

# VIETNAMESE POST FIGHTS OFF WAVES OF ENEMY TROOPS

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Heavy Shelling Follows as  
Battle Near Laos Border  
Goes Into Sixth Day

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By Reuters

PLEIKU, South Vietnam, Tuesday, April 6 — A South Vietnamese artillery base near the Laotian border was reported under heavy shelling yesterday after having withstood waves of North Vietnamese ground attacks the day before.

It was the sixth day of fighting over Fire Base 6, which a South Vietnamese general described as vital to the security of the Central Highlands of South Vietnam.

Maj. Gen. Ngo Dzu, commander of the military region covering the highlands, said that the North Vietnamese had sent "wave after wave" of troops against the base on Sunday.

"They were suicide squads, and their bodies were piled in front of our guns," he said.

## Outpost Reported Encircled

The outpost, which is on a hill six miles from where the Laotian, Cambodian and South Vietnamese borders meet, is encircled, according to the general, by two North Vietnamese regiments supported by an artillery battalion and supplied from caches in Cambodia. If at full strength, two North Vietnamese battalions would total 3,000 to 4,000 men.

General Dzu explained that the installation, defended by about 1,000 men, was the first line of defense for the support base at nearby Dakto, which controls a string of frontier outposts in the western part of the

highlands. Many military sources have speculated that the North Vietnamese were intent on its capture in an effort to show that the recent South Vietnamese thrust across the Ho Chi Minh Trail network in Laos had not affected their ability to attack at will.

They began their attack on Fire Base 6 last Wednesday and overran it briefly before being pushed out again by South Vietnamese troops heavily supported by American air power.

## Only 2 Copters Land

Yesterday, according to military sources, the mortar and antiaircraft fire around the base was so intense that only two American helicopters managed to land there.

The sources also reported heavy fighting going on yesterday afternoon about four miles northeast of the outpost, where a South Vietnamese infantry battalion—as many as

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700 men—had been conducting a sweep.

According to the Saigon command, 1,914 North Vietnamese soldiers have been killed in the fighting for Fire Base 6. The South Vietnamese toll was put at 61 killed.

## Ammunition Abandoned

QUANGTRI, South Vietnam, April 5 (AP)—South Vietnamese forces pulling back after their retreat from Laos were leaving thousands of unused artillery shells and other ammunition at bases in the northwest corner of South Vietnam until United States military officials complained, informers said today.

No estimate of the amount of ammunition left behind was available, but American officers in the field said it included "thousands" of 105-mm and 155-mm howitzer shells,

mortars and small arms ammunition.

Today trucks of the South Vietnamese First Infantry Division were carrying ammunition back along Route 9 toward Quangtri. Ammunition that is not trucked out of the forward bases will be blown up by demolition crews, military officials said.

## Foe Bolsters Force in Laos

VIENTIANE, Laos, April 5 (Reuters)—A Laotian Defense Ministry spokesman said today that the North Vietnamese were reinforced their position around the royal Laotian capital of Luang Prabang and bringing in antiaircraft guns. He said the North Vietnamese now controlled all strategic hilltops.