

zczc sag

yy nnm

wsiroeil

editoniammam

dmz 1 (normass/deepe)

WITH THE U. S. 9th MARINE REGIMENT, DEMILITARIZED ZONE, VIETNAM, OCTOBER 3--The treetop ~~layer~~ tier of of jj jungle canopy had been withered brown by American defoliat defoliation sparys, but the two lower layers still encased <sup>below</sup> the Marine unit ~~below~~ in an emerald u. umbrella. of foliage .

Only as the Huey "slick" descended into a cylindrical landing zone where the rainforest had been felled did the troops emerge life-size from their prison of greenery. The troops were hi gingerbread-colored, their faces arms and uniforms having been powdered and buttered with the cinnomon <sup>AND MORE</sup> dust of the jungle floor.

==more reuter

zczc sag

yy nnm

dmz 2 (normass/deepe)

0. In the humid, mid-day heat, many had stripped off their shirts and flak jackets; some were hacking away the undergrowth between trees; some were laboriously chipping out floxholes from the rubbery clay. They were digging deep; a company in a sister unit earlier in the operation had already been decimated in a ten withering North Vietnamese army and mortar barrage, ~~suffering~~

The troops of the 1st b ~~bat~~ battalion--which had already written Vietnam military history along the demilitarized zone during the battles of Con Thien and Khe Sanh--appeared weary; some wore several dayss of stubble on their chins and cheeks; they had been on the march since August 27 and during the ~~operat~~ Typhoon Bees in early September had bequeathed them with twenty two inches of rain in four days. BESS WAS the VIOLENT HARB. 1984 the monSOONS.



zczc sag

yy nmm

dmz 3 (normass/deepe)

The jungle in and around the ~~dmz~~ dmz is some of the densest in the world; it is among the most agonizing terrain in ~~W~~ Vietnam in which to walk--little lone to fight. Sending out super-cautious flank security <sup>into the</sup> ~~in potential~~ ideal Communist ambush country, the 1st ~~Bat~~ Battalion had moved about three-fifths of a mile a day--one grid square on the map--while on the ridgelines. But at the base of the mountains, in the gulleys and draws where machete hacking was required, the battalion covered 500 yards a day--the equivalent of five normal city blocks.

==more reuter

zczc sag

yy nmm

dmz 4 (normass/deepe)

The ~~demilitat~~ demilitarized zone is perhaps the great misnomer of the Vietnam war. On the ground, it has not been a bloody battleground--but for the North Vietnamese, it has since ~~mid-1965~~ become mid-1964 become a significant transiting area from which to prepare, man and supply their battlefield further south. The Allies have during the years countered with massive tactical and strategic air bombardments, artillery and naval gunfire shellings. The Communists have in turn countered this with their own artillery shellings ~~an onto the~~ <sup>into</sup> ~~ground across the dmz and surface-to-air missiles and radar-controlled 100 millimeter anti-aircraft barrages directed at American ~~airera~~ fighterd fighters and bombers.~~

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy nnm

dmz 5 (normass/deepe)

Only frequ occasionally, however, in the past three years, have American or South Vietnamese combat units pierced into the dmz (except for unannounced, clandestine Special Forces raids).

~~When~~ Usually the battleground ~~was~~ ground battles were fought further south, on the Allied side of the southernmost limits of the zone. *line*

When Allied battalions did venture into the zone, they have thus far to date remained in the so-called "southern trace"--the half of the <sup>dmz</sup> zone south of the Ben Hai river. The Ben Hai forms the sole natural boundary of the dmz--which on the maps is termed the "provisional military demarcation line."

==more reuter

zczc sag

yy nnm

dmz 6 (normass/deepe)

~~Three miles on each side of the Ben Hai River, except for a few odd wrinkles here and there, lies~~  
thr

Except for a few odd wrinkles here and there, <sup>three</sup> ~~there~~ miles on each side of of the Ben Hai river lies the "southern trace" and the northern half of the zone. Zigzagging and ~~s-cur~~ S-curving towards the South China Sea, the silvery river--currently about a hundred yards wide--appears as one of the most innocent and idyllic waterways in the world; yet more than any other, it ~~has~~ has given birth to diplomatic, ~~is~~ ideological and military confrontations in this decade.

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy npm

dmz 6 (normass/deepe)

Horizontally, scissoring North and South Vietnam, the Ben Hai forms the midstream of the ~~an~~ 40-mile-long dmz from the Laotian border to the South China Sea.

