

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

REPORT

Maritime Unit, Group A, OSS
Combat Operations with U.D.T.#10
From 10 August 1944 to 16 April 1945

From: Lt. L. J. GIBBNEY, M.C., USNR

To: Comdr. R. Davis HALLIWELL, USNR

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23 May 1945

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Bill G. ...
May 23, 1945

From: Lieut. L. J. Giboney, M.C., USNR
To: Commander E. Davis Halliwell, OSS, PCA, Honolulu
Subject: Maritime Unit Group A, OSS - Combat Operations
with U.D.T. #10 from 10 August 1944 to 16 April
1945.

1. The Maritime Unit, Group A, OSS personnel attached to U.D.T. #10 are as follows:

CHEATE, Arthur O., Jr.	Lieut.	A-V(S)	126320	USNR
GARRETT, Arthur O.	Ensign			USCGR
GIBONEY, L. J.	Lt. (jg)	MC-V(G)	140000	USNR
KNOTT, James	Lieut.	A-V(S)	126262	USNR
WOLFE, William D.	1st. Lt.	C. E.	0-363886	AUS

Plus TEN other officers not OSS

BECK, Hullo	BM1c	576935
DEBS, Robert K.	EM2c	576292
HOPPER, William D.	EM2c	634849
MULHORN, Raymond K.	EM2c	535117
NIKOLENKO, Nicolas	EM2c	575072
RISSEY, Gordon E.	Cox.	675001
PARKER, Robert E.	Mot31c	574117
SCOOLES, Robert D.	GM1c	575077
BODINE, Leslie L.	Sgt.	521895
WHITE, Frank A.	Sgt.	880348
WRIGHT, William C.	Sgt.	346403
ENGLISH, Frank T.	Cox.	2565166
KATSLRUBAS, William P.	SP(X)2c	6076075
KENWORTHY, Robert B.	Cox.	7025310
KING, Everett D.	SM3c	5648084
LONG, James L.	QM3c	5648154
MUSSEY, Cleo C.	SS3c	6713819
TRAVIS, Wright S.	SP(A)2c	8142669
WELDON, Henry T.	SP(X)2c	7208264

Plus 51 other men not OSS

COMPLEMENT: 15 Officers
70 Enlisted Men

2. The Maritime Unit Group A, OSS, has served temporary duty with U.D.T. #10 from 25 June 1944 until the present date. Group A was organized November 1943 and was trained rigorously for six

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months in California and in Hawaii in underwater swimming and demolition as well as general field training. All officers and men were volunteers, having been advised of the hazardous nature of the work which they were to undertake.

In June 1944, Group A was sent to OSS, Honolulu for duty. The group was reassigned to temporary duty at Naval Combat Demolition and Training Base, Maui, T. H. where they were integrated with U.D.T. #10. Group A constituted practically the entire swimming complement of U.D.T. #10. These men were not only trained and conditioned extensively, but were expert swimmers at the time that they volunteered for Group A. Group A, attached to U.D.T. #10, participated at the Angaur, Ulithi, Leyte, Lingayen Gulf, and Zamboales landings and one group of five OSS men participated in a special submarine borne reconnaissance of Yap and Palau as noted below.

3. The itinerary of Maritime Unit Group A attached to U.D.T. #10 is as follows:

(A) Training at Maui, T. H. from 26 June 1944 to 9 August 1944. During this training period emphasis was placed on team work in regard to blasting channels in coral reefs with the use of demolition charges.

(B) August 10, 1944 U.D.T. team #10 boarded the USS Rathburne (APD 25) and proceeded to Purvis Bay, Solomon Islands where the Palau Islands operation was staged.

(C) September 12, 1944 U.D.T. #10 commenced pre-assault work off Angaur Island.

(D) On or about 17 September 1944 U.D.T. #10 in company with a

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small task force left the Palau Islands for the Ulithi Islands where pre-assault work was commenced 18 September 1944.

(E) September 22, 1944 U.D.T. #10 aboard the USS Rathburne left the Ulithi Islands and arrived at Manus, Admiralty Islands about 25 September 1944 where the Leyte, P.I. operation was being staged. U.D.T. #10 carried out a conditioning and training program during the two week period they remained at Manus.

