

Viet Fight ^{8/23/69} Continuing During Week

SAIGON (AP) — Fresh fighting flared south of Da Nang late Friday night following reports that the North Vietnamese were bringing up reinforcements in a battle that has blazed without letup since Sunday.

Reports early this morning said soldiers of the American Division's 196th Light Infantry Brigade killed 22 enemy in two sharp clashes 31 miles south of Da Nang. American casualties were listed as one killed and four wounded.

Enemy gunners hurled a rocket and mortar barrage into Tam Ky, a provincial capital near the battlefield, killing one child and wounding four civilians and two Vietnamese soldiers.

Hue Also Hit

The former imperial capital of Hue also was hit shortly after midnight by two rockets that killed one child.

While the heaviest action centered south of Da Nang, other sporadic clashes claimed American lives.

In the far north near Gio Linh, two miles south of the demilitarized zone, an element of the U.S. 5th Mechanized Infantry Division came under a mortar barrage followed by a sharp ground attack. The attack was beaten back at a cost of one American dead and seven wounded.

About 100 miles southeast of Da Nang, a U.S. Army engineer group clearing a road was ambushed by an enemy force and fighting lasted two hours. Headquarters said one American was killed and nine wounded.

Closer to Da Nang, North Vietnamese troops in miles of interlocking bunkers continued to hold back U.S. infantrymen despite a pounding by artillery and waves of fighter-bombers.

The battle broke out Sunday when two companies of U.S. troops bumped into a strong North Vietnamese force believed about to attack the refugee center of Hiep Duc.

But since Wednesday it has been a battle between the North Vietnamese and U.S. forces trying to reach the wreckage of an American command helicopter shot down in the hills with eight aboard. All were believed killed.

By Friday night, officials estimated 35 to 40 Americans had been killed and more than 160 wounded in what has turned into the biggest battle since the enemy opened a fall campaign last week.

Enemy deaths were estimated at more than 470, most of them the result of barrages of artillery, bombs and flaming napalm.

Despite the sharp fighting, the Americans were little closer to the wreckage than when they began the drive Wednesday.

Intelligence reports said an unknown number of North Vietnamese reinforcements appeared headed toward the battlefield and were last spotted about six miles away.