Special Operations and the Grenada Campaign

DANIEL P. BOLGER

Some of the best warriors in the world choose to battle in the shadows. They fight, have fought, and will fight in hot wars and cold, in major actions and minor skirmishes, usually in deep twilight and, very rarely, on center stage. At the upper end of the spectrum of warfare, their efforts may catalyze a major campaign. At the low, dirty end, they can decide small wars or, better, abort such conflicts before they erupt. The titles of the outfits evoke respect among friends and strike fear among foes: Delta, Rangers, Green Berets, Night Stalkers, SEALs, Air Commandos, and Force Recon. These are the core of America's special operations forces. For the sake of brevity, we'll refer to them as SOF in this article.

In an era of random terrorism, sputtering insurgencies, and violent challenges to American interests in the restive Third World, SOF seem to offer the best way to respond to many of the vexing military confrontations euphemistically labeled "low-intensity conflicts." With the electorate often eager for bold action in these frustrating episodes, America's special units have become the unwilling subjects of much recent public attention.[1] Against their wishes, special fighters have emerged from obscurity.

Yet the picture remains unfocused, not only for the curious citizenry, but also for many of the combat leaders serving in the United States' general purpose forces. The professionals need better information. In times past, with ample time to get smarter, otherwise gifted American officers badly misused special operations forces; witness the fate of Colonel William O. Darby's Rangers in the hellish Cisterna infiltration in Italy in 1944,[2] or Brigadier General Frank D. Merrill's Marauders' costly travail against the Japanese at Myitkyina, Burma, also in 1944.[3] Given this age of smoldering half-peace, conventional and special elements can be at war within hours. In order to make the best use of America's burgeoning special warfare capabilities, line commanders and staff planners must understand *now* how these units can best

contribute to all forms of conflict, ranging from what General John R. Galvin called "uncomfortable wars" on the periphery to an intense death struggle in central Europe.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to earn a Ranger tab, eat snakes, or swim out of torpedo tubes in order to understand how to employ special warfare units. Once one understands the nature of special operations, a few commonsense conceptual considerations will increase the likelihood of success in the employment of SOF. Although many specific techniques used by these elite outfits remain closely guarded secrets, the voluminous coverage of the recent American intervention in Grenada provides a wealth of information on a diverse panoply of special missions. For the military professional, a study of special actions on Grenada serves admirably to illustrate the importance of the basic considerations of SOF employment.

What are special operations, and what sorts of troops conduct them? FM 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, defines special operations as:

> Military operations conducted by specially trained, equipped, and organized . . . forces against strategic or tactical targets in pursuit of national military, political, economic, or psychological objectives. They may support conventional military operations, or they may be prosecuted independently when the use of conventional forces is either inappropriate or infeasible.

FM 100-5, *Operations*, elaborates on this definition by stipulating that targets must be of "operational value." This field manual explains that SOF deploy into the enemy rear area to collect intelligence, acquire targets, direct air and missile strikes, interdict enemy transportation, destroy enemy nuclear and command sites, and recover friendly personnel.[4]

While the official definition and doctrine are serviceable, we should note that SOF are specialists, a fact having three important implications. First, these forces can do a few unusual things exceedingly well. Being special, they should be used only for special missions. Second, these skilled raiders are often outnumbered and outgunned, so they must gain and exploit surprise in order to pit their finely honed capabilities against enemy weaknesses. The necessity for surprise in turn places a premium upon the best possible intelligence (preferably from a source right on the objective). Third, and most important

---

Captain Daniel P. Bolger is an assistant professor in the Department of History at the US Military Academy. He is a graduate of The Citadel and holds an M.A. in Russian history and a Ph.D. in military history, both from the University of Chicago. His assignments have included command of an infantry company and battalion staff officer duty with the 24th Infantry Division (Mech), at Fort Stewart, Georgia. He has written previously on Operation Urgent Fury for *Military Review*, and his account of the campaign is included in his book *Americans at War 1975-1986: An Era of Violent Peace* (Presidio Press, 1988).

---

for planners, the things that SOF do are very complex and highly demanding. Only fully trained special-purpose units can dare to attempt some tasks. Even so, with so many moving parts, friction often overwhelms special missions. Failure is as likely as success in some situations.[5] If SOF tasks are critical to the success of the overall campaign, therefore, then conventional reinforcements, diversions, supporting operations, or other special precautions will help provide flexibility and decrease the risk of failure.

