

South Viet Troops Repel Red Assault

Saigon

South Vietnamese forces trying to block enemy infiltration along the northern frontier threw back the third North Vietnamese assault in two days yesterday.

U.S. B-52 bombers joined in backing up the week-long South Vietnamese drive.

The allied commands claimed 257 North Vietnamese troops were killed in air attacks and ground fighting Saturday and yesterday, below the demilitarized zone.

Lieutenant Colonel Do Viet, a spokesman for the South Vietnamese military command in Saigon, said 23 heavy weapons and 41 rifles were captured.

Viet said South Vietnamese casualties were light. Informants said initial reports indicated six South Vietnamese soldiers were killed and 53 wounded.

The allied claim of enemy killed appeared to be based on estimates by aerial observers.

GUNSHIPS

The U.S. command said that American rocket-firing helicopter gunships supporting the South Vietnamese Marines cut down 58 North Vietnamese troops 18 miles east of Khe Sanh.

The North Vietnamese as-

sault early yesterday hit the night bivouac of a South Vietnamese Marine battalion less than two miles from their command post, Camp Sarge, 12 miles northwest of Khe Sanh.

Viet said two South Vietnamese Marines were killed and 12 were wounded in yesterday's battle.

BOMBERS

U.S. B-52 bombers dropped 900 tons of explosives on a North Vietnamese base camp north of the South Vietnamese Marine bivouac.

Some 3000 South Vietnamese Marines are taking part in the operation, called Lam Son 810, which was launched May 3 in the northwestern corner of South Vietnam.

The marines are covering a section of Highway 9, a key North Vietnamese infiltration corridor and supply route that leads from the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos into Quang Tri province in South Vietnam.

"The purpose of the operation is to clear the area, to block infiltration on the roads," Viet said.

Associated Press