

4th Div. Gls Battle in Highlands

SAIGON (S&S Vietnam Bureau) — Fourth Inf. Div. soldiers battled the Reds in an on-off battle that lasted 5½ hours Friday and ended with 39 Communists dead on the battlefield, the U.S. command said.

The running fight began when an observation helicopter spotted an enemy force about 20 miles north of An Khe in the Central Highlands.

A unit of the division's 2nd Brigade was put into the area and supported by artillery and aircraft. A second unit of the brigade entered the fight later when a second Red force was spotted, and the fighting continued until nearly dusk, when contact was lost.

U.S. casualties in the action were reported as six wounded.

Fourteen troopers of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Air Cav. Div., were injured by a rocket fired by a division gunship during an artillery mission, the U.S. command announced. The accident occurred about 60 miles north of Saigon.

Twenty more Reds were killed in Long Khanh Province about 60 miles northeast of Saigon when troopers of the 1st Brigade, 1st Air Cav. Div., teamed up with artillery, helicopter gunships and planes to pound a Red force.

South Vietnamese 7th Inf. Div. troops, with air and artillery support, reported killing 25 enemy troops and detaining six persons in an operation 40 miles southwest of Saigon, according to the Vietnamese command.

They also reported capturing an East German light machine gun, as did 9th ARVN Inf. Div. troops operating near Svay Rieng in Cambodia, where they killed 10 Reds. Losses in the former operation were reported as very light, while the Cambodian fighting cost the 9th Div. two wounded.

Vietnamese infantrymen of the 25th Inf. Div. killed 14 enemy near Tay Ninh, about 60 miles northwest of Saigon, while losing one killed and four wounded.

In the Delta region about 85

miles southwest of Saigon, a Vietnamese Ranger element killed 10 Communists and detained 10 persons while taking only light casualties.

About 10 miles north of Quang Ngai, Red gunners fired 30 rounds of 60mm mortar fire into

a hamlet, causing light casualties among regional forces and killing three civilians and wounding two.

Republic of Korea Tiger Div. troops operating in the vicinity of Nha Trang killed nine Reds in scattered actions and captured

50 bags of rice, 17 radios and other equipment, a Korean spokesman said.

The ROK units suffered four wounded, two of them from a booby trap.

U.S. Marines in Quang Nam Province fought three actions, killing seven enemy soldiers while suffering two wounded. The Marines also captured two and one-half tons of corn in a bunker near Da Nang.

Two Americans were killed when their helicopters — a UH1 and an OH6 — were hit by ground fire and destroyed.



USA Photos by Spec. 4 Todd Weber

Troops of the 68th Assault Helicopter Co. battle monsoon rains to land troops of the 199th Light Inf. Brigade's 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf. Below, a pathfinder for the unit prepares to "pop smoke" to guide the choppers that come in through heavy rain (above). The action took place 25 miles southwest of Xuan Loc.

Bruce Briefed In Saigon

SAIGON (S&S) — David K. E. Bruce, new chief U.S. negotiator at the Paris peace talks on Vietnam, spent Saturday here attending briefings, an embassy spokesman said.

He said the morning and afternoon were taken up with briefings at the embassy. U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker was host at a luncheon for Bruce and Vietnamese officials and legislators, the spokesman said.

Bruce was to tour outside of Saigon Sunday morning, then return to the city for more briefings. He was scheduled to leave Saigon Monday.

Laotian Col. Dies In Battle

VIENTIANE, Laos (UPI) — The commander of a government battalion was killed Friday night in heavy fighting in south central Laos, it was announced Saturday.

Gen. Bounpon Makthepharak, Third Military District commander, identified the commander as Col. Chanthara, but gave no details how he was killed when two battalions of government troops engaged three battalions of North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao guerrillas at Ban Nongbua near the Ho Chi Minh trail.

He said the fighting flared Wednesday and lasted till Friday night between the guerrillas, supported by artillery and mortars, and the troopers, backed up by air strikes.

The general said the Communists suffered at least 100 dead, mostly killed by air strikes, but he refused to disclose government casualties.

Government casualties were believed high, and reliable sources said the troopers were repulsed.

The sources also said the government launched the offensive in south central Laos several weeks ago to prevent the Communists from consolidating their positions during the rainy season, but the offensive met strong opposition.

The fighting Wednesday to Friday was southwest of Moungphine where Route 23 stretches down from Mu Gia Pass in North Vietnam and Route 9 to Khe Sanh in South Vietnam. It was about 93 miles east of Savannakhet in south central Laos.

Food Stamps Extended

WASHINGTON (AP) — A three-year extension of the food stamp program has been approved by the House Agriculture Committee.

Evicted Queen Mother Finds Home

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Under cover of darkness, Queen Mother Sisowath Kossamak Neareith left the royal palace here Friday night to take up residence in a small house that had been a museum for her son, ousted Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

The queen mother was evicted from the beautiful and spacious palace by the government of Premier Lon Nol, which cut off operating funds for the palace staff. Relations between the monarchy and the government which overthrew Sihanouk in March have been in serious de-

cline for several weeks over the issue of proclaiming Cambodia a republic.

The queen mother left the palace complex precisely at 7 p.m., accompanied by her granddaughter, Princess Norodom Buppha Devi, prima ballerina of the apparently now defunct Royal Ballet Co. The entourage of two vehicles and a small baggage truck was preceded by several van loads of police and soldiers.

The leave-taking was very discreet. Save for a few cycle drivers cruising the dark, tree-

Reds Attack 2 Points

PHNOM PENH (AP) — Communist troops launched small attacks against two important but widely scattered points in Cambodia, the military high command reported Saturday, as both government and Communist troops paused to rebuild their strength between offensives.

The military spokesman said government positions in the Siem Reap-Angkor Wat region were hit by a short attack, as was a patrol just south of Kompong Thom.

The spokesman said the attack against Siem Reap, 155 miles northwest of Phnom Penh, lasted only a few minutes. This seemed to be one more probing action by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops before launching what government intelligence believes will be a massive attack against positions at the provincial headquarters and military regional command center.

The current lull has been repeated many times both here and in the Vietnam war as Communist forces expend men and supplies in such quantities that they must resupply before their next attacks.

The high command also reported national Route 4 had been reopened to heavy traffic, including large oil trucks coming from Kompong Som, Cambodia's only deepwater port. Highway 4 is the only road from Kompong Som to Phnom Penh. A bridge which was partially damaged early in the week had reduced traffic for a time to only taxis and small vehicles.

Thailand Oil Complex OK'd

BANGKOK (UPI) — The government has approved in principle a plan that would give Thailand a \$120 million oil industry.

The proposal was made by Thai International Petroleum Company (TIPC) to the minister of defense.

The national oil complex, which will consist of a refinery with a capacity of 80,000 barrels a day and a pipeline, will be wholly owned by the Thai government.

A Thai tanker fleet is to be established to transport crude oil to the refinery. TIPC plans to finance a survey of oil resources near the northern Thailand city of Chiang Mai.

There also are plans to extend the pipeline across the Mekong River to Vientiane because of the increasing demand for oil products in Laos.