Let's explore these ideas a little further. Conventional commanders have to resist strong temptations to use specialists for tasks better left to general purpose forces. While SOF troop quality, morale, and discipline are excellent and their unique talents are well developed, more fundamental battlefield skills, organizational flexibility, and weaponry may be lacking. Green Berets will not defeat a massed armored onslaught, Spectre gunships cannot dogfight with enemy jets, and Ranger tabs do not deflect bullets. (Darby's lightly armed Rangers went up against German tanks and self-propelled guns at Cisterna, and only six of the 767 Rangers returned!) SOF capitalize upon difficult skills considered marginal to conventional units but ones that will likely prove critical in certain combat situations. To be blunt, employment of highly specialized units as regular forces is almost always a mistake. This dire expedient should be a carefully calculated action, similar to using engineers as infantry or firing air defense weaponry against ground targets. Throwing Rangers into a defensive sector would be the equivalent of using a speedy football wide receiver as a bruiser fullback just because the wide receiver knows how to handle the ball. Worst of all, squandering SOF in routine combat may leave the commander's bag of tricks empty when he needs some special help.

Special warfare outfits are highly capable but fragile. Even if they are not tossed into the line of conventional battle, they may come to grief without thorough preparation and effective surprise. Because of their extensive training and distinctive equipment, special units can use relatively esoteric techniques like abseiling or helocasting[6] to attempt high-risk missions such as hostage rescues, clandestine long-range reconnaissance patrols, and surprise raids on key installations. It would be nice to have enough time to gather complete information about the objective, the surrounding area, and routes in and out. Elaborate rehearsals, such as those used before the 1970 Son Tay raid, would be preferable. Usually, however, time is at a premium. SOF often have to trust in their pre-mission training, designed to enable them to improvise on the spot. Special units can atone for lack of specific mission preparation time by having reliable, on-site intelligence sources which provide detailed updates. This allows the special operations leadership to match a properly trained unit to the unfolding situation. A well-trained unit employed in accord with accurate on-site intelligence can do much to increase the chances for surprise and hence victory.

Superb training and surveillance improve the prospect of success, but there are no guarantees. Special missions are delicate and tricky, with little room for error. They often break down due to their own complexity and reliance on inherently dangerous, high-risk techniques. As Carl von Clausewitz warned, war develops its own friction, guaranteed to gum up the works at critical points. Using SOF independently (i.e. with minimum conventional support) against strategic and tactical targets would be better than burning them up in daily battle. It would be a mistake, however, to bet the ranch on these missions. The intrinsic dangers of complicated special warfare missions will probably result in about as many failures as victories. In low-intensity conflict, however, .500 ball will not always be good enough, as the American rescue force discovered halfway to Tehran in April 1980. But in mid- or high-intensity war the resulting diversions and disruptions in the enemy rear might be just as valuable as concrete SOF successes.

Given the pitfalls of special warfare, what can line commanders do to accentuate the odds for victory? The best way is to integrate the special units and their missions into the conventional structure. Despite the doctrinal definitions, SOF should *not* operate independently. As a minimum, the elite units must draw on local commands for communications, transportation, intelligence, logistics, and security. But to increase the chances of SOF triumphs, commanders should be ready to back up their special warriors with capable general purpose forces prepared for on-order contingency missions. These can range from diversions to assumption of all or part of the special missions should failure appear imminent. Careful integration of conventional and special operations became a fine art in the major amphibious landings of the Second World War. Despite the current fascination with picked special action forces, a prudent commander would do well to back up his more critical special efforts with a good chunk of prepared conventional insurance.

So much for general concepts. The SOF performances during Operation Urgent Fury, the Grenada campaign of October 1983, stand as practical examples of the importance of these special warfare fundamentals. Although one must be careful not to draw too many definitive conclusions from a single insular campaign, Grenada offers the only recent well-documented use of special warriors on a sizable scale. Much reliable unclassified information has been released in various defense and government press organs, all of it within reach of military professionals (and informed civilians). Perhaps as time goes on, this reservoir of available knowledge about special units in action will expand to include those in the Persian Gulf. For now, however, Grenada serves as a suitable SOF case study, at least with regard to the applicability of the broad, commonsense concepts outlined above.

