

# Da Nang Bombing Error Embarrasses U.S. Aides

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Jan. 8—The latest accidental bombing incident of the Vietnam war is causing particular embarrassment here among American officers who have been defending the Navy and Air Force against Hanoi's charges of striking civilians.

The incident occurred this morning, when 34 bombs weighing 500 pounds each were dropped by five American warplanes on the giant American and South Vietnamese air base at Da Nang.

Nine Americans were wounded and one Vietnamese on the base was also wounded, the United States command said. One fuel tank for American and Vietnamese planes on the base was hit and another burned. An American Army helicopter was damaged, as was a Vietnamese C-119 cargo plane. The runways were not damaged.

## Still Used by Jets

The base, one of the first military installations used and built by American troops in the early nineteen-sixties, is a sprawling installation with two 10,000-foot runways, radar navigation devices, and scores of American planes and several thousand American airmen.

No fighter-bombers have been there since last summer, when the last Air Force tactical fighter wing in Vietnam moved to Ta Khli air base in Thailand, but Navy and Air Force jets still use it as a forward-operating location.

Navy pilots, who occasional-

ly land at the base instead of on their aircraft carriers when they are short of fuel or have mechanical problems, call Da Nang "rocket city." They do not like to stay long in the comfortable barracks of the Fleet Air Support Unit there because of the fear of frequent attacks by the Communists with 122-mm. rockets.

Today, two Navy A-7 Corsair jet bombers, two Marine Corps F-4 Phantom jets and an Air Force Phantom flew in over heavy clouds, closely coordinated their approach runs, and dropped their bombs in unison, blind, in one of those electronic advances of the Vietnam war designed to permit pilots to drop bombs with precision on targets they cannot see.

Along with the Pentagon, the military command here has cited such aids when denying Hanoi's charges that civilian hospitals, houses, and schools were bombed in the intense B-52 raids on North Vietnam that began Dec. 18. "We target only military targets" was the phrase used by briefing officers then.

Somehow, today, the electronics—a system involving matching radar signals from widely separated transmitters to determine the geographical position of an airplane at night or in bad weather—failed, and when the bombs dropped out of the clouds they hit Da Nang.

The United States command, which announced the bombing only five hours after it had occurred at 8:30 this morning, said that it did not know why the error had been committed or what the intended target of the mission was, and that an investigation was under way.

"On this one, I haven't even dared to raise my head and ask what went wrong," one officer said. "I'm keeping my head low on this one."

## Rival Cambodian Factions Clash at Paris University

PARIS, Jan. 8 (AP) — One man was killed and about 30 injured today in fighting between rival factions at the Cambodian students' quarters at the University of Paris, the police reported.

They said the dead man was shot in the head with a rifle. Witnesses said that about 50 supporters of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the deposed Cambodian Premier, entered the quarters and attacked backers of the present Government of Marshal Lon Nol. The attackers used iron bars, long knives and paving stones, the witnesses said.

## Antiaircraft Build-Up Is Reported by Hanoi

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Jan. 2 (AP)—North Vietnam announced today that hundreds of antiaircraft units had been formed by the home guard and militia in the Hanoi and Haiphong regions, the main targets of last month's heavy American air raids.

The announcement, broadcast by the Hanoi radio, suggested that the North Vietnamese were expecting new air attacks north of the 20th Parallel if the peace talks, just resumed in Paris, broke down again. President Nixon halted bombing north of the parallel on Dec. 30.

The broadcast said that the new antiaircraft units were being formed to "deal more stunning blows to the U.S. air marauders." added that "more artillery units have been set up" in provinces west and northeast of Haiphong by militia forces.