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parked almost squarely between the Army contingent and the attacking VC.

He turned to look back inside for some safer cover, and, just as the sparks up forward died out, he saw a small, shadowy silhouette reach into the plane through the still-open forward hatch to place something on the floor 30 feet from him, then disappear.



IT'S ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER ON 001.

It was a plastique satchel bomb. It exploded in their faces in a brilliant, blast-furnace hot 10-foot ball of orange flame and sparks. Parr can't describe the noise it made.

He and Glasscock were both blown clear out the open doorway. They landed, temporarily blinded, in a jumble of arms and legs on the steel parking apron, each with slight wounds of the hands. Simultaneously, both jumped up and ran without uttering a sound—in opposite directions.

Parr pounded across the runway, through the line of fire. He still doesn't know why he was never hit. He was stopped, though—when he ran full steam into a concertina of barbed wire-strung around the field.

After the gunfire stopped, he extricated himself from the wire and went back to the plane, cut and bleeding. Glasscock was still hiding in a sand ditch behind 001, scared but not seriously hurt. Together, they staggered across the runway again to the dispensary.

It was morning before Parr got back to 001. What was left of it, that is.

There was a five-foot-square hole in the cabin floor. Cables, electrical panels and insulation had been ripped and charred loose, and dangled out of walls and ceilings at crazy angles. Bullets had torn through the cockpit, randomly slicing control cables, smashing radios and instruments, and shattering the radar antenna in 001's big, bulbous nose. Pressure of the blast had collapsed large sheets of the plane's metal skin.

001 was in trouble again.

The next day the maintenance people flew up from Tan Son Nhut, shook their heads sadly and led 001's crew away quietly.

The plane stayed there for 30 days, getting enough patchwork for a flight to Saigon. Arriving there, still with a hole in its belly, it got two weeks more temporary work.

Thence to Taiwan. But 001 insisted on adding insult to injury—its hydraulic system started to fail on the flight. Not from battle damage, just from pure cussedness.

IT TOOK them 15 days in Taiwan to clean out the polluted system, then 001 was shuffled on to Japan for more work. By this time, it looked like a big band-aid with wings.

The Lockheed engineers at Tachikawa AB put \$100,000 worth of work into 001 the next month, and for a while it looked as if the incorrigible aircraft would finally straighten up. For two months, it flew outstandingly on local hops, giving no trouble at all.

But it was just waiting its chance.

They finally got around to inspecting it one day—and found the plane had a shattered nose strut inside its landing gear.

Disgusted, the maintenance people dragged 001 off to the side of a little-used taxiway to await a shipment of parts. It sat there for 70 days . . . it seems some parts were held up, and engineers from other 315th Hercules kept "cannibalizing," borrowing parts off 001, and the plane was losing more than it was gaining.

"I remember seeing it one day sitting out there without any engines on it at all," Parr said. "Just a big C-130 glider."

Finally, the mechanics rounded up enough parts to get old 001 flying again. It took off just the other day, with Hassell on board as flight engineer.

How far it'll get is anyone's guess.