Grenada required a major commitment of American special warfare strength. Then, as now, the United States maintained a significant array of special operations forces drawn from all four armed services. Of these, Army

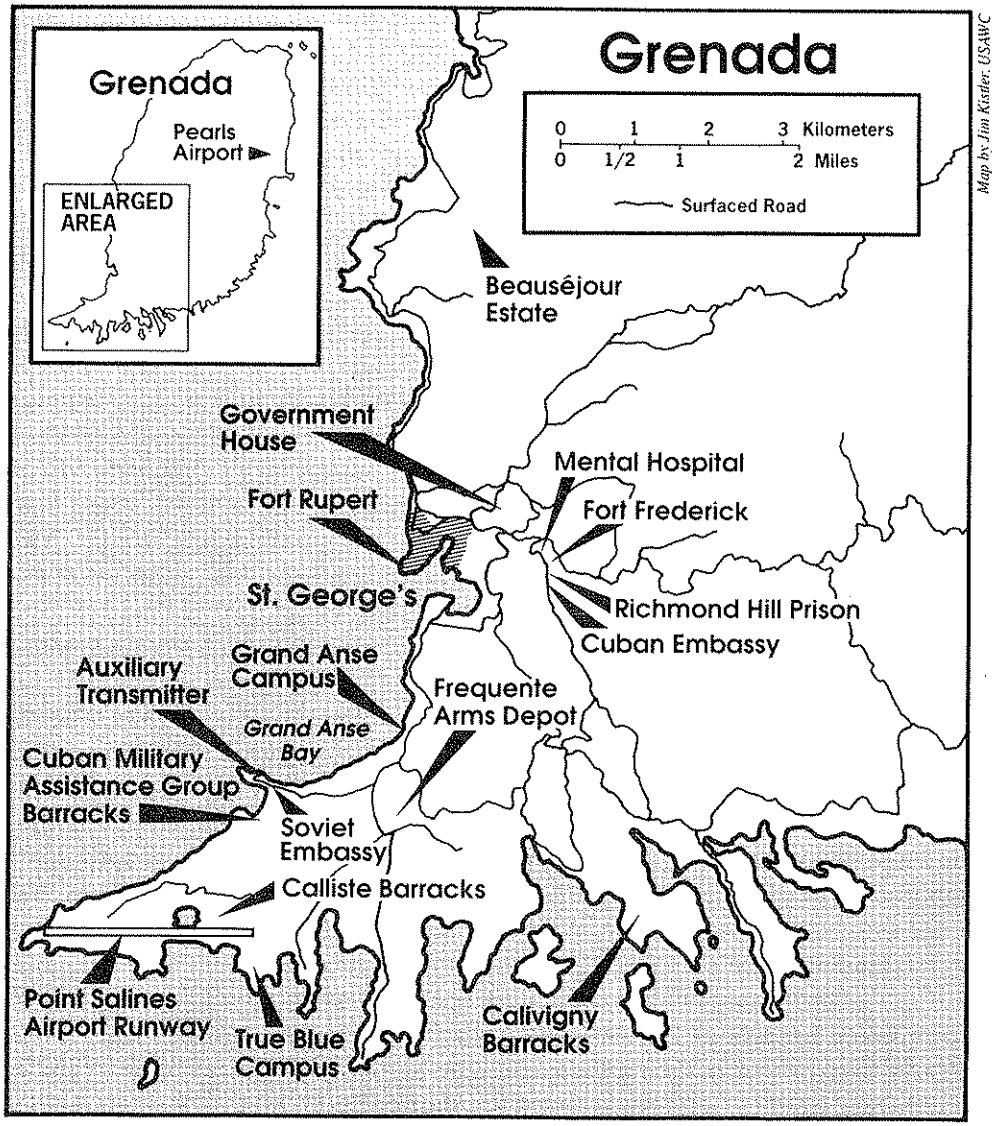
Special Forces (Green Berets), psychological operations units, and civil affairs troops are typically oriented on processes that affect military situations gradually over time. The other contingents might operate over extended periods, but they normally focus on discrete objectives that produce immediate and often dramatic results. Thanks to a general reorganization of SOF occurring in the wake of the aborted 1980 Iran raid, a headquarters known as the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) existed at the time of Grenada to coordinate many of these elements' actions. Except for the Army Special Forces, which principally organize and train insurgents and counter-insurgents, American special units and JSOC all had important roles during the Grenada campaign.

