

# U.S. Planes Start Jungle Fires To Aid Besieged Vietnam Base

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Saturday, April 10 (AP)—United States aircraft reportedly set off jungle fires with napalm yesterday in an intensified effort to break a North Vietnamese siege of a South Vietnamese artillery base in the Central Highlands.

But the outpost, Fire Base 6, remained under heavy enemy fire for the 10th day and two American helicopters were unable to land.

They had been sent to pick up an American artillery officer, who had been missing since the base was overrun briefly by the enemy on March 31. The officer, First Lieut. Brian M. Thacker of Honolulu, walked into the base yesterday after having spent nine days in the jungle on the run.

The action around Fire Base 6 was part of a series of enemy attacks in the Central Highlands, which has become the focus of the fighting in South Vietnam. The enemy has launched a drive in the area each spring, but United States military sources are now saying that this year attacks are on a broader scale.

These sources note that the attacks have been spread over Pleiku and Kontum Provinces, whereas in previous years the enemy chose targets in a single province.

There were no reports of new ground fighting at Fire Base 6, but a sharp engagement was said to be under way 80 miles to the south at an artillery outpost named Lonely.

South Vietnamese headquar-

ters said that its forces there had killed 25 North Vietnamese. The defenders' casualties were put at three killed and four wounded.

In the attempt to lift the siege of Fire Base 6, a hilltop post six miles east of where the Laotian, South Vietnamese and Cambodian borders meet, B-52's were ordered in, as on previous days, to bomb nearby concentrations of North Vietnamese troops.

United States fighter-bombers then saturated the jungle around the base with napalm, military spokesmen reported, and American helicopters dropped a similar fiery liquid in 55-gallon drums to touch off fires. The objectives was to burn out the heavy jungle growth and thus deny cover to the enemy as well as to clear the field of fire for the defenders?

In other action reported yesterday, Laikhe, the headquarters of the South Vietnamese Fifth Infantry Division 25 miles north of Saigon, was shelled. Five civilians were reported killed and 11 civilians and one soldier wounded.

## Foe Breaks Up Rally

VITHANH, South Vietnam, April 9 (UPI)—An enemy mortar battery broke up a rally and awards ceremony today for Vietcong defectors in this provincial capital in the Mekong delta. Seven civilians were