

# Drive Follows Success Of Behind-Lines Strike

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HUE, South Vietnam, May 14 —Government troops moved out from two points southwest of Hue today and by nightfall had advanced to within half a mile of Fire Base Bastogne, which fell to the enemy more than two weeks ago.

The counter offensive followed the success of a lightning strike behind enemy lines to the north by South Vietnamese marines yesterday. About 4,000 South Vietnamese soldiers of the First Division took part in the latest drive in an attempt to ease the threat to the nearly deserted city of Hue.

The South Vietnamese said they killed 110 North Vietnamese and uncovered three tons of ammunition and supplies in two caches as they advanced two and a half miles.

## 700 Tons of Bombs

Last night and this morning, B-52's and artillery cleared a path for the South Vietnamese infantrymen. Thirty B-52's dropped a total of nearly 700 tons of bombs and artillerymen fired more than 5,000 rounds.

Maj. Gen. Pham Van Phou, the boyish-looking commander of the First Division, and his senior American adviser said that the division had been on the offensive for more than a week but that they had been unwilling to announce it for fear the drive would be blunted and the Government embarrassed.

When the offensive was disclosed by officers in Hue this morning they made no mention of the earlier fighting by the division, which eroded the North Vietnamese positions and helped make advance possible. This evening the South Vietnamese were reported in position to try to retake Fire Base Bastogne.

The marine raid, in which about 1,500 men participated, was the first publicly announced offensive effort by Government troops in the northern military region since the North Vietnamese invaded more than six weeks ago.

"It was critically important both militarily and politically to demonstrate that an offensive was possible," one officer said.

Col. Bui The Lan, the com-

mandant of the South Vietnamese marine division, suggested that the dividend to morale as a result of the raid was nearly equal in value to the damage inflicted on the 66th North Vietnamese Regiment.

The raid was made public within hours after the troops had landed. There were two landings of about 500 men each in clearings a little less than two miles apart, east of Route 1 in Hailang District, 10 miles southeast of Quangtri city.

A short time earlier, 500 marines forded the Mychanh River, which approximates the northern front line. These troops were meant to draw the attention of the North Vietnamese and serve as a blocking force as the others jumped from United States Marine Corps helicopters and began sweeping southward. There were three American majors and three captains on the operation.

## 'A Beautiful Operation'

"It was a beautiful operation," one senior officer said. "It caught them totally unaware." He said he felt the capability of the enemy regiment had been seriously impaired.

The marines said they believed they killed the regiment's executive officer and a company commander as they swept five miles back to territory not held by enemy forces.

The marines also rounded up more than 1,300 civilians in North Vietnamese territory. Colonel Lan said they would be sent to refugee camps. He said he did not know how many other civilians might be on the enemy side of the front.

Allied officers termed marine casualties light with fewer than 20 killed. The South Vietnamese said 300 enemy soldiers had been killed. No Americans were hurt.

One of the helicopters was badly damaged on landing and was destroyed on the ground.

The raid was described by many officers as a spoiling attack, not to gain or hold territory but to disrupt the enemy.

The hope of the South Vietnamese is not only to disrupt the North Vietnamese but to push them away from the southwest approaches to Hue. The South Vietnamese want to reoccupy the land in this area, where they believe a major ground assault or heavy shelling would be likely to originate.

As the North Vietnamese have inched closer to Hue, taking over fire bases in the progress, they have gained control of much of Route 547, which approaches the city from the southwest.

"What we're trying to do is push them further out," one officer said. "We want to keep them off balance, too, make them move their troops and their artillery—We don't want them bringing the heavy stuff down on Hue."

The military men say that in the last several days the enemy threat to Hue has decreased considerably. Nevertheless, the majority of the 200,000 who fled in fear of attack last week have not returned to their homes.

## Malagasy Capital City Hall Set Afire by Demonstrators

TANANARIVE, Madagascar, May 14 (AP) — Demonstrators set fire today to City Hall, then drove a burning bus against a building housing the mayor's office in the second day of rioting in which at least 12 people have been killed and about 100 injured.

The demonstrators were led by students striking for what they call a more democratic educational system. They were dispersed by the police of this island's capital off East Africa and the fire was put out.