The Grenada crisis erupted quickly and violently on 19 October 1983. SOF were assigned to the unified command responsible, in this instance US Atlantic Command under Admiral Wesley McDonald, who assumed control of JSOC and its elite troops. Other special outfits, like the Navy's SEAL Team 4 with Amphibious Squadron 4, were already attached to subordinate headquarters for their use. As the unified (theater) commander, Admiral McDonald formed a subordinate headquarters to direct the American intervention. Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf's Joint Task Force 120 (JTF-120) took control of JSOC and a force including line units of all four services and a small party of Caribbean allied troops.

Metcalf had three strategic goals: to protect the lives of US citizens caught in the factional fighting between rival Grenadian leftists; to restore order and conditions for democratic government; and to eradicate Cuban, Soviet, and other East Bloc influences on the island. With the clock running down to a 25 October 1983 D-Day, Metcalf, his staff, and his subordinates labored to develop a concept of operations based upon these missions and their estimate of the situation. As Admiral McDonald remarked with wry understatement, "The planning time was very compressed."[7]

The initial JTF-120 estimate revealed some important factors. Rough terrain and hazardous beaches restricted American line unit landings to the Pearls airstrip area in the northeast and the Salines runway and vicinity in the southwest. Salines' jetport exceeded the shorter Pearls strip in military value. Preliminary intelligence correctly indicated that southern Grenada held the majority of the endangered American students, the bulk of the Grenadian populace, and several well-armed enemy battalions, not to mention the seat of government, the capital city of St. George's. Many of these southern localities were not immediately accessible from Salines, and thus they became good candidates for "special" attention.

Overhead reconnaissance identified too many heavily equipped opposing soldiers to go in with the small special units alone. But that was not the worst of it. Hobbled by the short planning period, pre-mission intelligence work located only about a third of the American citizens.[8] This necessitated a vigorous offensive to engage and destroy enemy forces before they could



harm or take hostage the rest of the US students, along with a concurrent effort to locate and recover the endangered American civilians. Unsure of all the key concentrations of potential hostages, Metcalf decided to attempt the rapid capture of the entire island. The admiral elected to combine special and conventional elements in his concept of operations.

Metcalf's team created a plan to meet the evolving Grenadian situation. Capture of the airfields keyed the US assault. Once this occurred, the known US student communities would be secured and the main enemy forces would be fully engaged, rendering them far too busy fighting to bother any American civilians. Also, seizure of the airfields would cut off Cuban

defenders from reinforcements and supply, allow additional American forces to be deployed, and secure American logistics. Consequently, the Joint Task Force split the island into two zones. Amphibious Squadron 4 and its embarked Marine battalion landing team were responsible for seizing Pearls airstrip and the less-populous north in a conventional action. Due to the wealth of special warfare objectives around Salines and St. George's, JSOC initially ran the show in the south.

This main effort, conducted by special forces and line units, was naturally directed at the vital Salines/St. George's region. JSOC assigned its pair of Ranger battalions to take the runway, a conventional task, and then secure the US students at nearby True Blue campus, a special mission. JSOC expected to accomplish its various missions expeditiously and then clear out, ready for other assignments in Grenada or elsewhere. Consequently, a healthy portion of the Army's 82d Airborne Division was slated to reinforce and take over the southern zone as JSOC completed its missions. If JSOC failed, the All-Americans were rigged to take the Salines airdrome themselves.[9] Indeed, conventional units had on-order missions to assume part or all of most of the various special warfare missions. This precaution would pay dividends as the fighting unfolded.

The actual fighting on Grenada was over rather quickly. At dawn on 25 October 1983, the Marines took Pearls against light resistance, and JSOC's Rangers captured Salines in the face of strong opposition. As planned, a brigade of the 82d Airborne Division flew in to relieve the embattled Rangers. Though the JSOC headquarters and some of its fighting elements then left, substantial SOF remained behind to support the All-Americans as needed.

After nightfall on 25 October, Metcalf committed the bulk of the Marine battalion landing team in a coordinated helicopter and beach assault that enveloped the rear of the stubborn Cuban and Grenadian defenders between Salines and St. George's. Unhinged by the swift, aggressive American attacks, the enemy forces collapsed on 26 October. Only scattered sniping persisted, petering out by 2 November. Every single American civilian had been secured unharmed. Friendly military losses, Grenadian civilian casualties, and collateral damage were all minimal.[10]

