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# Say Reds Setting Kien Duc As a Spring-Loaded Trap

SAIGON (AP) — South Vietnamese infantrymen pushed into the contested town of Kien Duc in the lower central high lands Monday in their battle to retake the district capital, field headquarters here announced.

But the government troops may have walked into a trap, field reports indicated.

North Vietnamese artillery was said to be zeroed in on them from high ground to the north and south, and fresh Communist troops were said to be massing to the south with up to 20 tanks, reports said.

Government field commanders said the supply road leading from the provincial capital of Gia Nghia, 12 miles to the east, was mined and North Vietnamese troops were lying in ambush along the last kilometer, the reports said.

An announcement from the 23rd Infantry Division said 40 North Vietnamese troops were killed in Monday's push and four Soviet-built T54 medium tanks were destroyed — two inside

the town and two on the outskirts.

Field commanders said many rifles, mortars and other ammunition were captured. Government casualties were light, they claimed.

Correspondents got to within three kilometers of Kien Duc but were stopped from going into the town because of the reported road mining and massing of enemy troops.

Field commanders said there also were small units of enemy troops still in the town.

The government field command said three government

battalions, up to 1,500 men, took up positions to the east, north and south of the town.

Government positions inside the town, including the military command post, were reported under sporadic artillery attack.

Sunday, government bombers and artillery pounded North Vietnamese holed up in reinforced bunkers in and near Kien Duc, reports said.

South Vietnamese officials have steadfastly predicted a Communist command general offensive early next year. They say the original assault on Kien Duc by North Vietnamese tanks and infantrymen last Tuesday was a preliminary maneuver to gain rice for their troops and to gain access to Highway 14.

Kien Duc lies astride Highway 14, and the North Vietnamese need this stretch of the roadway to complete a 400-mile all-weather supply network through South Vietnam.