

13 GIs Missing, 1 Dead After Mayaguez Raids

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Thirteen U.S. Marines and airmen are missing and feared lost, one Marine died, and 22 others were wounded, three of them seriously, in the U.S. mission to re-take the American merchant ship Mayaguez that was seized by Cambodian forces earlier this week.

The Pentagon made public this still preliminary casualty report yesterday, and also confirmed that U.S. warplanes bombed targets on the Cambodian mainland hours after the Mayaguez crew had been released by the Cambodians in an apparent attempt to ward off such bombing.

According to information now reaching Washington from U.S. Navy ships in the Gulf of Siam, where the action took place, the captain of the Mayaguez succeeded in convincing the Cambodians that if they let him and his 39-

man crew go, the merchantmen could get the U.S. military to stop bombing and strafing Cambodian gunboats in the waters near where his ship was held captive.

The Mayaguez crew was being held prisoner on a small island named Rong near the mainland port of Kompong Som. It was some 30 miles back to Tang Island near where the Mayaguez was at anchor and where U.S. forces were getting ready to land.

According to messages reaching the Pentagon, the crew set sail in a small Thai fishing boat at about 8:20 a.m. Wednesday, Cambodian time. 14 MAY

The United States, Pentagon officials said, did not know the men had been released until between 10:45 when the U.S. destroyer Wilson spotted their boat, and 11:13 a.m. when the crew boarded the Wilson.

By 10:57 a.m. Navy jets from the car-

rier Coral Sea had started pounding the airfield at Ream on the mainland.

At 11:50 a.m., the Pentagon confirmed yesterday, a second wave of Navy jets hit fuel dumps, barracks and warehouses on the mainland around Kompong Som. That raid was 37 minutes after the United States knew it had all the Mayaguez crew back safely.

Pentagon spokesman Joseph Laitin said yesterday the second raid was not called off because there were still some 200 Marines left on Tang Island—34 miles off the coast—under fire and awaiting helicopters to take them out.

Laitin said the additional strikes on the mainland were needed to insure that Cambodians didn't move any forces from Kompong Som on the mainland—which the Pentagon put at

See OPERATION, A10, Col. 1

1 Marine Dead, 13 GIs Missing

OPERATION, From A1

about 2,400 men—onto boats and take them out to Tang island.

Other officials have said privately that the second raid probably could have been stopped at no risk to the Marines, but that from the time the Cambodians seized the commercial ship in what the United States has repeatedly stressed were international waters, there was strong feeling among some decision-makers that the Cambodians ought to be dealt some "punitive" air strikes as well.

"From the outset," one official said, "the thinking was: 'One, how do you get the crew and ship back and two, how do you get them (the Cambodians) not to do it again?'"

The Pentagon acknowledged yesterday that U.S. B-52 bombers had been alerted on Guam. These planes were never used, but there were plans to use the B-52s, if need be, to bomb the Kompong Som area.

The timing surrounding release of the crew and bombing of the mainland also appears to contradict statements made yesterday by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, and in the early morning hours Thursday by Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger.

Both officials said that the attacks by the United States on the mainland appeared to be factors in the Cambodian decision to release the crew.

But the timing of the release of the crew—at about 8:20 a.m. Wednesday Cambodian time—and the chronology of the air strikes against the mainland as provided by the Pentagon, made it clear that the Mayaguez crew had left Cambodian control in their small boat, at least 2½ hours before the first bombs hit the mainland.

Yesterday, Kissinger told reporters: "Now, as it turned out, there seems to have been some relationship between the release of the crew and the attacks on the mainland."

"That is to say," he went on, "some members of the crew were told that they should tell the (USS) Wilson . . . that they were being released on the assumption that this would end the bombing attacks."

"When we received this word . . . I mean this additional word, shortly after midnight [Washington time] . . . then all actions except those that were judged to be immediately necessary for military operations were stopped."

In making known the casualty figures yesterday, Laitin said that the 13 missing servicemen were aboard a helicopter that was attempting to land Marines on Tang island, where the United States—mistakenly as it turned out—thought some of the Mayaguez crew were being held.

The chopper was hit by ground fire, swerved back out to sea and eventually caught fire and crashed. The destroyer Wilson managed to scoop 13 of the 26 Marines and airmen out of the water. But the rest are still missing and Laitin said: "I wouldn't want to give any great hopes."

The Pentagon also acknowledged that a mammoth 15,000-pound bomb, the biggest in the U.S. arsenal, was dropped on Tang island while the Marines were battling dug-in Cambodian forces.

Sources said the huge bomb was dropped after word had been received that the Mayaguez crew was in fact not on the island.

It reportedly was dropped for two reasons: to create panic and divert the attention of the Cambodians at a time when the Marine evacuation was in some trouble, and to blast another potential emergency landing site for helicopters out of jungle area on the island, where some Marines had penetrated, in case those troops could not get back to the beach evacuation areas.

It was also reported yesterday that an alert U.S. pilot apparently had spotted the Mayaguez crew aboard a Cambodian gunboat as it sped from Tang island, earlier in the week, to the mainland.

The captain of the Mayaguez reportedly said that only a warning shot was fired at the craft he was in, and that the planes then dropped tear gas, in another attempt to stop the boat.

It was around the same time that U.S. warplanes sank three gunboats and strafed others.

Cambodia: U.S. Attacked After Crew Released

The new government of Cambodia accused the United States yesterday of launching a "ferocious, insane" assault 20 minutes after the release of the American merchant ship Mayaguez and its crew.

Cambodian Information Minister Hu Nim, in a broadcast over radio Phnom

Penh, described the Marine landing on Tang Island as "an act of open aggression."

"In the face of our goodwill, U.S. imperialism responded by savage, ferocious, insane, aggressive acts," Hu Nim said in a broadcast monitored in Bangkok.

The Khmer Rouge official said the Communist government decided Wednesday "to release the Mayaguez and all of its American crewmen despite the fact that this ship had violated Cambodia's territorial waters."

"In light of this decision, on the morning of May 15 at 6 a.m., our Coast Guard returned all members of the American crew," Hu Nim said.

A Pentagon spokesman in Washington said a Marine assault force landed on Tang Island in the Gulf of Siam at 6:20 a.m. Thursday (7:20 p.m. EDT Wednesday) to rescue the ship and 40-man crew. *16 MAY*

Sources in Washington said the captured crew men were put in a small boat to make their way to the Mayaguez, 30 miles away, two hours later, at 8:20 a.m. The Pentagon said the Americans were picked up by the U.S. destroyer Wilson at about 11 a.m., at approximately the same time U.S. planes were bombing Kompong Som.

Hu Nim said Cambodian forces protected the Mayaguez crew members "when U.S. aircraft were carrying out savage bombing and strafing raids" against Khmer Rouge ships in the gulf.

He accused the Americans of conducting "espionage," but said the Cambodian government decided to free them out of "goodwill and a desire to exist in peace."

The New China News Agency quoted Hu Nim as saying that U.S. planes and ships made daily reconnaissance mission over and near Cambodia.

Meanwhile, it was reported in Stockholm that a boat believed to be Cambodian had shot at a Swedish freighter in the Gulf of Siam on Wednesday.

"If the investigation should confirm our information this is an outrage against international justice which we must react strongly against," a Swedish Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The Swedish East Asia Shipping Co. said the captain of its ship Hirado reported that, when fired on, he "ordered a quick turn" and got away "at full speed."