The SOF role on Grenada was extremely important, bordering on decisive. Special operations forces attempted 13 missions, including ten special and three conventional. Thus the great majority of SOF missions involved special rather than conventional combat. Eight of the ten special operations succeeded, as did two of the three conventional, as noted on the chart on the following page.[11] The two failures among the special operations—a classified mission by SEAL Team 6 and the attempt to rescue political prisoners at Richmond Hill Prison—were not due to misuse. Previous experience would indicate that about six or seven of the special missions during Urgent Fury should have gone awry, as opposed to the actual two. How did the SOF on Grenada

Special Operations Forces Activities on Grenada

Date	Unit	Control HQ	Nature of Mission	Result
24 Oct.	SEAL Team 4	Amphibious Squadron 4	Special; reconnoiter beach in Pearls area	Success
24 Oct.	SEAL Team 6	JSOC	Special; rescue Sir Paul Scoon from St. George's	Success
24 Oct.	SEAL Team 6	JSOC	Special; destroy Radio Free Grenada at Beausejour	Success
24 Oct.	SEAL Team 6	JSOC	Special; classified mission*	Failure
25 Oct.	1st SOW	JSOC	Special; reconnoiter Salines	Success
25 Oct.	Rangers & 1st SOW/MAC	JSOC	Conventional; seize Salines runway	Success
25 Oct.	Delta, Rangers, & 160th Av. Bn.	JSOC	Special; rescue political prisoners at Richmond Hill Prison	Failure
25 Oct.	Rangers & 1st SOW/MAC	JSOC	Special; rescue students at True Blue campus	Success
25 Oct.	1st SOW	JSOC & 82d Abn. Div.**	Conventional; support ground units with gunship fires	Success
25 Oct.	4th Psyops Gp. & 193d ECG	82d Abn. Div.	Special; replace Radio Free Grenada; inform populace***	Success
25 Oct.	96th Civil Affairs Bn.	82d Abn. Div.	Special; conduct proper civil-military relations***	Success
26 Oct.	Rangers & HMM 261	82d Abn. Div.	Special; rescue students at Grand Anse	Success
27 Oct.	Rangers & 82d Combat Av. Bn.	82d Abn. Div.	Conventional; raid Calivigny	Failure

Abbreviations: SEAL, Sea Air Land; JSOC, Joint Special Operations Command; SOW, Special Operations Wing; MAC, Military Airlift Command; Psyops, Psychological Operations; ECG, Electronic Combat Group; HMM 261, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261.

* Possible targets: Radio Free Grenada auxiliary transmitter or Cuban military assistance group buildings.

** JSOC relinquished control by 1900 25 October. AC-130 gunships continued to support ground forces until hostilities ceased on 2 November.

*** These operations continued beyond the cessation of hostilities.

beat the typical special operations law of averages? Conversely, could they have expected to do any better?[12]

The conventional commanders and staffs for Urgent Fury did as well as they did because, by and large, they remembered the nature of their elite forces. In general, JTF-120 and its subordinate headquarters gave the SOF truly special missions, increased surprise and effectiveness of special efforts by on-site reconnaissance, and provided conventional backup for critical undertakings. Special warriors led the way in the Grenada fighting. Of the 19

US killed and 115 wounded on Grenada, 16 died and at least 36 were wounded in the conduct or support of special operations.[13]

As we have seen, special operations forces were used in three instances to accomplish conventional missions, and twice they succeeded. These two—the seizure of Salines by the Rangers and the support of ground units with gunship fires by the Air Force 1st Special Operations Wing—reflected carefully calculated decisions to bend the usual commonsense considerations, and they worked. The third case—the Calivigny raid—was a hasty call and it came a cropper. Let us examine each of these three in greater detail.

In the seizure of the Salines runway, Army Rangers and Air Force Air Commando transports and Spectre gunships (plus some regular tactical airlift planes) collaborated in a daring low-level dawn parachute assault. Since the only known American student community, True Blue campus, directly adjoined Salines, the first JTF-120 troops on the airstrip had to be ready to recover hostages. Otherwise, any hostages would have been at the mercy of the alerted enemy while line units waited for SOF to arrive and pass through for a rescue attempt. Doctrinally, regular paratroopers should probably have taken the airstrip, reserving the Rangers for special tasks. But the 82d Airborne troopers were not experts at hostage recovery. So Admiral Metcalf took a risk and let the capable Rangers handle both tasks. The hard-bitten Rangers took the airhead conventionally *and then* switched rapidly and successfully into a key special role, hostage rescue.[14]

The other successful use of special operations forces in a conventional role—i.e. the employment of the Air Force's AC-130 Spectre gunships as routine close air support of ground troops—was much easier to justify. Given utter American air supremacy and a desire to be precise with fire support, this intentional employment of these unique aircraft as flying artillery made sense. There was no risk to the Spectres and their skilled crews other than overwork.[15]

The Calivigny raid of 27 October was another matter. In fact, it was a daylight air assault mounted on short notice against the only enemy battalion still thought to be holding out. Commanders guessed that a lightning move might catch this last major opposing outfit by surprise. The entire escapade was thrown together very quickly. Reconnaissance, rehearsals, and coordination therefore suffered markedly.