(F) On 18 October 1944 aboard the USS Rathburne U.D.T. #10 arrived off Leyte, P.I. and commenced pre-assault operations.

(G) On 22 October 1944 aboard the USS Rathburne U.D.T. #10 left Leyte, P.I. and proceeded to Noumea, New Caledonia arriving there about November 11, 1944. U.D.T. #10 was sent ashore for a two week period of training and recreation. Team #10 departed from Noumea, New Caledonia aboard the USS Rathburne 26 November 1944 and proceeded to Hollandia, New Guinea arriving there about 1 December 1944. Team #10 remained at Hollandia for approximately four weeks during which time a rigorous training and conditioning program was carried out.

(H) U.D.T. #10 aboard the USS Rathburne left Hollandia on or about 28 December 1944 in company with units of the 7th Fleet and proceeded to Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, P.I. arriving there 6 January 1945.

(I) On 7 January 1945 U.D.T. #10 commenced pre-assault work at Lingayen Gulf. On or about 12 January 1945 U.D.T. #10 aboard the USS Rathburne departed from Lingayen Gulf and proceeded to Leyte Gulf arriving there on or about 18 January 1945.

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(J) U.D.T. #10 was chosen as the stand by team for further Philippine operations and was ordered to remain at Leyte Gulf until further notice.

(K) On or about 25 January 1945 U.D.T. #10, aboard the USS Rathburne, proceeded in company with amphibious landing forces to Zamboales, Luzon, P.I. arriving there on the night of 29 January 1945. Night reconnaissance work was carried out on arrival there.

(L) On 31 January 1945 aboard the USS Rathburne U.D.T. #10 departed from Zamboales and proceeded to Guam stopping off for approximately 10 days at Ulithi enroute. Arrived at Guam on 27 February 1945 at which time U.D.T. #10 was detached from USS Rathburne and ordered ashore where they remained as a stand-by team for the Okinawa operations.

(M) Not having been called on for the Okinawa operations U.D.T. #10 was ordered aboard the USS Arenac (APA 128) on 4 April 1945 for transportation to Maui, T. H.

(N) U.D.T. #10 arrived at Maui, T. H. on 16 April 1945 since which time a training and recreation program has been carried out. Team #10 is now waiting for orders sending them to the states for 30 days' leave and for several weeks training duty at Fort Pierce, Florida. Under the present plan Team #10 will return to Maui on the completion of leave and temporary duty at Fort Pierce.

4. The below named OSS men were detached U.D.T. #10 and sent on temporary additional duty with Com 3rd Phibs.

BARNHILL, Leonard L.	CN3c	8903302
BLACK, Robert A., Jr.	Q11c	8114104
CHRISTENSON, W. R.	Q13c	8697250

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MacMAHON, John C.
MOORE, William E.

SP(A)1/c
SP(X)1/c

4027186
6339607

These men were sent on a special extra hazardous mission the entire nature of which is unknown to me. However these men operating from the Submarine USS HURFISH reconnoitered at night beach approaches and shore installations of various islands including Palau, Yap and Truk.

Two of the above listed men (BLACK, R. A. and MacMAHON, J.C.) failed to return to the USS HURFISH from a night operation off Yap Island. The remaining three men (BARSHILL, L. L., CHRISTENSON, W. R. and MOORE, W. E.) were returned to Maui, T. H. where each was awarded the Silver Star. Since the completion of the above mentioned operations aboard the USS HURFISH the latter named men have acted as swimming instructors at NCOT&E Base, Maui, T. H. since their return in the late summer of 1944 until the present time. It is anticipated that these men will rejoin U.D.T. #10 before the latter group returns to the United States for leave and temporary duty.

The two men (BLACK, R. A. and MacMAHON, J. C.) are listed as "missing in action" and to my knowledge no other status has been given these men by the Navy Department. The Health Records of these men are now in my possession and will be returned to OSS, Washington, D. C. for proper disposition.

