

U.S. RAID FOR P.O.W.'S IN 1970 DESCRIBED

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WASHINGTON, July 1 (UPI)—United States commandos raided a North Vietnam prisoner of war camp in 1970 despite reports that it was empty and killed 100 to 200 Soviet or Chinese soldiers in a battle that broke out when many raiders attacked the wrong target, according to the author of a new book.

NYTimes
Benjamin Schemmer, author of "The Raid," said Secretary of defense Melvin R. Laird and other officials had ignored intelligence reports that the Son Tay prison camp had been evacuated, and ordered the Nov. 21, 1970, raid anyway because aerial photos suggested that someone might still be there.

Mr. Schemmer, who said he had interviewed men who took part in the raid, others who were prisoners of war and intelligence sources, said none of the volunteer commandos had known the camp might be empty and, in any event, most of them landed by helicopter at a heavily guarded antiaircraft training school 600 yards away.

"The largest part of the raiding force landed there by mistake and killed 100 to 200 Russian or Chinese troops in a preemptive strike that left the school—the raid's ground commander told me—blazing like a roman candle," Mr. Schemmer said in an interview.

The other raiders, he said, broke down every door in the deserted camp 23 miles west of Hanoi only to find no one there.

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