## McDONNELL DOUGLAS/HUGHES MH-6 STEALTH HELICOPTER

The deep black of a moonless night shielded a small gunboat from detection. Silently, it crept through the dark waters of the Persian Gulf, seeking to attack any foreign oil tanker unfortunate enough to pass near enough on its journey through the guarded waterway. The crewmen of the little boat were secure in the knowledge that they were totally invisible to the eyes of the searching watchmen on board the oil tankers plying the gulf during this tense period in time. They could hit the defenseless tankers and escape without detection, inflicting severe damage on the giant ships with little risk to themselves.

Suddenly, and without any warning, the little gunboat erupted in a violent explosion, a victim of the very element of surprise the hapless crew was relying on for their successful raid. Although they never knew, they were the first victims of modern stealth technology. For only a mile away, another "invisible" craft had been observing everything the unsuspecting gunboat and its crew had been doing. The MH-6 Night Hawk had struck!

This was the first reported incident in which "stealth" aircraft had been officially acknowledged by the U.S. and operated in a combat situation. A short time later, the scenario was repeated again, and three Iranian gunboats would no longer offer any threat to the heavily-laden tankers.

Essentially, the MH-6 is a development of the popular MD-500 Defender helicopter, a variant of the potent little Hughes OH-6A Cayuse used in Vietnam. Performance characteristics of the stealth version are the same as the standard military type. The MH-6 can carry nearly every combination of weapons used on any American combat helicopter. However, the secret of the Night Hawk is its "invisibility paint", a thick, dull black coating that contains microscopic metal balls. This paint both absorbs and deflects radar waves so there will be no tell-tale image on an enemy's radar screen. In addition, a new-technology engine silencer and "quiet" rotor make the MH-6 nearly as silent as the night through which it travels. From a distance of only a mile, it is undetected by the enemy, while its advance fire control system locates, tracks and destroys the enemy.

This tiny machine is only 23 long, about the size of a modern pick-up truck, but its load is far more potent. The model depicted by this kit is a replica of the MH-6 described in the scenario above. It was the first "stealth" aircraft to be unveiled to the public and was displayed at the 1988 Edwards AFB open house, where the data for this Minicraft/Academy model was gathered.

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