

# Danang Raid Called Pilot Error

SAIGON, Jan. 8 (AP)—An authoritative source said today that the accidental bombing of Danang Airbase by U.S. planes Monday was apparently caused when the flight leader, guiding the planes above a heavy overcast, ordered the bombs dropped at the wrong map coordinates.

Ten Americans and one Vietnamese were reported wounded by shrapnel or injured while running for cover. No deaths were reported.

The command first reported the explosions as an enemy shelling attack. Seven hours later, it announced that an investigation showed five Air Force, Navy and Marine fighter-bombers "flying above a heavy overcast accidentally dropped 34 500-pound bombs at Danang Air Base."

The command said the cause of the error was not known. An authoritative source, however, said the bombing was due to a pilot error, apparently was heightened by the heavy overcast.

## Wrong Coordinates

The intended target was suspected North Vietnamese and Vietcong positions near Danang.

Meanwhile, North Vietnam announced that hundreds of antiaircraft units have been formed by the home guard and militia in the Hanoi and Haiphong regions, the main targets of last month's massive U.S. air raids.

The announcement, broadcast by Hanoi Radio, suggested that the North Vietnamese are expecting new air attacks north of the 20th parallel if the peace talks just resumed in Paris break down again. President Nixon stopped the bombing north of the parallel on Dec. 30, in a step tied to resumption of the peace negotiations.

U.S. warplanes continued to hammer positions in North Vietnam below the 20th parallel. The command said U.S. B-52s flew 15 missions and tactical fighter-bombers 125 strikes in the southern panhandle during the 24-hour period ending at 8 a.m. Monday.

## B-52 Strikes

B-52 strikes also were flown in South Vietnam from Quangtri in the north to the Mekong Delta.

The Saigon command said that Vietcong and North Vietnamese mortars killed nine civilians and wounded 49 others in a daylight attack Monday

on the provincial capital of Vienthanh, 110 miles southwest of Saigon.

The command also said North Vietnamese and Vietcong attacks across the country dropped from an average of 100 a day for the past five days to 77 for the 24-hour period ending at dawn Monday. Most of the attacks were indirect fire by mortars and rockets, the command reported.

U.S. troops strength in Vietnam dropped by 100 last week to 24,000 the lowest since January 1965, when the American buildup in Vietnam began. About 100,000 other U.S. servicemen, however, are actively involved in the war from ships off the Vietnam coast and from air bases in Guam and Thailand.



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American soldiers try to put out fires in petroleum dumps hit when U.S. planes accidentally bombed Danang airbase.