OPERATIONS

The following is a very brief account of these operations:

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ANGAUR ISLAND

U.D.T. #10 arrived off ANGAUR ISLAND aboard the USS Bathurne on 12 September 1944. On D minus 2 days Team #10 made a pre-assault reconnaissance of the tentatively planned landing beaches. This operation was done under heavy fire and was especially hazardous for the swimmers who swam up to the very water's edge. Complete hydrographic and beach studies were made and reported to the admiral in charge of the amphibious landings. From these reports it was determined which beaches were most suited for amphibious landings. On D day team personnel led the first assault forces into the beach, locating the best areas for their landings. Also on D day, Team #10 searched and bouyed MARK IV type mines located about 200 yards off the beach where they were a menace to gun boats and larger landing craft. During the latter phase of the operation sharks were sighted by the swimmers adding another serious hazard to their job. One shark 6-8 feet long came within 10-15 yards of the swimmers, placing them in a perilous position until the shark was driven off by gunners in the stand by L.C.P.R.

On D plus 1 and D plus 2 days, Team #10 was called upon to blast deeper channels in the coral reefs on the landing beaches so that the unloading of supplies from the larger craft such as LST's would be facilitated.

Rear Admiral D. E. Barbey complimented Team #10 for their work in the ANGAUR landings.

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ULITHI ISLAND

U.D.T. #10 arrived off ULITHI ISLAND aboard the USS Rathburne on 18 September 1944 and on D minus 2 days commenced pre-assault reconnaissance of five beaches. These operations covered a period of two days during which time complete hydrographic and beach studies were made and reported to the admiral in charge of the assault forces. Demolition work was necessary on one beach which consisted of blasting a channel to facilitate the amphibious landings on said beach.

U.D.T. #10 was sent a "well done" dispatch from the admiral in charge of landings.

LEYTE ISLAND

U.D.T. #10 arrived off LEYTE ISLAND aboard the USS Rathburne on 18 October 1944 and on D minus 1 day commenced pre-assault reconnaissance of Red Beaches. Under extremely heavy mortar, machine gun, and sniper fire Team #10 made a complete study of the beach by swimming up to the water's edge from which point a study of beach installations was made. The report of these studies together with maps and recommendations to the assault commander were an invaluable aid toward the successful completion of these landings.

Team #10 was sent a "well done" for their part in the operation by Vice Admiral J. B. Oldendorf.

LINGAYEN GULF

U.D.T. #10 arrived off LINGAYEN GULF aboard the USS Rathburne on 6 January 1945. The ships of the fire support unit

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were attacked repeatedly by enemy suicide planes during the entire time spent in these waters.

The gunners of the USS Rathburne were officially credited with the destruction of two enemy planes. Some of the ship's guns were manned by U.D.T. #10 personnel. One enemy plane was hit by gunners while making a suicide dive on the USS Rathburne which resulted in the plane losing control and crashing into the water approximately 50 feet aft of the ship's fantail.

On D minus 2 days U.D.T. #10 commenced pre-assault reconnaissance of beaches from which U.D.T. #10 was able to turn in accurate reports and maps of beaches reconnoitered. U.D.T. #10 made a post-assault search of suitable landing beaches for LST's which facilitated the unloading of supplies. U.D.T. #10 received a "well done" dispatch from Vice Admiral J. E. Clendorf for work done at LINGAYEN GULF.

ZAMBALES LUZON

U. D. T. #10 arrived at ZAMBALES, LUZON aboard the USS Rathburne on the night of 29 January 1945. Without fire support U.D.T. #10 made a sneak night reconnaissance of the beaches at ZAMBALES. In order to get as much information as possible team members risked the hazards of infiltrating to the beaches to check on enemy installations and strength. No enemy activity was observed and U.D.T. #10's report, in part at least, influenced the amphibious command to dispense with the usual pre-assault bombardment obviating the loss of many native lives and the destruction of their villages. The amphibious landings were unopposed.

