

Seven Days in Vietnam: Bombing and Fighting, Swimming and Boredom

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, forced the suggestion, American officials said, that the South Vietnamese Army has slowly improved over the last few years and that the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong have lost much of their former strength. Among the developments that the officials pointed to were the following:

Statistically, last week was just another week in the war: 6 Americans, 360 South Vietnamese and 1,026 of the enemy were reported killed, about average. Ninety-seven people were said to have been abducted by the Vietcong, and 81 areas of South Vietnam were bombed by American B-52s.

But to military commanders and intelligence specialists in Saigon who analyze the war with charts and maps, last week's statistics appeared to confirm some significant patterns, especially when compared with earlier years in the war.

The week's figures rein-

¶The South Vietnamese Army is capturing an average of 65 enemy weapons a day and finding an equivalent number of enemy bodies left on the battlefield. In past years, the Communists were always meticulous in removing the bodies of their dead and weapons before the Americans and Government troops could find them.

¶The number of enemy ground attacks on Government and American positions has dropped over 60 per cent in the last year to an average of one per week. Most attacks

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