The ~~first~~ <sup>of the 9th MARINES</sup> ~~ba~~ 1st Battalion <sup>A</sup> has been almost in the horizontal center of the ~~dm~~ dmz; vertically it has moved from 500 yards south of the Ben Hai southwards towards its southermonst boundardy.

The battalion ~~first~~ <sup>Began</sup> ~~no~~ began ~~operating~~ <sup>MEANDERING</sup> its operation on ~~August 27~~ outside the dmz on August ~~2u~~ 27, while searching the hills and mountains and valleys around the ~~sg~~ shaggy "Rockpile" area. Then on September 17, it was helicoptered into the lowlands near the Ben Hai river and ~~moves~~ <sup>Began</sup> ~~moved~~ <sup>MEANDERING</sup> southwards.

~~Since September 17, the battalion on the map has~~  
It has taken the battalion since September 17 to <sup>-By the map-</sup> move ~~the~~ the three miles from the Ben Hai river to the southern limits of the dmz--but the routes ~~has~~ have been doubly circuit circuitous, up and ~~doq~~ down the ~~hi~~ mountains and ~~v~~ mountainsides and meandering ~~around each~~ upon one mountainside, down the other side and meandering between the ridges. In ~~Besides~~

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy nmm

edmz 8 (normass/~~dep~~ deepe)

Besides moving cautiously to ~~spring~~ potential Communist ambushes and bushwacking parties, the battalion also took time to ~~blaze~~ blaze out a one-ship helicopter landing zones which can be were used to for resupply and medical evacuations. ~~and~~

~~The unit first moved into the dmz on~~

In part, the unit was moved into the dmz as a follow-up ground action committed to assess the effectiveness of B-52 raids in the area during the two previous days. On D-Day--September 17--~~the~~ the battalion was helicoptered into the Hill 256 ~~oo~~ complex and then two of its companies moved southwards to secure the dominant terrain in overlooking the Ben Hai. The next day, the battalion was split; two companies--roughly ~~18~~ 170 men per "grunts" ~~per~~ "grunts"--per company--moved directly southwest cross-country and the remaining two companies attacked along a ridgeline <sup>into</sup> ~~in~~ a known North Vietnamese bunker complex. The units then moved into the Hill 579 complex, midway between the Ben Hai and the southernmost border of the dmz.

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy nmm

dmz 9 (normass/deepe)

In confident spirits, but haggard-looking, Captain Edward F. Riley, explained what the battalion had found during their three-week jungle odyssey. in the dmz. A 31-year-old native of Portland, Maine, he served as the battalion's operations officer during his second tour in Vietnam in three years. period.

"We discovered hundreds of bunkers, sometimes bunkers within a maze of bunker complexes," he said matter-of-factly. "With our two companies attacking southwest from the Ben Hai, we encountered a significant arms cache three kilometers south of the Ben Hai, overlooking the river. We found a lot of weapons and ordnance and an elaborate Communist bunker system completely wired with landline communications."

==more reuter

zczc sag

yy nmm

dmz 10 (normass/deepe)

"Some of the bunkers measured 15 feet by 20 feet and were deep enough for a man to stand in. Logs eighteen inches in diameter provided the roofing. Everything was extremely well camouflaged and there were even patios on top of some of the bunkers with eating facilities. There were roofed-in eating facilities. They had cut steps down the mountains and hills and had bamboo banisters on them. Everything was extremely well camouflaged. AND THEY HAD WELL-DEVELOPED ANTI-AIRCRAFT SITES

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy nnn

dmz ~~10mmmm~~ 11 (normass/deepe)

"Their main trails generally followed the ridgelines, but were crisscrossed with minor trails every several feet. These minor trails ~~can~~ ran down into the draws,

He explained what the battalion had seen in the aftermath of a B-52 raid. the B-52 raids.

"The B-52's were on target in the majority of the bunker complexes," he said. "Many trees were uprooted and anything above ground in the area would have been decimated. The bunkers immediately removed from the bunker area--about 100 meters away bombing craters--about 100 meters away--on the flanks--showed no dma damage. But we did ~~four~~ <sup>ND four</sup> ~~mass graves~~. We uncovered one and it had in excess of two bodies in it; we found twenty bodies, but we did not dig to the bottom of the grave. The other three graves we did not uncover." He estimated "maybe ten per cent of the bunkers his battalion discovered were destroyed." The evidence was that the NVA had made an extremely well organized withdrawal from the area before we got there. They didn't rush out; they buried their dead, policed up the area and left.

