

Fighter H-Bombs Not For Practice: TAC

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Fighter - bombers of the Air Force's Tactical Air Command, capable of carrying small hydrogen bombs, do not transport the weapons during normal peacetime operations, a TAC spokesman revealed yesterday.

The Shaw AFB spokesman said that only practice "smoke bombs" are carried during training missions, not nuclear weapons.

This is true both for TAC planes based in the United States and those overseas, he stated. "We do not carry nuclear weapons on peacetime missions and don't expect to," he said. The information was issued through the Air Force Headquarters information officer Maj. Harold Susskind.

HE WAS QUERIED on the possibility after an announcement by Gen. O. P. Wayland, commander of TAC, that a hydrogen bomb small enough to be carried by a fighter-bomber has been developed for use by tactical air forces.

Wayland had said that tactical fighters are dispersed at bases around the world and "a large segment" of any potential enemy target complex lies within their range.

The Shaw AFB spokesman said that these fighters are equipped with "practice" non - explosive bombs. In case of war a nuclear weapon can be loaded on each plane, he added.

"Unlike the Strategic Air Command which is capable of striking with nuclear weapons at any time, we carry only practice bombs until we're called upon to fight," he said.

The practice bombs are non-explosive smoke bombs which have a light powder charge. They are used to mark hits on the practice bombing ranges, he added.

Wayland stated earlier that the fighter delivery system for the H-bomb is so accurate it exceeds that of the low altitude bombing system.

THE LOW-altitude bombing system is presently used by TAC fighter-bombers. It is a system by which a plane goes into a target area low enough to avoid radar detection. Once close enough to the target, it may either loop, springing loose its nuclear weapon, or climb vertically, releasing its weapon, and continue in the opposite direction.

Shaw-based jets compose part of the 337th Air Division. This is a reconnaissance outfit, the spokesman pointed out, and its planes carry neither bombs nor guns of any type. Their only weapon is a high speed camera which photographs terrain for use by other forces.

The RB-66 a reconnaissance-equipped B-66 type bomber, and the RF-101, a camera equipped supersonic fighter, are used by Shaw forces. Neither reconnaissance plane is equipped now for delivering nuclear weapons.