

Thai-Laos River Clash

Bangkok

Artillery fire from Laos sank a Thai gunboat on the Mekong river border yesterday, touching off the most serious fighting between the two countries in recent years.

An exchange of fire across the river line continued after dark, involving tanks, artillery and helicopters.

Thai border police helicopters joined the fight on their side of

the Mekong, 25 miles northwest of the Laotian capital of Vientiane, firing at Pathet Lao troops inside Laos, field reports said.

A Thai navy spokesman said one Thai sailor was killed in the initial shooting.

Since the Pathet Lao took over control of Laos last summer, there have been frequent but brief battles across the Mekong.

United Press
