

**THE "MY CANH"
BOMBING**
Saigon, June 25, 1965

American Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor, visiting a Saigon hospital after the attack, comforts a small boy, one of many Vietnamese children wounded by the Viet Cong bombs.

A statement by U. S. Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor

Saigon, June 26, 1965



The explosions set off by the Viet Cong last night on Bach Dang Quay have killed or maimed some fifty people. Many of these were women and children. Most were Vietnamese. In this, as in every other respect, the deed bears an unmistakable label: Viet Cong.

This, surely, was the act of desperate men who have begun to realize that they cannot win. For years they have been seeking, at the behest of their masters in the North, to impose their rule of terror on the people of South Vietnam. But last night's outrage, like the wanton murder of an American prisoner announced yesterday by Radio Hanoi, can only strengthen us in our resolve.

May I, on behalf of the U.S. Mission, extend my heartfelt sympathy to the victims of this ruthless crime. And may I take this occasion—no occasion could be more appropriate—to renew the pledge we have solemnly given: We shall do everything in our power to help the South Vietnamese people in their struggle to protect their country against the Hanoi-inspired aggression which perpetrates such acts of terror.

On June 26, 1965, the clandestine radio of the Viet Cong broadcast its version of the VC attack on the My Canh floating restaurant the previous evening, describing the bombing as "a new glorious exploit . . . dealing an appropriate blow to the U.S. aggressors." The same account was later rebroadcast by Radio Hanoi.

Following are excerpts from the VC broadcast and the facts about the bombing.

These people were enjoying a stroll when the Viet Cong bombs exploded.



Fiction and Fact

VC-Radio broadcast

"... The My Canh floating restaurant at the Saigon Quay is an evening attraction for the U.S. aggressors. . . ."

"... hundreds of U.S. aggressors and their henchmen were killed or wounded. . . ."

"... a great number of killed and wounded U.S. aggressors were found and carried from the restaurant. Moreover, many dead bodies of the aggressors were buried under the tables and chairs and debris of the restaurant. . . ."

"... The My Canh floating restaurant was seriously damaged. A U.S. warship near the restaurant was blown up. . . ."

The Facts

The restaurant and the quay are also evening attractions for hundreds of Vietnamese residents of Saigon, including cyclo drivers, shopkeepers, and children who enjoy the playground next to the restaurant. Many of these people were killed or wounded by the VC bombs.

Killed—43

22 Vietnamese
12 Americans
1 French
1 German
2 Filipinos

Wounded—81

62 Vietnamese
16 Americans
1 German
1 Swiss
1 either German or French

The restaurant was not seriously damaged; it reopened for business on June 30, five days after the bombing. The bombs were designed to kill people, rather than to damage structures. No U.S. warship was near the restaurant, and no damage was done to any ships in the harbor.



Contrary to the claims of the Viet Cong and Hanoi radio broadcasts that "hundreds" of Americans were killed and injured, most of the victims were Vietnamese.



Mrs. Tho Thi My, left, grieves over the death of her daughter, Phuong Thao, a popular Saigon singer who was killed as she dined with friends at the My Canh restaurant. At right, a picture of Phuong Thao stands on the altar in her home.

Of the 123 people killed and injured in the attack on the My Canh restaurant, 89 were Vietnamese—cyclo drivers and government officials, sugarcane vendors and businessmen, young women clerks and a popular singer, and of course many children. These are the people whom the VC-Hanoi radio broadcasts called “henchmen of the U.S. aggressors.” News-men interviewed survivors of the atrocity and relatives of some who were killed. Following are some of their stories:

NGUYEN VAN THANH, pedicab driver.

Q—What is your name and age, please?

A—My name is Nguyen Van Thanh. I am 40 years of age.

Q—What is your profession in Saigon.

A—I am a pedicab driver. I used to park at the site of the explosion to wait for passengers.

Q—Where did you park at that time when you were injured? Could you tell us?

A—I parked right at the old Esso Service Station. I heard the first explosion but was not yet wounded, but my wife had her leg broken at about the ankle. I started toward her, intending to take her to my pedicab. It was then that the second explosion occurred and wounded me in my leg and took some flesh off my arm.

Q—Why was your wife with you when you were working?

A—That evening we planned to visit some friends.

MRS. NGUYEN THI NU, sugarcane seller.

Q—What is your name and age, please?

A—Nguyen Thi Nu. I am 40 years old.

Q—We know your husband, a pedicab driver, has also been wounded. How did it happen to you?

A—I was selling sugarcane. I was passing through that place when the explosion occurred. My husband saw me and was turning his pedicab so as to take me to the hospital when the second blast went off. He also was injured.

Q—Then who transported you to the hospital?

A—After a long time an American car transported me to the American hospital where I received first aid. Then I was transported to the Saigon hospital.

Q—Did you lose consciousness when you arrived at the hospital?

A—Yes, because I had lost a lot of blood.

Q—How many wounds do you have?

A—On my leg near the ankle, then over here there is a hole, and over here I lost some flesh.

Q—How do you feel now?

A—I feel hot all over.

LE TRONG TOAN, age 13.

Q—What is your name, my boy, and how old are you?

A—My name is Le Trong Toan. I am 13 years old.

Q—Do you have parents, and where do they live?

A—Yes, I have parents. They live in Thi Nghe.

Q—What were you doing at the Bach Dang quay at that time?

A—I was selling peanuts.

Q—How many wounds do you have?

A—Two places, on my back and on my leg.

Q—Did you have any surgery?

A—Yes, to take the shrapnel out.

Q—How do you feel now?

A—A little better.

MISS NGUYEN THI TAM, dressmaker.

Q—What is your name, please?

A—My name is Nguyen Thi Tam. I am 22 years old.

Q—What is your profession, and why were you there at the time of the explosion?

A—I am a dressmaker. I was with a friend over there at the My Canh restaurant.

Q—Where were you standing when you were wounded?

A—On the sidewalk, after the second explosion.

Q—And where had you been at the time of the first explosion?

A—I was in the My Canh restaurant.

Q—Were you injured after you reached the sidewalk, or were you hit when you were still running on the bridge?

A—On the sidewalk.

Q—How many wounds do you have?

A—Four, three on the legs, one on my arm.

MRS. TO THI MY, mother of Miss Phuong Thao, professional singer.

Q—What is your name and profession, please?

A—My name is To Thi My. I am in local business. Phuong Thao is my daughter.

Q—At the time of the explosion at the My Canh restaurant, was Phuong Thao entertaining customers there?

A—No, she was dining there with some of her friends whose names I don't know. They were there just for a good time.

Q—How old is Phuong Thao?

A—She is 22 years old.

Q—How did you know about her death?

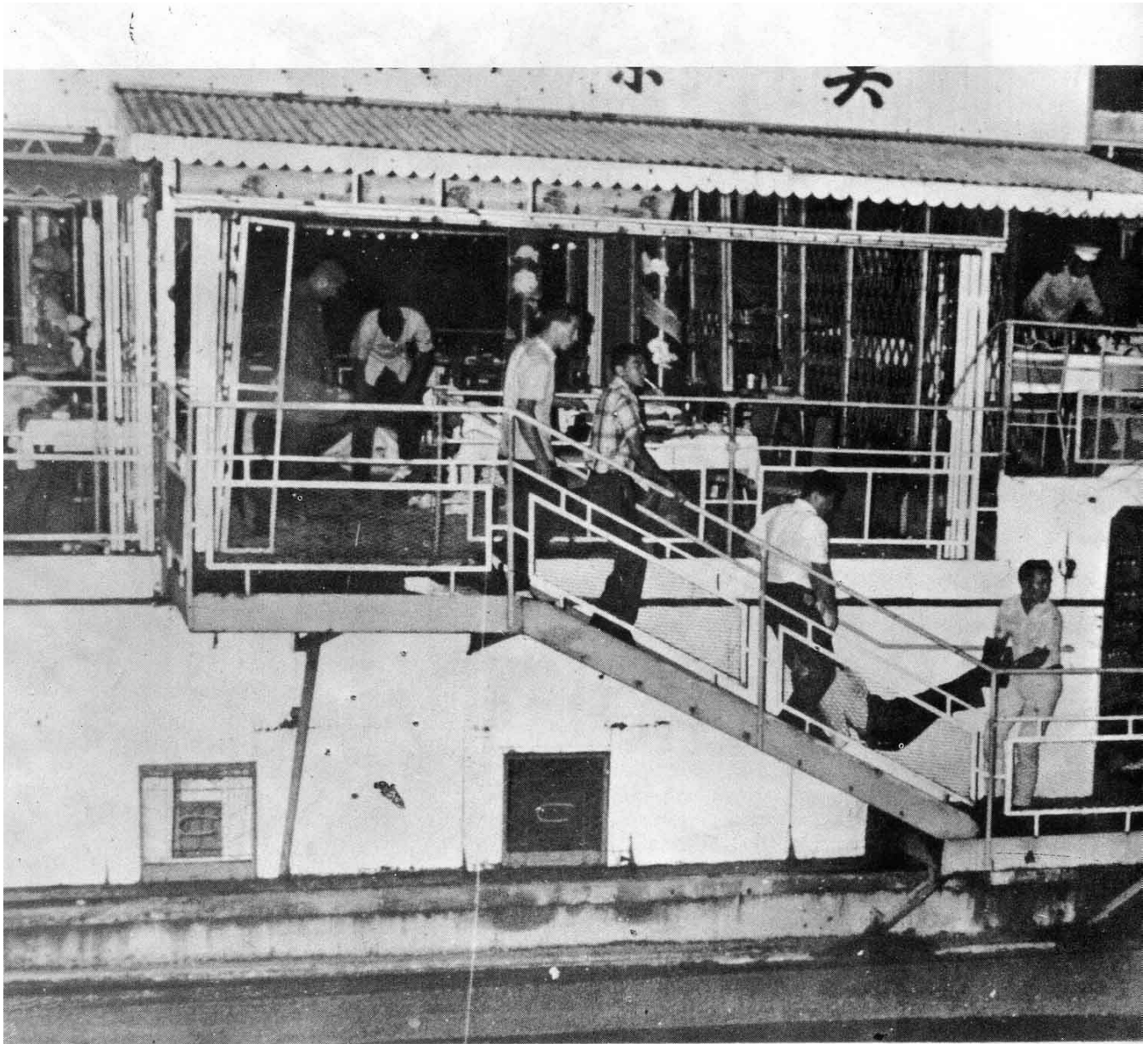
A—A friend came over to inform me about it.

Q—Then when you came over to My Canh, how was her condition?

—(Crying)

Q—Did she die right after the explosion?

A—Yes, right after the explosion.



The Viet Cong and Hanoi radios claimed that the floating restaurant was "severely damaged." In fact, very little damage was done to the restaurant, which reopened for business five days later. Bombs were designed to kill people, not to damage structures.