

BOMBING IS HEAVY OVER SAIGON AREA

Defector's Tip Said to Lead
to Enemy Infiltrators
NY Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Tuesday, Dec. 12 (UPI)—Heavy raids by United States B-52's were flown yesterday in the Saigon area.

The United States command reported that 13 missions — each consisting of up to three planes—were flown in an arc 23 to 48 miles northwest and northeast of the capital in the 24 hours ended at noon.

It was said to be the heaviest B-52 assault in the region since 14 missions were recorded Oct. 6.

Meanwhile, a North Vietnamese battalion infiltrating from Cambodia was reported attacked by South Vietnamese troops acting on a tip from a defector. Military sources said that 87 North Vietnamese were killed in heavy fighting in a jungled area 42 miles northwest of Saigon.

The defector was said to have left his unit Sunday, turning himself in at a Government outpost. The North Vietnamese force, said to number 500 men, was reported heading for the Saigon region from Cambodian sanctuary areas.

Military sources said the enemy force was pounded by artillery and air strikes and attacked at dawn by Government troops brought in by helicopters.

The Enterprise Gets a Rest

Among other developments, the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Enterprise completed her latest combat tour and was pulled away from the Vietnamese coast for a rest. Her planes had been hitting North Vietnam daily. Four other carriers are still on duty with the Seventh Fleet.

The United States command said that more than 90 sorties were flown over North Vietnam by Navy and Air Force fighter-bombers in the 24 hours ended at 5 P.M. Sunday, and that 214 such missions were flown over the South during that period.

Besides the B-52 missions in the Saigon area yesterday, nine others were reported directed at North Vietnam. One of them, the command said, was flown only a mile from the center of the southern most port city of Donghoi, 38 miles above the demilitarized zone. The others were said to have been flown near the zone itself.

Ten other waves of B-52's went on raids in South Vietnam's northernmost Quangtri Province. The missions had the dual purpose of striking at southbound enemy troops and equipment and of helping Government forces trying to push back Communist troops that occupy most of the province.