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Black African guerrillas claimed responsibility Thursday for an attack...

By NAT GIBSON

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa -- Black African guerrillas claimed responsibility Thursday for an attack on South Africa's largest military complex, but denied using Soviet-built rockets.

South African military spokesmen said a search was launched around Pretoria after four Soviet-made 122mm rockets slammed into the Voortrekkerhoogte military complex shortly before midnight Wednesday.

They said one of the rockets exploded near a maid's quarters, injuring a woman slightly. The other rockets hit a toilet, a hedge and an open field, causing minimal damage.

In a statement from its headquarters in neighboring Tanzania, the banned black nationalist African National Congress claimed responsibility but said their guerrillas fired RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenades simultaneously from four positions and sprayed the building with heavy machine gun fire.

The 122mm rocket is considerably bigger than the hand-held RPG-7 and is normally only carried on a special vehicle.

The ANC statement said the attack was timed to coincide with the 14th anniversary of Wankie Day, when the group's black African guerrillas

clashed with South African and Rhodesian forces in Zimbabwe, then known as Rhodesia.

Residents in the Indian township of Laudium said they saw the rockets streaking through the air moments before Zahed Patel, 17, was shot by the three men as he was parking his father's auto near the launch site.

A motorist chased the gunmen until they fired at his car. Police alerted by the noise pursued the gunmen and forced them to abandon their car after a flurry of shots. They fled into a field where they disappeared in the darkness.

Police immediately cordoned off all black and mixed race townships in the area and set up roadblocks and search parties.

The military complex, about 10 miles south of Pretoria, is the largest in South Africa. It contains two airbases and numerous army facilities.

There have been more than two dozen bomb and gun attacks by black nationalists since the beginning of the year, but the assault on the military base was the first time rockets have been used.

In Cape Town, Police Commissioner Louis Le Grange said two black nationalists involved in bomb and gun attacks last week in the southeastern Cape province were killed in a gun battle that left one policeman seriously wounded.

He said the two dead men were part of a five-man team responsible for bomb blasts in Port Elizabeth and East London and subsequent clashes with police last week.