

SFChronicle
Residential Area Hit

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Rockets Strike Da Nang Air Base

Saigon

Ten Soviet-made 122-mm rockets hit in and around the big allied air base at Da Nang shortly before midnight last night, allied spokesmen said.

A South Vietnamese civilian was reported killed and five wounded by the three rockets that slammed into residential areas clustered around the sprawling Da Nang Air Base, 370 miles north of Saigon.

Seven rockets hit the base itself, damaging four American C-47 transport planes and four vehicles, three of them U.S. pickup trucks and the fourth a Vietnamese Air Force water tanker. Eight U.S. and Vietnamese buildings were damaged, a military spokesman said.

BATTLES

Spokesmen reported heavy fighting yesterday in the coastal highlands. South Vietnamese third Division infantrymen pushing Communist troops back from Que Son, 345 miles north of Saigon, reported killing 50 of them in a midday battle yesterday. The infantrymen reported two of their own men killed and 19 wounded.

Fifty miles to the south, 22nd Division infantrymen near Tam Quan reported killing 53 Communist soldiers in a dawn battle yesterday, and losing five men killed and eight wounded.

In the air war, a U.S. Navy fighter swept north of

the 20th Parallel bombing boundary and shot down a North Vietnamese MIG jet with a missile, the U.S. command said yesterday.

In a delayed report, the U.S. command said a Navy F-4 jet went "a few miles north" of the 20th Parallel — the northern boundary set by President Nixon for U.S. planes — on Friday. Military spokesmen declined to say why. *(12 JAN)*

ESCORT

Observers speculated that the Navy Phantom was escorting a reconnaissance jet over North Vietnam when the slower MIG-17 attacked, and the ensuing air action swirled over the Gulf of Tonkin. The U.S. command would neither confirm nor deny that report.

It was the 184th time an American plane has downed a MIG in the Vietnam war according to U.S. statistics. Presidents Johnson and Nixon have authorized spy planes to overfly all of North Vietnam, and fighter escorts are allowed to fire back at anti-aircraft guns, missile

crews and MIGs when the North Vietnamese attack.

A U.S. Air Force B-52 was damaged by a North Vietnamese missile over North Vietnam yesterday, the U.S. command said, but the bomber landed safely at Da Nang. There were no casualties to its crew.

For the second day in a row Saturday and early yesterday, U.S. commanders ordered the bulk of B-52 raids inside South Vietnam — 29 missions averaging three planes each — into a 12-mile front just west of Quang Tri to destroy a new North Vietnamese supply buildup.

The B-52 raids continued today, the U.S. command said.

CAMBODIA

In neighboring Cambodia, Khmer Rouge Cambodian

Communist troops captured another Mekong river position near Neak Luong, 32 miles southeast of Phnom Penh. Field officers said the Communists captured a position on the west bank of the river which is a crucial supply route for Phnom Penh.

Last Saturday, the Communists captured nine other outposts on the east bank.

The silty river is a lifeline for Phnom Penh since all ground routes to the capital are now in Communist hands or under Communist harassment. A river convoy with food, ammunition and other necessities is due in Phnom Penh today, but sources said it appeared unlikely it would try to run the insurgent-held riverbank positions.

United Press