11/10/65	n	1st ARVN RngBn	Route 14	50%
		2nd ARVN RngBn	Route 14	50%
		3rd ARVN RngBn	Route 14	50%

Abbreviations:

Art Bn = Artillery Battalion (Towed) RngBn = Ranger Battalion (Infantry)
 Cav Bn = Cavalry Battalion (Infantry) Recon = Reconnaissance Battalion (Infantry)
 Aircav = Aircav Troop N, W, NW, etc. = Compass Points
 TFS = Tactical Fighter Squadron m, n = midnight, noon
 AerArt = Aerial Artillery Company

Special Rules: To reflect the capture of a map containing NVA deployments on November 1, most NVA units will briefly become visible to the American player on November 2.

Commanding the US/ARVN

As in the historical situation, you have overwhelming firepower behind you, although your artillery will help you less than your aircraft. Your mobility, though, is much less, and you need to modify your strategy accordingly. Instead of advancing on a broad front, with your units separated by two hexes, keep them within one hex of each other so they can come to each other's aid. Because of this need for concentration, you will not be able to sweep the valley in one pass, but instead will need to go back and forth. Once you make contact, you must make even more efficient use of supporting fires since you cannot surround

the enemy as easily. Also, because you cannot rush reinforcements to the aid of a threatened unit, you must protect Plei Me more carefully.

The NVA

The NVA Objective

Your original objective is to destroy the ARVN task force and capture Plei Me. However, once the American forces arrive, you will probably find that this is beyond your capabilities. In this case, your objective becomes to inflict casualties on the Americans suffering as few as possible yourself. You should also seek to recapture Victory Point locations after the US/ARVN leaves them.

Victory Conditions: You must prevent the US/ARVN from gaining 100 Victory Points more than you while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least one US/ARVN casualty for every four of your own. There is no automatic victory in this variant.

NVA Scenario Information

Start: October 23, 1965

End: November 15, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Sufficient

Off-map Supply: Northwest and West

Replacements: 150 men and 2 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
10/28/65	m	H-15 VC Inf Bn	W of Chu Pong	50%
11/2/65	m	1/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		2/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		3/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		66th Mort Co	Cambodia	50%
		Ind Mort Co	Cambodia	50%
		Ind AA Bn	Cambodia	50%

Abbreviations:

VC = Viet Cong Ind = Independent
 Inf Bn = Infantry Battalion AA Bn = Anti-aircraft Battalion
 W = West m, n = midnight, noon
 Mort Co = Mortar Company

Special Rules: None

Commanding the NVA

Despite the difference in the American's force structure from the historical situation, your approach to the battle changes little. If you have not already read the "Commanding the NVA" sections of variants one and two, you should do so now.

Nevertheless, a few differences in your position are worth noting. Because the Americans are less mobile, you should seek to spread them out. To do this, deliberately move one of your units into view away from the main American forces, and you will see them move toward the contact. If you do this in a few places, you will draw them apart, and then you can gang up on one and damage it. Remember, though, American aircraft and artillery are but a radio call away.

VARIANT FOUR

The Armored Cavalry Option

Introduction

Like the previous variant, the *Armored Cavalry Option* offers a radically different force structure for the American military effort in Vietnam. However, this variant posits that instead of airmobile infantry or elite jungle fighters, the U.S. Army chose to rely on units of armored, fully tracked vehicles. The vulnerability of France's road-bound light tanks gave armor a bad name in counter-insurgency circles in the early '60's, but during the war, the Americans found that modern medium tanks, armored personnel carriers, and self-propelled artillery could grind across country, even forested and mountainous country, if assisted by engineers with bulldozers and portable bridges. By the time the Pentagon realized this, however, ceilings on manpower were already in effect, and the force structure was pretty well set. There were mechanized units in Vietnam, but this variant gives you a chance to see how effective they might have been as the centerpiece of the American battle force.

The US/ARVN

US/ARVN Objectives

Your objective is to relieve Plei Me and then push on up the Ia Drang valley, engaging and destroying any NVA units you encounter.

Victory Conditions: You must gain at least 100 Victory Points more than the NVA to win while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least four NVA for every one of your own. There are no automatic victory conditions in this variant.

US/ARVN Scenario Information

Start: 6 pm, October 23, 1965

End: 6 pm, November 15, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: Northeast

Replacements: 75 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
10/24/65	n	1st Bde HQ	Plei Me Turnoff	100%
		1/12 Acav Sq	Plei Me Turnoff	50%
		2/12 Acav Sq	Plei Me	100%
		1/8 Acav Sq	NE of Plei Me	100%
		2/7 Acav Sq	NW of Plei Me	100%
		1st ARVN Recon	US Sanctuary	100%
		B/1/9 Air cav	Plei Me Turnoff	100%
		3/18 Art Bn	Plei Me Turnoff	100%
		A/2/20 Aer Art	US Sanctuary	50%
		B/2/20 Aer Art	US Sanctuary	50%
		C/2/20 Aer Art	US Sanctuary	50%
		1st TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		2nd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		3rd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%

11/9/65	n	1st ARVN RngBn	Route 14	50%
		2nd ARVN RngBn	Route 14	50%
		3rd ARVN RngBn	Route 14	50%
11/11/65	m	7th Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	100%

Abbreviations:

Bde HQ = Brigade Headquarters

Art Bn = Artillery Battalion (self-propelled)

Acav Sq = Armored Cavalry Squadron

Aircav = Aircav Troop

TFS = Tactical Fighter Squadron

Aer Art = Aerial Artillery Company

RngBn = Ranger Battalion (Infantry)

Recon = Reconnaissance Battalion (Airmobile)

Bomb Wng = Bomber Wing

N, W, NW, etc. = Compass Bents

m, n = midnight, noon

Special Rules: To reflect the capture of a map containing NVA deployments on November 1, most NVA units will briefly become visible to the American player on November 2.

Commanding the US/ARVN

In this variant, unlike the previous three, you not only have overwhelming fire support, but also you have maneuver elements with considerable shock power. However, your mobility is quite limited. Therefore, your tactics should be considerably different. You should be as aggressive as possible, attacking NVA units whenever and wherever possible, doggedly pursuing the retreating enemy until you destroy him. Each of your units is very strong by itself, so don't worry about keeping them within supporting distance; just worry about making and then relentlessly keeping contact with the enemy. Your fire support is still important, but your main weapon is your troops on the ground. The only thing to remember is that it would take significantly longer for your armor to get into the battle zone, so expect that your enemy's plan is further advanced.

The NVA

NVA Objectives

Your first objective is to destroy the ARVN task force and capture Plei Me. However, once the American armor arrives, you will find that this is unlikely to happen. As in the other variants, your objective then becomes to inflict casualties on the Americans while suffering as few as possible yourself. You should also seek to recapture Victory Point locations after the US/ARVN leaves them.

Victory Conditions: You must prevent the US/ARVN from gaining 100 Victory Points more than you while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least one US/ARVN loss for every four of your own. There is no automatic victory in this variant.

NVA Scenario Information

Start: October 23, 1965

End: November 15, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Sufficient

Off-map Supply: Northwest and West

Replacements: 150 men and 2 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
10/28/65	m	H-15 VC Inf Bn	W of Chu Pong	50%
10/28/65	m	1/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		2/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		3/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		66th Mort Co	Cambodia	50%
		Ind Mort Co	Cambodia	50%
		Ind AA Bn	Cambodia	50%

Abbreviations:

VC = Viet Cong

Inf Bn = Infantry Battalion

W = West

Mort Co = Mortar Company

Ind = Independent

AA Bn = Anti-aircraft Battalion

m, n = midnight, noon

Special Rules: None

Commanding the NVA

Despite the difference in the American's force structure from the historical situation, your approach to the battle should be similar. If you have not already read the "Commanding the NVA" sections of variants one and two, do so now.

Nevertheless, there are a few differences in your position that are worth noting. Because the American armor is so strong, you must be even more careful not to engage in a stand-up fight against it. Instead, you should avoid them except when you can mass three or four infantry units and a mortar company against one lone Squadron. However, even in this case, you should not move adjacent, but instead should attack from one hex away, trying to inflict a few casualties before moving back out of range. Also remember that the ARVN units are considerably weaker than the American cavalry, so you might try drawing the Americans off to the north-west while keeping the bulk of your force hidden near Plei Me. Then you can fall upon the garrison and perhaps overrun it before the Americans can react.

VARIANT FIVE

The Final Mix

Introduction

As the war went on, the Army came to realize the need to mix the three types of forces: airmobile, elite infantry, and armor. Over the years, the Americans launched a series of mobile "Search and Destroy" operations against suspected NVA troop concentrations and bases, and gradually forged a combined arms team in which each element played its part. This variant gives you the opportunity to command a brigade that might have responded to the CIDG's call in 1967 or 1968.

The US/ARVN

US/ARVN Objectives

Your objective is to relieve Plei Me and then move up the Ia Drang valley, locating and destroying any enemy forces in that area.

Victory Conditions: You must gain 100 more Victory Points than the NVA while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least four NVA for every one of your own. There is no automatic victory for either side in this variant.

US/ARVN Scenario Information

Start: 6 pm, October 23, 1965

End: 6 pm, November 15, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: Northeast

Replacements: 75 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
10/23/65	m	2/19 Art Bn	NE of Plei Me	100%
		1/5 Cav Bn	SE of Duc Co	100%
10/24/65	n	1/12 Cav Bn	Plei Me	50%
		2/7 Acav Sq	Plei Me Turnoff	100%
		2/12 Acav Sq	Plei Me Turnoff	100%
		2/8 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		3/18 Art Bn	US Sanctuary	100%
		A/1/9 Aircav	US Sanctuary	100%
		B/1/9 Aircav	US Sanctuary	100%
		C/1/9 Aircav	US Sanctuary	100%
		1st TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		2nd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		3rd TFS	US Sanctuary	50%
		A/2/20 AerArt	US Sanctuary	50%
		B/2/20 AerArt	US Sanctuary	50%
11/10/65	n	1st ARVN RngBn	Duc Co	50%
		2nd ARVN RngBn	Duc Co	50%
		3rd ARVN RngBn	Duc Co	50%
		1st ARVN Recon	Duc Co	50%
11/11/65	m	7th Bomb Wing	US Sanctuary	100%

Abbreviations:

Art Bn = Artillery Battalion

Cav Bn = Cavalry Battalion

Acav Sq = Armored Cavalry Squadron

Aircav = Aircav Troop

TFS = Tactical Fighter Squadron

AerArt = Aerial Artillery Company

RngBn = Ranger Battalion (airmobile)

Recon = Reconnaissance Battalion (airmobile)

Bomb Wng = Bomber Wing

SE = Southeast

n, m = noon, midnight

Special Rules: To reflect the capture of a map containing NVA deployments on November 1, most NVA units will briefly become visible to the American player on November 2.

Commanding the US/ARVN

This scenario contains a balanced force, with which you should employ tactics from each of the preceding three as appropriate. The best way to prepare for this is to read the "Commanding the US/ARVN" section in each, and apply the advice to the appropriate forces. Beyond this, you should seek to create true combined arms tactics. For example, you might want to use airmobile infantry to envelope an NVA unit being attacked by one of

your armored cavalry squadrons. Or, you might try deliberately putting your light infantry in an exposed position, and then when the NVA attack it, suddenly helicopter your airmobile troops to its rescue. You should experiment with these and other tactics, trying to maximize the contribution of each element while compensating for its weaknesses with the others.

The NVA

NVA Objectives

Initially, you are to defeat the ARVN relief force and seize Plei Me. If US forces appear, you are to immediately withdraw and then harass them, inflicting maximum casualties while minimizing your own. You should also seek to maintain a presence in the Ia Drang valley.

Victory Conditions: You will win if you can keep the US/ARVN from gaining 100 Victory Points more than you while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least one US/ARVN casualty for every four of your own. There is no automatic victory in this variant.

NVA Scenario Information

Start: October 23, 1965

End: November 15, 1965

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Sufficient

Off-map Supply: Northwest and West

Replacements: 150 men and 2 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
11/2/65	m	H-15 VC Inf Bn	W of Chu Pong	50%
11/2/65	m	1/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		2/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		3/66 Inf Bn	Cambodia	50%
		66th Mort Co	Cambodia	50%
		Ind Mort Co	Cambodia	50%
		Ind AA Bn	Cambodia	50%

Abbreviations:

VC = Viet Cong

Inf Bn = Infantry Battalion

W = West

Mort Co = Mortar Company

Ind = Independent

AA Bn = Anti-aircraft Battalion

m = midnight

Special Rules: None

Commanding the NVA

Like the American commander, you will find that his force mix requires you to borrow ideas from all three of the preceding variants. If you have not read the "Commanding the NVA" sections, do so now, and draw ideas from each to contend with the different elements of his brigade. However, remember that the mix is different than each of the elements, and strategies that work against a homogeneous force may not work against a heterogeneous one. Like your foe, you must innovate to find the right combination of tactics to fit the situation.

