

LAST COMBAT UNIT OUT OF CAMBODIA AFTER 2 MONTHS

Airmobile Division, the First
to Go In, Ends U.S. Assault
a Day Before Deadline

GENERAL HAILS ACTION

Advisers Will Depart Today
—Enemy Renews Attack on
Cambodian Arms Depot

By IVER PETERSON

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, June 29—The last United States ground combat troops in Cambodia scrambled back into the Central Highlands of South Vietnam this evening, ending two months of operations in Cambodia that, at the peak, had seen 18,000 American troops attacking Communist base and supply areas across the border.

The withdrawal was completed at 6 P.M. local time (6 A.M. Monday, New York time), according to Major General George W. Casey, commander of the First Cavalry Division (Airmobile), whose men were the first in and the last out of the Vietnamese Communist sanctuaries.

President Nixon had set June 30 as the deadline for the withdrawal of the forces, which crossed the border May 1.

'Appreciated the Opportunity'

"We certainly appreciated the opportunity to get into the sanctuaries," General Casey said at the muddy hilltop field camp of the First Battalion, 12th Cavalry, the last unit to return to South Vietnam across the Dakhuyt River from the area known as the Fishhook.

"I've done two tours over here faced with the sanctuaries problem, and it was an opportunity we thought we'd never have," the general added, alluding to the large stores of munitions, supplies and food that were removed or destroyed.

Infantrymen from Company D—Stacked Deck, as they have nicknamed it—were being flown out while other troops were returning on foot.

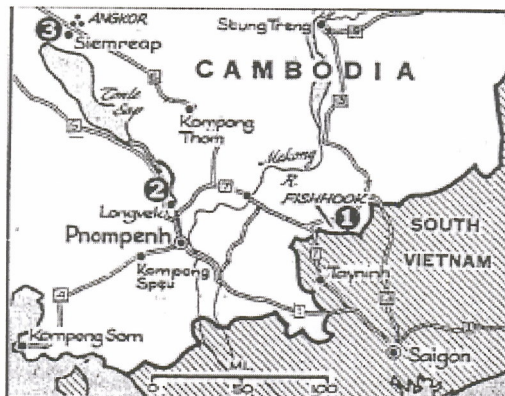
Interviews by Congressmen

As General Casey tried to speak over the roar of the engines, the men tumbled out of the helicopters with knees and elbows protruding from ragged, mud-caked uniforms but with huge grins shining from unshaven faces. They scrambled through the mud, taking group pictures and flashing the V sign at each helicopter as it came in.

The men were interviewed by five United States Congressmen who had accompanied General Casey to the camp, which is about 80 miles north of Saigon. The legislators, members of the 12-man House Select Committee on Southeast Asia, are in the second week of a tour on United States involvement in Asia. The First American ground

Continued on Page 13, Column 1

Last U.S. Combat Force Departs From Cambodia



The New York Times

June 30, 1973

The last American combat troops in Cambodia returned to South Vietnam, leaving through the Fishhook region (1). Communist units resumed their attack on Longvek (2) and shelled Cambodian positions in area of Siemreap (3).

Continued From Page 1, Co. 8 be some adjustments in those figures.

soldiers in the operation crossed the border into Cambodia at approximately 9:40 A.M. May 1.

Within the next week, the American portion of operation had been expanded from the Fishhook region to take in at least six known enemy base areas in four Cambodian border provinces.

As enemy supply depots and cache sites were uncovered, army inventory specialists were airlifted to them to keep count on rifles, ammunition and hundreds of other items ranging from bicycle tires to buttons. Engineering troops were called into the operation to build roads to at least two large cache sites so that truck convoys could haul out captured supplies.

In the last two weeks of the operation, the number of American ground troops in Cambodia fell to less than 10,000 as field commanders carried out strict orders to have their men back inside South Vietnam by June 30.

In the final days rains hampered efforts to conduct thorough searches of the Cambodian jungle, slowing the movement of both machinery and soggy soldiers. Enemy resistance and harassment increased during the operation, but there was no apparent last-minute enemy moves to coordinate attacks against withdrawing American troops.

As of this morning, 1,780 troops of the First Cavalry Division (Airmobile) were still in Cambodia.

"This evening there will be zero," said General Casey. "Those are my orders."

As of late tonight, fewer than 30 Americans remained in Cambodia, and official sources in Saigon said they would be pulled out tomorrow.

Military spokesmen said that the total number of American casualties in the Cambodian operation as of 4 P.M. were 337 killed and 1,524 wounded. But they said there would probably

Likewise, the total amounts of enemy supplies captured in Cambodia by American troops were termed tentative, until all reports from field commanders were turned in. It has previously been estimated that allied troops in Cambodia had found 30 to 50 per cent of the enemy supplies allied analysts believed were stored in the border sanctuaries.