

AUG 12 1972
**Communists
Shell Roads
To Saigon**

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Saigon

Enemy forces harassed the Saigon region yesterday with shelling and sapper attacks against bases and outposts on three approaches to the capital, the South Vietnamese military command announced.

Enemy sappers on the central coast, moving behind rocket and mortar fire, overran part of the city of Cam Ranh, inflicting more than 100 military and civilian casualties, field reports said.

Other Communist units penetrated the defenses of a government military base at Lai Khe, 30 miles north of Saigon, and again cut Highway 13 which links the capital with An Loc.

Military spokesman Le Trung Hien said 38 enemy sappers were killed and two prisoners taken before the base was cleared. Government casualties in the fighting which lasted several hours were put at four dead and 28 wounded.

SHELLING

North Vietnamese shells ripped through four district towns, three army outposts and the big Cu Chi military base in the Saigon region.

The army reported 27 persons were wounded in the shelling that hit the southern, northern and northwestern approaches to the capital.

Associated Press correspondent Holger Jensen reported that combat raged for most of the day along Highway 13, less than two miles from the Lai Khe army base.

LOSSES

Officers said they fought remnants of a North Vietnamese sapper squad which had penetrated the base. Propeller-driven Skyraiders strafed an enemy bunker line only 30 yards from the highway and government infantry backed by armor twice tried to storm the positions. They were driven back, both times, losing two armored personnel carriers in the process.

On the northern front, enemy long-range artillery continued to pound South

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SAIGON ROADS SHELLED

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Vietnamese marines in Quang Tri.

The marines said 32 enemy soldiers were killed at a cost of four dead and 20 wounded in firefights inside the devastated capital of South Vietnam's northernmost province.

HUE

Fresh fighting was reported near five recaptured hamlets 10 miles southeast of Hue. North Vietnamese infantry apparently slipped back into the area after being driven out earlier this week.

The U.S. command announced that eight B-52 missions were flown Thursday against enemy troop concentrations 47 to 58 miles from Saigon. Air Force Skyhawks also attacked bunker lines in the region.

Government militiamen said they found the bodies of 68 enemy killed by one U.S. strike in Dinh Tuong province, 40 miles from the capital.

The U.S. command also reported B-52s pounded ene-

my supply caches in North Vietnam while other American warplanes made 200 strikes above the demilitarized zone. They hit railroads, trucks, river craft, missile sites and storage facilities, the command said.

CRASH

An Air Force F-4 Phantom crashed at its base in Thailand as it took off on a mission in Indochina. Military spokesmen said the two crewmen were killed.

The new wave of attacks near Saigon coincided with the withdrawal of the last remaining U.S. infantry unit in Vietnam, officially ending the American ground combat role after 7½ years. The Third Battalion, 21st Infantry, which operated as a security force in the Da Nang area, was replaced by a South Vietnamese unit.

American forces in Vietnam will be reduced to 39,000 men by September 1. Another 100,000 U.S. servicemen are participating in the war from bases in Guam and Thailand and from ships of the Seventh fleet off the coast of Vietnam.