

Foe Repulsed in Cambodia, Saigon Says

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Friday, May 28 (AP)—In a surge of heavy fighting reported yesterday in eastern Cambodia, North Vietnamese troops stormed into the town of Snoul but were repelled by South Vietnamese forces with the aid of American airpower.

The South Vietnamese reported that they had also beaten back four attacks on Snoul's environs.

Snoul, a rubber-plantation town, is on Route 7, one of the main arteries leading from Cambodia to Saigon and the southern part of South Vietnam. The town was captured by a United States tank force a little more than a year ago during the big allied drive into eastern Cambodia, and its defense was taken over by South Vietnamese troops at the end of last June.

56 of Foe Reported Killed

Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Van Minh, commander of South Vietnam's forces in Cambodia, said his troops were seeking to hold the key eastern highways there to block North Vietnamese infiltration into Saigon and 11 surrounding provinces.

Saigon headquarters said 56 enemy soldiers were killed in the latest fighting over Snoul, which began soon after daybreak Wednesday and continued into yesterday morning. The assault on the town reportedly was made by a North Vietnamese battalion of up to 500 men, some elements of which reached the town's marketplace.

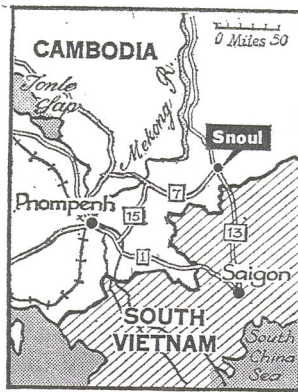
Initial reports, probably incomplete, listed 4 South Vietnamese soldiers killed and 12 wounded in two ground attacks near Snoul.

The 500-man South Vietnamese battalion defending the town was reinforced by an infantry company of 200 men along with tanks and armored personnel carriers. American helicopter gunships and fighter-bombers were reported to have joined in pounding the enemy.

Fighting Reported Over

"It is possible that there are still some small groups of enemy in Snoul," a Saigon military spokesman said, "but the fighting is now over."

In all, eight South Vietnamese task forces totaling 18,000 to 20,000 men are reported deployed along Route 7 and two



other major routes in eastern Cambodia, 1 and 15. General Minh said his objective included tying up the three enemy divisions known to be in the sector with a total force estimated at 12,000 combat troops plus support units.

In other war action reported yesterday, United States and South Vietnamese forces said they had killed 80 enemy soldiers in four clashes in the northern quarter of South Vietnam on Wednesday. United States casualties were not given, but reports from the

field said five South Vietnamese soldiers had been killed and 33 wounded in the fighting.

In two bombing raids reported yesterday, six B-52's struck at what were believed to be North Vietnamese positions a mile southeast of the demilitarized zone.

Angkor Shelling Laid to Foe

PNOMPENH, Cambodia, May 27 (Agence France-Presse)—A Vietcong officer who defected to the Cambodian Army said at a news conference here today that the historic temple at Angkor had been damaged by Vietcong artillery.

Earlier reports, strongly contested by Government spokesmen here, said the damage had been caused by Cambodian Army shells.

The Vietcong officer, Le Dat Thuong, a 28-year-old assistant battalion leader, said several mortar shells struck the south facade of the temple during a battle south of Angkor in January. He said the shells were fired from a position north of the temple by Vietcong gunners and that an error in direction had been responsible for the incident.