Fortified Calivigny looked uninviting for a bold, overwhelming stroke. Although labelled a raid, this air assault was not suited for Rangers, but rather was a job for a lot of line infantry with significant supporting fires. Given the tiny landing zones, *any* helicopter attack into the narrow streets of the Calivigny barracks compound begged for defeat in detail as the force dribbled in. Not surprisingly, it was considered a "suicide mission" when briefed to the 2d Battalion of the 75th Infantry (Airborne) (Ranger), which tried to execute it. Three helicopters wrecked, three men died, and 15 were wounded in the resultant confused operation. Fortunately, the supposed enemy "battalion" did

not exist.[16] Calivigny serves as a trenchant warning against misusing special warfare units. Had there been significant enemy elements present, the outcome could have been a disaster of the magnitude of the infamous (and equally misguided) Cisterna debacle.

Throughout the entire Grenada campaign, on-site intelligence proved eminently useful in permitting last-minute adjustments by SOF under severe stress owing to the prevalent short preparation times. Special warriors benefited greatly from the subsequent surprise generated by having just the right approaches to difficult objectives. Spectre gunships orbiting on station over Salines two hours before H-Hour observed enemy antiaircraft gun positions, thus allowing the Rangers to adjust their jump locations so as to minimize the effectiveness of enemy gunnery.[17] Clever use of a surreptitious telephone link to Grand Anse permitted what Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Hagler of the Rangers called a "a classic Ranger mission." Guided by reports from observant students, Rangers boarded Marine helicopters and snatched 224 Americans from behind enemy lines.[18] Careful monitoring of Grenadian media prior to the intervention and sensitivity to initial contacts on the island allowed US psychological warfare teams to employ the US-run "Radio Spice Island" to play skillfully upon divisions in the Grenadian political scene.[19] Underscoring the importance of on-site surveillance, a fundamental SOF requirement, every mission blessed with it produced a victory. Excessive haste denied an on-site source at Calivigny, thus contributing to the messy episode there. But that undertaking might well have backfired anyway.

A far more disquieting intelligence shortcoming occurred in the attempted rescue of political captives at Richmond Hill Prison after daybreak on 25 October. In this special mission, Delta troopers flew into the area of St. George's aboard the 160th Aviation Battalion's distinctive helicopters. Unaware of the lattice of enemy air defense guns surrounding the capital, the rescue force was shot to pieces and repelled in disarray. One helicopter went down, others suffered serious damage, a pilot died, and several men were wounded. Going in without the advantage of observers on the ground proved costly. Fortunately, the ferocity and scale of the other American operations underway panicked the Grenadian prison cadre and allowed the lucky captives to escape without armed rescue.[20]

Conventional reinforcement of SOF proved positively crucial in four cases. At Grand Anse, regular Marine helicopters carried the Rangers into action. Without them, there would have been no student rescue on 26 October. Conventional forces supported the restoration of civil order by conducting exhaustive house-to-house searches for weapons, East Bloc "guests," and hidden resisters. American military restraint in relating to the civilian populace paid direct dividends in terms of immediate intelligence and long-term good will.[21]

SEAL Team 6 converted two tough missions into successes thanks to JTF-120's readiness to provide potent conventional reinforcements at critical

points. Before H-Hour, SEALs used demolitions to silence the enemy radio station at the coastal hamlet of Beausejour. The Navy men finished off their work by calling in 127mm rounds from the destroyer USS *Caron*, steaming offshore to deliver the *coup de grace*. This effort aborted the enemy troop call-up and left seven militia battalions in dispersed confusion as the American line battalions stormed ashore.[22] The SEALs and a well-placed destroyer cut the possible opposition down to size.

