

Satchel Charge Rips Saigon Officer Billet

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SAIGON — Terrorists exploded a satchel charge at an American officers' billet two blocks from the presidential palace in downtown Saigon Tuesday night, slightly injuring two GIs and destroying an American jeep.

The blast ripped off a balcony and damaged rooms on six floors of the building. The jeep, which had been parked inside the compound, was blown across the street.

Staff Sgt. Bernard Strawn, hotel supervisor of the Le Qui Don BOQ, said the two Americans who were injured were at a party in a room close to where the charge was set.

He said one man received a bump on his arm when he was knocked across the room. The other was slightly cut by flying glass or concrete, he said.

A young Vietnamese boy walk-

ing by the BOQ at the time the charge went off was tossed across the street and wrapped in a section of fence, according to Spec. 4 Randy C. Shreves, one of the first MPs on the scene. The boy was slightly injured, according to a U.S. Command spokesman.

Shreves, who was cruising in the area before the blast, said he heard a smaller charge which "sounded like a hand grenade" before the satchel charge blew.

A Vietnamese woman, peddling soft drinks and beer from a push cart no more than 30 feet from the explosion, was unhurt, according to witnesses.

"I was standing up and was rocked by the explosion," Strawn said. "I just grabbed my rifle and went outside."

Strawn said there were no serious injuries because almost everyone on that side of the building had gone to eat when the blast went off at 7:05 p.m.