

WX Post

# Hanoi Claims 2 B-52s Shot Down In Last Hours of N. Viet Bombing

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From News Dispatches

SAIGON, Jan. 16—Radio Hanoi today claimed that North Vietnamese anti-aircraft artillery had shot down two U.S. B-52 bombers in Nghean Province on Sunday. 14 JAN

In a broadcast monitored in Tokyo, the official Vietnam News Agency claimed this made the sixth strategic bomber downed over the province since Jan. 4.

U.S. military sources in Saigon said two U.S. B-52 bombers were damaged by missile fire over North Vietnam, but that one made an emergency landing at Danang airbase in South Vietnam and the second returned to its base at Utapao, Thailand.

A Navy F-4 plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire over North Vietnam on Sunday, the command said, but the two crewmen parachuted to safety.

The U.S. command said its fighter-bombers flew 100 strikes against North Vietnam from 8 a.m. Sunday to 8 a.m. Monday, destroying 12 railroad and highway bridges between Thanhhoa, just below the 20th parallel, and Donghoi, 45 miles above the Demilitarized Zone.

In South Vietnam, the U.S. spokesman said B-52 bombers flew 16 missions against suspected enemy positions in an area only 35 miles northwest of Saigon. More than 1,000 tons of explosives were dropped in the area between Ben-cat and the old Michelin rubber plantation, he said.

The Saigon command reported that Vietcong gunners shelled Danang air base, killing one Vietnamese civilian and wounding five others.

Fighting in Cambodia,

meanwhile, centered on the attempt of government troops to retake the Mekong River, which has been closed to supply ships bound for the capital of Phnom Penh since Communist troops captured strategic positions along the river last week. Government troops re-occupied two positions on Sunday, but the waterway remains closed.

In Laos, Communist forces shelled the base of Buamlong 90 miles west of the royal capital of Luang Prabang on Saturday and Sunday, military sources said. At Ban Hin Heup, 50 miles north of Vientiane, military authorities ordered the inhabitants to take refuge on the other side of the Nam Lik River. Violent fighting also erupted in southern Laos west of Saravane, the sources said.