In the port city of St. George's, a SEAL detachment stole ashore before dawn on 25 October to secure the British crown representative on Grenada, Sir Paul Scoon. Scoon, his family, and his associates had been languishing under house arrest. Aggressive SEALs took the residence, but Grenadian infantry brought up BTR-60 armored personnel carriers and besieged the elite sailors and the 33 civilians of the Scoon party. Despite heavy antiaircraft fire, Metcalf used Marine attack helicopters, Spectre gunships, and Navy attack jets to protect the beleaguered SEALs. When a Marine ground contingent entered St. George's early on 26 October, they relieved the tired but defiant special fighters.[23] Without steady conventional support, this mission would have ended in defeat.

USAMHI

A US soldier stands guard during the Grenada operation.

Although special warfare units played important roles in the Urgent Fury concept of operations, they functioned principally in cooperation with the conventional joint service campaign to secure the island. As in previous landings in World War II and Korea, the SOF worked to ease the way for the assault waves as well as dealing with those enemy installations not readily accessible to conventional forces. Successful accomplishment of most of these tasks served as a catalyst in the achievement of Admiral Metcalf's overall goals. The special outfits rescued over half of the potential American and allied hostages, reduced American losses, and markedly disrupted the enemy defenses. Keyed by the special warriors, the US Army and Marine infantry battalions determined the issue.

Have the lessons of Grenada been learned? It appears that the solid (though by no means perfect) SOF performance during Urgent Fury, far from generating complacency, actually accelerated the revitalization of American special warfare capabilities undertaken in the wake of the tragic Iranian hostage rescue attempt. On 16 April 1987, America activated the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), a four-star unified command charged with direction of almost all national special warfare elements.

During the ceremonies marking its formation, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., charged USSOCOM as follows:

> First, break down the wall that has more or less come between special operations forces and the other parts of our military, the wall that some people will try to build higher. Second, educate the rest of the military—spread a recognition and understanding of what you do, why you do it, and how important it is that you do it. Last, integrate your efforts into the full spectrum of our military capabilities.[24]

In short, conventional and special professionals would do well to live by the simple phrase of Chinese guerrillas, borrowed by Marine raider Evans Carlson: "gung ho" (work together). Only then will the whole be greater than the sum of the parts.

NOTES

1. For a typical example, see "America's Special Forces: Can They Do the Job?" *US News and World Report*, 3 November 1986, pp. 36-42, or John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars* (New York: William Morrow, 1986). See also two new books on the subject, James Adams, *Secret Armies* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1988), and Steven Emerson, *Secret Warriors* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1988). These sensationalized journalistic accounts, based mainly on "inside" sources, are rife with inaccuracies. Nevertheless, they typify the recent upsurge of popular fascination with special operations.

2. See Michael J. King, *Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II* (Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.: Combat Studies Institute, 1985), pp. 29-41.

3. See Scott R. McMichael, "Common Man, Uncommon Leadership: Colonel Charles N. Hunter with Galahad in Burma," *Parameters*, 16 (Summer 1986), 45-57.

4. Department of the Army, FM 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Graphics* (Washington: GPO, 1985), p. 1-66; Department of the Army, FM 100-5, *Operations* (Washington: GPO, 1986), pp. 57-58.

5. Chaim Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars* (New York: Random House, 1982), p. 375; Paul B. Ryan, *The Iranian Rescue Mission* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1985), p. 97. These books include

discussion of the long odds facing most special actions. For a superb objective analysis of a special mission, Ryan's book is first-rate.

6. Abseiling is a type of rappelling that employs a vertical descent from a rock overhang or hovering helicopter without benefit of a wall face. In the water infiltration technique called helocasting, troops in swim fins leap from a helicopter which is moving slowly over the waves at low altitude.

7. US Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, *Lessons Learned as a Result of the US Military Operations in Grenada, Full Committee Hearing of the House Committee on Armed Services*, 98th Cong., 2d Sess., 24 January 1984, p. 16; US Congress, House, "Who'll Hold Reins of Secret Forces?" *Congressional Record*, 21 June 1984, pp. H6309-H6310. It is reported that other relevant comments about planning problems during the Grenada operation can be found in former JSOC commander Major General Richard A. Scholtes' classified testimony noted in US Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *To Combat Terrorism and Other Forms of Unconventional Warfare*, 99th Cong., 2d sess., 5 August 1986, pp. 44-45.

8. "Jumping into a Hot DZ at 500 Feet," *Army Times*, 14 November 1983, p. 10; Henry Zeybel, "Gunships at Grenada," *National Defense*, 69 (February 1984), 54. Colonel Hugh Hunter, commander of the Air Force's 1st Special Operations Wing, and Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Hagler of the Army's 2d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, both rated intelligence as six on a scale with one as worst and ten as best.

