

New Bombing Errors in Cambodia

Phnom Penh

American planes killed Cambodian government soldiers and civilians in at least five separate bombing accidents in the past two weeks, military sources said yesterday.

Three of the bombing errors came before the B-52 attack that left 145 dead and 280 wounded on a government base at Neak Luong on Monday, the worst bombing accident of the Indochina war.

On Tuesday, a U.S. F-111 hit a friendly village on an island near Neak Luong, killing eight persons and wounding 16.

OTHERS

Other U.S. bombing accidents have been reported at Prey Bang 15 miles northeast of Phnom Penh on July 29, and at Setbo 13 miles southwest of Phnom Penh on July 30.

Sources said that at Prey Bang three Cambodian soldiers were killed, ten wounded and four persons listed as missing and probably dead. At Setbo, eight soldiers and eight civilians were wounded and four other persons were missing, the sources said.

At Prateah Lang, where there has been heavy fighting for several weeks, U.S. jets were reported to have damaged an armored personnel carrier, killing three government soldiers and wounding 11.

Date

The sources said the bombing occurred last week but they did not give the exact date.

"The first three errors were caused by the normal fatigue of war," said a military source. "Cambodian controllers gave the wrong map coordinates."

Colonel Am Rong, chief spokesman for the military command, meanwhile announced that government forces have reopened Highway 1 to Neak Luong, 32 miles from Phnom Penh.

Supported by massive U.S. bombing, government columns from Phnom Penh and Neak linked up at the Mekong River town of Dei Doh, 26 miles southeast of the capital.

CONVOYS

It has been at Dei Doh that river convoys from the South Vietnamese border frequently have been ambushed by Viet Cong and Khmer Rouge gunners and the government operation is designed at least in part to ease their journeys.

Colonel David H. E. Opfer, an Air Force attache, denied reports that American planes were responsible for killing 15 civilians in the village of Veal Sbau, three miles from Phnom Penh, on Sunday.

Opfer said the U.S. officials at Nakorn Phanom, Thailand, informed the embassy here that no U.S. air attacks went within half a mile of Veal Sbau.

Some villagers at Veal Sbau said the bombs were dropped by jet fighter-bombers. The Cambodian air force has no jets.

The bombing mission was in support of government troops clearing the village of Khmer Rouge.

Associated Press