GAME THREE THE TIDE TURNS: KHE SANH, 1968

Historical Background:

War American Style

America's victory in the Ia Drang valley dramatically turned the tide of war. Before the battle, American policymakers worried how long the South could hold out. Afterwards they began to draw up timetables for victory.

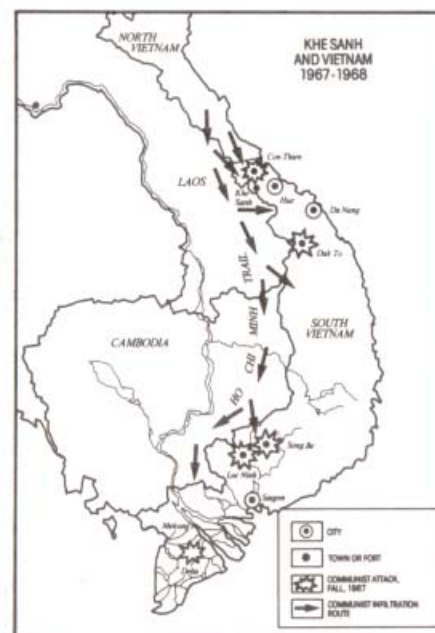
The American's new confidence reflected not just their technological superiority, but also the overwhelming numbers of men and machines they were bringing to bear. By the end of 1965 America had committed 180,000 troops; by the end of 1966 the total exceeded 420,000; and it rose by another 100,000 before the escalation came to an end.

With them the Americans brought a panoply of modern machinery, from helicopters and tanks to refrigerators and automated warehouses. They created huge bases for their aircraft and logistical services, complete with everything from oil tank farms to swimming pools and lawn sprinklers. It was war on an expense account, and it had serious effects on both the American and Vietnamese economies.

This massive support network backed up an incredible array of modern military might. Soldiers patrolled carrying a new, light weight rifle made from space-age plastics. Armored personnel carriers sporting multiple machine-guns behind specially created gun-shields served as assault vehicles, while armored, self-propelled artillery crawled along jungle trails to offer fire support. In the waterlogged Mekong Delta an entire infantry division was equipped for riverine operations with boats ranging from rubber dingies and assault landing craft to monitors and barracks ships. Helicopters served everywhere and as everything from ambulances to gunships, but most especially as a transport for soldiers, artillery, and supplies.

Overhead, jet aircraft rained a hail of bombs on both South and North Vietnam. Giant

B-52 intercontinental bombers flew thousands of miles from Okinawa and Guam to drop scores of 750-pound bombs with pin-point accuracy. Smaller fighter-bombers flew from bases in South Vietnam, Thailand, and aircraft carriers offshore to attack strategic targets and provide tactical air support. Converted transports dumped tons of defoliants on the jungle to deny the enemy its cover, while other planes seeded the clouds to make rain that would hinder enemy movements. Most impressive to many soldiers were the "Spookies", old C-47's with the cargo bay doors removed. These slowly circled American positions at night, dropping million candle-power flares and literally hosing down the landscape with three miniguns that fired 18,000 rounds per minute.



At closer quarters, Army Green Berets and Navy SEALs adopted and refined the enemy's terrorist tactics, combining centuries-old martial arts with the latest James Bond style spy technology. Meanwhile intelligence technicians in air-conditioned offices monitored electronic sensors scattered along the infiltration routes through Laos and Cambodia known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, directing the fires of long range artillery and aircraft on unseen enemy columns. Other technicians worked to create a computerized ID system intended to keep tabs on the entire South Vietnamese population.

This last effort was doubly necessary because the escalating scale of military and civic actions was uprooting a sizeable proportion of the South Vietnamese population. At the same time, the ocean of wealth the Americans brought caused an unprecedented upheaval in South Vietnamese society. Millions of Vietnamese fled or were forced out of the countryside and as they flocked to the cities they discovered a new world. Money was easily made by hook or by crook, and could buy an incredible variety of consumer luxuries unthinkable a few years before. Unlike France, which had fought at arms length, the America embraced Vietnam in a bear hug of reformist zeal.

General Westmoreland, commander of this vast juggernaut, estimated that if Washington gave him free reign, the issue would be settled by the beginning of 1968.

However, while Westmoreland had a blank check from Secretary of Defense McNamara to request whatever troop levels and material were necessary from a purely military point of view, he did not have the same freedom diplomatically. Fearing that moves into Laos and Cambodia would trigger a war with Red China, Washington denied him permission to send his soldiers into Communist sanctuary areas along the border.

Therefore, Westmoreland pursued a strategy of attrition. While ARVN units guarded the heavily populated coastal lowlands, American units took the fight into Communist base areas in the remote jungles and mountains. The goal of these "Search and Destroy" missions was primarily to bring the enemy to battle and secondarily to destroy the facilities and supplies in the base camps. The word came to have more ominous connotations when the Americans moved into more populous provinces to root out the military support network the Communists had created within the peasantry. Strongly pro-Communist areas were designated "free-fire zones", in which anything that moved could be killed and anything that didn't could be blown up or burned down.

Whether out in the "boonies" or in amongst the "villes", American operations centered on aggressive patrolling, vertical envelopment, and overwhelming fire support. When acting on concrete intelligence, one unit would generally move overland into the area of enemy activity while several others would be lifted into blocking positions on likely routes of retreat. Far more often, however, the Americans simply sent patrols out in regular search patterns to find and fix the enemy so that artillery in nearby firebases and aircraft on station overhead could deliver their lethal loads. It was a brutal game of cat and mouse, with American infantry acting as live bait.



DAY: 9

CODE: ATTLEBORO

The American war effort cost an enormous amount: billions of American dollars spent, millions of Vietnamese lives destroyed or uprooted, thousands of American boys shipped home in body bags. The results were difficult to gauge. By American standards we were winning. The statistics on tons of supplies captured, miles of roads deared, numbers of villages secured, and of course the all important body count of enemy dead all pointed at the same conclusion. However, critics of the war and increasingly members of the policy-making establishment in Washington questioned whether these statistics meant anything against an enemy operating from a secure base, backed by two great powers (China and Russia) only too happy to supply the wherewithal of war, and led by men who had been fighting for forty years. As the war moved into its third year, America remained optimistic, but the signs of strain were beginning to appear.

The Communist Response

The North Vietnamese, for their part, funnelled increasing numbers of troops down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to match American escalations, and they and the Viet Cong adapted as best they could to the new warfare. In part they perfected old tactics: Americans encountered mines and booby-traps far more often than enemy soldiers, and most shooting engagements began with an ambush by a sniper or small detachment. Even more than before, the Communists would seek to inflict casualties and then break contact quickly, before the shells and bombs began to arrive. Similarly, mortars and rockets would send a quick shower of explosives into an American position and then displace before their position erupted in flames.

Beyond these tried and proven techniques, the NVA and VC created a new set of tactics designed for the new war. Probable helicopter landing zones were studded with obstacles to catch rotors or ensnare debarking troops. If units were too heavily engaged to withdraw, they deliberately drew nearer to the Americans, knowing that the artillery would not shell their own troops. In other circumstances, knowing the American preoccupation with body counts, the NVA would have one or two men move in the open, inviting the American to shoot at them. Then, when the excited Americans rushed into the kill-zone to count the bodies, hidden VC would open fire, more than evening the score.

One of the most important Communist innovations was a vast extension of the tunnel networks underneath their base areas. During the French war, the Viet Minh had excavated shelters underneath friendly villages, where they would store supplies and hide when French soldiers appeared. Against the Americans' massive bomber fleet and sophisticated surveillance devices the tunnels provided some measure of protection, and as the pressure on the base areas built, the tunnels became longer and deeper. Some of the bases became literal ant-hills, with tunnels fifteen miles long and too deep for even B-52 strikes to destroy. Often, when the Americans launched one of their huge offensives, the Communists scurried underground, where they could hide out or make their way to safety. Some GI's, known as "tunnel rats", specialized in exploring the mazes, and American engineers developed a variety of techniques to deal with the tunnels, including smoke, explosives, and poison gas. The true extent of the tunnel systems and the impact made by the Americans will not be known until North Vietnam opens its archives, if any records exist, but the evidence suggests that they were extremely extensive, and that Americans were not able to seriously threaten them.

By these and a thousand other tactics the Communists bled the Americans and kept the war going. If they could not beat the US forces in open battle, they could generally avoid open battle and thus could avoid defeat in the war. They suffered horrendous casualties, but they inflicted serious losses in return. And the Communists, fighting (as they saw it) to liberate their homeland, were willing to accept the carnage. The Americans, fighting for

the more abstract concepts of anti-communism, national honor, and geopolitical advantage, were less certain of the price they were willing to pay. The South Vietnamese, the objects of this escalating conflict, appear to have had little idea why they were fighting at all.

The Opposing Strategies

By mid-1967 the American command, flush with statistical success, exuded optimism. Westmoreland knew that the war was far from won, but he felt that we were winning. Consequently, all that was needed in his estimation was more of the same: more troops, more bombs, and more technology. These would in turn produce more: more miles of road open, more villages secured, more enemy soldiers killed. The previous two years had produced some hard fighting and a lot of frustration, but the end seemed to be a matter of time, money, and manpower.

The North Vietnamese leadership was divided over the best course of action for its forces. One group, led by party theoretician Truong Chinh, argued that the war should be scaled back, that the leaders of a protracted war must allow for ebbs as well as flows. General Nguyen Chi Thanh, the commander of the forces in the South, seconded him. He knew first hand the terrifying power of the American juggernaut; he had endured mainly defeat and retreat for over a year, and had seen his ranks decimated in a monstrous game of chicken. Better to let the Americans tire of an endless guerrilla war, they argued, and then overturn the weak running dogs in Saigon once the Americans were gone.

Other members of the ruling circles opposed this approach. They, too, recognized that the battle of attrition was going against them, that the Americans were indeed beginning to kill North Vietnamese soldiers faster than they could be replaced. But, led by the venerable Minister of War Giap, they argued that North Vietnam should undertake a bold offensive to defeat the Americans quickly. They held that time was not on North Vietnam's side in a protracted war. America was gradually if clumsily gaining control over the Southern population through a combination of military force, clandestine operations, civic action, social upheaval, economic penetration, and cultural osmosis. If left alone, South Vietnam might well go the way of Taiwan and South Korea. By the time the Americans were gone, the ruling elite would be firmly entrenched in a westernized, rapidly modernizing state. And by that time, they, the aging leaders of the original revolution, would be dead.

Giap proposed instead to deliver a body blow that would shake South Vietnam to its core. Since the early days of the French war, he had always pushed to move beyond guerrilla tactics to the third phase of revolutionary war, conventional confrontation. Several times he had been bloodied, but eventually his determination had paid off at Dien Bien Phu. Now, once again, he pressed for a grab at decisive victory. The politbureau endorsed his plan in the Spring of 1967. Ironically his victory was sealed that summer when General Tanh was killed in a B-52 strike.

The Battle of Khe Sanh

Khe Sanh Besieged

In October of 1967, Giap launched phase one of his plan. North Vietnamese forces besieged and assaulted an American garrison at Con Thien, but were repulsed by a wall of expertly massed firepower. Next, North Vietnamese stormed Loc Ninh and Song Be near Saigon. Westmoreland shifted units from the north and bitter fighting raged until the end of November. Meanwhile, the NVA attacked Dak To, drawing much of two divisions and the entire 173rd Airborne Brigade into a ferocious 22 day battle. Then, in December, the Communists initiated the most massive battle ever fought in the Delta.

In January, the climax of Phase One began in the northwestern corner of South Vietnam. The US Marines had established a Combat Base at Khe Sanh, like Dien Bien Phu a remote outpost astride an important infiltration route. Like Dien Bien Phu, Khe Sanh was to serve as a forward base for patrols and aircraft to interdict these routes. Like Dien Bien Phu, Khe Sanh was surrounded by high mountains, and was soon besieged and cut off. Like Dien Bien Phu, Khe Sanh's outer fortresses on surrounding hills were the first targets of attacks, and as at Dien Bien Phu one of the besieging Communist divisions was the elite 304th.

Beginning with the first NVA attacks on January 21, 1968, General Westmoreland, President Johnson, and eventually the whole American public became mesmerized by the valiant stand by the beleaguered band of 6,000 Marines.

Westmoreland, like Navarre fifteen years before him, regarded the siege as an opportunity to use his superior firepower to break the enemy's back in a conventional confrontation. He was confident that the Marines, who unlike the French held both a relatively high plateau and the high ground overlooking it, would be able to hold out, given the massive air transport, artillery, and bombing resources available to them.

All these strengths notwithstanding, though, President Johnson lived in anguish that the base would fall, perhaps because he himself had been so instrumental in blocking American intervention to save Dien Bien Phu. He had a model of the base constructed in the basement of the White House, where he would brood about it at night. He received daily briefings on the situation and even demanded a written guarantee from the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the fortress would not fall.

