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Urgent Fury: The Battle For Grenada (Issues In Low Intensity Conflict)



Synopsis

In 1983 the execution by firing squad of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, together with seven of his close supporters, triggered the largest US military operation since Vietnam. In the 3-day invasion, code-named "Urgent Fury", 14,000 of the 20,000 troops involved received gallantry decorations. "Urgent Fury" was proclaimed a triumph for the Armed Forces, coming at a time when US morale was low. The author was the Caribbean Operations Staff Officer for the operation and he gives here an eye-witness account. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

It's hard to believe I first wrote this review almost ten years ago. Since then, thanks to the miracle of the internet and in research for my own book (in which Grenada will take up a few chapters) of my military experiences, I've learned more about the operation from fellow veterans and Retired Marine Gunnery Sergeant Joe Muccia, who is researching his own book on the battle. In fairness to Major Adkins and the reader I believe I should update my review based on this new information. I've heard numerous times that this is the best book on Operation Urgent Fury, the U.S. led invasion of Grenada. If so, this makes me sad. As a participant of the operation (I was eating my wife's birthday cake when I received the alert notice to go) I bring an eyewitness perspective to many of the events the author describes. I was a Sergeant assigned as a gunner to a howitzer section with Battery B, 1/320th FA (Airborne), 82nd Airborne Division. We were part of the first battalion task force from the

82nd to deploy to the island. Most accounts of the battle have been flawed - most unable to even get the order of battle right. My unit is usually listed at Battery B, 2/325 Infantry - which in deployment was tactically true but wrong. Even though we deployed as part of Task Force 2/325, we were still for all intent and purposes B 1/320th. I do like what one 2/325 commander did when he presented us with a guidon calling us D Battery 2/325. This may seem a minor detail but Truth is like a fine suit, if one thread comes loose, the entire garment can unravel. Others have either hyped the battle to the point of being a mini-Iwo Jima, or worse, demeaned it to the point of being a bad joke. I believe both points of view are both wrong - and unfair.

"We blew them away," a senior White House advisor remarked regarding the overwhelming success of the invasion of Grenada in late 1983. For the first time in history, a democratic nation had crushed a Marxist regime-and did so with few casualties. To the untrained eye, it seemed that the U.S. military had operated flawlessly in defeating the communists in Grenada. However, the British Major Mark Adkin, Commanding Officer of the Caribbean Peace-keeping Force (CPF), contests that theory and counters in his book *Urgent Fury* that the U.S. armed forces came extremely close to a major political defeat. Adkin asserts that American forces were never in jeopardy of losing the battle for Grenada. However, he believes that the U.S. military command had committed major flaws in the planning and carrying out of Operation Urgent Fury. These leaders narrowly escaped insurmountable American deaths through luck and through the battlefield intuition of lower grade officers. Adkin's main assertion is that the invasion of Grenada was not the staunching success that the military and the Reagan Administration heralded. Adkin draws out several major accounts of compromised military objectives and traces all of these back to poor planning on a senior officer's part. From the initial invasion on October 25 to the "all-clear" in December, the military units involved were sent out on poorly planned and uncoordinated missions that nearly cost America numerous casualties. Fortunately the U.S. had on its side overwhelming superiority and availability of American fire support to bail out our forces from near defeat. The invasion of Grenada was divided into two major sections. The first was the U.S. Marine landing in the northern division of the island.

This is THE book to learn what happened on Grenada in 1983. This battle overlooked today marked the turning point in the Cold War. This was the first American military victory since the Vietnam War and sent a signal to the Soviets that communist expansion would cease under the Reagan administration. Major Adkin's book covers all of this, and points out the fight centered on the 10,000 foot strategic runway at Point Salines which as proven by the vast quantities of arms captured was

the transfer point to all of Latin America for violence. The book shows how the New Jewel Movement collapsed due to personal jealousies and assassinations leading to a swift U.S. plan to invade, which while not perfect, was necessary rather than delay in order to secure American medical students held hostage from harm. Reading the details he lays out of the U.S. Army Rangers parachuting in under 500 feet--under Cuban anti-aircraft guns---to seize the Point Salines airfield is exhilarating and well written, and busts open the Hollywood myths foisted by movies like "Heartbreak Ridge" that marines did the fighting and rescuing when their assignments to the north were uncontested, and without any Americans to be rescued. Adkin shows how the PRA and Cubans were dug in on the beaches waiting for a water landing when The Rangers, then the 82d Airborne Division came from the sky, catching them by surprise. Follow on operations had the Rangers rescuing U.S. medical students using mc and U.S. Army helicopters and the 82d Airborne Division fighting against stiff resistance before fanning out to secure the southern half of the island. The book doesn't flinch however from tactical details and how things could have been done better.

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