



AP Photo/Photos

Chu Lai: Hester Was Here

Above, a Huny (left) and a Cobra helicopter gunship lie in the wreckage of their hangar at Chu Lai after

Typhoon Hester smashed into the base. Below, an American Div. trooper looks over a smashed barracks

area at the base. An estimated 200,000 persons were left homeless in South Vietnam's northern provinces.

Enemy Takes Key Cambodian Village

CHAMBAK, Cambodia (AP) — Cambodian troops fighting desperately to hold a country road that once served as a Communist supply route have been hurled back from at least one village.

At Chambak, a town 24 miles south of the Cambodian capital and about five miles northwest of embattled villages, Cambodian officers reported Monday that defenders of the small market town of Sai Va had been driven out of their bunkers by a mortar barrage that was followed by a ground attack in which the men fought with knives and bayonets before bowing to the weight of the enemy assault.

Capt. Khim Yeang, commander of Chambak's garrison, said two companies of Khmer infantrymen had defended Sai Va until Saturday and they managed to bring out some of their wounded by carrying them piggyback. Others too badly hurt to move this way had been loaded aboard buffalo carts, the captain said.

As the captain spoke, a radio in the corner of his headquarters in the classroom of a burned out Chinese school crackled with the sound of the American-accented English of helicopter gunship pilots who were taking advantage of a break in monsoon rain clouds to provide the beleaguered Cambodian force with air support.

Cobra gunships from South Vietnamese bases and Cambodian T-28 dive bombers were busy and the fighting was still hot, Khim Yeang said. Wounded from the battle were being evacuated overland to Phnom Penh, the captain said.

The captain said the Khmer battalion commander at the town of Toul Lolork was attempting to push forward under the cover of the gunships to retake Sai Va.

Repeated cuts in the road and roadblocks manned by North Vietnamese or Viet Cong forces were holding up the drive to recover Khmer dead abandoned in Sai Va, the captain added.

He refused to give any specific figures on casualties for four days of fighting on the road, which an official spokesman in Phnom Penh admitted earlier were "medium."

The captain indicated that many men feared dead might in fact be missing or captured. He said that troops at Sai Va had not been able to make an orderly retreat and that two easterly outposts each manned by a company of Khmer troops had been abandoned.

Toul Lolork has also been hit hard, the captain said.

An hour before dawn this morning, a barrage of more than 100 mortar shells slammed into the town, the captain reported.

Khim Yeang said the road, which runs from the east toward Highway 2, had been used by the Communist side as one of its main supply routes toward the west, where elements of the first North Vietnamese division have a stronghold in the Elephant Mountains.

Reds Again Building Road

BANGKOK (UPI) — Air Chief Marshal Dawee Chullasataya said that Communist Chinese troops and engineers recently resumed work on their strategic road in Laos.

He told newsmen the road now extends to within 23 miles of the Mekong River and the Thai border.

Dawee, chief of staff of the supreme command, said construction was again in progress following suspension of work at the end of the last dry season.

"We will have to wait and see what purpose the road is put to," he said.

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Little Action Reported

Storm Puts Damper on War

SAC Vietnam Bureau

SAIGON — The tempo of fighting remained slow in South Vietnam in the wake of Typhoon Hester's disastrous blow to the northern provinces, the U.S. command said Monday.

Seventh Air Force fighter-bomber pilots flew 16 air strikes in the 24-hour period ending at 6 a.m. Monday, but all were flown in Military Region III — the provinces around Saigon.

For the second consecutive day, no B-57 missions were reported.

Ground action also slowed Sunday as South Vietnamese

military spokesmen reported nine attacks against military units and civilians.

A unit of the 25th ARVN Inf. Div. reported finding a division-size Communist base camp Sunday near the Cambodia-Vietnam border, 75 miles northwest of Saigon, spokesmen said.

Spokesmen said it appeared that Communist soldiers abandoned the base early this month after destroying 10 per cent of it.

South Vietnamese infantrymen found mess hall and toilet facilities, a communications bunker and generator. They called in Air Strikes to de-

stroy the base, spokesmen said.

Meanwhile, Communists pounds the position of an ARVN infantry and cavalry element 40 miles northwest of Saigon with 88 rounds of mixed indirect fire Sunday, spokesmen said.

The Red gunners began the attack shortly before dawn, firing 40 82mm mortar rounds, 30 80mm mortar rounds, 10 B-40 rockets and eight 107mm rockets into the position five miles northeast of the Boi Loi Woods.

Spokesmen said the South Vietnamese soldiers suffered light casualties with no one killed.

Scattered fighting flared in Military Region II.

South Vietnamese Rangers reported killing eight Reds in Pleiku Province in the Central Highlands Sunday. One Ranger was wounded.

South Vietnamese soldiers also killed five Communists in Binh Dinh Province and four in Kontum Province Sunday. There were no South Vietnamese casualties in the clashes, spokesmen said.

4,000 GIs Go Home in 1 Week

SAC Vietnam Bureau

SAIGON — U.S. troop strength dropped by 4,000 during the week ended Oct. 21, U.S. command said Monday.

The Army rotated 3,300 men, the Navy 300 and the Air Force 400, bringing the number of U.S. military personnel in Vietnam to 202,000.

Other Free World forces in Vietnam dropped to 59,000 with the withdrawal of 500 troops during the week.

Meanwhile, the U.S. command announced the 7th Bn., 15th Arty, began stand down Monday, creating 580 space reductions.

The 7th Bn., 15th Arty., equipped with 105mm guns and eight-inch howitzers, arrived in Vietnam in July 1967.

Two other Army units, the 228th Ordnance Co. and the 547th Signal Det., also began stand down to account for 160 space reductions.

The 7th Bn., 15th Arty.,