

SAIGON LAUNCHES A COUNTERATTACK IN THE HUE AREA

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4,000 Government Troops
Strike at Enemy Forces
Threatening the City

RAID IN QUANGTRI ENDS

Attack by Foe on Kontum
Reported Repulsed With
the Loss of 10 Tanks

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Monday, May 15—South Vietnamese troops, in their second counterattack of the weekend against Communist forces, pushed out from two points southwest of Hue yesterday in an effort to disrupt enemy preparations for an attack on the city.

Farther north, Government marines completed a swift strike behind enemy lines in Quangtri Province, reporting that they had left behind almost 300 North Vietnamese dead. Most of the marines, who made their assault by helicopter Saturday morning into the area previously captured by the enemy, crossed back into allied territory before midnight last night by foot.

In the Central Highlands, North Vietnamese tanks and infantry began their first major attack on Kontum city early yesterday morning but were beaten back after five hours of fighting. The attackers did not penetrate the town and were reported to have lost 10 tanks.

Major Bridge Attacked

The United States aircraft, continuing their bombing of North Vietnam, attacked a major road and rail bridge north of Thanhhoa, 80 miles south of Hanoi. The Air Force said that 80 to 100 feet of the bridge had been destroyed, thus effectively cutting an important supply route.

In the counterattack west of Hue, 4,000 soldiers of the South Vietnamese First Division were said to have advanced about two and a half miles, with some units reaching within half a mile of Fire Base Bastogne, which fell to the North Vietnamese 17 days ago. The South Vietnamese, who were supported by artillery fire and strikes by American B-52 bombers, reported killing 110 North Vietnamese soldiers.

Raid Only Symbolic

The surprise raid into Quangtri Province by the South Vietnam marines was adjudged successful. The South Vietnamese force of about 1,000, airlifted by United States Marine Corps helicopters and accompanied by American advisers, reportedly marched out of enemy territory almost unscathed after having inflicted sizable casualties.

Some military observers said that the marines had shown professionalism and wisdom in not attempting to stay in Quangtri Province. They evidently struck and left before the North Vietnamese could effectively react.

Their withdrawal, however,

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made the raid symbolic and not a reversal of the gains made by the North Vietnamese since the offensive began March 30.

Elsewhere the war continued to exact a high price in lives with no apparent major gains on either side.

The siege of Anloc, 60 miles north of Saigon, went on, but with diminished fury. South Vietnamese military spokesmen said about 600 rounds of artillery and rocket fire struck the besieged garrison yesterday—far fewer than the 10,500 rounds of the two previous days.

The Air Force said that the raid on Thanhhoa had been made with 2,000-pound and 3,000-pound "guided bombs," which use electronic devices to zero in on targets.

Because Washington refuses to permit the disclosure of information about the raids on North Vietnam on a regular, daily basis, few other details were available.

MIG Reported Downed

The command spokesman did report that on Friday one North Vietnamese MIG-19 fighter was shot down during a fight between four MIG's and four United States Air Force F-4 fighters near the airfield at

Yenbai, which is near the vital northwest railroad line about 50 miles from Hanoi.

A high level of American bombing in support of South Vietnamese forces continued in South Vietnam, including a total of 25 B-52 missions in the 24-hour period ending at noon yesterday. Twenty of the heavy bomber raids were in the northern military region.

Although the battle has become an increasingly conventional war between large organized units, the enemy forces in recent days have evidently begun to employ familiar harassing methods.

The allied air base at Danang was reported shelled by 20 rounds of 122-mm. rocket fire, which resulted in "light" damage to one United States aircraft. The Marble Mountain airfield nearby was hit by mortar fire that wounded three Americans and inflicted light damage on six helicopters.

Two Civilians Killed

A mortar and rocket attack on Hoi-an, the capital of Quangnam Province, which includes Danang, killed two civilians.

The attack on Kontum City today came from the northwest and was stopped about one and one half miles from the town. Two of the 10 tanks destroyed were knocked out by missile-firing American heli-

copters, the command said.

The South Vietnamese reported killing 173 enemy soldiers and capturing three men and 43 weapons.

While the attack itself accomplished little, it seemed to indicate that the North Vietnamese, after a considerable delay, had moved forces that previously shattered the South Vietnamese 22d Division at Tanchanh to begin a siege of Kontum.

Cambodia Reports Battle

Pnompenh, Cambodia, May 14 (UPI)—Government troops fought a fierce battle with Communists today at Kirivong in the south of Cambodia, only four miles from the South Vietnamese border, a Government spokesman said.

Communist gunners also fired at least five 122-mm. rockets into downtown Pnompenh late yesterday, marking the fifth shelling of the capital in the last eight days. No casualties were reported.

The fighting around Kirivong was the latest in a 20-mile-deep corridor along Cambodia's southeastern border with South Vietnam. Communist troops have taken at least 25 important Government positions in the four provinces in the area in the offensive that began 46 days ago.