9. For a fuller examination of the concept of operations on Grenada, see Daniel P. Bolger, "Operation Urgent Fury and Its Critics," *Military Review*, 66 (July 1986), 57-69.

10. A reliable summary of the campaign can be found in Peter M. Dunn and Bruce W. Watson, eds., *American Intervention in Grenada* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1985).

11. Sources for data in the figure include: "JCS Reply to Congressional Reform Caucus' Critique of the Grenada Rescue Operation," *Armed Forces Journal International*, July 1984, p. 13; Ralph Kinney Bennett, "Grenada: Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," *Reader's Digest*, February 1984, p. 76; Hugh O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada: Revolution, Invasion, and Aftermath* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p. 211.

12. Scathing criticisms of the American SOF performance on Grenada can be found in many popular news organs and books. The most notorious and influential include those found in Edward N. Luttwak, *The Pentagon and the Art of War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984); Richard A. Gabriel, *Military Incompetence: Why the American Military Doesn't Win* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985); and William S. Lind, "Press Release: Congressional Military Reform Caucus' Critique of the Grenada Operation," 5 April 1984. The Lind report is quoted at length in "JCS Reply . . . ," *Armed Forces Journal International*, and in L. James Binder, "Grenada Post-Mortem: A 'Report' That Wasn't," *Army*, June 1984, pp. 12-16. Weak research and a lack of objectivity mar these works and their many media offspring. These flawed efforts have created a great deal of misunderstanding about the activities of special units on Grenada.

13. "Grenada Casualty List," *Army Times*, 14 November 1983, p. 66.

14. Army Studies Group, *1-75 Rangers in Grenada* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1983), pp. 4-12; Major Frank B. Kearney, "2nd Ranger Battalion Lessons Learned" (unpublished briefing notes), pp. 4-5; "Jumping into a Hot DZ at 500 Feet," pp. 1, 2, 10, 66.

15. Zeybel, "Gunships at Grenada," pp. 54-56; James W. Canan, "Blue Christmas Coming Up," *Air Force*, January 1984, p. 78.

16. "Jumping Into a Hot DZ at 500 Feet," p. 66; Kearney, "2nd Ranger Battalion Lessons Learned," p. 7.

17. Zeybel, "Gunships at Grenada," p. 54; "Jumping Into a Hot DZ at 500 Feet," pp. 1-2, 10; Kearney, "2nd Ranger Battalion Lessons Learned," pp. 4-5; *1-75 Rangers in Grenada*, pp. 4-5; "Rescue from Grenada," *Army Times*, 14 November 1983, p. 62. This last article features eyewitness accounts from US students who watched Urgent Fury unfold.

18. "Jumping Into a Hot DZ at 500 Feet," pp. 10, 66; Kearney, "2nd Ranger Battalion Lessons Learned," p. 6; US Congress, House, *Lessons Learned . . . Grenada*, pp. 22- 23; US Congress, Senate, *Hearings on Organization, Structure, and Decision-making Processes of the Department of Defense, Part 8, Hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 98th Cong., 1st Session, 9 November 1983, p. 337.

19. O'Shaughnessy, p. 211; Stephen Harding, *Air War Grenada* (Missoula, Mont.: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1984), pp. 32, 48.

20. "JCS Reply to Congressional Reform Caucus' Critique of the Grenada Rescue Operation," p. 14; Harding, p. 26; "Delta Unit's Presence in Grenada Invasion Cause for Lid on Press," *Army Times*, 14 November 1983, p. 10.

21. "Paratroopers Get Gratitude, Aid," *Army Times*, 14 November 1983, pp. 1, 26; "Grenadians, Too, Felt Rescued by US Troops," *Army Times*, 14 November 1983, p. 26; US Congress, House, "Guards and Reserve Participation in Grenada, Beirut Operations," *The Congressional Record*, 23 January 1984, p. H29.

22. William Berry, et al., "Ten Days of Urgent Fury," *All Hands*, May 1984, p. 23; O'Shaughnessy, pp. 202, 211; "JCS Reply . . . ," p. 13.

23. "JCS Reply . . . ," p. 13; Bennett, p. 76; Michael J. Byron, "Fury from the Sea," US Naval Institute *Proceedings*, 110 (May 1984), 127.

24. Quoted by James J. Lindsay, "The Quiet Professionals," *Defense 87* (December 1987), p. 51.