

Ground War Flares Up Below DMZ

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SAIGON, South Vietnam — (AP) — The ground war in South Vietnam flamed up Tuesday with a battle just below the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in which 109 Communists were reported killed.

Other sharp actions cost the enemy 153 dead, the U.S. Command said. The command reported seven Americans killed and 51 wounded.

U.S. headquarters also reported the downing of two U.S. jets in South Vietnam in the past 24 hours due to "unknown causes."

BOMBERS ATTACK

B52 bombers unloaded on the enemy in South Vietnam Tuesday, ~~making two raids~~ in the demilitarized zone. This is the staging area supporting some 35,000 Red troops threatening U.S. Marines guarding the upper approaches to South Vietnam.

It was just below the zone that a small Marine convoy of three trucks ran into elements of a Communist regiment Monday.

Heavy fire blasted all three vehicles, but armed helicopters riding shotgun overhead opened up and a tank spearhead quickly reached the battle.

The Marines reported 109 Communists and five Leathernecks killed, and 34 Marines wounded.

A short time later spotter planes caught some 300 Communist troops in the open and directed artillery fire on them, but no enemy toll was claimed from the barrage.

In the Saigon area, Viet Cong terrorists shot and wounded an American civilian, fired at two American military billets and mined a village headquarters in mounting pre-election harassment.

A U.S. spokesman said the civilian, an employe of the navy supply system in Saigon, was shot three times as he talked to three Vietnamese men in Cholon. A police official said two persons passing on motorbikes fired the shots and escaped.

DOUBT EXPRESSED

The head of South Vietnam's national police Brig. Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan, expressed doubt, however, that the Communists could stage any major terrorist incidents before the Sept. 3 presidential elections.

He said his police have not been able to smash the main Communist organization in Saigon but enough Reds have been picked up to hamper the network severely.

On the political front Premier Nguyen Cao Ky said charges by some civilian candidates of government misdeeds during the campaign "not only have created suspicion among the people but have also discouraged allied nations."

He appealed in a nationwide broadcast to all candidates to refrain from personal accusations and vowed that the election would "be completely honest and impartial."

Ky is running for vice president on the military ticket headed by Chief of State Nguyen

sumed their government-arranged tour of the provinces last Wednesday after receiving assurances that the military regime would treat them fairly.