

ENEMY OVERRUNS DONGHA IN DRIVE ON QUANGTRI CITY

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Saigon Troops Are Forced
Into Small Arc Around
Beleaguered Town
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KONTUM IS SURROUNDED

South Vietnam's Defenders
Reported to Yield Half of
Fire Base Bastogne

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Saturday, April 29 — Attacking with the support of many tanks, North Vietnamese troops reportedly overran the town of Dongha, near the demilitarized zone, yesterday and forced the Government forces into a tightening arc around the provincial capital of Quangtri.

Only Route 1, South Vietnam's main north-south highway, was reported open into Quangtri from the south, but it was under heavy artillery fire.

In the Central Highlands, Communist forces sealed their ring around the provincial capital of Kontum, cutting off all access to it by road.

Fire Base Hard Pressed

American officers are predicting that the Communist forces will assault both Kontum and Quangtri as soon as their infantry and supporting artillery units are in place. None of the 44 provincial capitals in South Vietnam has been so greatly threatened since the Communists' Tet offensive of four years ago.

At Kontum, capital of the central mountain province of the same name, the Communist ring was reported to be five miles around the city.

A high-ranking American officer at Kontum said that the South Vietnamese division in the area had performed inadequately and that its survival in the expected all-out assault on the city was problematical. [Page 10.]

In the north, the defenders of Quangtri, which is about 19 miles south of the demilitarized zone, were reported to retain control of a circular area about three miles in diameter, all of it accessible to enemy guns.

[About 30 miles south of Quangtri, other North Vietnamese troops seized more than half of the besieged fire base known as Bastogne, which has guarded the southwestern approaches to the ancient imperial capital of Hue, The Associated Press reported.]

Shelling Is Stepped up

On the other major front in the Communists' offensive, which began March 30, the besieged provincial capital of Anloc, 60 miles north of Saigon, continued to be pounded by North Vietnamese rockets and artillery. An American officer estimated that at least 15,000 rounds had been fired at the

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defenders in two weeks, but ground fighting at Anloc was limited to skirmishes.

American officers, reporting on the fighting in the northernmost part of the country, said the fall of Dongha occurred some time between Thursday night and yesterday afternoon.

By midafternoon the shelling of Quangtri had been stepped up noticeably. The Communists were reported to be bombarding the city with rockets and artillery, including long-range 130-mm. guns.

The number of American ad-

visers remaining in Quangtri was put at 30 to 40. Yesterday afternoon two companies of South Vietnamese troops traveling in a truck convoy managed to reach the beleaguered city from Fire Base Nancy, a few miles to the southeast.

The total number of attackers was put at 10,000 by American officers. This is believed to give the North Vietnamese a numerical edge over the South Vietnamese defenders, whose number is uncertain.

Troops Said to Regroup

Dongha, about 12 miles south of the demilitarized zone in low-hilled scrub country, was the eastern anchor of the South Vietnamese defense line in the northeastern corner of the country.

American officers described the enemy drive as a "multi-divisional operation," conducted by elements of the 2304th and 308th North Vietnamese divisions and units from independent regiments.

An American officer reported that 15 to 20 North Vietnamese tanks were put out of action Thursday by South Vietnamese ground forces and United States air and naval attacks. United States Navy vessels offshore re supporting the South Vietnamese with gunfire, particularly in the region between the coast and Route 1.

The United States command reported that an American Cobra helicopter gunship destroyed three tanks yesterday morning two miles northeast of Quangtri but was shot down. The two crew members were reported killed.

Civilians Held in Town

In the Kontum area of the Central Highlands, the North Vietnamese have tanks all around the besieged town and are reported to be positioning artillery.

Many of the citizens, as well as Montagnard tribesmen who fled the surrounding mountains, remain in Kontum, held there by Communist control of a long section of the road linking Kontum with Pleiku 30 miles to the south.

The enemy forces in the area are believed by American officers to be withholding their attack until an overcast day grounds American tactical fighter-bombers. The planes were in action throughout the day attacking enemy troop concentrations and armor.

In the 24 hours ended at noon yesterday B-52 bombers reportedly flew 10 missions in the Kontum area. The closest bombing to the town was said to have been five miles away.

Sixteen other B-52 strikes were reported in the same period, 10 in the Quangtri region.