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy nmm

dmz 12 (normass/deepe)

The 1st battalion

As

Since the major M NVA units had withdrawn from their bunkering complex, the 1st Marines had made no "solid" face-to-face showdown contacts. However, the unit had been mortared on four or five occasions, generally at dusk dusk, when the Communists can observe where their rounds impact, yet still use the approaching darkness to evade on the onrush of American airpower. On one night last week, a platoon-sized Communist probe hit two flanks of the command group's security company, but American artillery supported the Marines within 15 minutes. Several nights later, the North Vietnamese hurled twenty to thirty mortar rounds at the 1st Battalion; the Marines suffered one slightly wounded-casualty casualty and returned fire with 97 artillery rounds.

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy nmm

dmz 13 (normass/deepe)

Further to the east in the dmz, ~~the 26th~~ <sup>RUNNING</sup> Marines discovered a road leading southwards from the Ben Hai <sup>SOUTHWEST</sup> river for roughly eight kilometers. The road, wide enough for truck traffic, was cut into the sides of the mountains, thus giving it an all-weather capability. Senior commanders fear the Communists may have been building the road in order to move down their heavy pieces of artillery down closer to ~~Americ Marine forward combat bases numerous~~ <sup>THE</sup> ~~combat bases~~ <sup>MARINE</sup> which have replaced Khe Sanh for operational purposes.

Since the dmz ~~operation~~ operation began on August 27 September 17, eight Marine companies have consistently operated in the zone in the "southern trace" at at times ~~12~~ <sup>4</sup> companies were four more companies were committed there. For a few minutes, four other <sup>moving northward</sup> companies may have slipped across the southern most boundary into the dmz proper <sup>are no</sup> since there is no visible features defining the southernmost boundary of the dmz, and ~~an~~ even elaborate maps are not exact, American commanders sometimes find it difficult to say specifically when they are in the dmz, on the southern boundary line or in south vietnam proper.

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy nnm

dmz 14 (normass/deepe)

Generally, four Marine companies of 170 men each form a battalion, but at times during an operation companies are added or subtracted from the a battalion for specific durations.

~~Source~~

No official statistics are currently available on materials, bunkering a, complexes and casualties of both sides incurred during the operation within the dmz proper. However, <sup>from</sup> ~~since~~ August 27, <sup>3, 5</sup> operating inside and ~~d~~ south of the central part the dmz and ~~son~~ in the northern part of south vietnam, the <sup>A</sup> J<sub>2</sub> Marines killed 750 North Vietnamese while suffering 70 <sup>DEAD</sup> killed. An additional 401 Marines were wounded and evacuated from the battle zone; 41 others were wounded but not evacuated. Communists wounded are unknown. Four Communists were s/captured as prisoners of war and five other Vietnamese were detained as suspects.

==more reuter



zczc sag

yy nnm

dmz 15 (normass/deepe)

Official statistics list 1,588 Communist bunkers destroyed, 678 weapons <sup>FIND</sup> seized, 1.4 million rounds of repeat one point four million rounds of small arms ammunition seized, <sup>Other captured items were</sup> 10 tons of explosives, 37 tons of rice, 7 tons of salt, 20,255 artillery, mortar and rocket rounds and 12,589 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines.

~~Please insert~~

Note to editors: please insert the following after the second take: The Marines had been cut off from the news of the outside world during the operation. Unlike <sup>MARINES</sup> ~~thier~~ ~~their~~ the troops in the ~~bunkered~~ remote, bunkered base camps south of the <sup>Dm2,</sup> ~~zone~~, the 1st Battalion had not listened to the early morning broadcasts of the World Series. And they were unaware of the verbal ~~fuss being raised~~ in the Paris peace conference and the American Presidential ~~ca~~ campaign about restoration of the "de" in the militarized zone. The Marines were more intent on digging their foxholes ~~deep and~~ deeper.

<sup>EXCHANGES</sup> Hank: sorriest this isn't written very well; eyem ~~stand in reuter~~ rushing to get it out with a courier to Saigon. Maybe you can <sup>MESSAGE</sup> ~~polish~~ it ~~some~~. Regards Bev).

==end reuter