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MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS ON OSS MARITIME UNIT, GROUP A.
ATTACHED TO U.D.T. #10

PERSONNEL

OSS Maritime Unit personnel made up approximately one third the total personnel attached to U.D.T. #10. Included in this group were 5 officers and 24 enlisted men all of whom assumed key positions in U.D.T. #10. The positions held by the OSS Maritime Unit officers are as follows:

Lt. Choate, USNR, the commanding officer of Maritime Unit, Group A, was placed in command U.D.T. #10 which command he holds to the present date.

Lt. Knott, USNR, the executive officer of Maritime Unit, Group A, was designated as the executive officer of U.D.T. #10 which position he held until early March 1945 at which time he returned to Washington, D. C. under orders.

Lt. Gibboney, USNR, the medical officer attached to Maritime Unit, Group A, was designated as the medical officer of U.D.T. #10 which position he held until 16 May 1945 at which time he was detached from U.D.T. #10 to return to OSS Washington, D. C.

1st. Lt. Wolfe, USA, was designated as the intelligence officer attached to U.D.T. #10 which position he held until early March 1945 at which time he returned to Washington, D. C. under orders.

Ensign Garrett, USCGR, was designated as the platoon leader of Platoon #1 U.D.T. #10 which position he holds to this date.

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The 24 enlisted men attached to Maritime Unit, Group A, on temporary duty with U.D.T. #10 likewise were given key positions in U.D.T. #10 making up nearly the entire swimming complement of the team. Five of these men were chosen to go on a special mission aboard the Submarine USS HUNFISH. Two of the five men are missing in action.

The OSS personnel attached to U.D.T. #10 did an excellent job both during the period of training and in operations and were largely responsible for the successful operations undertaken by U.D.T. #10.

That the OSS personnel attached to U.D.T. #10 were superior swimmers to other demolition personnel supplied by the Navy from Fort Pierce is borne out by the fact that OSS men were assigned as swimming instructors for all of the demolition base team personnel and consequently these OSS men have trained over a thousand U.D.T. Navy personnel.

COMMENTS BY ADMIRAL CHESTER W. NIMITZ

When sent ashore at Guam U.D.T. #10 was instructed to build their own camp. On inspecting the camp and the personnel attached to U.D.T. #10, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz praised U.D.T. #10 highly stating that they were the best appearing sailors on the Island of Guam. Admiral Nimitz also commended U.D.T. #10 for the good work they had done in their previous operations.

TRAINING

Maritime Unit, Group A, were trained extensively for 6

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Months in all types of water work both on the water's surface and under water. In addition to this a complete course in demolition work and field training was carried out.

The demolition personnel not attached to OSS, on the other hand, had less than two month's training nearly all of which time was spent on demolition work.

In addition to this the OSS Maritime Group were a much more carefully selected group both physically and mentally. Consequently the responsibility for training U.D.T. #10 as a unit rested on OSS personnel. Only in demolition work did the Navy demolition personnel compare favorably with the OSS personnel.

EQUIPMENT

The Maritime Unit was equipped for independent operations both in the water and on land. Most of this equipment was not practical for U.D.T. operations and is in storage at NCDT&E Base, Maui, T. H. The advantages of swim fins in carrying out swimming operations were shown by the OSS Maritime Group. Swim fins are now used by all Navy Demolition Teams and have increased the efficiency of the teams tremendously.

MEDICAL REPORT

A medical survey of all U.D.T. #10 personnel while in POA has been prepared by Lt. L. J. Giboney, M. C., USNR, and will be turned over to Colonel Sylvester C. Missal by Dr. Giboney on his arrival in Washington, D. C. This report has already been forwarded to BuMed via AdComPhibeFac by Lt. Choate.

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DECORATIONS

The following decorations have been awarded:

CHOATE, Arthur C.	Lt. USAR	Bronze Star
BAKERHILL, Leonard L.	GM 3/c	Silver Star
CHRISTENSEN, W. R.	GM 3/c	" "
MOORE, William E.	SP(X) 1/c	" "

CITATIONS FOR DECORATIONS NOT YET AWARDED

It is my understanding that Lt. Choate has cited all of the officers and men of U.D.T. #10 for the Bronze Star.

Lawrence J. Gibbons