

2d Decade of War Begins; Truce Broken by Clashes

By IVER PETERSON **JAN 2** 1971
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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Jan. 1—The United States today began the second decade of its involvement in the Vietnam war, with military spokesmen reporting a surge of fighting that marred a 24-hour New Year's truce proclaimed by the allies.

There were at least 26 clashes between allied and enemy troops, the spokesman said.

The United States command said one American was killed and eight were wounded in the clashes. South Vietnamese casualties for the 24-hour period were put at 6 killed and 20 wounded, and 9 guerrillas were reported killed in the encounters.

As had been the case over Christmas, the enemy proclaimed a three-day New Year's truce, adding a day before and after the holiday.

In the decade since Jan. 1, 1961, the date that is regarded by the United States command as the statistical beginning of American involvement in the war, more than 44,200 Americans are reported to have died in action in Indochina.

As of last Saturday, the official figure was 44,208, but to this total there will be added the still untabulated casualties incurred since then. The total of wounded was put at 293,225.

The heaviest fighting during the New Year's truce proclaimed by the allies was reported to have occurred early today between South Vietnamese and Vietcong troops. The Vietcong, military spokesmen said, attacked a Government outpost on the edge of the U Minh Forest in the Mekong Delta.

Five South Vietnamese soldiers were reported killed in the attack and ten wounded. Enemy losses were put at three dead.

Despite the truce declared by the enemy, New Year's eve was costly in terms of American lives. Five American soldiers were reported killed by booby traps in the central coastal province of Binghtuy and in the north province of Quangtin.

Five more Americans were reported killed in a New Year's eve ambush of a United States

Continued on Page 3, Column 6

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

navy supply boat in Kiengiang Province in the Mekong River delta.

The largest ground engagement involving American troops yesterday was said to have occurred at an enemy bunker complex discovered by helicopter-borne troops in the Cambodian border area about 56 miles northwest of Saigon. Eight enemy soldiers were killed in an attack on the American unit, a United States military spokesman said. He said 16 Americans were wounded.

The next truce period will come Jan. 26, when the Lunar New Year, or Tet, is celebrated. The allies are expected to announce a one-day or possibly a two-day truce. The enemy is already committed to a three-day truce.

First Withdrawal of 1971

SAIGON, Jan. 1 (AP) — The United States command announced the first troop redeployment of the new year. It said authorized American troop strength was reduced by 170 men with the withdrawal of an Army air supply company.

Under the sixth phase of American withdrawal, United States troop strength is scheduled to drop to 284,000 by May 1, a decrease of 53,800 from the present total of 337,900 men.

Warning by Thieu

SAIGON, Jan. 1 (UPI)—President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam in a speech to members of the diplomatic corps who came to bring him New Year's greetings, said he believed any peace agreement with the Vietcong would be worthless unless the Communist movement in South Vietnam was first rooted out and destroyed.

"In fact," he said, "experience has shown, as in Laos, that there is no genuine peace even if the Communists sign a peace agreement based on their own proposals, unless the Communist infrastructure is eradicated, the Communist aggressive forces eliminated, and their staging areas from across the borders destroyed."