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# U.S. Bombs Cut Major Hanoi Bridge

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Saigon

United States jets hit the strategically important Paul Doumer Bridge within the city limits of Hanoi in one of the most intense raids of the war on the North Vietnamese capital, the Seventh Air Force said yesterday.

In the ground war, officers reported the threat to Hue had been ended with the smashing of an enemy division that had menaced the city.

The bridge across the Red river, said to carry all traffic from the Chinese frontier to the demilitarized zone, suffered its heaviest damage of the war in raids Sunday, an Air Force spokesman said.

Three spans were destroyed and three damaged by F-4 Phantom jets using 2000-pound laser-beamed bombs, the Air Force announced.

## BARRACKS

Four military barracks with their complex of assembly and repair plants and storage and distribution depots on the fringes of Hanoi were also bombed, the Air Force said.

A Navy A-7 jet was shot down by an anti-aircraft missile 14 miles southwest of Hanoi on another mission. The pilot is listed as missing.

South Vietnamese infantrymen, commanded by a lieutenant colonel known as the "Spider of Bastogne," have routed the only North Vietnamese division threatening Hue, senior officers reported yesterday.

"We've broken the back of Hanoi's 324B Division," a U.S. adviser told Associated Press correspondent Holger Jensen. "They can't even shell it anymore. There's been dramatic improvement in the military situation here."

It is the first significant victory claim on the northern front, contrasting with the government's failure to recapture Quang Tri, north of Hue.

Field commanders said remnants of the 324B Division, which fought its way to within 12 miles of Hue last

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month, are retreating southwest toward their traditional sanctuary in the A Chau Valley, 30 miles southwest of the city.

Artillery Bases Bastogne and Checkmate, which had changed hands frequently in June, July and August, are now firmly in government control.

"I admit we were worried at times in the last three months," said one adviser. "We had taken casualties, high casualties. But the only conclusion I can draw now is that the North Vietnamese have given up trying to take Hue from the southwest."

Other officers attribute the success to a combination of saturation bombing by American B-52s and ground maneuvers by the First Regiment of the First Division.

Its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Vo Toan, earned the nickname "Spider of Bastogne" for his defense of Bastogne, a onetime American base that anchors the western defenses of Hue.

At Bastogne, Toan used a network of squad positions that was likened to a spider web.

## COPTERS

Seventy South Vietnamese helicopters were destroyed or damaged Sunday by explosions at a bomb dump in the big Bien Hoa base, 15 miles northeast of Saigon, according to field reports.

Two Vietnamese were killed and 21 Vietnamese and 40 Americans were injured by the blast.

Cause of the explosion is being investigated but, sabotage is suspected. The Saigon command at first announced the base had been hit by enemy rockets but later admitted the cause is unknown.

The helicopter loss may be the worst of the war and could severely hamper the army's mobility.

The armies of the North and South remained in stalemate positions on the two most active fronts — Quan Tri and Tien Phuoc in the north — with casualties mounting on both sides.