

Four El Dorado Miners Die In 400-Foot Plunge

McClatchy Newspapers Service

EL DORADO, El Dorado Co. — Four miners were killed this morning when the elevator they were riding plunged 400 feet to the bottom of the shaft of a limestone mine.

Fellow employees of the El Dorado Limestone Co. mine said a clutch broke on a cable reel drum which operated the elevator car. The men were 400 feet up the 1,350-foot vertical shaft when the mechanism failed, dropping the car to the bottom.

Identities of the victims were withheld pending notification of kin. A coroner's report indicated all were residents of western El Dorado County.

"It dropped like a stone," said one workman witness of the tragedy.

Another explained the brakes on the cable reel drum were burned up trying to hold the plunging elevator car which weighs three tons. It was used both as a passenger lift and for carrying limestone out of the mine.

The bodies were brought out by an elevator running parallel to the one which fell. That elevator was so badly smashed it could not be lifted from the mine's bottom.

A deputy sheriff at the scene said

the bodies were "smashed almost beyond recognition. It looked like every bone was broken."

The mine runs 24 hours a day, employing 63 persons taking limestone from several levels below the surface at the site about 3 miles south of the community of El Dorado.

S. Viets, Red Troops Clash In Cambodia

SAIGON (AP) — Military spokesmen today reported fighting at five points in eastern and northwestern Cambodia and the loss of a U.S. jet fighter-bomber over southern Laos while it was bombing enemy supply routes.

The two crewmen aboard the Air Force F4 Phantom are missing, a spokesman said. The plane went down Sunday night.

Only one significant action was reported in South Vietnam, the ambush of a U.S. convoy on Highway 20 in the southern part of the central high-