Six Killed in Explosion At Naval Post

Sitka, Alaska, Oct. 12 (AP) — An unexplained explosion at an underground dynamite magazine at the Sitka naval air station today killed at least six service men, injured dozens of persons in the nearby fishing village and damaged defense and private construction.

The blast reverberated across Baranof Island just as hundreds of civilians and army families were attending the dedication of the Sitka church at 12:10 p.m. The concussion sent windows cascading into the streets in showers of broken glass, inflicting one death, many women and children walking out of the church and along the narrow streets of this island town.

The list of dead, as provided by naval officials, included Capt. Francis C. Allen of Kentfield, Calif.; a civilian, identified as an Oil Company of California at San Francisco and more recently promoted to marshal at the air station; Capt. Merle C. Todd of Los Gatos, Calif.; Capt. Hedley C. Easterbrooks; Pvt. Frank E. Hayton, San Francisco, and Pvt. Albert J. Slipp of Millville, Va. All these were soldiers.

Thomas A. Baskom, a Marine, was the sixth fatality.

One house was also damaged. Many of the homes built recently for officers as part of the $5,000,000 improvements on the air station were undamaged. Although the station is being operated by the navy, an army detachment has also been assigned here, as well as a number of Marines.

Navy reluctance to give details made an accurate check of property damage inside the station impossible. Much of the construction there has been completed, including large hangars which may have been endangered. In Millville, a grass fire which spread over the small island.

A navy official said the dynamite which exploded had been stored in the magazine by contractors here to build hangars and houses on the government property.

Caused by Grass Fire.

Cmdr. J. R. Tate, commanding officer, said 30 persons were being treated for minor injuries.

The dynamite magazine, located on a small island off shore from town, was owned by the Siems-Drake Sound Company, contracting firm. Unofficial sources said the explosion was caused by a fire which spread over the island.

The dead men, sources said, were in a fire truck which approached the magazine. More than 43,000 pounds of dynamite exploded from heat. The navy confirmed this in part by listing a fire truck as lost in the explosion.