

JAN 8 1973

U.S. Planes Hit Da Nang By Mistake

A.P. & U.P.

Saigon

U.S. Air Force planes mistakenly bombed the big allied air base at Da Nang today in an incident wounding or injuring 10 persons, military sources said.

Earlier, the U. S. command said the base was struck by Communist rockets and there was no immediate explanation by it for the reports of the bombing. "We are investigating the report," one spokesman said.

However, military sources said 15 bombs weighing 500 pounds each hit the airfield. One bomb, they said, made a direct hit on a fuel tank and two other tanks caught fire.

Two U. S. army men, two American civilians and a Vietnamese civilian were wounded by shrapnel, the sources said, and four U. S. airmen and one American civilian were injured while diving for cover.

Elsewhere B-52s bombed highways, rivers and canals in southern North Vietnam with more than 1000 tons of explosives Saturday and yesterday in a campaign to stop war supplies from reaching South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The U.S. command announced the loss of the 32nd American plane in three weeks, raising to 99 the toll of airmen killed; captured and missing in that period.

The command said a Navy A-7 Corsair attack-bomber developed mechanical trouble and crashed into the sea Saturday morning shortly after taking off for a mission from the carrier Midway. The pilot, its only occupant,

From Page 1

was killed, the command reported.

North Vietnam has acknowledged that much of its northern heartland, including Hanoi and Haiphong, has been devastated, its production impaired and a national emergency declared as a result. North Vietnam indicated that the two-week aerial blitz above the 20th Parallel had inflicted the heaviest destruction since the country's devastating floods in the summer of 1971.

A Radio Hanoi newscast yesterday said Truong Chinh, second ranking member of the Politburo, headed a group of officials who visited military units and devastated regions in Hanoi on Friday.

The broadcast said that one of the installations visited was the Yen Phu power plant servicing Hanoi, where Chinh exhorted the workers "to care for the flow of electrical power to the capital as if it were the flow of blood in your veins."

The U.S. command reported earlier that five major power plants serving Hanoi and Haiphong were heavily damaged in the raids. Chinh's statement seemed to indicate a power shortage in the North Vietnamese capital.

U.S. headquarters reported that B-52s flew 14 missions across the southern sector of North Vietnam below the 20th Parallel — which excludes Hanoi and Haiphong — during the 24 hours ending at 8 a.m. yesterday.

The U.S. command said a bombing halt above the 20th Parallel ordered by President Nixon on December 30 remained in effect but refused to comment on reconnaissance operations in the northern half of North Vietnam.

TARGETS

Other U.S. sources acknowledged, however, that while a bombing halt is in effect, reconnaissance operations are continuing above the 20th Parallel and unmanned aircraft called drones are being employed.

The command said the targets of the B-52s were storage complexes along highways, rivers and canals 50 miles southeast of the port of Vinh, supply depots to the west and south of Dong Hoi and entrances to the Mu Gia Pass, the gateway to the Ho Chi Minh supply network running southward through Laos. Vinh is 145 miles above the demilitarized zone, the Mu Gia pass 70 miles and Dong Hoi 45 miles above it.

The U.S. command also reported that fighter-bombers carried out 123 missions below the 20th Parallel during the 24-hour period ending at 8 a.m. yesterday.

In South Vietnam, B-52s carried out 19 missions in all four military regions, attacking troop concentrations and staging areas ranging from just below the demilitarized zone to the Mekong Delta, south of Saigon.

For the fifth successive day, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacks in South Vietnam were double the average number of the past two months in what allied military sources described as the Communist command's winter - spring campaign.

The Saigon command reported 98 attacks across South Vietnam during the 24-hour period ending at 6 a.m. yesterday. Most of these were small-scale and three-fourths of them were by rockets and mortars.

A communique from the Saigon command said 140 enemy troops were killed in more than a half dozen clashes concentrated in the region south of Da Nang, in the Central Highlands, in the Saigon area, and in the Mekong Delta. Initial reports said 12 government soldiers were killed and 55 wounded.