

B52s Pound N. Viet Troop Positions in DMZ



S&S Vietnam Bureau
SAIGON — Air Force B52s dropped at least one-half million pounds of bombs on North Vietnamese positions in the demilitarized zone Tuesday, completing their sixth raid on the DMZ in three days.

U.S. headquarters said the eight-engine Strategic Air Command bombers flew three raids Tuesday above Con Thien in the southern half of the zone.

Each B52 flight reportedly consists of at least three to five planes, each able to carry 60,000 pounds of bombs.

The Navy said Tuesday its carrier-based planes bombed a second railroad bypass bridge during Monday's strike on Lang Son, 10 miles from the Red Chinese border.

The raid on the first bridge — which was reportedly destroyed — was announced a

few hours after the strike Monday.

The Navy said 7th Fleet jets Monday also struck the Na Phuc rail yard, 16 miles south of the Chinese border.

At the same time, planes from the carrier Constellation in the Tonkin Gulf bombed a 500-yard highway bridge across the Red River seven miles north of downtown Haiphong. The Navy said two spans were blown into the river.

A delayed report here said an RA5C Vigilante — an Air Force photo plane — was shot down Sunday over Lang Son. Both crewmen are missing.

Tuesday's B52 raids on the DMZ were flown against North Vietnamese troops, bunkers and what was termed "extensive artillery and antiaircraft positions" in a half-moon extending about four miles above the Ma-

rine post at Con Thien.

Targets were listed as 2½ miles northeast, 4½ miles northeast and 3½ miles northwest of the base. Con Thien is less than two miles below the six-mile-wide DMZ.

The raids followed three B52 strikes on the zone Sunday. They are apparently intended to relieve North Vietnamese pressure on Marines operating near Con Thien and Gio Linh along South Vietnam's embattled frontier.

Three and possibly four North Vietnamese divisions are known to be active in or near the DMZ, using artillery, rockets and mortars in the zone against U.S. Marines.

Bombing raids on the zone were cut back earlier this year when North Vietnamese surface-to-air missile (SAM) emplacements were spotted in and just above the zone.

Most of the SAM sites apparently have been knocked out since then by intensive U.S. air strikes. Attempts to replace the SAMs have been countered by additional air strikes and Naval bombardment.

In other strikes on North Vietnam Monday, Air Force Phantom jets from Ubon, Thailand, set off two explosions at a fuel storage area 11 miles south of Dong Hoi.

An F105 Thunderchief from Korat, also in Thailand, touched off a huge explosion at an ammo depot 66 miles northwest of Hanoi.

The F105 pilots — Capt. Charles A. Horner and Dino Ragagli, also knocked out two searchlights that tracked the plane near Yen Bai.

In a night raid, Marine jets bombed the port of Hon Gai, 30 miles northeast of Haiphong on the Tonkin Gulf.

Allies Repel Attack Near Dong Ha

S&S Vietnam Bureau
SAIGON — Marine-Vietnamese Popular Forces combined action platoon dug in near the U.S. base at Dong Ha was struck by North Vietnamese before dawn Monday.

One Marine was killed and two wounded. The Vietnamese took light casualties, officials said. Nine enemy soldiers were killed and 10 weapons captured in the 10-hour battle.

The enemy attacked at 4:15 a.m. with rifles and machine guns, the U.S. command reported. They kept up the fight

despite heavy artillery and air attacks until 2:30 in the afternoon.

The fight took place four miles southwest of the Marines' Dong Ha base, frequent target of North Vietnamese artillery, rocket and mortar attacks.

Elements of the Army's 101st Airborne Brigade ran into a stiff fight Sunday afternoon 10 miles southwest of Tam Ky in Quang Tin Province.

The paratroops first hit what they estimated was an enemy company at 5 p.m. The U.S.

forces called in artillery and helicopter gunships and the Reds broke contact.

Later Monday morning heavy fighting broke out, again this time with both sides using artillery and mortars.

The second battle continued almost until dawn when Communist forces again withdrew.

U.S. officials reported two paratroopers killed and 19 wounded. They counted 35 enemy bodies.

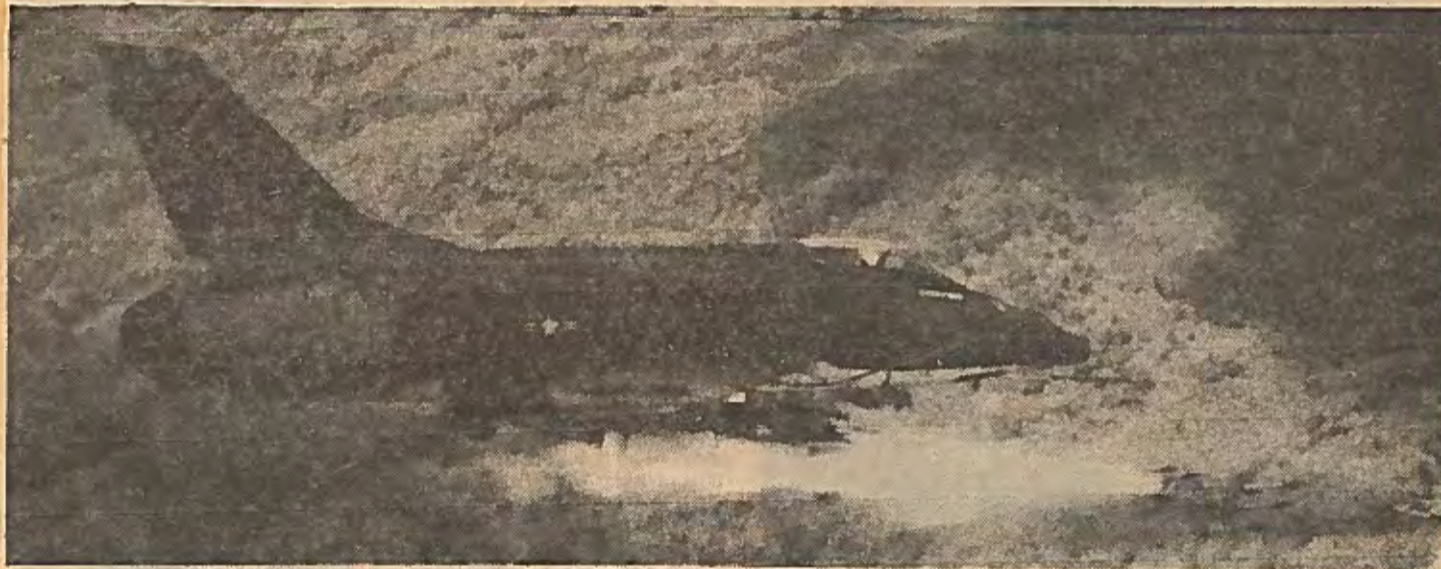
The paratroops and elements of another Task Force Oregon

unit, the 196th Light Inf. Brigade, had kicked off Operation Benton in the area Sunday morning.

Total casualties reported for Benton were four U.S. dead and 32 wounded, and 48 enemy dead.

The Marines announced Monday they launched Operation Cochise Aug. 11 in the Quang Nam-Quang Tin Province border area just above Tam Ky.

In three days of light contact they killed 13 enemy and captured 13 suspects, while suffering three dead and 22 wounded.



Pretty Picture—Unless You're a Red

An Air Force F100 Super Sabre pilot fires rockets into an enemy position in South Vietnam. The Super Sabres, supporting U.S. and allied units in South Vietnam, are equipped with bombs, rockets and cannon. (USAF)