

Devastating Raid on Hanoi

SAIGON — (AP) — U.S. jets made some of the most devastating raids of the war against Hanoi and its suburbs yesterday, wrecking North Vietnam's biggest and most important bridge and smashing four military installations covering more than 300 acres, the U.S. Air Force announced today.

But the Air Force's report of heavy damage in North Vietnam was offset by a revised field report that explosions Sunday at a bomb storage dump at Bien Hoa Air Base, 15 miles northeast of Saigon, destroyed or dam-

aged 70 South Vietnamese helicopters. Forty Americans were wounded.

It was the worst aircraft loss of the war for the South Vietnamese and will severely restrict their operations at a critical time, when renewed North Vietnamese offensive action is expected.

In South Vietnam, government troops abandoned the district capital of Tien Phuoc, the key defenses of Da Nang, in what field officers said was a "justified" retreat.

A spokesman for the Sev-

enth Air Force said the U.S. air attack on the Paul Doumer Bridge at Hanoi, the biggest in North Vietnam, was "the most damage we've ever done to it in the war."

The bridge across the Red River was repeatedly attacked in the 1965-68 bombing campaign and again last May 10-11, but it was repaired each time.

Using laser-guided, 2000-pound bombs, U.S. pilots reported destroying three spans of the bridge and

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damaging three others. The pilots also reported heavily damaging the superstructure, of the steel and concrete bridge.

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"Psychologically, it is the most important bridge in North Vietnam," said the Air Force spokesman. "All traffic from the Chinese border to the demilitarized zone comes across the bridge."

The four military installations were attacked for the first time in the war. They included anti-aircraft assembly and repair plants, storage and distribution depots for war materials, and barracks.

The Air Force identified them as the Hanoi Barracks East, four miles east of the city limits; the Hanoi Barracks Gia Thuong, two miles northeast of the capital; the Trai Hop Military Barracks, 42 miles north of Hanoi; and the Ngoai Trach military installation 23 miles to the northwest.

Pilots reported destroying or damaging more than 40 buildings.

The U.S. Command announced the loss of one plane yesterday, a Navy A7 jet shot down by an anti-aircraft missile 14 miles southwest of Hanoi. It said the pilot is missing.

It was the 90th U.S. plane and the 98th airman reported lost in North Vietnam since the start of the enemy offensive last March 30. Thirty-seven of the men are known to have been captured.

Hanoi claimed three U.S. planes were shot down yesterday.

The U.S. Command reported more than 320 strikes against North Vietnam during the day.

The Saigon command announced earlier that the explosions at Bien Hao were caused by enemy rockets, but today it said the cause was not known and was being investigated. Other sources said they believed saboteurs did the job, while others said it might have been an accident.

About 150 500-pound

bombs went off and ripped through two hangars at the big U.S.-South Vietnamese air base. Revised reports said two South Vietnamese were killed, 21 Vietnamese were wounded and 40 Americans were wounded.

In the ground war, fighting at Quang Tri remained in the stalemate and continued to exact heavy casualties on both sides.