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U.S. Flies Its Heaviest Strikes In South Vietnam in 5 Months

SAIGON, South Vietnam, strikes, the Seventh Fleet said Wednesday, Jan. 24 (UPI) — a Navy A-7 pilot destroyed an artillery position in Quang Ngai Province on the upper central coast.

The United States command reported yesterday that American planes had flown their heaviest day of raids in five months over South Vietnam.

In the 24 hours ended at 8 A.M. yesterday, the command said, United States fighter-bombers carried out 374 strikes and B-52's flew 27 missions. Each mission was said to have been flown by three of the heavy bombers.

The command reported that American planes yesterday also bombed the Ho Chi Minh supply trail complex in Laos and targets in Cambodia.

Ground action, meanwhile, was described as relatively light yesterday throughout South Vietnam. The Saigon command reported 52 Communist-initiated incidents, 42 of them shelling attacks, in the 24 hours ended at dawn.

Sampan Convoy Attacked

Reports from the northernmost front said that South Vietnamese marines, deployed in ambush positions along the bank of the Thach Han River, had smashed a North Vietnamese sampan convoy within 300 yards of the destroyed Citadel at Quang Tri City.

The marines reportedly killed 18 Communist soldiers, sank five sampans and captured a number of weapons.

Reports from the field also said that two American planes had accidentally dropped five bombs on a South Vietnamese artillery base about eight miles southwest of Hue, wounding seven soldiers. The United States command said it had no word of such an incident.

The 374 fighter-bomber strikes flown yesterday were described as the highest number since last Aug. 22, when 375 were flown.

According to command statistics, there have been 2,333 air strikes by American fighter-bombers and 204 three-plane missions by B-52's in South Vietnam in the last seven days.

Reporting on the latest air

Cambodia Reports a Victory

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, Jan. 23 (UPI)—The Cambodian command said today that Government reinforcements, backed by American F-105 jets, had lifted the siege of Romeas, a railway center 46 miles northwest of here.

Communist troops surrounded the town on Jan. 5. Reports from the field said that about 20 of the Cambodian soldiers who had been trapped in Romeas had been killed and 75 soldiers and their dependents wounded during the siege.