

Doctor Describes Effect of

By Harold Jackson
The Guardian

LONDON—A new type of antipersonnel bomb dropped on Hanoi by American aircraft is causing severe medical problems for the North Vietnamese, according to a British consultant physician who has just returned from Hanoi.

Dr. Philip Harvey, who works at St. Stephen's Hospital in London, arrived in Hanoi on April 8 to carry out an extensive medical education program at the invitation of the medical faculty at Hanoi University.

A week after his arrival, on Sunday, April 16, 60 U.S. aircraft bombed the city, he said, causing extensive damage to eight residential districts.

Dr. Harvey said in London last week that he had visited one of the areas, less than a mile from his city center hotel, and examined some of

the dead and wounded.

"I saw the body of one woman—she was pregnant—and she had been riddled with plastic pellets from an antipersonnel bomb.

"This is a new development. The pellets used to be metal, but now that they are using plastic it is impossible to locate the pellets by normal X-rays. They can be found with the use of ultrasonic vibrations, but the North Vietnamese do not have such equipment."

"A full ultrasonic vibration unit costs about \$50,000.

Pentagon Comment

[The Defense Department made the following response to Dr. Harvey's charges: "There are no weapons in the U.S. inventory which employ plastic fragments or pellets or which depend upon plastic or any other nonmetallic projectile for fragmentation effects. No U.S. weapons are designed

with the intent of making X-ray detection of fragments difficult or impossible, nor are weapons designed with the intent of making any medical treatment difficult or impossible."]

Dr. Harvey said that the plastic pellets penetrate the victims' bodies at 1,300 feet a second, creating such intense heat that they vaporize the flesh.

"They can fracture a bone without even making contact with it," he said. The wounded people Dr. Harvey saw all had multiple penetrating wounds caused by cubical pellets, he said.

The raid took place at about 9:30 a.m., and involved three waves of 20 aircraft flying about 25,000 feet, the doctor said.

Vapor Trails

"It was impossible to see the planes," Dr. Harvey said,

"though the sky was completely clear. I did see the vapor trails of the ground-to-air missiles being fired against them.

He said that six or seven brick-built thatched houses had been destroyed in the area he visited. Two people had been killed outright and 11 others injured, five seriously, he added. Later two of the injured died and another two bodies were located in the ruins.

The bombs dropped seemed to be an equal mixture of high explosive and antipersonnel. The latter, Dr. Harvey said, had no effect on property or structures.

"I dug some pellets out of the brickwork and they had only gone in about a quarter of an inch."

Public Holiday

The other areas attacked that morning were all

New U.S. Bomb

within a mile or so of the city center.

"It was a public holiday and the streets were teeming with people. At the moment Hanoi has about five times the population for which it was originally designed. Later the authorities started evacuating women and children."

Dr. Harvey said that this was the only raid on the city while he was there—he left on Saturday April 22—though there had been one false alarm five days after the attack.

"So far as I could tell the morale seemed to be remarkably high and they carried on with my program as though nothing had happened. It seemed to me that the bombing had much the same effect in Hanoi as it did in London during the blitz: It just strengthened people's determination to same effect in Hanoi as it

did in London during the blitz: It just strengthened people's determination to struggle on."

[Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) charged in a news conference March 24 that such bombs were being used in Indochina. Sen. Gravel based his charge on information gathered by an anti-war group called Project Air War.

[Fred Branfman, director of the organization, said he had met a man whose factory manufactured plastic casings for bombs while looking for someone to make plastic models of other bombs used in Indochina.

[He said the plastics manufacturer had told him that he had a large contract from the U.S. Navy to make the plastic casings, and that the plastic was designed to splinter on impact into very small pieces.]