

# SAIGON RANGERS IN THRUST ACROSS CAMBODIA BORDER

Incursion Is the First Since  
Signing of Cease-Fire—  
Two Battles Reported

HUNDREDS OF REFUGEES

—APR 16 1973

25 Armored Vehicles Said  
to Make Crossing—Ships  
Reach Phnom Penh

NYTimes

By The Associated Press

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Monday, April 16—South Vietnamese troops have pushed across the Cambodian border for the first time since a Vietnam cease-fire went into effect two and a half months ago.

Fighting was reported at two points along the border and hundreds of refugees were said to have fled from Cambodia into South Vietnam.

[Three tankers made their way up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh, bringing to seven the number that have reached the capital since the Communist blockade of the river began in late March.]

Reports from the field indicated that the South Vietnamese had pushed a half mile into Cambodia in an attempt to drive back North Vietnamese and Cambodian Communist troops.

## Town Is Attacked

At least 25 armored vehicles manned by Rangers reportedly moved across the border on a line about half a mile deep in an operation that began Friday.

The crossing was made from the Vietnamese town of Tinh Bien, 125 miles southwest of Saigon. Tinh Bien is in the center of a region used as a staging area by the North Vietnamese First Division. Heavy fire was reportedly being exchanged there.

Twenty miles to the northeast, Communists were said to be attacking the Vietnamese district town of Tan Chau on the Mekong River, six miles from the Cambodian border.

South Vietnamese troops first entered Cambodian territory in March 1970, just after the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk. United States troops also invaded Cambodia in May, 1970, but pulled out two months later.

Later there were scores of South Vietnamese operations in Cambodia up until the cease-fire was declared in effect Jan. 28. They were aimed at both protecting South Vietnam's borders and aiding embattled Cambodian forces. There has been no truce agreement in Cambodia.

## Village Wiped Out

The South Vietnamese were pounding suspected Communist positions with artillery and machine guns mounted on armored personnel carriers. Cambodian Government troops also were reported to be engaged in the battle, allied with the South Vietnamese against the Communist insurgents.

The Communist forces were reported using mortar and small arms fire.

The fighting broke out Friday when the Communist troops wiped out a village on the Cambodian side of the border, burning most of the thatched homes to the ground, reports from the field said.

About 500 refugees streamed into South Vietnam on both sides of Route 2, which leads north from Tinh Bien 65 miles

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to the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. Route 2 and all other major arteries leading to Phnom Penh have been cut with the exception of route 4 from the southwest.

A United States State Department official at Chau Doc said more than 10,000 refugees had crossed into South Vietnam through Tinh Bien since mid-February.

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