

# Marines Tell Invasion Plan

BOSTON — (UPI) — American naval and Marine forces cruised off the North Vietnamese coast for a month last spring in preparation for a well-rehearsed airborne landing north of the Demilitarized Zone splitting North and South Vietnam, the Boston Globe reported today.

In a copyrighted story, the Globe said nine ships, including an aircraft carrier, and more than 300 Marines took part in the exercise.

"The mission coincided with the incursion into Laos in early 1971 and may have been related to it," the newspaper said.

It quoted Pentagon officials as denying — last year and again last week — such an assault had been planned. They said the only missions planned were to free downed airmen or prisoners of war.

The Globe quoted three Marine officers attached to the 3rd Division as saying the raid was planned on the

air base at Vinh, 160 miles south of Hanoi and 150 miles north of the DMZ.

The officers, who took part in briefing sessions, said it was unlikely the mission was a rescue operation.

The base at Vinh was surrounded by a reported 5000 North Vietnamese troops, it was reported.

Two of the three officers were identified as Lt. James E. Roark, 26, of Morgantown, W. Va., and Lt. William Grant of Evergreen, Colo. The other officer was not identified because he is still on active duty in California, it was reported.

Roark called Pentagon denials of the planned raid "an out and out lie" and Grant said the denials were "an outright, boldface lie.

"I don't know if a copy of the operations order for the raid is still available," Grant said. "They may have been burned — but I saw the order in black and white. I was there. I was part of the whole thing."