

# Fierce Red Offensive in Cambodia

## Phnom Penh

Communist Khmer Rouge forces overran six government positions as close as 18 miles to the Cambodian capital yesterday and advanced to within a mile of the strategic Mekong river base at Neak Luong, the Cambodian command reported.

Several hundred Communist troops broke through six government positions near the town of Thnal Totung, 18 miles southwest of Phnom Penh on Cambodia's "road to the sea," Highway 4, and in the Highway 2 district town of Chambak, 18 miles south of the capital.

The command reported five government soldiers killed and seven wounded in the series of attacks. Military sources said that Highway 4 and 2 had been severed in the assaults.

## FIGHTING

Fierce fighting also centered on Highway 1, Cambodia's Communist - occupied link with Saigon. The command said Khmer Rouge forces killed four government reinforcements and wounded ten as they grabbed one half mile of the highway just south of Dey Eth, 15 miles southeast of the capital.

Heavy fighting also took place when Communist troops left the port city of Banam, two miles from Neak Luong, in flames and advanced toward the government marine base guarding the Mekong river.

The Communists now hold nearly three miles of Highway 1, isolating the government troops trying to hold Neak Luong.

## DANGER

Should Neak Luong fall for lack of supply and reinforcements the Communists will close the Mekong river. The river is Phnom Penh's umbilical supply cord providing the capital with food, petroleum and armaments by convoy from Saigon.

In Saigon, the South Vietnamese high command reported an upsurge of fighting yesterday.

The major battle was a ten - hour fight in the Central Highlands between the cities of Pleiku and Kontum.

*United Press*

