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Cambodian Border Clash

Gis Battle North Vietnamese

SAIGON, South Viet Nam (AP) — U.S. Infantrymen engaged a North Vietnamese force in bloody combat Sunday in the near Central Highlands near the Cambodian border, a U.S. spokesman reported.

The action, in which 78 North Vietnamese regulars were reported killed in a day's fighting, was taking place west of Pleiku, 240 miles northeast of Saigon. It was in this same general area that 10,000 North Vietnamese regulars have been reported by authoritative sources in Saigon to be poised for an attack from Cambodia's Chu Phong Mountains.

The Americans involved were troops from the U.S. Army's 25th Division. Their casualties in the fighting since noon Saturday were described by Saigon briefing officers as moderate.

Bombers Strike

The clash topped the day's war news, which for weeks now has been secondary to South Viet Nam's political crisis. In other war action:

—B52 bombers from Guam struck again at suspected Communist troop concentrations 45 miles in from the coast in Quang Ngai Province where U.S. Marines brought Operation Mobile to a close. The Marines reported they killed 23 Viet Cong and seizing 90 suspects or prisoners in the hunt-and-kill operation that opened with an amphibious landing Wednesday.

—Clearing skies over North Viet Nam brought increased U.S. air strikes Saturday. Briefing officers' reports Sunday said planes hit island targets. One was Table Island, 45 miles south of Communist China. The other was Bach Long Vi island, where the Communists man a radar station.

—A South Vietnamese regiment began a sweeping maneuver 65 miles southwest of Saigon after a Viet Cong mortar attack on an airfield near Vinh Long. The enemy attack caused casualties among U.S. and Vietnamese reported killed 14 Viet Cong and capturing 8 suspects in the aftermath.

The Central Highlands action in wild country west of Pleiku flared as an offshoot of the 25th Division's operation Paul Revere, which had been sweeping the countryside with only fair success until noon.

At that time the infantrymen made several contacts with the North Vietnamese regulars and by dawn Sunday a pitched battle was under way. Rocket firing U.S. Air Force jets slammed at enemy positions.

The U.S. Spokesman said the 25th Division forces moved into the area four days ago to chase down Communist troops who had laid down a mortar barrage on the town of Sam Due, killing 30 civilians and wounding 54.

In the operation over-all, the American infantrymen have killed 115 enemy soldiers, captured 14 and seized 13 suspects, the spokesman said.

Informants in Saigon said Saturday that North Vietnamese troops were sitting on the Cambodian side of the border waiting to spring into South Viet Nam's Central Highlands during the rainy season.

Report Denied

Cambodia, a neutral, has denied it is allowing North Vietnamese troops or Viet Cong guerrillas to use its territory, and did so again Sunday.

The report of the informants in Saigon, however, seemed to agree with remarks to newsmen in Washington Friday by Maj. Gen. Stanley R. Larsen that up to six North Vietnamese regiments were massed in Cambodia. His remarks drew a quick denial from the U.S. Defense Department. It said there were unconfirmed reports of North Vietnamese being in Cambodia but no actual evidence of it.

The Saigon informants said their information on the North Vietnamese was based on intelligence reports available to military commanders in South Viet Nam.