

TUESDAY

THE MONTICELLO HOT LINE

7 DEC 1965

MARINES STORM ASHORE ALONG VIET NAM COAST

SAIGON: AMERICAN MARINES STORMED ASHORE FROM LANDING CRAFT AND HELICOPTERS IN AN AMPHIBIOUS RAID ON A VIET CONG HIDE OUT ALONG THE CENTRAL COAST OF SOUTH VIET NAM, ABOUT 300 MILES NORTH OF SAIGON. THE DAWN RAID, NAMED "OPERATION DAGGER THRUST," WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE AMPHIBIOUS READY FORCE OF THE UNITED STATES SEVENTHFLT.

THE FIRST TROOPS CAME ASHORE FROM THE LANDING SHIP DOCK, USS MONTICELLO AND BLASTED A PATH IN FRONT FOR TANKS. AIR STRIKES ALSO WERE CALLED IN FROM THE AIRCRAFT CARRIERS USS KITTYHAWK AND BON HOMME RICHARD. THE MARINES MOVED INLAND THROUGH A CHAIN OF COASTAL SAND DUNES ALONG WITH LUMBERING M38 TANKS. OTHER MARINES LANDED BEHIND THE DUNES BY HELICOPTERS FROM THE AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT CARRIER USS VALLEY FORGE. MORE WAVES OF MARINES HIT THE BEACHES FROM THE ATTACK TRANSPORT USS MONTROSE. A MILITARY SPOKESMAN SAID THE RAIDING FORCE WAS STILL ASHORE AT NIGHTFALL SUNDAY. HE SAID THE MARINES HAD KILLED 14 VIET CONG AND AIR STRIKES HAD PUT 11 OTHER ENEMY TROOPS OUT OF ACTION. MARINE CASUALTIES WERE DESCRIBED AS LIGHT.

AT THE SAME TIME, TROOPS OF THE UNITED STATES 1ST INFANTRY DIV. WENT INTO BATTLE AGAINST AN ESTIMATED FORCE OF 500 COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS ONLY 35 MILES NORTHWEST OF SAIGON. THE INFANTRYMEN FOUGHT MOST OF THE DAY IN A GROWING BATTLE THAT BROKE OUT IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE VIET CONG'S "IRON TRIANGLE" JUNGLE STRONGHOLD NORTH OF SAIGON. THE BATTLE SHAPED UP AS A HEAD-ON CLASH BETWEEN AMERICANS AND A VIET CONG COLUMN THAT KEPT FEEDING IN MORE REINFORCEMENTS AS THE DAY WENT ON. AS THE AMERICAN TROOPS BEGAN RUNNING INTO MORE VIET CONG, OFFICERS CALLED FOR AIR STRIKES AGAINST AN ENEMY OF AN ESTIMATED BATTALION SIZE-- BETWEEN 600 AND 1000 SOLDIERS. QUICKLY ANSWERING THE CALL, THE AIR FORCE AND NAVY DUMPED 14 LOADS OF BOMBS ON THE COMMUNIST POSITION AND IN OTHER AIR ACTION, GIANT B-52 BOMBERS STRUCK AT VIET CONG TARGETS IN 4 RAIDS SOME 50 MILES NORTH WEST OF SAIGON.



Cruiser St. Paul Duels With Red Shore Guns

Plumes of smoke and water erupt around the U.S. 7th Fleet heavy cruiser St. Paul as she comes under heavy fire off the coast of North Vietnam. Red shore batteries opened up on the St. Paul as the ship sailed off Phu Cong. It was not reported whether the ship was hit. (USN Photo by AP Radiophoto)