Finally, the American public became entranced as nightly newscasts beamed pictures of the shell-rocked base and the frantic efforts to supply it. Gritty Marine riflemen, space age bombing technology, and the prospect of screaming waves of fanatical orientals: Khe Sanh had it all. For day after day, the garrison, the Saigon command, the White House, and the American public waited in growing suspense, wondering when the blow would fall. Every day hidden guns pounded the base, while anti-aircraft guns contested the skies above it. Electronic sensors confirmed the presence of large bodies of enemy soldiers in the hills and jungles. Somewhere out there, the enemy was massing. Sometime soon, the enemy must strike.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Uncertainty about the enemy's objectives played a crucial role in the battle for Khe Sanh. IN ORDER TO PLAY AN HISTORICALLY ACCURATE GAME, YOU ARE ADVISED TO PLAY AMERICAN SIDE OF VARIANT ONE BEFORE YOU READ ANY FURTHER.

The Blow

Ten days after the siege began, the enemy did strike.

However, they did not strike at Khe Sanh. Carefully choosing the first day of Tet, Vietnam's most important holiday and traditionally the occasion for a brief truce, the Communists launched an ambitious offensive against towns and cities up and down the length of the South Vietnam. Over a three day period Viet Cong urban cells and VC regulars infiltrated in from the countryside staged a series of revolts intended to spark a general uprising.

The North Vietnamese army provided some shock troops, but generally remained in the background, ready to reinforce successes and deal with those ARVN units that did not disintegrate in the expected political upheaval. The blow, if successful, would confront the Americans with the political and military collapse of their ostensible host. They would,

in Hanoi's calculations, have no choice but to negotiate and withdraw.

While the offensive was a master-stroke that caught the Americans and South Vietnamese completely off guard, it completely failed to achieve its objectives. The South Vietnamese people did not rise up, the ARVN did not collapse, and almost everywhere the insurgents were quickly routed, with terrible casualties. Westmoreland, who at first regarded the attacks as a diversion from Khe Sanh, was soon elated by the strength allied forces had shown and the damage they had dealt the enemy. He requested permission to pursue the beaten foe into his sanctuaries, and for 200,000 more men with which to do it.

His request for yet more men, and a yet wider war, caused a crisis in Washington. The Army in Vietnam could only be brought up to that strength by mobilizing the reserves. This move would be economically disruptive and politically difficult, since it would have drawn in family men who could vote. Difficult at any time, such a move was clearly impossible amidst the gathering storm of controversy over the war. While the military regarded the Tet Offensive as a notable victory, the press and public were shocked that an enemy thought to be on the ropes could mount such a huge offensive. A squad of VC had attacked the American embassy in Saigon, and the ancient citadel at Hue fell to enemy attackers who then held out for two months. The bitter house-to-house fighting only came to an end when US artillery and aircraft reduced the ancient monument to rubble. For many Americans, including many of the policymakers who had led the country into war, that battle epitomized the hopelessness of a war that was destroying the very things it sought to save.

The anti-war movement in America had been growing steadily since the beginning of American involvement, but until the Tet Offensive it had had little impact on policy. Now, with the military's claims of imminent victory belied by the enemy's attacks, many more Americans began to question whether the war was right. Many opinion leaders in the press and in public life turned against the constant escalations, and advocated instead a negotiated settlement. This shift climaxed when the man who had overseen the military effort, Secretary of Defense McNamara, resigned. His replacement, Johnson's old friend and confidant Clark Clifford, was at the time and had always been a staunch supporter of the war. However, when he ordered a thoroughgoing analysis of the situation, what he learned changed his mind. The situation was bleak. Even with the additional troops there was no guarantee that the outlook would improve any time soon, for the NVA had been largely unscathed in Tet, except for a measured outpouring of blood in the peripheral battles.

On March 12, avowed peace candidate Eugene McCarthy nearly tied President Johnson in the bell-weather primary in New Hampshire. Soon Robert Kennedy took up the peace banner, and Johnson saw his political position unravel. And still, he had not made up his mind about the requested reinforcements. He commissioned a blue ribbon panel with venerable military figures like Matthew Ridgeway and Omar Bradley and elder statesmen like Dean Acheson and George Ball. They were briefed by experts from the CIA, the State Department, and the Pentagon. After the panel delivered its verdict, Johnson interrogated the men who had briefed it. Despite the favorable kill-ratios and the miles of highways cleared, there was no end in sight.

On March 22, Johnson announced the long planned transfer of General Westmoreland back to Washington. With his departure in June would come the end of the big unit battles of attrition. On March 31, Khe Sanh, which had endured 77 tense and on a few occasions intense days of shelling and siege, was relieved. That evening, President Johnson went on television to announce a freeze on troop levels, a limit on the air war against North Vietnam, and an overture to the Communist regime to negotiate a settlement. He also announced that he would not seek a second term as President.

Giap's offensive had failed to shatter South Vietnam's shaky government, but it had shaken America to its core. It was the decisive battle that turned the tide of the war.

Guide to the Game

In *The Tide Turns: Khe Sanh, 1968*, you control the forces in the crucial northern province, Quang Tri. As the US/ARVN commander you command the Third Marine Division guarding the DMZ, along with the Khe Sanh combat base and miscellaneous ARVN units. As NVA commander you lead the divisions besieging Khe Sanh, those along the DMZ, and those which will deliver the Tet offensive in the area. The stakes are high: the war may be won or lost in a day.

The Variants consist of the historical situation (variant one) plus a series of unidentified variants. These contain different NVA deployments for the Tet Offensive. It is recommended that you play the American in variant one before reading about the other variants.

Thereafter, you should play the NVA in the historical situation, and then go on to the random variants. You can play them in any order you choose, taking the American side first, and then later try the NVA. There are three possible situations in variants two through four, and the fifth randomly picks one of them, so you can play the US/ARVN with uncertainty about NVA intentions as many times as you like.

VARIANT ONE

The Historical Situation

Introduction

In this variant the two antagonists square off for the show-down using their historical deployments and strategies. Both sides knew that something decisive was about to happen, and both did their best to position themselves for the moment of crisis. The eyes of the world focused on the beleaguered garrison of Khe Sanh, and held its breath waiting for the onslaught to begin.

The US/ARVN

US/ARVN Objectives

As commander of the American and South Vietnamese forces in Quang Tri province, you are responsible for the security of the population and the defense of the border from infiltration or invasion. Most of all, though, you must maintain the combat base at Khe Sanh. Everyone up the Chain of Command to the President himself is breathing down your neck. If you blow it there, America will lose its first war and your career will be shot.

Victory Conditions: You must prevent the NVA from gaining 50 or more Victory Points, while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of three NVA for every one of your own. You cannot win an automatic decisive victory, but beware: the NVA can by capturing any critical location.

US/ARVN Variant Information

Start: 1am, January 21, 1968

End: 6 pm, February 4, 1968

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply: Ample

Off-map Supply: East

Replacements: 75 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

attack failed, although successes elsewhere in South Vietnam more than made up for it. Can you make it work?

Victory Conditions: You must gain at least 50 Victory Points, while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio by suffering fewer than three losses for each you inflict. You can gain an automatic decisive victory by capturing any one of the three critical locations: Quang Tri, Dong Ha, or Khe Sanh.

NVA Scenario Information

Start: January 21, 1968

End: February 4, 1968

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: North and South

Replacement Rate: 125 men and 2 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: In order to keep you from noticing where the NVA reinforcements appear if you were leafing through the book before playing the US/ARVN side, the reinforcement schedule for the NVA forces is given in paragraph form for this variant.

Your forces for the Tet Offensive appear on January 30. They consist of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions of the 812th NVA Regiment, the 101st Sapper (assault engineer) Battalion, and the 1st VC Battalion, which all arrive around Quang Tri City and Mai Linh. The 324th Artillery Battalion (with heavy mortars and light artillery pieces) appears two hexes to the northeast, while the VC 2nd and 3rd Battalions appear seven hexes to the north-northeast and eleven hexes to the northwest, respectively.

Commanding the NVA

As NVA commander in the north, you will play a crucial role in the coming showdown. You must balance your need to create credible distractions around Khe Sanh and along the DMZ against the cost in lives and equipment American airpower will exact. You should keep something going in each place at all times, such as long periods of shelling by artillery punctuated by probing attacks and feints. Never lose sight of your goal: to draw the US/ARVN forces away from the towns in the lowlands to give your assault elements there the best chance possible. You may also want to try to infiltrate additional forces to support your attack on the cities, although you should be careful that one doesn't stumble into the enemy and destroy all your careful diversions. Once your reinforcements arrive, you should make an all out effort to capture their critical objective. Do not neglect to use the VC forces to hold up enemy reserves.

VARIANTS TWO THROUGH FOUR

Alternative Communist Strategies

Introduction

The historical attacks by the North Vietnamese in the North were consistent with their strategy throughout the country. However, even within that overall strategy, they could have chosen a different approach locally, since there were several other critical points in the northern front. Variants two through four allow you to explore these possibilities in a way that recreates the American commanders' uncertainty about Communist intentions. You can choose to play these variants in any order, but you are advised to play the US/ARVN side first. Once you have learned the various strategies, you can then go back and play as the NVA.

The US/ARVN

US/ARVN Objectives

As in the historical variant, your goal in all of these variants is to protect the cities, defend the DMZ, and hold Khe Sanh.

Victory Conditions: You must prevent the NVA from gaining more than 50 Victory Points, while maintaining a casualty ratio of more than three NVA losses for each of your own. You cannot achieve an automatic victory, but you must watch out to prevent the NVA from capturing any one of the three critical locations.

Variant Information

Start: 1am, January 21, 1968

End: 6 pm, February 4, 1968

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: East

Replacements: 75 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
1/23/68	m	1st USN FS	US Sanctuary	100%
		2nd USN FS	US Sanctuary	100%
		4th USAF FS	US Sanctuary	100%
		5th USAF FS	US Sanctuary	100%
		1st Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	100%
2/1/68	n	2nd Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	100%
		3rd Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	100%
		A/2/20 AerArt	US Sanctuary	100%
2/2/68	n	B/2/20 AerArt	US Sanctuary	*
		2/1 Mar Bn	E of Mai Linh	*
2/3/68	n	3/1 Mar Bn	E of Mai Linh	*
		1/7 Cav Bn	W of Mai Linh	*
		1/8 Cav Bn	W of Mai Linh	*
		A/1/9 Air Cav	W of Mai Linh	*
		5th ARVN Abn Bn	W of Mai Linh	*
		2/17 Art Bn	W of Mai Linh	*
		2/19 Art Bn	W of Mai Linh	*

*These reinforcements will only be released by higher headquarters if the strategic situation warrants it. The date given is the earliest they may appear.

Abbreviations:

USN = US Navy

USAF = US Air Force

FS = (Tactical) Fighter Squadron

Bomb Wng = Bomber Wing

Mar Bn = Marine Battalion

Cav Bn = Cavalry Battalion

Abn Bn = Airborne Battalion

Aer Art = Aerial Artillery Battery

m, n = midnight, noon

Special Rules:

1. To reflect the extensive use of electronic sensor by the Americans, some hidden NVA units will be revealed during the course of play.

2. Due to the size of the battle area, it is recommended that players with Commodore,

Atari, and IBM computers move the cursor with the keyboard's fast cursor controls rather than a joystick.

Commanding the US/ARVN

Your situation is the same as in the historical variant. If you have not read the "Commanding the US/ARVN" section for that variant, you should do so now.

The NVA

WARNING: DO NOT READ THIS SECTION UNTIL YOU HAVE PLAYED THE US/ARVN COMMANDER IN ALL THE VARIANTS.

NVA Objectives

The variants contain three different Tet attacks, so your specific objectives will vary. One of the situations repeats the historical strategy. A second involves an attack across the DMZ, aimed at the crucial river-crossing at Dong Ha. The third posits an assault on the Marines at Khe Sanh.

Victory Conditions: Despite the differing objectives, your goals in each of the variants is the same: to capture at least 50 Victory Points while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least one US/ARVN for every three of your own. You can gain an automatic decisive victory by capturing any one of the three critical locations: Quang Tri, Dong Ha, or Khe Sanh.

NVA Scenario Information

Start: January 21, 1968

End: February 4, 1968

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: North and South

Replacement Rate: 125 men and 2 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: In order to keep you from noticing where the NVA reinforcements appear if you were leafing through the book before playing the US/ARVN side, the reinforcement schedules for the NVA forces are given in paragraph form in these variants.

Variant four recreates the historical attack on Quang Tri City. Your forces for the Tet Offensive appear on January 30. They consist of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions of the 812th NVA Regiment, the 10th Sapper (assault engineer) Battalion, and the 1st VC Battalion, and come in around Quang Tri City and Mai Linh. The 324th Artillery Battalion (with heavy mortars and light artillery pieces) appears two hexes to the northeast, while the VC 2nd and 3rd Battalions appear seven hexes to the north-northeast and eleven hexes to the northwest, respectively.



DAY: 10
CODE: NEVADA EAGLE

Variant three presents the second possible NVA strategy, an attack across the DMZ against the Marine's fortified line of defense. To carry out this assault, at midnight on January 30 the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 803rd Regiment, the two artillery battalions of the 324th Division, two independent tank regiments, and the two battalions of the 164th Artillery Regiment appear along the DMZ, with the armor concentrated at the boundary between the US Marine and the ARVN positions. In addition, at noon on February 1st, the 2nd battalion of the 803rd will appear to the southeast of Dong Ha.

