

500 U.S. Planes

Record Bomb Raids on DMZ

SAIGON — (UPI) — At least 500 American warplanes including more than 100 B52s bombed Communist troops and supplies throughout Indochina yesterday and early today, the U.S. command said.

The Demilitarized Zone was the target of a record number of the B52 strikes.

The high-flying Stratofortresses launched a record seven bombing waves — 21 planes — inside the DMZ which nominally separates North and South Vietnam and flew at least 27 other missions in the two Vietnams, Laos and Cambodia.

Link Repaired

In the bomb-free area of North Vietnam above the 20th parallel, the boundary set by President Nixon in October during early cease-fire negotiations, U.S. military sources said the North Vietnamese had repaired one of two rail links between Hanoi and China. The rail lines were destroyed by U.S. bombing early this year.

The sources said the North Vietnamese have been pumping war materiel down the line on a round-the-clock basis since it was repaired about two weeks ago.

Although the movement of trains on the line is still slowed by makeshift repairs to some bridges knocked down by American "smart bombs," equipment can be taken directly from the Chinese border to Hanoi.

Move It South

"And as soon as it gets to Hanoi, they put it on another train and move it south" to the 20th parallel, now the northern boundary for U.S. air strikes, one source said.

UPI correspondent Donald Davis reported from the combat zone that government marines and paratroopers were on the receiving end of at least 2125 artillery and mortar shells hurled at them by North Vietnamese forces in 54 barrages in 24 hours.

Casualties Up

Marines began a push north of Quang Tri earlier this month, but have been stalled about seven miles north of the province capital in their attempt to win back territory lost to the Communists last April.

The Saigon high command

said casualties on both sides rose last week, mostly as a result of heavy fighting in the Quang Tri region. Spokesmen said 480 government troops and 1896 Communist soldiers were killed.

Throughout South Vietnam, U.S. jets flew 290 air strikes, including 145 in the northern sector and 70 in the Saigon region, U.S. military spokesmen reported.

Another 30 raids were reported in North Vietnam, while an undisclosed number of others hit Cambodia and Laos. Fighter-bomber sorties had been limited in recent days because of the heavy monsoon rains.