

Heavy Rocket Attack On Saigon Air Base

U.P. & A.P.

Saigon

Communist gunners hit Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Air Base with a barrage of 51 rockets today destroying aircraft on the ground, setting fires and killing at least seven persons, including one American.

Nine other Americans were injured in the early

morning attack, according to the U.S. command. Military sources said six South Vietnamese were killed and 22 wounded. Most of the South Vietnamese casualties were civilians, at least six of them children.

The sources said the rockets were aimed at the huge

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stockpile of war materiel unloaded in recent weeks and timed to catch as many persons as possible moving around on the base.

One U.S. Air Force HH-43 rescue helicopter was destroyed by a direct hit and another slightly damaged. Two South Vietnamese UH-1 helicopters were damaged and a tank filled with fuel was destroyed, sources reported.

ROCKETS

The Soviet-built 122-mm rockets were fired at the sprawling complex from three sites about five miles northeast of Saigon, the sources said. All three sites were brought under fire by artillery and scrambling helicopter gunships, and ground troops were rushed into the area.

The 45-minute attack started about 7:30 a.m. local time. The commercial flight operations zone was not hit, but officials closed the commercial airport for two hours.

Yesterday enemy forces pressed attacks in the Central Highlands. The Saigon command reported one on-

slaught was repulsed, but a base camp may have been overrun.

South Vietnamese military spokesmen reported government troops repulsed several North Vietnamese assaults Monday against the big Ngo Trang base camp, seven miles north of Kontum.

A communique from the Saigon command said 65 North Vietnamese were killed in the assaults and 16 weapons were captured. It listed government losses as four dead and 15 wounded.

Artillery base November, four miles north of Kontum, was hit with 40 artillery and mortar shells, causing light casualties, field reports said.

IN DOUBT

A third North Vietnamese assault against a government outpost nine miles north of Kontum left the fate of the position in doubt.

In an effort to stop the re-supply in northern Quang Tri, more than 30 B-52s attacked the area yesterday, the U.S. command announced.

The bombers also struck supply caches around the North Vietnamese port of Dong Hoi, 27 miles north of the demilitarized zone.