The third possibility, presented in variant two, postulates that the expected attack on Khe Sanh base takes place. Reinforcements consist of the 29th, 803rd, and 812th Regiments (which are called battalions in the text display), along with an independent tank regiment. These appear adjacent to the Combat Base in an arc from the northeast to the southwest, with the tanks moving up the road. So be careful not to put units in these hexes, lest you block the reinforcements from entering.

Special Rules: None

Commanding the NVA

Your strategy will naturally depend on which of the three possible attacks you intend to make.

If you chose the historical approach, you should follow the guidelines given for variant one. If you have not yet read the "Commanding the NVA" section of that variant, do so now.

If you chose to attack across the DMZ, you should do everything possible to draw American reserves toward Khe Sanh. You could even try a feint against Quang Tri City a day or two before your main assault. You should also realize that you are likely to suffer staggering casualties from the 3rd Marine Division and US airpower, so you should aim not to reduce each fortress in turn, but instead should try to infiltrate enough units through the line to stage an attack on Dong Ha. To do this, you can even try moving units in behind the Marines from the West, while using your forces in the DMZ to tie down the US/ARVN reserves.

If you chose to go after the Khe Sanh, just remember to pound it with all the artillery you can. Try to overrun one or two of the outposts so you can mass your maximum effort against the base when your reinforcements appear (remember not to block their entry hexes, though, especially the road where the tanks appear). Then, when the new units arrive, attack like crazy.

VARIANT FIVE

The Variant Randomizer

This variant chooses one of the preceding six (variants two through seven) at random for you. Once you have discovered the NVA strategies, you can choose this variant to play games as the US/ARVN with true uncertainty about the NVA objectives.



DAY: 11
CODE: MACON

GAME FOUR EMPTY FISHHOOK: CAMBODIA, 1970

Historical Background

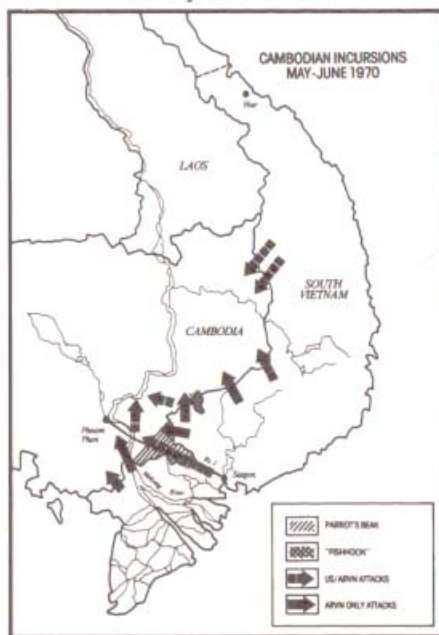
War and Politics

Napoleon once observed: "In war, the morale is to the physical as three is to one." Johnson's announcement that American escalation and his own political career would end on the same day that the Americans "won" the battle of Khe Sanh demonstrated that Napoleon's dictum was as true in 1968 as it had been in 1808. All America's battlefield successes had not brought victory; one weak Communist offensive had turned the tide of war.

The biggest loser in 1968 was Johnson's Democratic Party. Torn between the architects and opponents of the war and numbed by the assassination of its leading candidate, Robert Kennedy, the party's fate was sealed when Democratic Mayor Daley's police viciously attacked anti-war demonstrators and bystanders outside the party convention in Chicago. Vice-President Hubert Humphrey won the Democratic nomination, but lost the election to Republican Richard Nixon, who ran on the promise that he had a secret plan to end American participation in the war on honorable terms.

Nixon Takes Command

Once in office, Nixon commissioned a review of American policy and then embarked on a three part policy to disengage with honor. The first part was to continue the negotiations with the Communists begun during the last days of the Johnson administration. The second was to gradually withdraw American troops. The third, which complemented the second, was to gradually turn responsibility for the fighting over to the South Vietnamese. Thus, he hoped to placate the growing opposition to the war without committing himself to a policy that would necessarily end the war.



Formal negotiations had begun on May 10, 1968, but soon degenerated into endless procedural haggling. It took, for instance, seven months to agree on the shape of the table (both the Viet Cong and the South Vietnamese felt that to sit alongside their allies at a rectangular table would be taken as a sign of dependency, while neither was willing to concede the other the legitimacy a square would have conferred). To break this log-jam, Nixon had his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, meet secretly with a senior official in the North Vietnamese government, Le Duc Tho. The two principals talked more freely during these meetings, but they, like the formal sessions, dragged on. The Americans wanted to settle, but for moral and

geopolitical reasons refused to accept conditions they felt would look like they were dumping the South Vietnamese. The North Vietnamese were just playing for time.

The reason the North Vietnamese played for time at the talks is that Nixon's second policy was steadily reducing the number of American troops, and with them the Allies' battlefield superiority. Emergency reinforcements after Tet brought American troops levels to a high of 540,000, but by the end of 1969 the total had dropped to 485,000, and they would fall to 335,000 by the end of 1970. Coupled with the powerful air forces and bountiful logistical apparatus, the American army was still a considerable force, but its aggressiveness began to decline as it ceased to pursue victory.

The third part of Nixon's program, "Vietnamization," slowly but surely turned over to the South Vietnamese responsibility for the war. The ARVN ground and VNAF air forces expanded and adopted modern equipment from the departing Americans, while the South Vietnamese logistical and specialized services were modernized. While corruption and political favoritism continued to plague the Southern war effort, its armed forces were becoming for the first time a considerable factor on the battlefield.

"Vietnamization" of the war was helped greatly by the fact that during the lull following the Tet Offensive South Vietnam made significant strides toward consolidating as a state. The enemy's all-out attack had destroyed the Viet Cong as a military force; NVA soldiers manned the divisions that were ostensibly VC. America's campaign of attrition, while not decisive, had hurt the North Vietnamese Army very badly as well. Mostly it hovered along the borders near its sanctuaries. Support for the Communists ran too deep to eradicate in some provinces, but in most the people began to make their peace with the South Vietnamese government. Communist atrocities in Hue while they controlled it had disillusioned many Vietnamese, and the American's departure increased the government's stature as an independent entity. What opposition remained was ruthlessly suppressed by the Phoenix program, a joint CIA and military campaign of assassination and terror. The Americans and South Vietnamese government appeared to be gaining the upper hand once again.

Cambodia and Vietnam

The only cloud on the horizon was the continued presence of the NVA along the border. Despite the increasing ARVN strength, the NVA was still a more formidable force. Man for man and unit for unit it was superior, and it was numerically as strong. Given that a numerical advantage of three to one is generally needed to sustain an offensive in conventional war and ten to one is held to be essential to win a guerilla war, the NVA clearly posed a mortal danger to the South Vietnamese.

Cognizant of this danger, the American forces continued to seek battle. They actually staged more operations than before Tet, although these were generally on a smaller scale. Despite their exertions, though, they seldom brought the enemy to battle. Just as Giap was willing to sacrifice the Viet Cong military structure in the Tet Offensive, he was willing to sacrifice its political apparatus during the American withdrawal. He calculated that if the NVA was destroyed, the Communists would eventually lose even if the VC survived, while if the VC disappeared the Communists could still win as long as the NVA survived.

Frustrated, Nixon authorized increasing military action against the Communist base areas in neutral territory. In March, 1969, American warplanes began an intensive bombing campaign, which was kept secret for political and diplomatic reasons. These failed to disrupt the NVA, however, because they simply moved deeper into Cambodia. Their presence became more and more of a challenge to the Cambodian government, and so in early 1970 the neutralist Prince Sihanouk went to Moscow to try to get Russia to pressure the North

Vietnamese to withdraw. While he was gone, his long-time aide, General Lon Nol, staged a coup and installed a more strongly anti-Communist government. America sent money and arms, and fighting between the Cambodian army and the NVA increased.

In late April Nixon decided to make a bold move: a ground attack by US and ARVN forces against the NVA bases in Cambodia. American troops would generally spearhead the advance, but would remain close to the border, while ARVN units would range more deeply. The major objectives were the area known as the "Parrot's Beak" near Saigon, the Mekong River and Highway 1 between the border and Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, and the "Fishhook" region northwest of Saigon. The Parrot's Beak was the major Communist staging area for attacks into the populous southern provinces and Saigon. The river and highway were essential lines of supply for the Cambodian government. The Fishhook was a major base area and suspected location of COSVN, the Communist headquarters for South Vietnam. Other operations were launched against smaller base camps. Together, these moves were intended to destroy the Communist ability to stage offensives for a vital year or two.

Overall, the invasion, or incursions as the diplomats preferred to call them, went well. 15,000 American and 5,000 ARVN troops began moving across the border on April 29, and overran the border sanctuaries against fairly light opposition. Nixon limited the Americans to an area within 20 miles of the border, and promised that they would remain in the country no later than June 30. The ARVN forces, eventually reinforced to 40,000 men, pushed more deeply, clearing the river and highway to Phnom Penh. Other deep South Vietnamese drives faltered, but these reverses seemed unimportant compared to the successes. The Americans and ARVN had captured huge amounts of supplies, destroyed much of the enemy's physical plant, and killed thousands of enemy soldiers. The NVA would not be able to undertake a significant offensive for at least a year.

The Battle of the Fishhook

The Fishhook operation began with an intensive air and artillery bombardment. Thereafter, ARVN paratroopers helicoptered into positions north of the suspected Communist base, while American armored cavalry moved up from the Southeast and airmobile infantry and mechanized forces attacked from the southwest. ARVN armored cavalry and infantry patrolled to the east. It was a prototypical operation, differing only in scale from the small unit actions that took place daily all over Vietnam.

WARNING: Surprise was an important element in the Fishhook operation. IN ORDER TO PLAY AN HISTORICALLY ACCURATE GAME, YOU ARE ADVISED TO PLAY THE AMERICAN SIDE OF VARIANT ONE BEFORE YOU READ ANY FURTHER.

The operation met with mixed success. Despite the obvious need for surprise to catch COSVN, the operation got under way two days after the first incursions to the south. Not surprisingly, the attackers did not find COSVN, although how much difference the delay



DAY: 12
CODE: HENDERSON HILL

made is not known. Otherwise, the Americans crushed what little opposition the NVA put up and discovered huge amounts of supplies. One base area to the northwest of the initial objective was so vast the American troops dubbed it "The City." In all, the Americans captured enough heavy weapons to arm 33 Communist battalions, and enough small arms to equip them plus 22 more. COSVN escaped and few NVA were killed, but the operation had still dealt the NVA a heavy blow.

In the United States, the Cambodian incursions stirred up a hornet's nest. Anti-war protests broke out across the country, culminating in the shooting deaths of four teenagers at Kent State University by National Guardsmen. Even the war's supporters were shocked by the tragedy, and the country was convulsed by protests. The killings at Kent State symbolized the gulf that had come to divide America.

The big losers from the invasion, though, were the Cambodians. Having maintained a precarious neutrality for 15 years, the Cambodian government was now fully involved, and as America disengaged from Southeast Asia, Lon Nol gradually lost control of the country to the NVA and the Khmer Rouge, the Cambodian Communists. Once victorious, the Khmer Rouge murdered 2,000,000 people through executions, forced migrations, and slave labor. Eventually the Vietnamese intervened and imposed a client government, but this started a guerrilla war that continues to this day. Once signifying a peaceful backwater, "Cambodia" has become another name for atrocity.

Guide to the Game

In *Empty Fishhook*, you command the American or North Vietnamese during what is, except for its political importance, a typical Search and Destroy mission. It differs little except in scale from the huge, multi-divisional operations of the late sixties and the small-unit sweeps conducted all over Vietnam each day throughout the war. Whether executed by platoons or brigades, the principle was the same: airmobile infantry helicoptered into blocking positions while ground troops pushed into a suspected enemy concentrations. When they flushed out some NVA, they would call in the firepower, and afterwards move through and count the bodies. Sometimes the Communists reacted violently, harassing the Americans or digging in and defending stubbornly. Mostly, though, the American "grunts" just moved through empty jungle, discovering an occasional supply cache and smoking out tunnels.

Empty Fishhook's variants enable you to command in all these situations and experience the uncertainty that faced American commanders in each one. The first variant is historical, recreating North Vietnamese deployments as they were. Variants two through seven contain different Communist deployments, which as the American commander you cannot see until your forces search for them. After you play each one, you can try it as the NVA commander. Once you have played all of them, you can select variant eight, which will randomly choose from the previous seven.



DAY: 13
CODE: MASHER

VARIANT ONE

The Historical Variant

Introduction

In this variant you face the same situation as the historical commanders. Since the Americans at the time were very uncertain about what they would find, it is recommended that you play the Americans before reading about or playing the NVA.

