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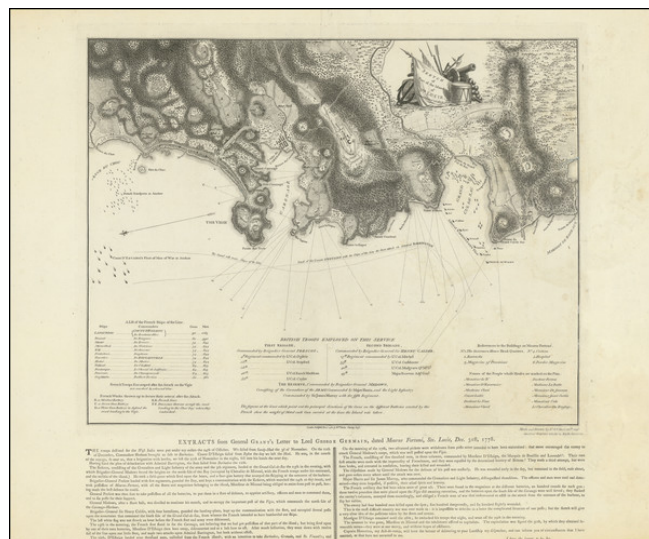
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[Battle of St. Lucia] Sketch of Part of the Island of Ste. Lucie

Stock#: 94974
Map Maker: Faden
Date: 1781
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 19.5 x 19.5 inches Including Text
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Faden Battle Plan of St. Lucia provides an intriguing account of the 1778 Franco-British encounter in the region. The cartographic representation of St. Lucia orients with the east at the top, detailing areas including Ville du Carenage, Grand Cul de Sac, Pointe de Marigot, and extending northwards towards Riviere du Choc.

The Battle of St. Lucia, also known as the Battle of the Cul De Sac, was a significant maritime conflict during the Revolutionary War, occurring in December 1778 between the British Royal Navy and the French forces. The encounter resulted in the British securing St. Lucia, largely influenced by strategic maneuvers led by General John Grant and Commodore William Hotham.

The French assault was under the direction of Jean Baptiste Charles Henri Hector, Compt d'Estaing, who departed from Boston in November 1778. However, unfortunate winds blew the French off course, providing the British an opportunity to claim advantageous positions at Cul De Sac Bay. This location played a pivotal role in their resounding triumph on December 16th, 1778.

The detailed map, denoting the positioning of forces, the fleet locations, and 'track of the Compt d'Estaing,' further reveals the significance of this battle, demonstrating how the West Indies became a key theater in the War of Independence. Despite the French capturing Dominica in September 1778, the subsequent defeat at the hands of the British at St. Lucia signaled Britain's resolve to retain control over its island colonies.



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St. Lucia had been contested territory since the 17th century, with France and Britain alternating control multiple times. The tensions escalated in 1778, in the context of the American War of Independence, when Britain declared war on France, aligning the fate of St. Lucia with the global conflict.

The map, a meticulous account of military strategy, indicates the French fortifications, naval forces of both the French and the British, and the designated landing points. It provides an opportunity to understand the military logistics of that time, while also offering a glimpse into the societal infrastructure of St. Lucia. The French and British forces are listed along with their respective commanders. Among the French forces, notable names like Admiral d'Estaing and Major General de Bouillé surface, while among the British forces, Admiral Barrington and General Meadows stand prominent.

Also depicted are the French troops encamped following the attack on the Vigie, along with the ad-hoc works erected by them. The British forces, identified by their distinct first and second brigades, are shown alongside the British Reserve forces. Each troop movement and establishment is marked distinctly, providing a layered understanding of the combat strategies.

The narrative also features references to the buildings on Mourne Fortune and names of people whose houses are marked on the plan, providing a detailed view of the civilian aspects of the battle. The comprehensive list of French Ships of the Line provides an understanding of the naval strength each side possessed during this conflict.

The battle, which lasted for several days from late December 1778, resulted in a British victory despite the French's numerical advantage. This victory significantly bolstered the British control over the Windward Islands, allowing them to maintain a strategic edge in the Caribbean region for the rest of the war.

Battle Overview

General Grant's letter to Lord George Germain, dated December 31, 1778, offers a firsthand account of the operations, capturing the complexities and challenges of the Battle of St. Lucia. His chronicle, rich with military details, fills in the narrative gaps of the Faden Battle Plan.

Grant, who was assigned command of the troops on October 24, sailed from Sandy Hook on November 3, arriving at Barbados on December 10, with Commodore Hotham. Count D'Estaing, his French counterpart, had set sail the same day from Boston. A lost brigantine carrying horses had fortuitously alerted D'Estaing of their proximity on November 27.

The subsequent days saw quick movements and decisive actions. With a debarkation plan in place, Admiral Barrington's fleet sailed from Barbados on December 12. The Reserve, comprised of the



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Grenadiers, Light Infantry, and the 5th regiment, landed at the Grand Cul de Sac on December 13. Led by Brigadier-General Medows, they successfully forced the heights, overcoming Chevalier de Micoud's French troops and seizing a field piece and a four-gun battery.

On December 14, General Prescott landed with five regiments, establishing a defensive line along the bay. His troops also ensured communication with the Reserve, which took possession of Mourne-Fortuné and its stores, forcing Monsieur de Micoud into a retreat. In the aftermath, Prescott secured all batteries, putting them in a state of defence, while Medows, after a short respite, occupied the strategically important post of the Vigie.

General Sir Henry Calder, with four battalions, safeguarded the landing-place, maintained communication with the fleet, and occupied positions to prevent potential French bombardment from the mountains that overlooked the Grand Cul de Sac.

