

PACIFIC

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# Reds Hit Tan Son Nhut, Attack Khe Sanh Unit

**SAIGON (AP)—**Communist gunners shelled Saigon's battered Tan Son Nhut Air Base and other sections of the city and its suburbs again Tuesday.

While no casualties and only minor damage was reported at the sprawling military-civilian airport complex, South Vietnamese military spokesmen said, more than 120 homes were destroyed and there were a number of civilian casualties outside the base.

Communist gunners slammed five rounds of Russian-made 122mm rockets into Tan Son Nhut in two shellings in the early morning darkness. One

**SAIGON (AP)—**Three Communist armored vehicles were spotted deep in South Vietnam only 50 miles northwest of Saigon, the closest to the capital city Communist armor has been confirmed, the U.S. Command announced Tuesday.

U.S. Special Forces troopers firing from ambush destroyed one of the vehicles. It exploded and killed 30 Communists, headquarters said.

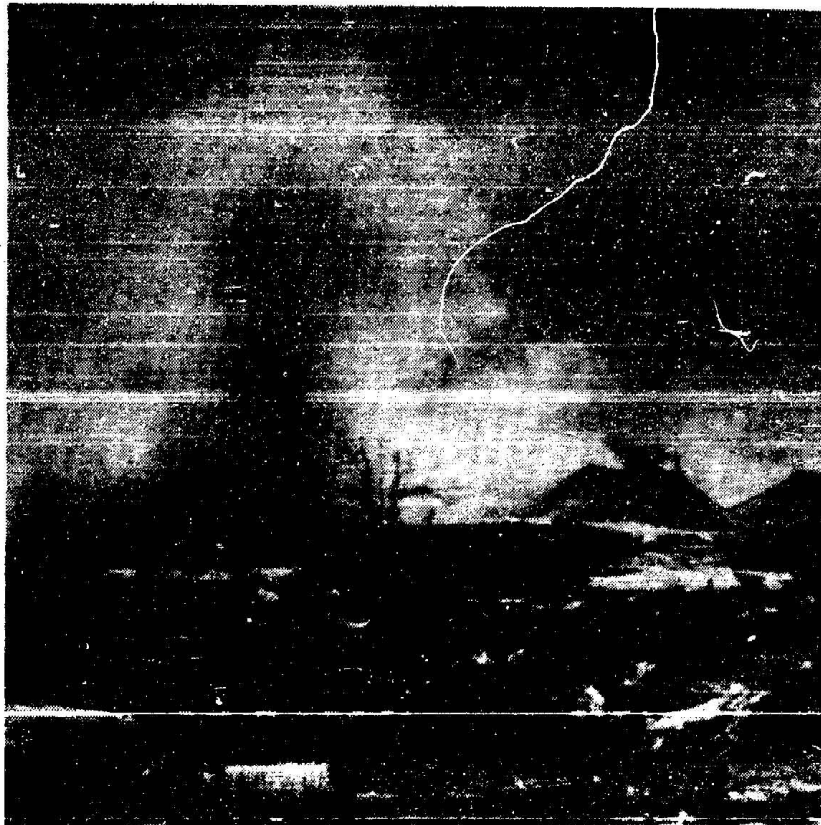
volley of three of the 100-pound shells hit the air base at 1:30 a.m. and two more rockets hit at 5:40.

An Air Force spokesman said that in the first shelling one rocket hit in the area used by Air America, a civilian airline under contract to the U.S. government. The spokesman said "minor damage to a few aircraft" was inflicted.

The Communist gunners may have been aiming for Gen. William C. Westmoreland's U.S. Command Headquarters, known as "Pentagon East," which is just across the road from Air America.

In another action, a U.S. Marine platoon patrolling outside the Khe Sanh combat base was

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North Vietnamese artillery rounds hit the Marine base. The enemy hit the northwest tent and vehicle parking area at the Khe Sanh base with a heavy barrage. (AP Radiophoto)

## Reds Shell Tan Son Nhut Again

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ambushed by North Vietnamese regulars who overwhelmed the outnumbered Americans.  
A second platoon (45 men) sent to help also suffered casualties.

The action was the latest in the month-long battle of bullets and nerves at the base in northwestern South Vietnam. Several officers said Monday they believed the North Vietnamese troops are in position and that a

large scale ground attack is imminent.

Jet warplanes swooping in to cover the Marines, trying to get back to the base from the ambush, pounded the battle site with bombs and napalm.

(Under new U.S. security regulations, the number of Marine casualties was not disclosed.)

The patrol, sent out on a routine intelligence-gathering mission, was 800 yards beyond the outer wire when it was hit. Senior officers said the young lieutenant leading the platoon went beyond the distance set for his patrol and fell into the enemy's grip.

Marines inside the combat base shot back with tanks, recoilless rifles and machine guns to cover the patrol's escape.