The US/ARVN

US/ARVN Objectives

As commander of the US/ARVN task force in the Fishhook region, you are to cross the border, sweep the suspected base areas, eliminate all enemy resistance, destroy COSVN, the Communist command structure, and secure all base enemy facilities.

Victory Conditions: You must capture and maintain control of Victory Point locations, and destroy base complexes and COSVN units worth 300 Victory Points while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of four NVA for every one of your own. There are no automatic victory conditions in this variant.

US/ARVN Scenario Information

Starting Date: 11 am, May 1, 1970

End Date: 6 pm, May 6, 1970

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Replacement Rate: 65 men and 10 heavy weapons each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
5/3/70	n	2/5 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/7 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/8 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/19 Art Bn	US Sanctuary	50%

Abbreviations:

Cav Bn = Cavalry Battalion Art Bn = Artillery Battalion n = noon

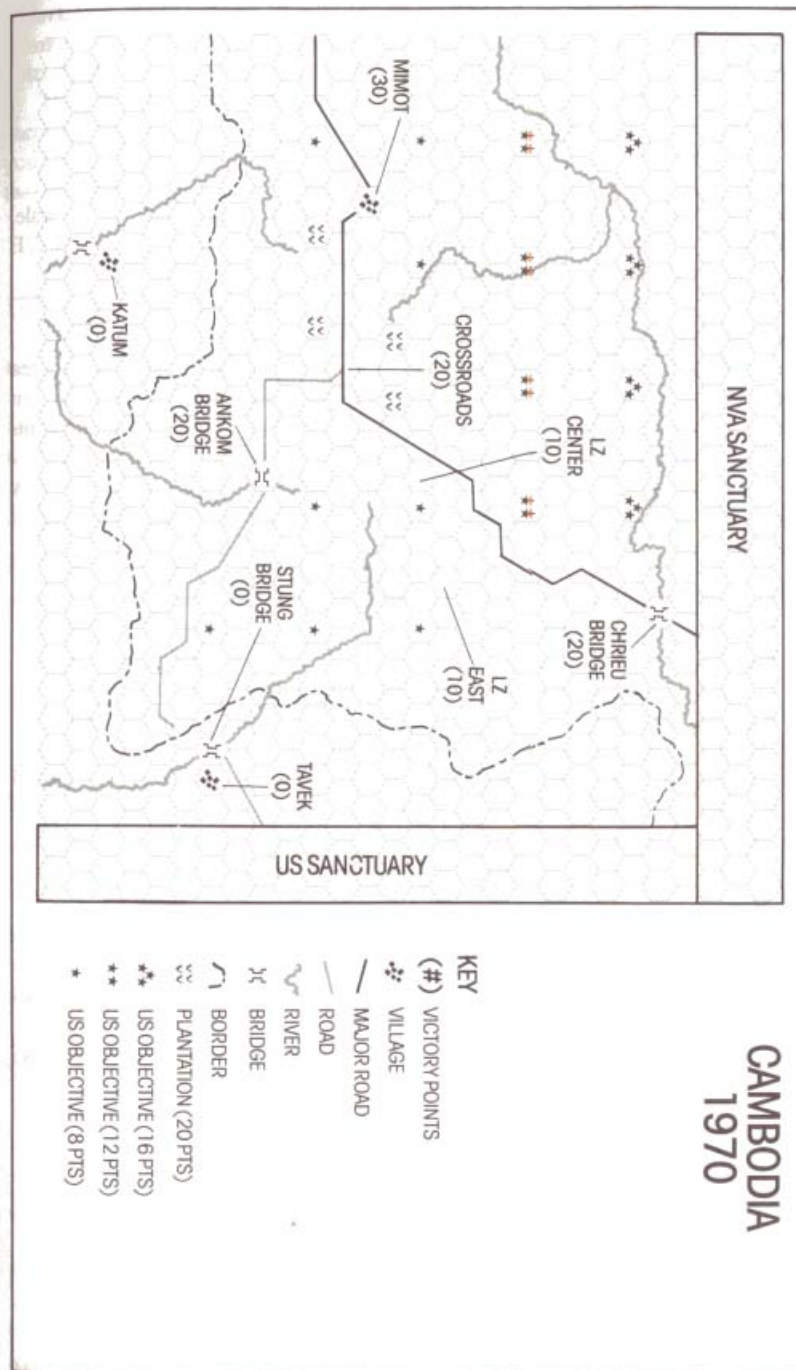
Special Rules: None

Commanding the Americans

As the operation opens, your forces are deployed in a cordon around the objective area. You need only move your mechanized units north toward the ARVN paratroopers that have just helicoptered into blocking positions across the border. As these pincers close, the



DAY: 14
CODE: CEDAR FALLS



enemy will be caught in the squeeze. Those that get away to the north should be intercepted by the 1/9 aircav, while those that move east will run into the ARVN 1st Armored Cavalry Squadron. Once you have swept the objective, you should send units into the other areas of the map in order to search for additional base camps. Good luck and good hunting!

The NVA

WARNING: Uncertainty about NVA deployments played an important role in the battle. YOU ARE ADVISED NOT TO READ ANY FURTHER UNTIL YOU HAVE PLAYED THE VARIANT AS THE AMERICANS.

NVA Objectives

You begin with a substantial margin of victory. You will gradually lose it as the Americans occupy territory inside Cambodia and destroy bases and headquarters. You can dispute control of some areas by secretly retaking VP locations, but the biggest determinants of victory are the bases destroyed and casualty ratios.

Victory Conditions: To win, you must limit the Americans to fewer than 300 Victory Points while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of one US/ARVN loss for every four of yours.

NVA Variant Information

Starting Date: 11am, May 1, 1970

End Date: 6pm, May 6, 1970

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: None

Replacement Rate: 125 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: None

Special Rules: None

Commanding the NVA

The army high command has anticipated this move by the Americans and decided to avoid the blow by pulling back COSVN and most units, even though some supplies and facilities must be sacrificed. As rear-guard commander, you are to cause the invaders what casualties you can and then withdraw your forces to the north. Your task is not an easy one, but remember: every enemy you kill brings victory closer; every comrade's life you preserve will add to the next blow.



DAY: 15
CODE: STARLIGHT

VARIANTS TWO THROUGH SEVEN

Alternative NVA Deployments

Introduction

These variants contain a number of different NVA deployments that could have been encountered in the Fishhook operation. You are advised to play the US/ARVN first, so that your initial encounter with each situation will be fresh. After you have played a variant as the US/ARVN, you can then try it as the NVA.

The US/ARVN

US/ARVN Objectives

Your situation is the same as in the historical one. You must search the area with your task force and destroy any NVA units, bases, and headquarters elements you encounter.

Victory Conditions: You must capture Victory Point locations and eliminate bases and headquarters worth at least 300 Victory Points, while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least four NVA for every one of your own.

US/ARVN Variant Information

Starting Date: 11am, May 1, 1970

End Date: 6pm, May 6, 1970 (low opposition variants)

6pm, May 12, 1970 (high opposition variants)

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Replacement Rate: 62 men and 10 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
5/3/70	n	2/5 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/7 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/8 Cav Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
		2/19 Art Bn	US Sanctuary	50%
5/6/70	n	1st Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	*

*These reinforcements will only be released by higher headquarters if the operational situation warrants it.

Abbreviations:

Cav Bn = Cavalry Battalion

Bomb Wng = Bomber Wing

Art Bn = Artillery Battalion

n = noon

Special Rules: None

Commanding the US/ARVN

As you begin, your situation is the same as in the historical variant. If you have not yet read the "Commanding the US/ARVN" section of that variant, do so now. However, the force you encounter may be quite different. The NVA 7th Division is known to be operating in the area, but what elements are in your objective are not known. Furthermore, COSVN may or may not be present. After you have played these variants, you will have experienced a cross section of operations commanded by American officers.

The NVA

NVA Objectives

Your objective will vary greatly, depending on the forces at your command. If elements of COSVN are present, your first priority is to protect them and move them from the danger zone. If you have a large force, you are to defend tenaciously, forcing the US/ARVN to pay for every inch of territory. If you have a light force, you should harass the enemy and then withdraw north into sanctuary areas.

Victory Conditions: You must prevent the US/ARVN from accumulating more than 300 Victory Points while maintaining a favorable casualty ratio of at least one enemy for every four of your own.

NVA Variant Information

Starting Date: 11am, May 1, 1970

End Date: 6 pm, May 6, 1970 (light opposition variants)
6 pm, May 12, 1970 (heavy opposition variants)

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Replacement Rate: 125 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: None

Special Rules: None

Commanding the NVA

Your strategy will depend upon the variant. In the low strength variants your goal is similar to the historical one: cause as much damage as possible while preserving as much of your own force as possible. At the other extreme, if you have most or all of a division, you should make the Americans pay in blood for their invasion. Hunker down and fight as long and hard as possible, and then try to save the survivors. In the less extreme situations, your strategy should blend the two: when conditions are right, dig in your heels; when not, hit and run. Whenever elements of COSVN are present, you should put a high priority on distracting the Americans and rushing the VIPs north to your sanctuary area.

VARIANT EIGHT

The Variant Randomizer

This variant will choose one of the preceding six at random for you. Once you have discovered the NVA deployments in them, you can choose this variant in order to continue to play games as the US/ARVN with uncertainty about what you will be up against.



DAY: 16

CODE: JUNCTION CITY

GAME FIVE

FIRST CRACKS: QUANG TRI, 1972

Historical Background

America Bows Out

Whatever the cost, the invasion of Cambodia did set the North Vietnamese back a year. Negotiations, withdrawal, and Vietnamization all proceeded apace. The negotiations got nowhere, for the same reasons as before: the Americans refused to blatantly cut and run, while the North Vietnamese saw no reason to compromise since the Americans were leaving. American troop levels dropped to 335,000 by the end of 1970, and then to 158,000 by the end of 1971. The South Vietnamese armed forces continued to expand and modernize, and undertook an ambitious offensive against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos.

Morale among the remaining American troops sank in pace with their numbers. Aware that they were just buying time, a growing proportion rebelled against service. Many sported anti-war symbols and adopted the anti-Establishment views of the counter-culture that emerged in the late '60s at home. Discipline became lax, drug use soared, and race relations soured. In many units the officers and men shared an understanding that their primary goal was to minimize casualties. Officers who insisted on gung-ho spirit were sometimes killed, shot in the back during battle or riddled by fragments from grenades tossed into their quarters.

While the role of American soldiers declined, that of its airmen, helicopter pilots, and supply sergeants rose. ARVN forces did increase in numbers and effectiveness, but were of very uneven quality and were still weakened by ethnic and political favoritism in the officer corps. Most of the elite units, the First Infantry Division, the Rangers, the Marines, and the Paratroopers, gave a good account of themselves, but other divisions performed poorly. All showed at least as much reliance on artillery and air support as the Americans

had. The militia and paramilitary forces were numerous and well equipped, but their morale, and hence combat effectiveness, was low. The Regional and Popular Forces were known as "Ruff/Puff's" while the Military Police were called "White Mice" after the color of their helmets and their general demeanor.

Operation Lam Son 719

The ARVN's uneven quality was demonstrated in 1971 in its biggest operation, LAM SON 719, the attack into Laos against the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Transported and supported by American aircraft, two divisions advanced slowly across the rugged terrain, carving out a series of firebases as they went. For the first few days the advance proceeded easily, but soon NVA reinforcements



arrived and resistance stiffened. American air support proved less helpful than planned because the ARVN's American advisors, who had served as liaison with the planes, could not enter Laos with their units. The ARVN clawed tooth and nail through the defenses to their objective, Tchepone, in some of the bitterest ground fighting of the war. They took Tchepone after a month, and scoured the area for supply dumps and transport facilities.

When they turned to leave, though, they found their narrow corridor lined with NVA troops, artillery, and a sizeable force of tanks. These attacked with incredible ferocity, enduring staggering losses from air and ground fire to press in on the outnumbered and exhausted ARVN task force. Some of the South Vietnamese units disintegrated, while others held together precariously until American choppers came to their rescue. The operation succeeded in disrupting the NVA's supply lines temporarily, forestalling an offensive in 1971. But the rout at the end looked as bad on television as it felt in real life, and the spoiling attack only delayed the next North Vietnamese offensive by a few months.

The Battle For Quang Tri

With American troop levels down to about 150,000 at the end of 1971, the North Vietnamese seized the initiative while the winter monsoons kept American aircraft grounded. On March 30 they launched the long-awaited offensive. This time, the surprise was not its occurrence, but its form. Along the length of the country, and especially across the Demilitarized Zone dividing the two Vietnams, the NVA launched big unit conventional assaults, led by numerous tanks and backed by the devastating firepower of new Soviet 130mm field guns. The ARVN reeled under the blow, but with the help of American airpower repulsed most of the attacks.

