

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 1 GI Killed, 9 Yanks Wounded

PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES

AN AUTHORIZED UNOFFICIAL PUBLICATION
FOR THE U.S. ARMED FORCES OF THE PACIFIC COMMAND

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Vol. 28, No. 341

Thursday, Dec. 7, 1972

First reports said one HH43 "Pedro" helicopter — the type used to rescue downed fliers — was destroyed.

There were also reports of a large fire in the northern corner of the base at the U.S. embassy storage area. The fire began after the first barrage of rockets and threw up a giant cloud of black smoke that could be seen for several miles.

As the first rounds hit the base, the elaborate warning system here triggered sirens and the "giant voice" — an elaborate system of loudspeakers scattered throughout the base. The system appeared to work flawlessly as the "voice" told base personnel to take cover.

As the attack began, helicopters took to the air and began searching for the launch sites. All other aircraft remained on the ground.

Spec. 5 Fred Pulse, Pacific Stars and Stripes correspondent, said the bases alert status changed to "yellow" at about 8:53 a.m.

Base security police told Pulse that Tan Son Nhut was hit with both rockets and mortars during the barrage, which lasted about 45 minutes.

"They started with three rockets," one airman told Pulse, "and then they began walking mortars from the northern end of the runway."

Another Stars and Stripes reporter, Spec. 4 Tom Peterson, managed a quick survey of part of the northern half of the base including the building in which two Americans were hurt.

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As the first warnings were made the entrances to the base were locked and nearly all out-door activity stopped.

Vehicle traffic was restricted to police and emergency vehicles although a number of motorcycles zipped around the base carrying passengers to duty stations.

Remarkably, most of the per-

(Continued on Back Page, Col. 5)

SAS Vietnam Bureau

TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam — One American was killed and 18 persons, nine of them Americans, were wounded when about 35 122-mm rockets hit this sprawling airbase beginning at about 7:42 a.m. Wednesday.

Official sources said the main concentration of rockets, and possibly mortars, was aimed at the flight line in the northern part of the base.

Rockets—

(Continued From Page 1)
sonnel at Tan Son Nhut were not shaken by the attack. Most remained indoors at their work areas with flak jackets and helmets on.

Air Force T. Sgt. Tommie Scott said he began hearing the explosions at about twenty to eight and then he heard the "giant voice."

When asked what the "voice" said, he replied, "It beats hell out of me. I just grabbed my equipment and found me a corner. We don't have any bunkers to go to."

He said all of his comrades remained calm throughout the attack.

In another location and closer to the target areas, S. Sgt. Thomas Furlong, a computer maintenance man, said his building was repeatedly shaken by explosions. He said he did not know of any rockets hitting near his building, which is near the center of the base.

According to Air Force spokesmen at Tan Son Nhut, the American killed was an Air Force helicopter repairman working on a "Pedro" when the first rockets came in.

Also, the spokesman said, nine Americans—Army and Air Force — and nine Vietnamese were wounded.