

[PDF] The Last Battle: The Mayaguez Incident And The End Of The Vietnam War

Ralph Wetterhahn - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: The Last Battle: The Mayaguez

Author: Ralph Wetterhahn

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly On May 12, 1975, less than two weeks after the ignominious end of the Vietnam War, Cambodian Khmer Rouge troops seized the Mayaguez, an American container ship in the Gulf of Thailand, and held the 40-member crew hostage on an island off the Cambodian coast. The American response was swift and deadly. President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger ordered an immediate rescue operation and bombing of the Cambodian mainland. Less than 24 hours later, the crew was returned unharmed and Ford declared the mission a success. Yet research by journalist and former air force pilot Wetterhahn (who completed 180 missions over Vietnam) clearly shows that the rescue operation was botched terribly. In their haste to act decisively, Wetterhahn argues, Ford and Kissinger sent dozens of U.S. Marines to the wrong

offshore island at the same time the Khmer Rouge were about to release the Mayaguez crew. In all, 41 American troops were killed in the operation (including 23 air force personnel who died in a helicopter crash). Three marines were inadvertently left behind on Koh Tang Island, where Wetterhahn reveals for the first time they were captured and executed. Wetterhahn painstakingly reconstructs the action from four points of view: the policy makers in Washington, the American troops on the ground, their superiors along the chain of command and the Khmer Rouge officers who seized the crew and fought the Americans. The battle scenes are riveting and evocative, the analysis of the strategy and tactics insightful and the discovery of evidence showing the fate of the three marine MIAs convincing and disturbing. Photos not seen by PW. (June) Forecast: With Kissinger's record on covert actions in Vietnam, in Chile and elsewhere during the Cold War being reevaluated Christopher Hitchens's forthcoming *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* is one among several titles this season this book forms another piece of the puzzle. The book will appeal to buffs, vets and lay historians, and may be brandished by pundits, particularly given the situation's similarities to the recent U.S-China spy plane incident.

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From Library Journal A journalist and former air force pilot with 180 completed Vietnam missions, Wetterhahn chronicles the capture of the S.S. Mayaguez and the disjointed rescue attempt in 1975. The Mayaguez was captured by the Khmer Rouge about 60 miles from the Cambodian coast. Saigon had fallen just over a week before, and the humbled U.S. government was eager to show its force. Unfortunately, the Americans did not have good intelligence to tell them where the hostages were being held. As a result, a total of 41 marines were killed in the attempted rescue, with three more left on the island after the evacuation of the assault force. The hostages were already in the process of being released from another location when the attack began on Koh Tang Island. Much of this information was never released to the public. Wetterhahn used interviews with the survivors and other official records to compile the book, which is written in a strong, hard-to-put-down narrative style and is similar in scope to Timothy Castle's *One Day Too Long* (LJ 3/15/99) and Mark Bowden's *Black Hawk Down* (LJ 1/15/99). Recommended for both public and academic libraries. Mark Ellis, Albany State Univ., GA

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