Along the DMZ, however, the ARVN collapsed. In the first week of fighting the mechanized NVA attack broke through the border defenses, mauling the newly formed 3rd Division. Its remnants, a Marine brigade, a new armored regiment, and some RF/PFs were barely able to hold at the first natural line of defense, the Cua Viet River. The command in Saigon rushed Rangers and Marines northwards, and the fighting bogged down. The NVA had difficulty coordinating their tanks and infantry, and the elite ARVN units held determinedly. The NVA kept up the pressure, though, and on April 28 the ARVN cracked. Ironically, the retreat began when a squadron of the 20th Armored Regiment began a planned redeployment to the rear. Unfortunately, neighboring soldiers thought that it was an unplanned retreat and panicked. Soon the whole line was headed backward. The Marines and Rangers fought a rear-guard action, but the rest of the ARVN melted away. The NVA occupied the capital of the northernmost province, Quang Tri City, on May 1, and pressed onward toward Hue.

The crack ARVN 1st Infantry Division halted the enemy just outside Hue, and as the weather cleared American airpower began to pound the NVA, softening up defenses for local counter-attacks, breaking up NVA attacks, and suppressing the fearsome 130mm guns. Moreover, President Nixon resumed limited bombing attacks against the North to choke off the Northerners' supply lines and to warn them of America's power. Most dramatically, he authorized the mining of Haiphong Harbor, the main conduit for Russian supplies.

The ARVN launched a counteroffensive in early summer, but the Northerners dug in and defended their recently won ground. The NVA suffered grievous casualties, but the ARVN made only gradual progress. They did not retake Quang Tri until September 17, and could claim to have expelled the invaders at the end of October.

The South Vietnamese repulsed the invasion, but they had needed the full support of American airpower to do it. The NVA lost three or four times as many men as the ARVN,

much material, and most importantly were denied a final victory. Still, the Easter attack must be judged a success for the North Vietnamese. If the South Vietnamese wall had not come tumbling down, it had shown its first cracks.

Epilogue

Peace

President Nixon initiated the bombing to help stop the North Vietnamese offensive, and then unleashed it with full fury when the peace negotiations stalled once again late in 1972. The two sides could talk, but remained fundamentally deadlocked. The North Vietnamese insisted that a conciliatory regime replace South Vietnamese President Thieu's government as a precondition to settlement, while the Americans insisted that the NVA withdraw from South Vietnamese territory. Finally losing patience with the North Vietnamese strategy of "talk, talk; fight, fight", Nixon gave the Air Force and Navy permission to mount an unrestricted bombing campaign.

For eleven days B-52s and fighter-bombers lashed at hitherto prohibited targets in Hanoi and Haiphong. Using precision bombing, the planes managed to devastate industrial and transportation facilities while minimizing civilian casualties. Only a little over a thousand were inadvertently obliterated during the onslaught. The Americans lost heavily to the North Vietnamese anti-aircraft defenses, which included both interceptors and surface-to-air missiles. The enemy shot thousands of the latter, which accounted for most of the 15 B-52s and 11 other planes brought down. Once they ran out of missiles, however, the Americans had free rein in the skies. The air battle ended only when the Americans ran out of targets, the North Vietnamese having indicated four days earlier a willingness to negotiate seriously once the bombing ended.

The peace, scarcely different from a draft hammered out in October, was signed on January 27, 1973. Thieu remained in office, but North Vietnamese units in the South remained in place. Thieu's government had gained some more time, but the North Vietnamese had maintained a foothold in the South. The accord was much ballyhooed at the time, including a Nobel Peace Prize for the two chief negotiators, Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. Kissinger accepted, but his North Vietnamese counterpart declined the honor, for the leaders of both halves of Vietnam saw the accord for what it was: a truce.

The Fall of South Vietnam

In 1973 the South Vietnamese controlled about 80% of their own territory, and the NVA occupied the rest. The Easter offensive had cost the North Vietnamese so dearly they were in no position to hinder Thieu's consolidation of power in the areas he controlled. He had over a year in which to forge an independent state. He failed.

The NVA used the time and freedom from American airpower to create an elaborate logistical system capable of sustaining large scale conventional operations. The Soviet Union provided substantial amounts of modern equipment and plenty of ammunition and supplies.

While Thieu's regime fought to consolidate its hold on the country and the North Vietnamese patiently hacked out improved roads and created huge supply depots, several outside events radically altered the balance of power and enabled the NVA to end the war with one blow.

The first was the Watergate affair. Nixon's government became paralyzed by a political crisis of its own making. By engaging in and then attempting to cover up illegal espionage against the opposition Democratic Party headquarters, Nixon's administration came to pose

a far greater threat to American Democracy than Vietnamese Communism. Establishing the truth and then ousting the President became America's overriding priorities. The process rapidly eroded his political power. With it went his ability to deploy American military forces and hence to enforce the peace agreement. Congress increasingly restricted his freedom of action. On August 9, 1974 he resigned rather than face impeachment.

The second outside event was the Yom Kippur War in the Middle East. This had two effects. First, it diverted much American military material away from South Vietnam. Second, an Arab embargo on oil to the West stimulated the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to form a cartel and begin a series of price hikes that vastly increased the price of energy. Modeled on the mechanized American army, ARVN operations were suddenly constricted as the price of fuel skyrocketed. With American aid dwindling, the ARVN was losing its edge in conventional warfare to the well supplied NVA.

The South Vietnamese' biggest weakness, however, was apathy, corruption, and disillusionment in the ARVN and the rest of society. Even as the final hour approached, Saigon's elite engaged in frenzied financial dealings. Their implacable self-interest set the tone for the rest of the country. When the Communist offensive struck in early 1975, it advanced like a sharp ax through a rotten log.

First, the NVA seized Phuoc Long province. When the Americans made no move in support of Thieu, he had no choice but to write off the whole province. Encouraged, the North Vietnamese moved on to their next phase, an attack against Ban Me Thout in the Central Highlands that quickly destroyed an ARVN division.

When Ban Me Thout fell, Thieu decided to consolidate his forces by abandoning sparsely populated sections of the country in favor of the populous heartlands along the coast and in the Mekong Delta. However valid this strategic withdrawal was in theory, a deliberate retreat in the face of enemy attack is one of the most difficult military maneuvers, and the ARVN was not up to it. Poorly planned and organized, the retreat from the Highlands turned into a rout, and the NVA swept into the northern half of the country. Advancing boldly, the Communists captured Hue and Danang after little fighting.

Then, shifting their weight for the final blow, the Northerners turned on Saigon. The ARVN 18th Division made a valiant stand at Xuan Loc, waiting, like the French at Dien Bien Phu 21 years before, for American bombers that never came. What American aircraft did appear in the skies over the South were helicopters evacuating Americans and selected Vietnamese from the rooftop of the American embassy in Saigon. The NVA massed four divisions against the solitary ARVN 18th, and overwhelmed it. With resistance crumbling everywhere, the North Vietnamese entered Saigon on April 30, 1975, and renamed it in honor of Ho Chi Minh. The war was over.

Guide to the Game

The North Vietnamese Easter Offensive opened the final, conventional phase in the war. Just as the Viet Minh had moved from political agitation and establishing remote bases to protracted guerrilla war to a conventional coup de grace at Dien Bien Phu, so, too, the North Vietnamese moved through the same progression from the late 1950s through the early 1970s against the South Vietnamese. Only this time, the Communists attacked not one isolated outpost, but all over the country. Furthermore, they employed modern medium tanks and the latest Soviet long range artillery, which easily outclassed the ARVN's older equipment. Particularly in the early fighting in Quang Tri province the battle resembled World War II, with tanks sweeping across open countryside and bitter infantry battles at close quarters. It was a gritty and at times desperate fight.

First Cracks contains two variants: a short historical one, *Blitzkrieg*, and a long historical one, *The Battle for Quang Tri*. You can play either side first in *Blitzkrieg*, but it is recommended that you play the ARVN in *The Battle for Quang Tri* first, since that variant contains some surprises.

VARIANT ONE

Blitzkrieg

Introduction

Blitzkrieg recreates the shattering first week of the North Vietnamese offensive. The NVA attacked south across the DMZ and east out of the Khe Sanh area, led by tanks and backed by heavy artillery. Their goal is to push through the ARVN border defenses and breach the natural line of defense along the Cua Viet River. Opposing them are one low quality ARVN infantry division and a miscellany of crack units. Will the North Vietnamese be able to crack open the front, or will the ARVN coalesce into a firm defensive line? The answer depends on you!

The ARVN

ARVN Objectives

As commander of the 3rd ARVN division and attached units, your job is to guard the DMZ and western approaches to Quang Tri City. When the NVA onslaught opens, you must parry it in order to buy time for reserves to move up from the south.

Victory Conditions: You must prevent the NVA from capturing 100 or more Victory Points, while inflicting at least three NVA casualties for every two your forces suffer. You cannot gain an automatic victory in this variant, but be careful because the NVA will if they capture two critical locations.

ARVN Variant Information

Start: 1 am, March 30, 1972

End: 6 pm, April 6, 1972

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: East

Replacement Rate: 25 men per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
3//30/72	m	17ACR	East edge	50%
4//1/72	m	1st Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	50%
		2nd Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	33%
4//2/72	m	258 MarHQ	Beach	50%
		1/258 Mar Bn	Beach	50%
		2/258 Mar Bn	Beach	50%
		3/258 Mar Bn	Beach	50%
4//3/72	n	1/1 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4//3/72	m	2/1 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4//4/72	n	3/1 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%

4/4/72	m	1/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/5/72	n	2/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/5/72	m	3/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/6/72	n	4/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
		115 TFS	US Sanctuary	100%
		232 TFS	US Sanctuary	100%

Abbreviations:

- ACR = Armored Cavalry Regiment
- Bomb Wng = Bomber Wing
- MarHQ = Marine Headquarters
- Mar Bn = Marine Battalion
- Rng Bn = Ranger Battalion
- TFS = Tactical Fighter Squadron
- Beach = Coastal hexes east of Luong Kim
- East edge = Road on east edge of map
- m, n = midnight, noon

Special Rule: To reflect the demoralization of the ARVN in the face of the initial NVA attack, ARVN units are particularly unsteady during the first few days of combat.

Commanding the ARVN

You are in a very difficult position. The NVA have a three to one advantage in numbers and they also have a qualitative edge, particularly in artillery. You must move your reserves forward as quickly as possible and establish a line of fortified positions along the Cua Viet River. Remember to put your best units, the armor or Marines, in Dong Ha. It is the linchpin of your whole position.

The NVA

NVA Victory Conditions:

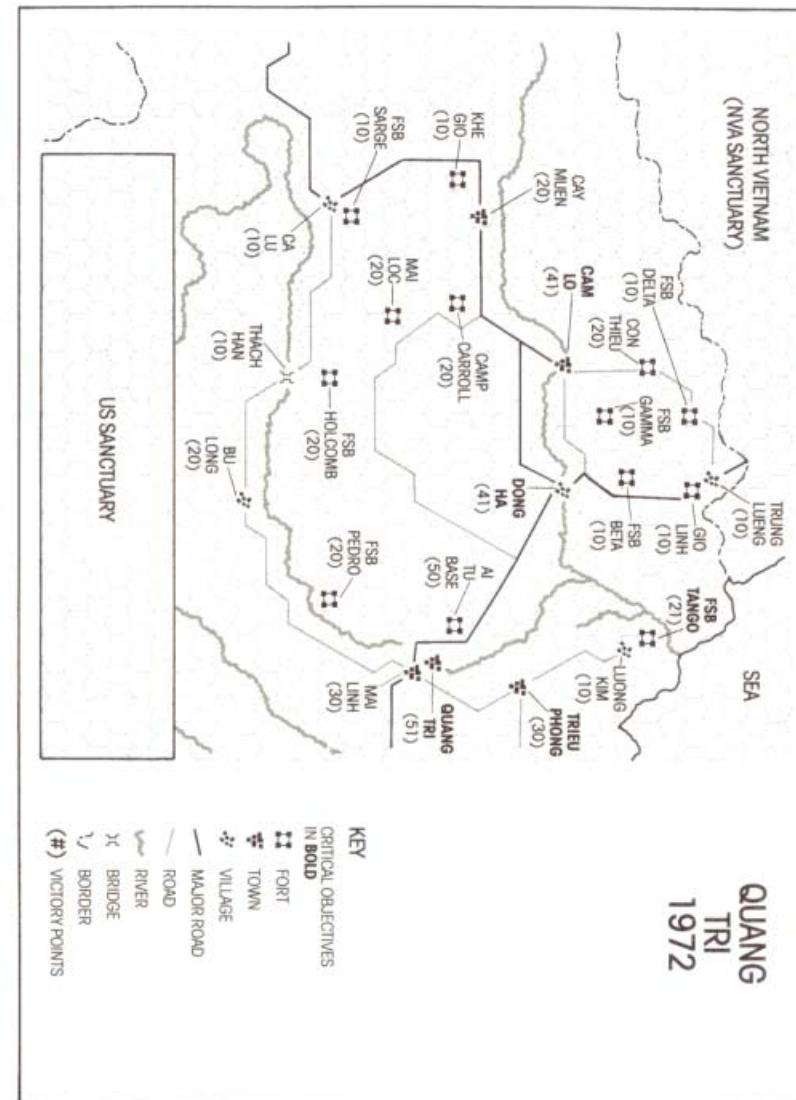
You must capture Victory Point locations worth at least 100 Victory Points while causing at least two casualties for every three you suffer. You can win an immediate automatic victory by capturing two critical locations.

