

Bigger & Uglier

Asleep in a scramble tent at the south end of the 10,000-ft. Đà Nẵng Air Base runway, U.S. Air Force Major George V. Moore of McCook, Neb., was rudely awakened at 1:25 a.m. "Suddenly there were explosions going off all around me," he said later. "I was knocked out of my bed and against the side of the tent."

Near by Pfc. Bruce Devert, 19, of Los Altos, Calif., one of 9,000 U.S. Marines assigned to guard the Đà Nẵng Air Base, which is the major staging center for the U.S. aerial bombardment of North Vietnam, found himself "in a dark vacuum with the whole world made up of flashing noises and explosions."

This was the start of a Viet Cong raid against Đà Nẵng last week. Under heavy-mortar-fire cover, the raiders stole out of a graveyard toward a sector of the base perimeter patrolled by South Vietnamese troops. The guerrillas snipped one barbed-wire fence, stepped through a dozen holes cut in another fence by defensive troops to facilitate their own movements, and let go with a barrage of grenades, satchel charges and recoilless rifle fire. The Reds ran into no outer guards, were on Đà Nẵng's runway before they met their first challenger. Carrying coffee to a guard on duty down the line, a U.S. Air Force enlisted man spotted the raiders, emptied his pistol at them — and was cut down by a burst of sub machine gun fire. He was the only American killed.

Before they fled under a hail of Marine mortar and small-arms fire within minutes after they had come, the raiders destroyed one Delta Dagger jet and two four-engine C-130 Hercules transports and damaged two Delta Daggers and one Hercules. Estimated total cost: \$5,000,000. The Viet Cong left behind them trails of blood indicating that several had been wounded. **One was captured, turned out to be a North Vietnamese soldier named Do Xuan Hien, 29**, who under questioning said that he had infiltrated into South Vietnam three months ago with his entire battalion and had trained for the Đà Nẵng raid for a month.

In the Đà Nẵng raid, as in many other ways, that "ugly little war" in Vietnam last week got uglier — and bigger.

We Take Care of Our Own

[Click to Report BROKEN LINKS](#) or [Photos](#), or [COMMENT](#)