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U.S. Aces Deny Dikes Are Targets

Washington

The first Air Force aces of the Vietnam war said yesterday that dikes and other civilian structures have never been the targets of U.S. bombers in the area.

Captain Richard S. Ritchie, 30, Reidsville, N.C., an F-4 Phantom pilot and Captain Charles B. DeBellevue, 27, Lafayette, La., told a news conference at the annual convention of the Air Force Association that published reports of dike bombings are false.

"When we read about such things we laugh, because we

know it's not true," DeBellevue said.

"We knew every target—obviously, it had to be pinpointed—and there were never any dike targets," Ritchie said.

"Our bombs never even came close to dikes."

DeBellevue said the Air Force deliberately reduced its effectiveness in going to great pains to avoid hitting non-military targets.

"If the U.S. had wanted to bomb dikes there wouldn't be one dike left in the North," he said.

Associated Press