NVA Variant Information

- Start:** 1 am, March 30, 1972
- End:** 6 pm, April 6, 1972
- Initial Supply:** Ample
- Resupply Rate:** Ample
- Off-map Supply:** Northwest
- Replacement Rate:** 50 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week
- Reinforcements:** None

Commanding the NVA

As commander of the revolutionary forces poised to strike at the South Vietnamese border defenses, your task is to drive hard and fast to shatter them before American airpower and ARVN reinforcements can come into play. Your artillery is your strongest asset, so you should use it instead of ground troops whenever possible. Meanwhile, the armor and infantry should move forward, pushing as deep into enemy territory as possible. Avoid at all costs a static battle, for once the ARVN fortify you will find it difficult to dislodge them.



VARIANT TWO

The Battle for Quang Tri

Introduction

This variant recreates the full NVA offensive from the initial attacks to the fall of Quang Tri City. It is a long and taxing scenario, but rewards play with a tense and challenging game.

The ARVN

ARVN Objectives

Your objective is to stem the North Vietnamese tide. In particular, you must defend the populous lowlands, along the coast.

Victory Conditions: You must keep the NVA from gaining more than 300 Victory Points by defending Victory Point locations and inflicting at least three NVA casualties for every two the ARVN suffer. You cannot win an automatic decisive victory, but beware: the NVA can by capturing all four critical locations (Dong Ha, FSB Tango, Trieu Phong, and Quang Tri).

ARVN Variant Information

Start: 1am, March 30, 1972

End: 6pm, May 1, 1972

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: East

Replacement Rate: 25 men per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
3/30/72	m	17ACR	East edge	50%
4/1/72	m	1st Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	50%
		2nd Bomb Wng	US Sanctuary	33%
4/2/72	m	258 MarHQ	Beach	50%
		1/258 Mar Bn	Beach	50%
		2/258 Mar Bn	Beach	50%
		3/258 Mar Bn	Beach	50%
4/3/72	n	1/1 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/3/72	m	2/1 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/4/72	n	3/1 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/4/72	m	1/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/5/72	n	2/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/5/72	m	3/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/6/72	n	4/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
		115 TFS	US Sanctuary	100%
		232 TFS	US Sanctuary	100%
4/6/72	m	5/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/7/72	n	6/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/7/72	m	7/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
4/8/72	n	8/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%

4/8/72	m	9/5 Rng Bn	Quang Tri City	100%
		212 TFS	US Sanctuary	100%
		224 TFS	US Sanctuary	100%
4/10/72	n	18th ACR	East edge	50%
4/11/72	m	4th ACR	East edge	25%

Abbreviations:

ACR = Armored Cavalry Regiment

Bomb Wng = Bomber Wing

MarHQ = Marine Headquarters

Mar Bn = Marine Battalion

Rng Bn = Ranger Battalion

TFS = Tactical Fighter Squadron

Beach = Coastal hexes east of Luong Kim

East edge = Road on east edge of map

m, n = midnight, noon

Special Rules:

1. To reflect the demoralization of the ARVN in the face of the initial NVA attack, ARVN units are particularly unsteady during the first few days.

2. Because the ARVN's morale was very brittle, they may become very weak under pressure during the course of the game.

Commanding the ARVN

Once again, you start off in command of the ARVN 3rd Division plus attached units defending against the primary NVA attack. You must do your best to hold back the onslaught while reinforcements arrive. With these you should be able to form a solid defensive line, and perhaps even begin to counterattack. Your airpower should be concentrated against the NVA artillery, because this is the backbone of the enemy offensive.

The NVA

NVA Objectives

Your objective is to break through the ARVN border defenses and drive on the important provincial capital Quang Tri City.

Victory Conditions: You must gain 300 Victory Points or more by capturing territory and maintaining a loss rate no more than 50% greater than the ARVN. You can win an automatic decisive victory by capturing four critical locations (Dong Ha, FSB Tango, Trieu Phong, and Quang Tri).

NVA Variant Information

Start: 1am, March 30, 1972

End: 6pm, May 1, 1972

Initial Supply: Ample

Resupply Rate: Ample

Off-map Supply: Northwest

Replacement Rate: 50 men and 5 heavy weapons per unit each week

Reinforcements: (see chart)

Reinforcements:

Date	Time	Unit	Location	Probability
4/7/72	n	308 DivHQ	North edge	100%
		1/88 Inf Bn	North edge	100%
		2/88 Inf Bn	North edge	100%
		3/88 Inf Bn	North edge	100%
		1/102 Inf Bn	North edge	100%

	2/102 Inf Bn	North edge	100%
	3/102 Inf Bn	North edge	100%
	308 Art Bn	North edge	100%
	308 Art Bn	North edge	100%
4/7/72	m	1/36 Inf Bn	North edge
		2/36 Inf Bn	North edge
		3/36 Inf Bn	North edge

Abbreviations:

DivHQ = Divisional Headquarters

Art Bn = Artillery Battalion

Inf Bn = Infantry Battalion

m, n = midnight, noon

Special Rules: Because of pre-planning and special training, your troops will be at their most effective during the first week of the attack.

Commanding the NVA

In this variant, your strategy should be similar to that in *Blitzkrieg*: use your artillery to smash ARVN resistance while your armor and infantry to press forward relentlessly. Always push into empty territory. Grab as much as possible, as fast as possible, to disrupt enemy defensive positions and encircle enemy units. Do not stop even if your units become very depleted, for once a solid front is formed, your units will become easy prey for American airpower. The key is to utilize your artillery to the maximum and press your ground troops ever forward.

V
Notes



INTRODUCTION

This section consists of two parts, the Designers' Notes and the Recommended Readings. The Designers' Notes contain reflections of the design of CONFLICT IN VIETNAM and some concluding observations about the war itself. The Recommended Readings list the books and articles that proved helpful in preparing the games, and includes brief comments about their contents, strong points, and weaknesses.

Designer's Notes

Comments on the Game Design

Like any historical reconstruction, a computer simulation involves many judgements about what to include or not include, and how to present what is included. Some features of a game represent deliberate design decisions, while others involve "lesser of the two evils" compromises with sources of information, computer memory, and the designers' endurance. Whatever the cause, these decisions deserve mention, particularly in a simulation as unusual as CONFLICT IN VIETNAM.

The first decision was which battles to simulate. The number, five, is the greatest number we could fit onto a disk. The choices represent a trade-off between the importance of a battle and its suitability as a game. Dien Bien Phu, Khe Sanh, and Cambodia were included primarily because of their importance in the history of the war. Ia Drang and Quang Tri were attractive because they are tense and tightly balanced contests, and therefore make particularly good game situations. These distinctions are relative and not absolute, of course. Both Ia Drang and Quang Tri were important battles, even though they were not well known. The Khe Sanh game also presents a tense contest, while the Cambodia and Dien Bien Phu games include a variety of challenging combats amongst the variants.

The second decision that has raised questions is the scale. Most commentary on the war has focused either on the very tactical level (individual experiences and small unit actions), or on the strategic and diplomatic issues of why we got involved and how we conducted national policy. That split focus has left a gap in the middle, the operational level which implements strategies by coordinating tactics. CONFLICT IN VIETNAM fills that gap. The War in Vietnam was, after all, a war, not just a series of disjointed fire-fights and not some abstract chess game played upon the world stage. Our officers led our soldiers across a series of battlefields, and how they maneuvered and fought had much to do with the outcome.

A third, related question, concerns the relationship between game-play and reality. When I showed the simulation to some officers who had commanded in Vietnam, they pointed out that operationally the basic maneuver element was the company and the basic artillery unit was the battery, whereas in the game they are the battalion. However, further discussion revealed that in practice, when contact was made, companies would pile on and batteries would concentrate within range, so that the effect was of battalion strength operations. Given the complexity that tripling the number of units would have created, we are satisfied that we have achieved a reasonable compromise between reality and simulation.

Another, more technical question raised by the officers was the question of unit designations. The military has a very precise way of identifying units, a way which makes a lot of sense for their purposes, but which is both complex and difficult to understand. Its complexity makes it expensive in terms of memory to reproduce on a computer, while its technicality makes it difficult for civilians to understand. Therefore, we chose a system of

nomenclature that conveys the spirit of the military system but streamlines it for the computer and simplifies it for civilians.

Furthermore, for the sake of both the computer and the player the American system of unit designations has been carried over to the North and South Vietnamese armies. The South Vietnamese system was generally modeled on the American, but its correspondence to the game system is lower. The NVA actually numbered each battalion separately, but since sources for these are lacking, the system adopted seemed as good as any.

Movement rates were another problem. A battalion moving through dense jungle might travel little more than a mile in a day, while a battalion in trucks could move many miles per hour. To some extent, this disparity is reduced when we realize that both a convoy of trucks will move rather slowly if mines and ambushes are a danger, and that to move a battalion involves more than just trucking a bunch of men around. In the game, a unit can move a long distance quite quickly, but it will arrive at reduced effectiveness and will require a good while to regain it.

One issue which aroused strong feelings was what to call losses on the status display screen. For a while, the display kept track of only those men killed in action, the body count. This figure was calculated by dividing the American casualties by one factor and the NVA by another. However, we reverted to total casualties for two reasons. One was to avoid offending those who lost relatives in Vietnam and therefore might find it offensive to count bodies, even in simulation. Second, the body count creates a misleading impression of the casualty ratios, because many Americans survived wounds that would have killed Vietnamese.

The last issue that has raised questions is the level of sophistication incorporated into CONFLICT IN VIETNAM. Very early in the design process we decided not to ease play by making a "World War II in the jungle" game. Instead we strove to simulate war in Vietnam as closely as possible. Commanders on both sides confronted unique challenges. The Americans had unprecedented mobility and overwhelming firepower, but found it difficult to locate the enemy and bring the weight of ordnance to bear. The North Vietnamese had to move and strike carefully, or their units were decimated to no effect. Both had to learn the value of patience and meticulous planning. The playtesters found that they confronted the same problems, and came up with the same solutions, as their historical counterparts. We are confident that anyone interested in knowing more about the war will find CONFLICT IN VIETNAM a satisfying challenge and an illuminating experience. We have included hints on play from the playtesters, but there is no substitute for first hand experience. Boot up the game and play! When you do, you will discover what made Vietnam a uniquely challenging military situation.

Historical Observations

The War in Vietnam was an overwhelming fact of life for Americans who lived through it, including those who did not serve there. It was on TV, in the newspapers, and in conversations. More than anything else it divided the generations and propelled many young people into radical politics and alternative cultures.

Consequently, it is difficult to recognize that the war is now history, as much a part of the past for the generation coming of age in the 1980s as World War II and the Korean War were for that which came of age in the late '60's. This fact did not hit home until I began researching the topic, using the skills as a professional historian I acquired in the late 1970s to look again at the events I had lived through the decade before. As I worked on the game, I was reminded of many of the issues that preoccupied America during the war years, and I gradually formed new perspectives on them, perspectives shaped by distance and informed

by the wealth of material that has appeared since then.

The most basic issue was what the war was about. Having gone back into the French phase in designing the simulation, it appears to me that the war was about two things: whether Vietnam would be independent, and, once independent, what kind of society it would be. The French war settled the issue of liberation: as elsewhere in the post-war world, European colonialism was defeated, and the Vietnamese took their place amongst the politically sovereign peoples of the world. However, the French war left the second part of the issue unresolved, and this clouded the first. Half of the country was ruled by the victors of the French war, the Viet Minh, whose commitment to create a communistic society was as deep as their nationalism. The other half was governed by a regime headed by a genuine nationalist, but one whose government was a creation of American policy and whose political and economic orientation tied him tightly to the United States. Consequently, many Vietnamese, and increasingly many Americans, who did not share the Communists' social program agreed with them that the question of independence was not yet settled. This justifiable doubt about South Vietnam's national independence undercut American efforts throughout the ideological struggle.

The most basic issue of the second, American, phase of the war was why America intervened. During the war, America was portrayed as either an altruistic champion of democratic humanism or a cynical agent of exploitative international capitalism. The reality, of course, was somewhere in between. America certainly felt that it had a concrete, material stake in the war in Vietnam. No country would spend the vast sums that America spent without expecting some practical rewards in the end, whether they be resources and markets or geopolitical advantage. Yet there was an honest and heartfelt strain of idealism in America's commitment, a genuine belief that the effort would spare the South Vietnamese the agony of Communist inspired social upheaval and bring them the benefits of a Western way of life.

That America was inspired by a mixture of motives is not unusual or reprehensible. Every large power must and will defend its own interests, even at the cost of infringing on those of lesser powers. But those lesser powers are inestimably better off if the greater power is motivated and constrained by a humane set of values, no matter how strained these may become in the heat of battle. All countries commit outrages in the harsh world of international conflict; America was one of the few that admitted it and felt shame. That may not seem like much to people who wonder why the world is not perfect, but for those who look at it as it is, America's openness and sense of conscience, however imperfect, stand out in an international order dominated by closed societies that recognize only realpolitik.

