

VIETNAM FIGHTING GOES ON AFTER CEASE-FIRE STARTS

Saigon's Push for Territory

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SAIGON (AP) — Widespread fighting shattered the start of an official cease-fire in South Vietnam today, with much of the fighting centered in the Saigon area.

Senior analysts said the fighting that extended beyond today's 8 a.m. (4 p.m. PST Saturday) truce deadline was not a surprise. But they said they did not feel that Saigon's hold on the country was seriously threatened and it had not lost any significant territory.

Fears that the North Vietnamese would use tanks in last-minute attacks did not materialize.

Fight for Territory

The analysts said that it appeared the fighting would only die out gradually. This is because the South Vietnamese were trying to recapture territory lost in the captured territory lost in the Communist side was trying to hold it.

Besides the Saigon area, fighting was reported in scattered parts of the central highlands and along central coast. Lt. Gen. Nguen Van Toan, commander of the 2nd military region, said about 15 incidents were reported after the 8 a.m. deadline.

In one of the incidents, two American helicopter crewmen were lightly wounded by ground fire near the An Khe pass on Highway 19. They were the first U.S. casualties reported after the cease-fire went into effect.

Planes Downed

The U.S. Command said two American planes were shot down yesterday afternoon while supporting South Vietnam marines in northeastern Quang Tri province, and listed four airmen as missing.

An American was killed in the last hours before the

cease-fire, bringing to four the number of GIs killed since the agreement was announced last Wednesday. More than a score were wounded.

Fighting was reported continuing after the cease-fire hour in a corridor north of Saigon, as close as five miles to the downtown sector of the city.

Associated Press correspondent Mort Rosenblum reported from the field that major battle was under way beyond the 8 a.m. deadline along Highway 1 near the district town of Trang Bang, 30 miles northwest of Saigon.

Rear Guard Action

Rosenblum said two South Vietnamese propeller-driven Skyraiders planes began bombing a few minutes before 8 a.m. and dropped 25 bombs during the next half hour. They later were joined by South Vietnamese air force jets, which strafed enemy positions.

The enemy troops were fighting a rear guard blocking action to prevent South Vietnamese armor reinforcements from reaching embattled Tay Ninh City, 25 miles farther northwest.

Tay Ninh was attacked yesterday by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops who moved into the suburbs of the city and the Cao Dai religious sect temple.

Col. Dang Nhu Tuyet, commander of a South Vietnamese infantry regiment, said North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces cut Highway 1 in about 10 places between Trang Bang and Tay Ninh. South Vietnamese infantrymen were ambushed at daylight when they tried to move up the road.

Armored personnel carriers filled with government troops and tanks rolled into Trang Bang 30 minutes after the cease-fire and renewed a drive — stalled since yesterday afternoon — to reopen the highway after the air attacks had softened up the enemy positions.

"We will fight as necessary if the Viet Cong keep fighting," said another South Vietnamese officer. "That's self-defense. We

cannot just stand in the road and wait."

Church bells rang out in Saigon to signal the start of the cease-fire, and some traffic stopped during a minute of silence.

President Nguyen Van Thieu voiced the Saigon government's gratitude to the Americans who helped it survive. Addressing his people, Thieu said:

"We do not know whether peace will last or not, or will be sabotaged by the Communists."

Base Retaken

All four crewmen aboard the downed planes, a Navy F4 Phantom and an Air Force OV10, were listed by the U.S. Command as missing. Spokesmen said they were shot down at about the same time.

Another report said South Vietnamese marines were reported to have recaptured the former Cua Viet naval base four miles below the demilitarized zone, re-establishing an eastern anchor of the South Vietnamese forward line in the north.

Military sources said the base, lost in the North Vietnamese offensive across the DMZ nearly a year ago, was retaken at 7:58 a.m. Saigon time today, two minutes before the cease-fire began.

During the 24 hours preceding the truce, the Saigon command reported 334 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacks across South Vietnam. Allied officials

described this as a land-grab attempt to fortify positions.

The number of attacks was the highest ever reported in the war for a 24-hour period.

Ninety minutes before the truce began, a score of rockets crashed into Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Air Base, killing one Vietnamese civilian and wounding 20.

U.S. warplanes had been scheduled for continued missions in Laos and Cambodia, but the latter country announced today that its soldiers will also observe a truce with Communist-led troops.

President Lon Nol of Cambodia, speaking at a special session of the national as-

sembly in Phnom Penh, said he had ordered government troops to halt offensive operations beginning tomorrow.

He said the cease-fire would enable North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces to "leave our country in the shortest possible time."

A 7th Fleet task force of 20 to 25 ships steamed into the Gulf of Tonkin on "Operation End Sweep" to clear U.S. mines from North Vietnam's harbors and rivers. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong officers were en route from Paris and Hanoi to Saigon for the first meeting tomorrow of the four-party Joint Military Commission.

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