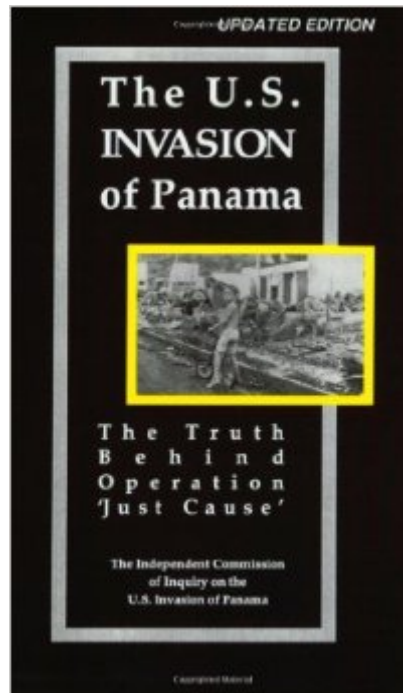


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The U.S. Invasion Of Panama: The Truth Behind Operational 'Just Cause'



Synopsis

This book counters the media blitz that portrayed the invasion of Panama--dubbed "Operation Just cause" by the Pentagon--as a restoration of democracy and a war against drugs. It details the horrors of the invasion as experienced by the civilian population and documents the "operation's" criminal character, thus providing the truth behind the U.S. invasion of Panama.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As always with anything in life there are two sides to every story. I was assigned to the 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg and was part of the Operation Blue Spoon and what was ultimately Operation Just Cause. I served as a Communications Chief not only as a planner but as a TACSAT (Tactical Satellite Radio Operator) for the Corps G-3 (Operations). I did appreciate the "other side" of the story from local Panamanian Nationals but from various times in the books I found that it lacked the whole story of the PDF (Panamanian Defense Forces) as well as the Dignity Battalions and Battalion 2000 and their role during the events in the months leading up to the invasion. I did find a that facts were either not fully researched or "grasping at straws" in certain cases with information regarding the night of the invasion. One in particular; on page 24-25 involving the rescue of Kurt Muse. Kurt Muse was NOT rescued by the 82nd Airborne. The rescue mission was executed by Task Force 160th and Special Forces personnel. Also several key points are that this prison was on the compound of the Commandancia (PDF Headquarters) and secondly that Kurt Muse had been in the prison for over 9 months. The reader needs to keep in mind that many events were on going that

led up to the arrest of Noriega and the Operation Blue Spoon. Roadblocks by the PDF were a common place event as well as harassment by the Dignity Battalions. Panama had many housing areas that supported the bases of the military personnel and these dependants many times were at risk due to these harassment operations.

Well, I really am speechless at the level of bull. As gunner in the lead aircraft on the initial assault and a key participant in the police actions thereafter, it pains me to see such false accusations of atrocities. In actuality the Battalion 2000, Guardia Nacional and PDF were burning homes and killing civilians in hopes of turning the public against the troops. Troops had also setup firing positions in apartment buildings and other structures that were poorly constructed. True there were individuals who acted inappropriately as there were many friendly fire incidents that luckily did not end up as catastrophes. Despite the glint tape, I personally was faced with the decision of not returning fire on US troops who engaged our aircraft (I won't mention any names but those who were there know exactly who I am referring to) despite a direct order to return fire, I chose not to as I had positively identified the target, we had the advantage of firepower and could climb out of small arms range. Also after the initial phase of the invasion US aircraft were used to medevac the wounded Panamanians to Cocosolo hospital and holding facility where humanitarian aid was given. We even had the task of guarding the very enemy soldiers that we wounded in the taking of the compound. This proves that there are professionals out there that this book insults with its release. If they want to slam someone slam the media for giving away the operation well in advance of it's execution. Or the mastermind that took our ammo away and forced us to play show and tell with empty weapons a week into the operation. They obviously didn't notice that the El Salvadorian Mechanizados had joined the fray evidenced by a V300 we knocked out the night before that was shooting into houses.

Let me just quote some of the comments I made previously on my website regarding this and some other relevant books. To begin with, this is what we saw on US television regarding the Panama Invasion: Noriega was bivouacked in a Catholic nunciature (no, I don't know what that is either) for sanctuary and the US forces attempted to drive him out by blasting Ted Nugent songs from an outdoor speaker system 24 hours a day.) That would certainly break my will to live. (We finally gave up on this tactic at the request of the Vatican.) At least, this is what we saw on TV in the United States. My memory of this is not perfect, but it seemed to me that this was presented to us as something in the nature of a fraternity prank. To be honest, I didn't pay much attention to it at the time. Actually, though, it was the biggest US military mobilization since the Vietnam war. There is

controversy regarding civilian deaths versus Noriega's "dignity battalion" (Dingbats!) combatant deaths, but I think the best estimates are around 300 or so, including combatants. Noriega's men were responsible for some of those. Panamanians in the poor El Chorillo district lost their homes (and some of them, their lives) due to fire. The initial US attack on the headquarters of the PDF caused a few of these homes to burn, but the remainder were torched hours later by Noriega's batalloneros. Twenty-three American soldiers and three American civilians were killed. Oddly, some of these fatalities were from friendly fire. You read different books, you get different stories. I thought that John Lindsay-Poland's book "Emperors in the Jungle" was excellent. He goes into great detail about the pollution and dangerous munitions left behind by the US military. He doesn't pull any punches and the book rings true.

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