Less encouraging is how the war was fought. Strategically, America was hamstrung by the problem of infinite escalation. What this means is that the North Vietnamese were willing and able to match every step by the United States. The initial steps by which America became embroiled in the war, a policy called graduated response, proved a failure because instead of acting "rationally" and caving in when threatened by American might, the Communist leadership dug in its heels and became even more determined. Furthermore, the assumption that by graduating our responses we retained the ability to pull back at will proved illusory. We became trapped in a cycle of escalation with the North Vietnamese in a struggle that would strain both countries to their limits.

Later, hawkish Americans wanted to invade Laos and Cambodia to destroy North Vietnamese sanctuaries and infiltration networks. The problem with this strategy was that the North Vietnamese could have just built bases deeper inside these countries, and if these had been threatened, in North Vietnam itself. Of course, some would have advocated that

we invade the North in turn, but then the problem would have simply shifted to China, which acted as a sanctuary during the French war and, dominated by the Maoist Red Guards, would certainly have rallied again. The costs and difficulties of a war against China would have been staggering and, judging by the current importance of China as a counterweight to Russia, a tragic mistake.

Wise as American restraint may have been, it did leave the North Vietnamese the strategic initiative, which they proved with the Tet Offensive. In 1966 American airmobility and firepower knocked them off balance, but once they realized that the Americans had simply established a massive human meatgrinder in South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese held back except so far as it served their purpose to keep the fight going. While the Americans methodically subdued the South in 1967, the North Vietnamese began to maneuver in preparation for Tet. The Americans scarcely noticed, but for the North Vietnamese losses on the battlefield changed from tragic defeats to calculated diversions. It is sobering to read accounts by American officers that still recount Con Thien and Khe Sanh as overwhelming American victories because of the numbers of bodies counted, ignoring the fact that they both accomplished their strategic purposes and contributed directly to the ultimate North Vietnamese victory.

The North Vietnamese' initiative on the strategic level paralleled their ability to maintain the tactical initiative as well, although in this case not because of any American forbearance but because of the nature of revolutionary war. In the countryside, they were able to choose between political agitation, guerrilla warfare, and conventional attack, and the Americans had to be ready to counter all three. Most of the time, both the Viet Cong and the NVA relied on guerrilla tactics. The Americans had a difficult time finding the enemy and, once that was accomplished, they had difficulty fixing him. If they could accomplish that, they had no problem destroying him, but it was a frustrating and ultimately futile game of blind man's bluff. While the Americans did sometimes manage to surprise the enemy or maneuver him into fighting on their terms, most of the time it appears to have been his decision when to be found and how hard to fight.

The only alternative to America's high-tech, airmobile approach would have been to saturate the country with ground troops, but they would have been difficult to mobilize, and the increased casualties that would have resulted would have been difficult to sustain. It was not a question of whether America had the manpower, but whether this was how the nation wanted to spend it.

This dilemma lay at the heart of the last major issue of the war: why the Republic of Vietnam did not survive. The most obvious reason is that there was a limit to American endurance, to how much America was willing to spend in a small country half-way around the world. This limit was clearly manifested by the decline in public support for the war, both in the press and in the public at large. However, there were deeper and more compelling limits in economics and strategy. These, not street demonstrations or editorials, changed the American government's policy. Basically, the United States was spending money and lives all out of proportion to what it had at stake, spending sums that its economy could not sustain, and diverting dangerous amounts of its military strength away from more vital areas of national interest in Europe and the Middle East. It is important to remember that the economic difficulties that bedeviled America into the early '80s stemmed from its profligate spending in Vietnam, and it was a decade before the damage to its forces in Europe and in Continental reserve was repaired. America turned away from victory not out of whimsy, but because the most knowledgeable and hard-headed men in the government decided that it just was not worth the cost.

The converse of American limitations was the almost limitless commitment of the North Vietnamese. Their top leadership was ready to sustain any losses to win, and they were backed by the Soviet Union and China, both of which were more than happy to supply them with the necessary arms. The Communist great powers could thus frustrate America on the cheap, while the North Vietnamese were willing to pay any price to win. The South Vietnamese, who should have borne the brunt of their own defense, never seemed to realize what was at stake, or perhaps they were just able to let the Americans carry the ball for too long. In the end, the North Vietnamese won because it mattered more to them than to anyone else. They were the ones prepared to "bear any burden, pay any price" to achieve victory.

Recommended Readings

The War in Vietnam has inspired a vast literature. During the war the emphasis was on national policy: should we be there, and if so, how could we win? When we withdrew that source of inspiration dried up and those books were replaced by a series of novels and autobiographies by participants. These continue to appear, but have recently been joined by books about the war as a military action. These latter are of two types: coffee table picture books and studies of small unit actions. The former are often of higher quality than one might expect; the latter are gold-mines for anyone seriously interested in learning how the war was fought. Few military histories of the war as a whole have appeared and no official history has yet been issued. Even less has appeared from the Vietnamese.

Histories of the War

Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (1983); a comprehensive survey of Vietnamese history and the war, based on the award-winning PBS series, with emphasis on the growth of American involvement and a generally liberal point of view.

Michael Maclear, *The Ten Thousand Day War* (1981); a history of the war from 1945 to 1975, with much information and many critical insights – so many that it manages to find fault with practically everything the Americans did in Vietnam, from the way we intervened to the way we left.

Dave Richard Palmer, *Summons Of The Trumpet* (1978); an outstanding military history of the war by a senior officer who served in it. An invaluable work, though some of his judgements on national policy are clearly those of a soldier.

Robert Pissor, *The End Of The Line* (1982); a superb journalistic history, focusing on the battle of Khe Sanh, but also critically illuminating the background and history of the war to 1968.

The Pentagon Papers (1971); originally a massive secret study of American intervention commissioned by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, it was leaked to THE NEW YORK TIMES and THE WASHINGTON POST by Defense Department analyst Daniel Ellsberg. The entire 47 volumes are available, as well as an abridged one volume paperback version.

Vietnam: The History And The Tactics, ed. John Pimlott (1982); a well illustrated survey of the conflict from 1945 to the early 1980s.

Tom Cahaart, *Battles And Campaigns In Vietnam, 1954-1984*; another well illustrated history, this one of specific battles and containing much detailed information.

War In Peace, ed. Ashley Brown and Sam Elder (1981); a survey of wars since 1945, with extensive sections on both the French and American phases of the Vietnam war.

Orders of Battle

Shelby Stanton, *Vietnam Order of Battle* (1981); a superb book that details every American Army unit, including support elements. Contains a wealth of other information also. Not for the casual reader, but invaluable for the researcher; unfortunately no longer in print.

The French War

Edgar O'Ballance, *The Indo-China War, 1945-1954* (1964); a solid study.

Bernard Fall, *Street Without Joy* (1961); a classic if somewhat spotty study of the French military effort by one of the foremost authorities on the war.

Bernard Fall, *Hell In A Very Small Place* (1966); a thorough and well written account of the final battle.

Jules Roy, *The Battle For Dien Bien Phu* (1963); another good account of the battle, a good complement to Fall's.

Studies of Small Unit Actions

S.L.A. Marshall, *Vietnam: Three Battles* (1971); a very detailed and well written study of American airmobile operations by an expert on small unit actions.

S.L.A. Marshall, *Battles In The Monsoons* (1966); another excellent study.

Infantry In Vietnam, ed. LTC Albert Garland, USA (Ret.) (1967); a systematic study of small unit tactics in 1965 and '66 based on interviews with participants.

A Distant Challenge, ed. *Infantry Magazine* (1983); a long delayed sequel to *Infantry In Vietnam*, but organized chronologically and incorporating entire articles by small unit leaders.

John Cash, John Albright, and Allan Sandstrum, *Seven Firefights In Vietnam* (1970); a set of reports by officers that had served in combat, prepared under the auspices of the Office of the Chief of Military History for the Army, and recently released in paperback.

Official Army and Marine Studies

Lieutenant General John Hay, Jr., *Tactical And Material Innovations* (1974); a discussion of operations from 1965 to 1968 focusing on new techniques of warfare adopted to cope with the new form of warfare.

General Donn Starry, *Mounted Combat In Vietnam* (1978); a history of armored vehicles in the Vietnam war by the man who commanded the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment during the Cambodian incursion.

Lieutenant General Julian Ewell and Major General Ira Hunt, *Sharpening The Combat Edge* (1974); a monograph on various command and control techniques developed in Vietnam.

Edward Hymoff, *First Marine Division: Vietnam* (1967); a short and glossy account of the division's first two years in Vietnam, reflecting the optimism of the times.

Moyers Shore, *USMC, The Battle For Khe Sanh* (1969); an official history of the battle, full of useful information, although its official sponsorship makes some of its evaluations of command decisions necessarily suspect.

Tran Dinh Tho, *The Cambodian Incursion* (1979); an account of the cross-border operations by a former South Vietnamese officer.

The Air War

Peter Mersky and Norman Polmar, *The Naval Air War In Vietnam* (1981); a comprehensive study of one aspect of the air war.

Bernard Nalty, *Air Power And The Fight For Khe Sanh* (1973); full of information, but with conclusions somewhat suspect since this is an official history published within a few years of the battle.

Pushpinder Singh, *A Guide To Air Power In Asia And The Pacific* (1971); a country-by-country listing of air assets around 1970.

General William Momyer USAF (Ret.), *The Vietnamese Air Force, 1951-1975* (1975); a brief history of the RVAF, published by the United States Air Force.

Development Of Strategic Air Command, 1946-1976, text by J.C. Hopkins (1976); another official USAF publication, but full of information on the US heavy bomber forces, including during the war years.

Works on the Communist Forces

Douglas Pike, *Viet Cong* (1966); an analysis of the indigenous Communist movement in South Vietnam.

Vo Nguyen Giap, *How We Won The War* (1976); a short discussion of the North Vietnamese strategy, full of stiff Communist rhetoric and undoubtedly containing distortions and omissions, but nevertheless a critical source for understanding North Vietnamese strategy and tactics.

Van Tien Dung, *Our Great Spring Victory* (1977); an account of the final NVA offensive in 1975 by the man who commanded it, with the same shortcomings and value as Giap's book.

First-hand Accounts

Frederick Downs, *The Killing Zone* (1978); an account by an army platoon leader of his experiences from 1967 to 1968.

Robert Mason, *Chickenhawk* (1983); the experiences of a helicopter pilot with the First Cavalry division during its first year in action.

Philip Caputo, *A Rumor Of War* (1977); a superb account by a Marine lieutenant who served in the first year of the war.

Everything We Had, ed. Al Santoli (1981); a collection of short anecdotes by thirty-three Americans who served in Southeast Asia from 1962 to 1975.

Vietnam Militaria

Leroy Thompson, *Uniforms Of The Indo-China And Vietnam Wars* (1984); a book full of color illustrations and containing some text.

Simon Dunstan, *Vietnam Tracks* (1982); a history of armored warfare in Vietnam, with lots of photographs.

Articles

Alexander Cochran, "First Strike at River Drang", in *Military History* (October, 1984); an interview with General Harry W.O. Kinnard, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division in 1965.

John Kramer, "Cohesion and Disintegration: American Forces in Vietnam," in *Strategy And Tactics* (March-April, 1971); a combination of history and personal reminiscences, with a little hard information.

John Prados, "The Year of the Rat: Vietnam, 1972," in *Strategy And Tactics* (November, 1972); a large article full of information and opinions, dated but still very useful.

DEDICATION

CONFLICT IN VIETNAM is dedicated to the memory of
Pfc. Michael John Patrick Callahan, USMC
(June 17, 1949 - November 8, 1967)
Killed in Action, Vietnam

CREDITS

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Special Thanks:
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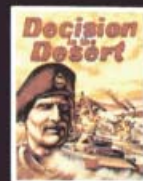
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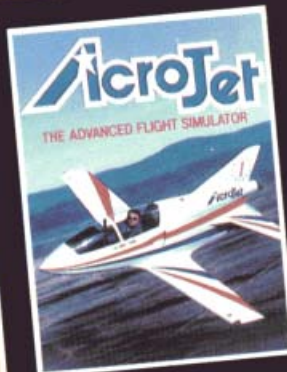
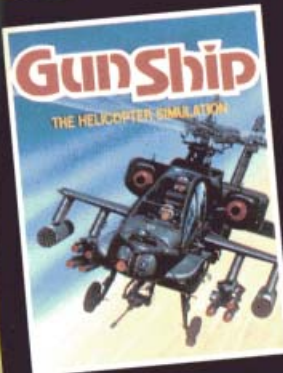
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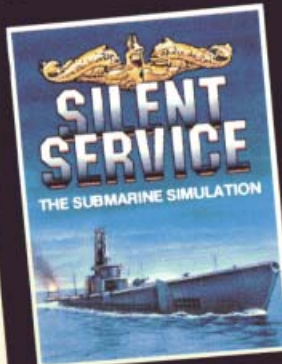
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