

Goldwater: 'Gen. Abrams Caught Hell'

SAN ANTONIO — (UPI) — Ousted Gen. John D. Lavelle and Army Chief of Staff appointee Gen. Creighton W. Abrams jointly ordered an unauthorized air strike against a radar site in North Vietnam last spring, according to Sen. Barry Goldwater.

"When the site was finally destroyed, it was on the orders of Gen. Abrams and Gen. Lavelle and they both caught hell from the Joint Chiefs of Staff — not because the JCS disagreed with the strike, but because the orders said you can't do it," the Arizona Republican said during the weekend.

Abrams' Denial

Abrams, whose appointment by President Nixon as chief of staff has been delayed pending a Senate Armed Services Committee investigation of 28 offensive air raids into North Vietnam during a time when only defensive strikes were allowed, has denied ordering the attacks.

Goldwater, a member of the Armed Services Committee and a retired Air Force Reserve General, said both men acted honorably and their actions were justified.

His remarks to the American Fighter Aces Association Saturday night were based on private testimony before the committee.

Will Tell More

Goldwater said one raid authorized by Abrams was against a radar installation in North Vietnam which "had been responsible for shooting down four of our Air Force F4s, and Gen. Lavelle and Gen. Abrams both decided that the radar site should be knocked out."

"I mention these things because I think it's time the American people know how we've been forced to fight a war that in my humble opinion could have been ended seven or eight years ago," he said.
