

# Viets Mop Up VC At Tan Son Nhut

SAIGON (UPI) — Tough South Vietnamese Marines and paratroopers mopped up remnants of a Viet Cong invasion force just outside Saigon's giant Tan Son Nhut Air Base Thursday.

The road leading along the eastern edge of the base was littered with burned-out cars, jeeps and trucks caught in the crossfire which raged around the base Wednesday and again Thursday.

There were bullet holes in almost every house along the road for about a mile. Civilians had fled the area.

A U.S. 7th Air Force spokesman said there was "no major damage" to the vital airfield itself and that air traffic had been restored.

A Vietnamese Marine battalion, with machine guns blazing, retook the Vietnamese armored command headquarters, about a mile northeast of the air base, where a handful of Viet Cong were still holed up.

The Viet Cong held the compound for about 36 hours but offered only light resistance when the Marines moved in behind armor.

It was more difficult rooting the Viet Cong out of a corner of the Vietnamese armed forces general staff headquarters adjacent to the base.

"I'm lucky to be alive," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Arthur M. Parker, 23, Lake City, S. C., an adviser to the Vietnamese paratroopers who fought at the general staff headquarters.

Parker and another American adviser were the only two men to escape without injury when the tank they were riding on was hit by a Viet Cong rocket and sprayed with automatic weapons fire Wednesday.

Eight Vietnamese paratroopers were in or on top of the tank.

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