Surprisingly, the French fleet and army were discovered just an hour after the last white flag was struck. The French fleet, misled about British control over the island, made two ineffective attacks on Admiral Barrington. Meanwhile, D'Estaing landed 9000 troops, intending to capture Barbados, Grenada, and St. Vincent's.

On December 17, the French forces attacked General Medows's corps on the Vigie. Despite their numerical superiority, the French were repelled in three separate attempts, leaving behind a substantial number of casualties. The spirited defence and strategic positioning of the British troops, especially the artillery from the captured French stockpile, proved decisive. This artillery, combined with the well-served batteries on the south side of the Carenage, posed significant problems for the French, even forcing a French man of war to abandon its position.

By December 28, D'Estaing had embarked his troops and left St. Lucia, leaving Monsieur de Micoud and the inhabitants to capitulate. A truce was signed on December 30, effectively ending the battle.

This firsthand account from General Grant highlights the resolute strategies, steadfast bravery, and tactical advantages that allowed the numerically inferior British forces to secure a significant victory at St. Lucia. Coupled with the cartographic details of the Faden Battle Plan, it offers a thorough understanding of a crucial episode in the island's history.

The following text appears at the bottom of the map:

EXTRACTS from General GRANT's Letter to Lord GEORGE GERMAIN, dated Mourne



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Fortuné, Ste. Lucie, Dec. 31st, 1778.

THE troops destined for the West Indies were put under my orders the 24th of October. We sailed from Sandy-Hook the 3d of November. On the 10th of December, Commodore Hotham brought us safe to Barbades. Count D'Estaing sailed from Boston the day we left the Hook. He was, in the course of the voyage, so near us, that a brigantine with horses, we lost the 27th of November in the night, fell into his hands the next day.

Having fixed the plan of debarkation with Admiral Barrington, the fleet sailed from Barbadoes the 12th.

The Reserve, consisting of the Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the army and the 5th regiment, landed at the Grand-Cul-de-Sac the 13th in the evening, with which Brigadier-General Medows forced the heights on the north side of the Bay (occupied by Chevalier de Micoud, with the French troops under his command, and the militia of the island.) He took a field-piece which fired upon the boats, and a four-gun battery that annoyed the shipping at the entrance of the harbour.

Brigadier-General Prescott landed with five regiments, guarded the Bay, and kept a communication with the Reserve, which marched the 14th at day-break, and took possession of Mourne-Fortuné, with all the stores and magazines belonging to the island, Monsieur de Micoud being obliged to retire from post to post, having made the best defence he could.

General Prescott was then sent to take possession of all the batteries, to put them in a state of defence, to appoint artillery, officers and men to command them, and to fix posts for their support.

General Medows, after a short halt, was directed to continue his march, and to occupy the important pos of the Vigie, which commands the north side the Carenage-Harbour.

Brigadier-General Sir Henry Calder, with four battalions, guarded the landing-place, kept up the communication with the fleet, and occupied several upon the mountains that command the south side of the Grand-Cul-de-Sac, from whence the French intended to have bombarded our ships.

The last white flag was not struck an hour before the French fleet and army were discovered.

The 15th in the morning, the French fleet stood in for the Carenage, not believing that we had



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got possession of that part of the island; but being fired upon by one of their own batteries, Monfieur D'Estaing then bore away, disconcerted and at a loss how to act. After much hesitation, they went down with twelve sail of the line upon our little fleet, and made two attacks upon Admiral Barrington, but both without effect.

The 16th, D'Estaing landed nine thousand men, collected from the French islands, with an intention to take Barbadoes, Grenada, and St. Vincent's; and every British settlement in the West-Indies.

On the morning of the 17th, two advanced pickets were withdrawn from posts never intended to have been maintained: that move encouraged the enemy to attack General Medows's corps, which was well posted upon the Vigie.

The French, consisting of five thousand men, in three columns, commanded by Monsieur D'Estaing, the Marquis de Bouillie and Lovendahl. Their two first attacks were made with the impetuosity of Frenchmen, and they were repulsed by the determined bravery of Britons! They made a third attempt, but were soon broke, and retreated in confusion, leaving their killed and wounded.

The disposition made by General Medows for the defence of his post was masterly. He was wounded early in the day, but remained in the field, rode about, and gave orders every where until the attack was over.

Major Harris and Sir James Murray, who commanded the Grenadiers and Light Infantry, distinguished themselves. The officers and men were cool and determined - they even surpassed, if possible, their usual spirit and bravery.

The French artillery that had been taken were of great use. There were found in the magazines at the different batteries, an hundred rounds for each gun: three twelve pounders that were placed upon the Vigie did amazing execution, and the batteries upon the south side of the Carenage were well served; they flanked the enemy's columns, annoyed them exceedingly, and obliged a French man of war that endeavoured to assist in the attack from the entrance of the harbour, to slip her cables.

The enemy had four hundred men killed upon the spot; five hundred dangerously, and six hundred slightly wounded.

This is the most difficult country war was ever made in: it is impossible to describe in a letter



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the complicated situation of our posts; but the sketch will give a very clear idea of the positions taken by the fleets and armies.

Monsieur D'Estaing remained until the 28th; he embarked his troops that night, and went off the 29th in the morning.

The moment he was gone, Monsieur de Micoud and the inhabitants offered to capitulate. The capitulation was signed the 30th, by which they obtained favourable terms -- they were at our mercy, and without hopes of assistance.

Captain Hamerton, my Aid-de-camp, will have the honour of delivering to your Lordship my dispatches, and can inform you of circumstances that I have omitted, or that have not occurred to me.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Detailed Condition: