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In '70, Ex-Maj. Says

Claim Cambodia Bombed Secretly

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A former Air Force major will tell the Senate Armed Services Committee in a public session Monday that U.S. B52s were secretly bombing Cambodia in early 1970, according to congressional sources.

The ex-officer, Hal M. Knight, of Memphis, Tenn., reportedly will testify that he received the hand-delivered bombing orders at a Strategic Air Command (SAC) radar outpost at Bien Hoa, South Vietnam, as often as twice a week and always burned the reports when the bombing missions were completed.

The United States never acknowledged any bombing raids over Cambodia until American troops invaded that country in May, 1970. The Senate committee last fall began investigating alleged unauthorized bombing in Southeast Asia.

In an interview with the New York Times, Knight, 37, now a graduate student in Memphis, said he was never able to determine where the secret orders originated. But he said he was told on one occasion that Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, then commander in Vietnam and now Army chief of staff, was aware of the secret missions.

He told the newspaper that the Cambodian bombing orders always were delivered by hand in the early evening to Operating Location 21 of the First Combat Evaluation Group of SAC, where he was operations officer.

The missions were conducted at night, he said, and he burned

the evidence the next morning.

"I had a number in Saigon to call and say that 'the ball game was complete' —which meant that I had burned the paperwork," he was quoted as saying. "One morning I went back to my hootch and fell asleep without calling and all hell broke loose. They called up screaming bloody murder."

Knight reportedly said the orders came to him from SAC's ADVON Group, a coordinating agency in Saigon that relayed intelligence and target information between Military Assistance Command officials and the Eighth Air Force on Guam.

Knight's story was told to the committee by Sen. Harold E. Hughes, D-Iowa, who was a key figure in the committee's hearings last year on unauthorized bombing raids ordered by Maj. Gen. John D. Lavelle, former commander of the Seventh Air Force. Lavelle was demoted and later retired after he admitted ordering unauthorized raids in North Vietnam in 1971 and 1972.

Knight said Lavelle never found out "that they had been doing exactly the same thing before he got there —only on a bigger scale —but they got away with it."

Hughes said that Knight disclosed his story last January in a letter to Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., who gave it to Hughes.

He said he brought the matter up last Friday in a closed committee hearing for Gen. George S. Brown, who preceded Lavelle as head of the Seventh Air Force and who was confirmed Saturday by the Senate as Air Force chief of staff.

Hughes said testimony at the hearing indicated Brown did nothing illegal by allowing the raids because they were "ordered by someone" higher up.