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# Last Unit Out Was First In

Special Article

New York Times

Saigon

American troops completed the withdrawal from Cambodia yesterday, ending a two-month offensive against Communist sanctuaries a day ahead of schedule.

United States military sources said fewer than 100 U.S. advisers remained in Cambodia and that they would pull back into South Vietnam by tonight.

At the height of the operation 31,000 American soldiers were involved in the campaign to destroy the enemy supply bases.

## FIRST

The withdrawal was completed at 6 p.m. local time, according to Major General George W. Casey, commander of the first cavalry division, whose men were the first in and the last out of the areas.

"We certainly appreciated the opportunity to get into the sanctuaries," Casey said at the muddy hilltop field camp of the Second Battalion, 12th Cavalry, the last American unit to return to South Vietnam.

"I've done two tours over here faced with the sanctuaries problem, and it was an opportunity we thought we'd never have."

## DECK

Infantrymen from D Company—or "Stacked Deck," as they have nicknamed it—were flown out of Cambodia ahead of other troops returning on foot, and were enjoying the opportunity to be out of the fighting and back to warm food and letters from home.

While the general tried to speak over the roar of the helicopters, the men debarked with knees and elbows protruding from ragged, mud-caked uniforms but with huge grins shining from unshaven faces.

As they scrambled through  
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the mud, taking group pictures and flashing the V-for-Peace sign at each helicopter as it came in with their buddies, they were interviewed by five U.S. Congressmen who had accompanied Casey to the camp, about 80 miles north of Saigon.

## SELECT

The Congressmen, members of the 12-man House select committee on Southeast Asia, are in the second week of a fact-finding tour.

"Tell it like it is?" a gap-toothed soldier replied to a question from Representative E. Ross Adair of Indiana about the Cambodian operation. "Sir, to tell it like it is you'd have to go over there yourself," he said.

Sergeant Michael Trigg of Niles, Mich., told Representative Gillespie V. Montgomery of Mississippi, the committee chairman, that the Cambodian incursion had been a success.

"We're over here to win," Trigg said, "so we might as well go where they are."

## MUCH

"Sergeant William Corley of Louisville, Ky., told Montgomery that the troops had "done just about as much as we could over there."

"Stacked Deck lost five killed and beaucoup wounded," Corley continued, "and if we'd stayed any longer it would have got progressively worse."

"Course, that's just my opinion," Corley added to his buddies as he walked away. "If I was sure about these things I'd be a general."

A group of soldiers agreed that the worst time of the Cambodian operation for them came on May 7, when they lost five men killed and 22 wounded in repeated thrusts against a well-

defended enemy supply cache.

## KEEP

"When you keep the pressure on like that," one soldier said, "You can't get the MEDEVACS (Medical Evacuation Helicopters) in. We had one man hit at 6 in the evening and couldn't get him out. He died at 3 in the morning, still in the field. That really tore a lot of us up," he said.

Casey was asked if he felt that Mr. Nixon had given him as much time as he would have liked to operate in Cambodia.

The general pondered a moment, looking at the mud flecks on his polished boots, and shot his questioner a knowing, ironic grin.

## HARD

"That's a hard question to answer, he replied. "Let's go have some lunch," he said finally and walked away.

Communiques said the offensive across the border had killed nearly 15,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong and brought in nearly 30,000 weapons and 8500 tons of rice seized in Communist havens.

U.S. headquarters said 339 Americans lost their lives in the Cambodian push, and that 1509 more were wounded. South Vietnamese losses were placed at 886 killed and 3724 wounded.

Allied military sources said at least 39,000 South Vietnamese troops would remain in Cambodia indefinitely, helping Cambodia's army cope with a force of about 60,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong.