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Contents

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

04 March 2021

Joseph Zemlin
CCCA President

On behalf of the CCCA Board of Directors, we thank you for your continued support, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our way of life changed for so many of us. Sadly, we have had family members, friends, and co-workers who are personally affected. Our hearts and prayers go out to you and yours. We celebrate the joy and hope that the future brings for all of us. This season will pass in time, and we will regain our freedoms from all of the mitigating actions that are in place. Some states are already lifting restrictions and doing their best to open up our economy as the vaccination rates increase and new case rates ebb. Many of us are still waiting for our vaccinations. It is our hope that the trend of improved wellness continues so that we may once again enjoy the bonds of friendship during social gatherings. It's been too long since many of us have had to deal with long terms of isolation. This is especially true for those with elderly family members who are at the highest risk factors.

This brings me to my next subject. As a charitable organization our focus is always to provide assistance for those in need. We cannot do this without our wider sense of community. I want to thank some very special folks who continue to demonstrate their love and devotion for the CCCA and NSW Family. Many of you have purchased the fantastic products that CCCA Member Pat Shima and Sean Cordes have worked on this past year. They are quality products wear them with pride! On behalf of the CCCA we thank Pat and Sean for their continued support and the proceeds donated to the CCCA Mission of compassionate care through its Casualty Assistance Program. This generous financial infusion is graciously appreciated and has directly helped multiple families during extremely difficult times. It has paid for medical services and lessen the burden of already very difficult financial stresses of this Pandemic. It also helps keep our lights on in our CCCA Headquarters. Although, we are all volunteers and take no salary, the lease and utilities need to be paid.

We also continue to see the charitable actions come from our CCCA members in the form of personal donations to cover the $50 annual membership fees for those who may need a little assistance. The Board of Directors have made great strides to ensure that annual memberships are prices remain reasonable. We still rely on annual memberships as an active revenue stream to fund our charitable missions. We sincerely thank Mike Hanrahan for his generous personal Hero Donations!

Our recent inclusion in the San Diego Mike Hinton Memorial Golf Tournament was a huge success. Being selected for being a charitable organization recipient was not only a surprise but a great honor. Additionally, we are very appreciative of the Strauss Family Grant, stemming from the Golf Tournament that demonstrated their trust and belief in our missions. We sincerely thank.

Lastly, you may notice that the official logo has changed. We have streamlined our branding and embraced the true spirit of our community to Preserve our History and Honor the Brotherhood!

Sincerely,
Joseph Zemlin
CCCA President
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Figure 1. CCCA Founder Jim Gray and Artist Ruben "Chato" Hinojosa, Jr. holding original Painting "Halter Special Operation Craft on a night raid.

Pictured (above) is Combatant Craft Crewman Association Founder Jim Gray (left) and CCCA Member and Artist Ruben "Chato" Hinojosa (left) at the CCCA National Headquarters with an original painting of a Halter Special Operations Craft on a night raid. Ruben has generously donated limited edition prints of this painting to CCCA for fundraising, and they are available through the CCCA Ship's Store.

Heart of a Warrior Soul of an Artist
Ruben "Chato" Hinojosa Jr.

By
Phil G. Garn
Edited by Joseph Zemlin

Whether you are looking at one of Ruben's paintings of an eagle, a dog, a commission for a military comrade, or public safety group, the optimistic spirit of his subject comes to life. Particularly in the paintings of military themes, he presents a great sense of pride, patriotism, and camaraderie, which sometimes translates as joy. Preparing this article, I naturally wanted to learn more about how Ruben's life experiences influenced his art, especially his military service within the Special Boat Units. I also wanted Ruben to explain his formal training and special techniques of literally adding physical layers of texture to his artworks. Lastly, I wanted to explore how art helped him cope with life's challenges.

Figure 2. Lab's Love."

Figure 3. "Strength from Above."

Ruben's paintings "Lab's Love" and "Strength from Above." You can see the devotion coming right through even on this screenshot from Ruben's website: www.Chato.com, as well as the determination and resolve of the eagle. Also, note the texture of the eagle's beak and feathers, adding to the painting's composition.

Figure 4. Ruben's study of a horse.

Ruben began drawing animals as a boy. He created a large wildlife mural in chalk on his bedroom wall growing up. He would carry a sketch pad, art pencils, and watercolors with him on deployments. Sadly, many of these artworks with combatant craft themes were lost in a fire when his parents' house burned down. After his Navy service, Ruben went back to school, studied fine arts at college, and majored in art history. So, he is a classically trained artist. I asked Ruben how he, as a military veteran, was perceived in Art School both by his professors and fellow students. Ruben said, "His professors in the late 1990's/early2000's were quite honored to have military people in their classes and made a point of introducing these veterans to the rest, of course. His military experiences and maturity also brought a greater understanding to his classmates.

Figure 5. Working to create an eagle sculpture.

While Ruben has worked in several mediums over the years, painting and sculpting have become two of his favorites. Painting is his primary medium. I asked him about the complexity and composition of his paintings. Ruben explained that there is just a super subject in a great pose every once in a while. He says to himslef, "I just have to do that." He then develops a strong mental picture which he can rapidly transfer onto his "canvas of choice", wooden panels with paint. Ruben said, "He prefers to paint on well-prepared stiff wooden panels rather than flexible canvas surfaces that are susceptible to tears and stretching over time. There is often a lot of pre-planning and preparation before painting a

particular subject. Particularly research and sketching accuracy. The process helps him visualize how things will work together before any paint goes on the boards. Saving both time and resources. He works relentlessly to get accurate details of the boats and equipment, historically right. Photographs provide the most accurate visual account. The veteran's descriptions and insights also contribute to making the final creation.

A recent example of this is his painting of the “Halter Marine Special Operations Craft on a Raid.” Ruben generously donated certified prints of the original art to the Combatant Craft Crewman Association (CCCA) to use in its fundraising efforts for the second printing of WARBOATS. Ruben contacted CCCA Founder and Historian Jim Gray and asked Jim to check his preliminary work to ensure the boat, weapons, and men were accurately portrayed. Once things were right, he was able to move forward and apply his artistic skills. All the while, Ruben is thinking about perspective, angles, colors, lighting, then in black and white, roughing it in and making changes to develop a concrete skeleton or frame that no one else will ever see but provides him a guide.

Think about a window frame on the house. In reality, it is painted a single shade of white.
However, in the painting, the base color will be a little grayer. This darker color provides the illusion of depth. The light, usually the sun, hits the frame and will present a brighter shade of white, and at the edges, like on the bottom where it is darker, the artist will add more gray. This process is simple shading and highlighting; most artists will add even more subtle differences in hues and shade. Then he will start building layers, which takes a long time to accomplish, but adds even greater realism. Ruben makes micro-shade adjustments on top of each other, in addition to the more traditional light and shadow techniques of highlighting and shading. Ruben will continue to add depth and texture to his artistic color palet. Sometimes he will want the brush strokes going in a particular direction with some overlap; think eagle feathers on the wing, but he adds a vertical stroke or counter strokes for emphasis in other areas. It takes a lot of skill and practice and experimentation to achieve the results he is after. As Ruben developed his unique techniques, he’s increased his efficiency to create the desired effects to bring a sense of spirit to his artwork. Although he can proceed more quickly, the process is never truly "fast," just more efficient.

Figure 6. Close-up of Halter SOC Painting.

Close up of the Halter SOC painting. Though the overall subject is less distinct and was not meant to be viewed this closely, see how the three-dimensional texture is much more complex and adds additional highlight and shade especially on the water in the foreground. Now contrast that with the flatter clouds in front of the Moon. Also note the effect of the gray on the blues and white

camouflage of the hull. Even the tops of the crewmen's helmets are highlighted to reflect the moonlight. This is all planned in advance and takes days to execute.

Figure 7. Ruben in front of the 70-foot Barbarian HSB.

Pictured (Left): Ruben Hinojsa, Jr. with the 70-foot experimental Barbarian HSB at the Boat House in Seal Beach, California. Like all HSBs, she was literally a backbreaker at speed; they did not have the mitigating shock-absorbing seats of today's CCM. Note the experimental systems on the flying wing. As Ruben says, "What boat doesn't break down and need an engineman!"

I often ask boat guys if they had any prior small boat or water experience before joining the Navy. Like one of my mentors from SBU-12, Steve Mironchik crewed on America's Cup sailboat racing teams. Don Mirkovich from STABRON 20 in Vietnam came from a European fishing family. He crewed on his relatives' boats during summer vacations. In contrast, others had very little, or virtually no, small craft experience, not even a Boy Scout canoe, yet turned out to be outstanding small craft operators. Ruben's father was a Coast Guard licensed captain with a 100-ton rating who sailed up and down the Mississippi's intercoastal waterways up to Michigan. As a boy, Ruben was earning extra bucks lifeguarding and renting sail and powerboats on South Padre Island and Corpus Christi, Texas. He then went to work on oil service platforms. It wasn't until he was 22 years old that his employer, Mr. Johnson, a World War II veteran, convinced him to join the Navy. After Ruben and a Vietnam veteran had saved a coworker from a fall into a cold January sea on an oil platform, Mr. Johnson told Ruben:

"I can pay anyone to do the job you are doing," Johnson said, "but I cannot pay someone to do what you just did, young man. You should consider joining the military."

Ruben would then enlist and go to Boot Camp in 1988 and become an Engineering Hull Technician. His first ship was the *USS Portland* (LSD 37). He earned his ESWS (Enlisted Surface Warfare) pin in 18-months.

CWO4 Edgar Jones, a brown water Vietnam veteran, and engineman would assign Ruben to any Special Warfare operations the ship was conducting. He would go on to SBU-24 (Special Boat Unit 24, in Little Creek, Virginia) and do several R&D details with SBU-12 in Coronado. At Seal Beach, he would be the LPO (Leading Petty Officer) of the Navy boat shed and do a lot of work with the experimental 70- foot *Barbarian* HSB (High-Speed Boat) testing Nighthawk low visibility system. They were also doing a lot of "MacGyver" (jury-rigged…I mean experimental) mountings on the Nautica RHIBs and riding the Setton and Halter HSBs before they were replaced by MKVs (MK V Special Operations Craft). There was also work with the reserve units and developing SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for HSBs. As Ruben said, "What boat doesn't break down and doesn't need an engineman; it was great duty!" He next reported to BUD/S Class 207 but was injured during training requiring several surgeries. While recovering, the XO said, what am I going to do with you? The PNC (Personnel Chief) said, "he's from the boat community," so the Navy sent Ruben TAD to SBU-26 in Panama (the best-kept secret in the Navy). When he returned to Coronado, Ruben was at the personnel office when Master Chief Kelly Webb told Chaplin Lee at NSW Group, "He's one of ours take care of him." He would have a lot of contact with many DGBs, including Bill Redmond, Doug Docksteader, and others, before being medically discharged. Ruben said what he learned from his time in NSW was, "never quit doing something, and someone always has your back at NSW."

As a child and member of the Lipan Apache Tribe, Ruben made a strong connection with the animal world both artistically and spiritually, particularly the Golden Eagle which has served to guide him through many challenging times in his adult life. After a number of his own medical operations, he returned to help his father with an important surgery in 2001 followed by his girlfriend's sudden death in 2002. He said it was a very dark time for him, but you can either choose the dark or the light, and he had been down both roads. He completed a healing ceremony through his tribal elders in 2005 and the spirit of the Eagle came back to him, providing an artistic renewal. Ruben explained art is very much of his healing process and creativity allows him to focus on the positive as well as release his frustration and negativity.

Figure 8. Ruben at the helm, at the Seal Beach Boat House.

Like many boat guys, the pain never completely goes away, and surgeries do not always provide a permanent fix for the problem(s), especially as we age. In 2012, Ruben had a brain aneurism, followed by a neck and spinal fusion operation in 2014. He thought he was going into the brightest light he ever experienced while lying on the operating table. Still, his eagle spirit brought him back, as it was not his time. The subsequent recovery was brutal, but Ruben continued with his art-making many alterations to his art tools to overcome limitations to pursue his artistic passion. Ruben explained that it's NSW grit not to give up and to be able to think outside the box to accomplish your objectives. Often it starts with you saying, it's up to you to save you; it's your responsibility.

He also received praise for his art from one of his college professors, a meaningful tribute and continued inspiration.

Ruben has received many awards and honors for his art, including being featured in *Homeland* magazine and recognized at the California State Capital in 2018 and the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art.

Figure 9. A commissioned art piece for the CCCA's first Casualty Assistance Director, William "Bill" Redmond, a.k.a. "Master Splitter, " and SWCC Instructor.

This was a commission by the CCCA for our first Casualty Assistance Calls Officer Bill Redmond. You may recognize a photo or two from our WARBOATS book. Ruben has incorporated the primary craft from Bill's service including Seafox, RHIB, PB MKIII and MKV as well as a service photo of Bill and his SWCC and Combatant Craft insignia on a background of the stars and stripes and ocean. A complex composition.

Ruben said in 2014, CCCA Founder and fellow artist Jim Gray reached out to him while he was completing that recovery 2012 recovery which required yet another surgery, a cervical fusion in 2016. This was how he began to re-connect with fellow boat guys. It provided another avenue for his art. He started doing commissions for DGBs, which featured their service in Naval Special Warfare.

I was amazed and honored to receive such a personalized gift from my CCCA comrades in front of my family, friends, and law enforcement colleagues when I retired after about 35 years of government service. Ruben's painting was a unique gift for me and brought out that festive spirit of service and comradeship for my family and colleagues that photos wouldn't capture.

Figure 10. Ruben presenting his art to me at my retirement ceremony.

Figure 11. A close up of my NSW Service Tribute Painting.

Ruben explains my NSW service in his presentation piece from the CCCA to the audience during my retirement in June 2017 from over 30 years of Federal service at the San Diego Police Officer's Association. This was a great honor and brought my Navy service and comradery to life for my friends, colleagues, and family. Again, the pride and fellowship shine through!

Figure 1. Bill Redmond left with Tika and Ruben Hinojosa with Simba at Canine Training

Service Dogs for Veterans

By
Phil G. Garn
Edited by Joseph Zemlin

Several years ago, I watched our then Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) Bill Redmond comforting a brother's family at his memorial service. A comrade standing next to me said quietly, "We were scared to death of him." I looked around to see who this "him" was, then recalled from earlier in the service that both he and the deceased man had been in the same SWCC class, and Bill had been one of their instructors.

Bill was more a contemporary of mine in the 1980s era Special Boat Units. Since joining the CCCA, Bill has been assisting many boat guys and their families. His outstanding actions earned him the recognition and position of the first CCCA Casualty Assistance Director. Bill's calm and caring demeanor was well suited for this demanding position of trust. I believe this was because Bill would meet the folks where they were and then guide them through the difficulties they faced. He might not have all the answers, but that never stopped him from finding them. He worked relentlessly to help ease the pain and burden of those in need. Working countless hours, Bill often found solutions or resources to address usually unforeseen issues. His approach helped us coin the phrase "Compassionate Care."

I had also forgotten that Bill was a PT machine, back in the day! That was before the founding of "The School House" and the SWCC training program. As Jim Gray and I were researching WARBOATS, I was continually reminded by Bill's former students how tough and demanding he was. A model of physical fitness who required his students to follow the example. However, over just a few years, I observed that Bill had developed severe mobility issues. They not only worsened significantly but rapidly, and he wasn't the only one among our ranks that suffered from similar physical challenges. It was also happening to some other comrades, right in front of my eyes. The sad part was that they were not "old men." Their bodies had just taken much more abuse than most their age. The physical demands that Naval Special Warfare Combatant Craft Crewman experiences are phenomenal! The truth is we didn't know the cost in the long-term.

Another CCCA member experiencing mobility issues was Ruben Hinojosa. Luckily, he found a program involving service dogs that might help his mobility issues. He knew that if he was able to benefit from this program that other Boat Guys could too. Ruben brought this to Bill's attention, and the two enrolled in the program.

Before going into Bill and Ruben's experience with the service dog program, I thought a quick reminder of the magnitude, causes, and widespread nature of boat guy mobility issues would be in order. Also, describing some of my education would put this in a better perspective for the reader. While in the Boat Units, my experience of injuries was of dramatic-single incidents such as the collapsing of Sea Fox canopies during heavy seas, causing deaths and significant injuries, not the day-to-day jarring. "Man, that sure was a rough op yesterday," and the boats were really picking up their high-speed capabilities. The experimental HSB's at SBU-12 were about twice as fast as the 65-foot Patrol Boats and Sea Foxes. The HSB's were followed by our first RHIB's. They were more maneuverable and more "fun." These would soon be followed by the MK V's just after my time…. Every boat guy knows the faster you go, the harder the water gets.

Figure 2. **Early SBU-12 Fountain HSB catching air, what goes up must come down and hard! Courtesy of Pete Diegel**

It was not until over twenty years later, during the 50th Anniversary at the School House Tour, I was stunned to learn from Admiral Tom "The Hulk" Richards that SWCCs were sustaining more injuries than any branch of the Navy or military service for that matter. Also, as Jim and I researched the book interviewing more men across generations, we learned more about the injury's men had been sustaining and how significant they were. Again, not merely single incidents like the collapse of the Sea Fox and MK V canopies in heavy seas causing distinct injuries or rollover of land vehicles, but the cumulative effects. Perhaps a few excerpts will help illustrate the physical impact on the men:

The young guys were losing an inch in height, getting neck and back injuries, losing memory, and getting TBI (traumatic brain injury). You have to remember not only are they enduring pounding from the boats but wearing helmets with NODs, and that additional weight is placing further pressure on their neck and head." Mike Palmer SBC (retired) SWCC Instructor

Medical doctors did not understand nor comprehend the damage caused by the sustained impacts on the boats. Doctors were used to single incident trauma and said, "no one experiences that much trauma!" Both coasts had unique seas: Big rollers on the West Coast and the East Coast was like a washing machine. The men wore heart monitors and sensors on their heels, but it was still beyond comprehension for the doctors. "It was like an NFL defensive lineman all the time, not just a Sunday for an hour's play." Men in their 20's were getting hip surgeries and experiencing degenerative bone loss. There were a lot of instances where there was no cartilage between bones. "Young men would do surgeries, heal partially and get going again!" Sean Cordes SWCC (ret).

The technicians testing sensors for shock mitigation on the boats were getting hurt. Their sensors were being knocked-out because it was so violent. Scientists had no idea how bad it was until they got some underway time on the boats—Kevin Meegan SBC (retired).

Figure 3. **The next generation of big fast boats, the MK V in heavy seas off Point Concepcion conducting shock mitigation testing. Each mission could be equivalent to 200 car crashes. Photo courtesy of Britt Meland SBCS.**

As Dave Wylie, the first SWCC Warrant, recalled, it took about 15 years for the Navy to recognize the widespread issues of repeated impact and take action with shock-mitigating seats, special exercise, and physical therapy for the active-duty SWCCs.

Additionally, there was an increasing psychological aspect with more and more combat commitments. The NSW men were fighting all the brushfire wars after Vietnam -Grenada, Lebanon, Persian Gulf, Panama, etc., and taking part in counter-narcotics on FIDs and MTTs, while the big Blue Water Fleet kept an eye on the Soviet and Communist threats. This tempo increased after Desert Storm, including Africa, and continues to this day with the war on terror with SWCCs on land and sea.

I asked Bill to tell me about how he found out about the canine program and describe the process. Bill related it was actually Ruben who told him about the Paws for Purple Hearts program, and he began asking questions and doing research. He soon discovered Tender Loving Canines (TLC), which has recently merged with the more well-known Guide Dogs of America and learned instead of a two-year waiting list for the Paws program, it could

Figure 4. **Bill and Tika at training.**

Bill said he had to study during the process and learn about ADA (Americans with Disability Act) laws and service dogs' requirements. They are not magic pets but an exceptional working companion. Sometimes the supervisors will have to bring out several dogs before a match is made. However, with both Bill's dog, Tika, and Ruben's dog, "Simba," the matches were suitable straight away. Also, more specific needs were addressed with the trainers; for Bill, his dog would have to learn how to pick up his cane, among other particular tasks, including helping Bill balance. Different dogs will have to learn to follow wheelchairs and other specific skills. When there are a certain number of veterans, they will class up. The classes are seven days long, and all travel, lodging, and meals are paid for by the VA. This is the hands-on training part, and it was terrific that Bill and Ruben knew each other, but they met other veterans and learned they were not alone with mobility problems. In addition to Bill's mobility issues, Tika will also lay on him for PODs (postural orthostatic tachycardia – a blood flow issue when you go from reclining to standing). Then support him if he is losing his balance, and lick or nudge him if he is having a nightmare. Bill explained the dog is almost continually working, monitoring several conditions even when Bill is sleeping. I asked Bill if Tika ever gets a rest? Bill said, "When she is in her crate, she can completely "switch off." From my law enforcement days, I know that my colleagues with working dogs said their dogs liked to be in their crates or vehicles because it was a much smaller space for them to be responsible for, where they could indeed relax. Working dogs like law enforcement, rescue, and sled dogs are bred to work, which they want to do. They like to pull the sled and are very happy doing that.

Bill said Tika had made a positive difference in his life, although they had to work out particular issues, such as Tika not being in the bed with him and his wife, Lisa. He has a lot more mobility and a much better quality of life. Tika can get too low items for Bill to reach by pointing at the thing, even at the store. If she goes for the item next to her target, Bill can quickly correct her. Ruben echoed Bill's experience with his dog, Simba. The dogs allow veterans to get out much more and interact with other people, providing a way to connect socially with others. Bill explained he does have to remind people that Tika is a service dog and petting may distract her from her tasks. He thinks once he gets a more traditional harness, it will be a better signal to people that she is a working dog and will provide much better balance for Bill than his cane.

Figure 5. **Bill and Tika getting some exercise and fresh air in Sedona, Arizona.**

Bill also explained that Guide Dogs of America and Tender Loving Canines could provide service dogs for the visually impaired (what we usually think of when it comes to service animals), veterans, and people with autism. Quite a bit is explained on their web site. He said he would be happy to assist other veterans with the process and is working with Ruben and Mike Sigsworth to get guidelines posted on our CCCA website. Bill stressed that mobility is a significant factor for qualification for their service dogs, which was the same with Ruben. As you will read about in the article showcasing his artwork in this issue of "On Target."

Since this story's submission, the CCCA is honored to announce its endorsement of this worthy, like-minded charitable organization. We appreciate all the work that goes into this fantastic program. The CCCA has donated its financial support to the cause of bringing much-needed assistance to our veteran community. If you are interested in more ways people are making a real difference, contact our new Casualty Assistance Director, James Grant, at caco@combatantcraftcrewman.org. We are stronger together, and our mission to Preserve the History and Honor the Brotherhood continues. Check us out at www.combatantcraftcrewman.org and join us in supporting our incredible community of veterans!

Figure 6. Ruben and Simba at training.

Figure 2. Photo of P-564.

Photo of P-564 Walter Mess' 85-foot Herreshoff Crash Boat "*Jeanie*" with kayaks and rubber boats on the forward deck, in SEAC/CBI after successfully returning from Operation Target. Note: Unlike many special operations craft with unique camouflage schemes, Walter Mess had all of the crash boats in his OSS Flotilla retain standard Army Air Force, Air Sea Rescue markings to promote anonymity as part of their cover. Photo from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the *Maritime Unit Arakan War Dairy* via Erick Simmel collection.

A Very Brief Look at OSS Crash Boats

By
Phil G. Garn,
Erick Simmel
And
Jim Gray

Edited by Joseph Zemlin

During World War II, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) utilized a wide variety of water bourn-craft ranging from the U.S. and foreign fleet type submarines and PT boats to native canoes for training and operational missions. These missions varied greatly from direct action and sabotage, to espionage to propaganda, clandestine resupply and recovering downed aircrew. OSS "operatives" (men and women alike) worked behind enemy lines, very often with covert "agents" who were local allies consisting of spies, saboteurs, and irregular fighters. They sometimes embarked upon conventional U.S. or Allied naval ships for single or a few limited operations or their own dedicated PT Boat Squadron and crash boat flotilla. An ideal example of these dedicated elements was Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron (MTB) SQUADRON-2(2), commanded by Medal of Honor recipient, LCDR John D. Bulkeley, "Wild Man of the Philippines." These specialized MTBs were crewed by experienced PT veterans (including Bud Liebenow, who rescued John F. Kennedy and the crew of PT-109 in the South Pacific) with specially modified 78-foot Higgins PT Boats that were assigned to the OSS to operate in the English Channel. Along these same lines, American Air Sea Rescue Boats or crash boats would support OSS operations in multiple theaters. Their versatility was ideal for the covert and clandestine OSS missions world-wide. They even had a dedicated OSS Crash Boat Flotilla in the South East Asia Command (SEAC). Today the United States presently refers to this operation area as China, Burma, and India (CBI) Theater. The OSS also experimented with crash boats as radio-controlled, television-guided explosive drones. The specialized combatant craft-crewmen who manned these crews came from various services during the WWII. They would eventually evolve into today's Naval Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen (SWCC) and Special Boat Teams. Before we look at craft and operations by theater,

there are a few unique aspects of the OSS that need to be considered, including mission, manning, sections, branches, organizational flexibility, and documentation.

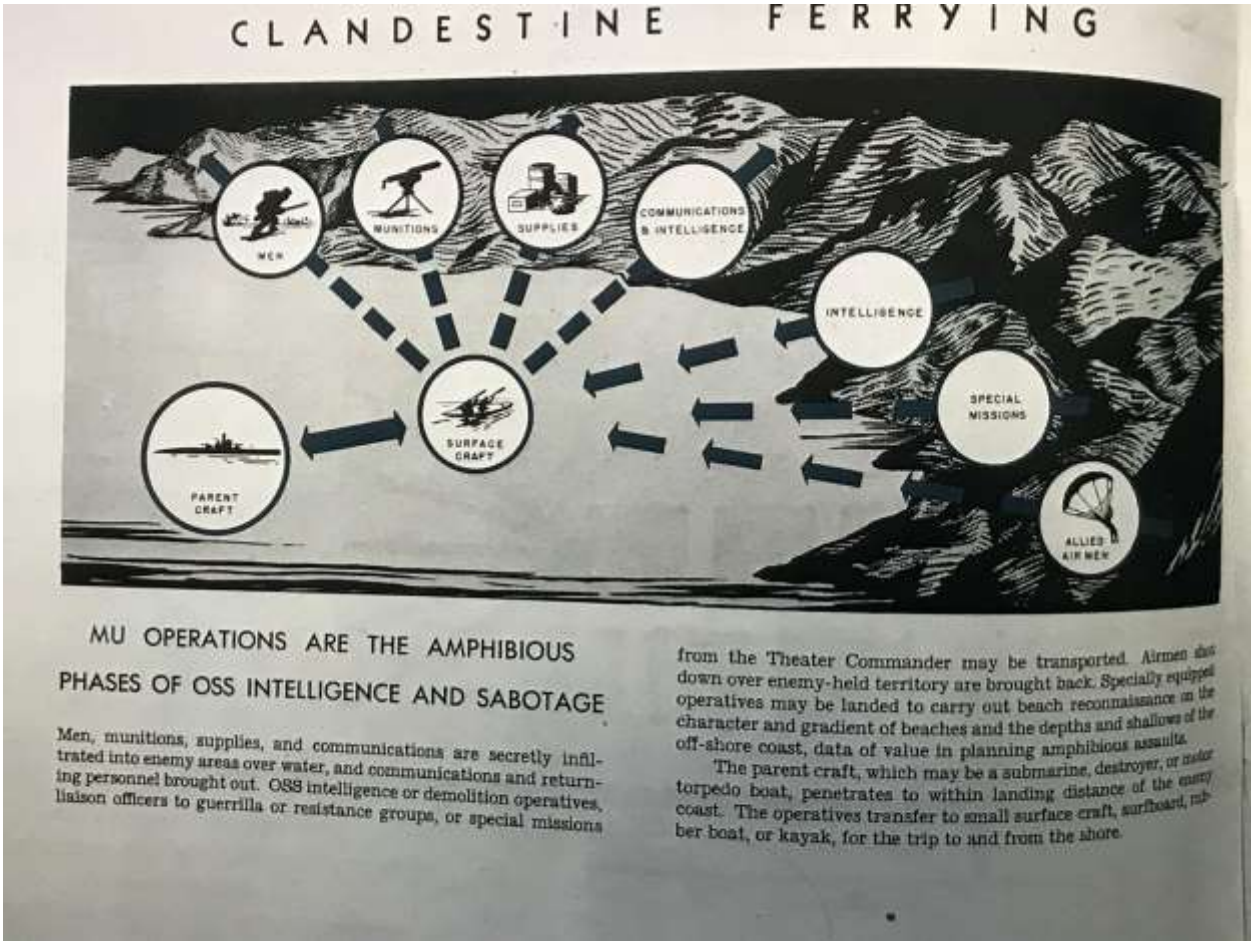


Figure 3. OSS "Secret" Maritime Unit Brochure Excerpt

The <u>PRIMARY</u> mission of the OSS Maritime Unit was clandestine infiltration, exfiltration and resupply from the water. The above diagram depicts a submarine, but OSS would use a wide variety of craft. Page from the OSS "Secret" Maritime Unit Brochure (NARA RG226, Entry 33, Box 16 Declassification Authority NND8877133).

Figure 4. Page from the OSS "Secret" Maritime Unit Brochure, depicting UDT "Frogmen" fixing charge to the target.

The OSS Maritime Unit's secondary mission was sabotage of the enemy's shipping, piers, locks, power plants, and hydrographic reconnaissance. The OSS combat swimmers from the Special Maritime Group would receive raiding and reconnaissance training from the Marine Raiders at Camp Pendleton. SMG men would eventually pass these capabilities to the Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT), transforming them from amphibious combat engineers into true UDTs. Thereby putting the "Frog" in Frogmen. Figure 3. is a page from the OSS "Secret" Maritime Unit Brochure (NARA RG226, Entry 33, Box 16 Declassification Authority NND8877133).

In the eloquent words of the late OSS Historian Brian Danis:

> "The Office of Strategic Services and its predecessor the Coordinator of Information (COI) was a civilian agency of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [*War Department*] that was chartered to obtain, check and analyze secret intelligence required for military operations and plans as well as execute programs of physical sabotage. This was all in support of theater commanders."

The COI and later OSS were an outgrowth of a pre-WWII relationship between President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) and his Columbia law school classmate, William Joseph "Wild Bill" Donovan. FDR asked Donovan to be his "Secret Legs" obtaining intelligence worldwide, while FDR focused domestically on recovering from the Great Depression. FDR, a former Secretary of the Navy, knew firsthand of the internecine rivalries and severe limitations of Naval Intelligence, Army Intelligence, the State Department, and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Donovan used his international law firm of Donovan, Leisure, Newton, and Levine without official cover to collect information worldwide for FDR. Donovan would recruit young men like Walter Mess for clandestine work. With hasty training from Treasury agents and FBI background checks, the latter began their wartime service well before WWII officially started. Once officially sanctioned by FDR, the COI and later OSS drew personnel from all US Military branches, foreign militaries, and civilians alike. Cleared and trained, they were used as an indispensable assets of the OSS. The real benefit became clear because they operated with minimal bureaucracy and greater flexibility than the conventional armed services or government agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It would not be uncommon for a man or woman to be transferred from an Operational Group (i.e., modern-day Green Berets) to Secret Intelligence (i.e., modern-day Central Intelligence Agency) the next day. There was no need to ask permission from their parent service personnel department.

Units would be composed of personnel from different services and branches from within those services. For example, The Maritime Unit (MU) in SEAC would be commanded by LCDR Derek Lee, Royal Navy; LT Walter Mess of the Army Quartermaster Corps would command the unit's Crash Boat Flotilla. The remaining officers and men of the entire unit would be composed of Navy, Coast Guard, Army, Marine, and civilian personnel. This compilation of talent is very much the prototype of present-day Special Operations Forces.

Furthermore, these MU men would support OG, SI, or MO (Morale or psychological warfare) missions and participate in the other branches of OSS missions as operatives. They were not merely water taxis behind the lines, just like today's Special Warfare Combat Crewmen (SWCC) and Sea Air Land (SEAL) Teams. Although assigned to larger traditional Armed Forces for deployments in wartime theaters, they were to be used for their specialized missions. The OSS MU would be part of the foundational model for both SWCC and SEALs in the early 1960s with the Naval Operational Support Groups, now known as Naval Special Warfare Command.

Figure 5. OSS Officers in SEAC/CBI at the First Camp Ritchie.

OSS Officers in SEAC/CBI at the First Camp Ritchie. Note the diverse make-up of an OSS unit in the field including: LCDR Lee a Royal Navy officer MU, Army Medical Officer Capt. Lambertesn MU, LT. Babb USN/MU, LT O'Jibway US Army/OG, Lt Booth USCG/MU. Photo from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the Arakan Report via Erick Simmel collection.

With the abrupt dissolution of the OSS at the end of WWII (1945-1946), the OSS functions and files would transfer to the War Department and the State Department before the formation of the CIA in 1947. Many of the files were classified "Top Secret" since high classification documents were mixed in with lower security classifications. The higher security classification always took precedence for the final classification. These Top-Secret documents would reside with the CIA for decades and would not become declassified until the late 1990s. The government implemented the added security technique of compartmentalizing OSS operations for added security. Meaning you also had to "need to know" to gain access, so there were not many personal memoirs published or released after the war. As stated before, some crash boats were assigned to the Maritime Unit and others only worked with them temporarily. Their records may or may not exist in the MU files; similarly, the other Armed Services' crash boats assigned to the OSS OG and SI branches did not always have their files listed in their respective parent Army Air Force, Coast Guard, and OSS files. Our research found a lot of contradictory material in the official documents. For example, the OSS Maritime Unit's London War Diary states: That the OSS PT Boats were drawn off from clandestine missions for convoy protection, as a result of the disastrous E-boat attack on allied shipping, at *Slapton Sands* (*Operation Tiger*) in April 1944. The OSS PT Boats did not resume work with the OSS until well after the D-Day Invasion, which would occur later in mid-June 1944. OSS combat reports, photographic evidence, veterans' recollections, and British publications contradict these findings with some of the following training and combat operations:

- OSS swimmer operative rehearsals and a mission to destroy U-Boat pens called off at the last minute.
- Successful clandestine landings behind the enemy lines in France before D-Day.
- Ferrying VIPs before, on and after D-Day.
- Filming D Day with John Ford's OSS Field Photographic Unit.
- Rescuing service members in the English Channel.
- Recovering the dead after the Normandy landings.

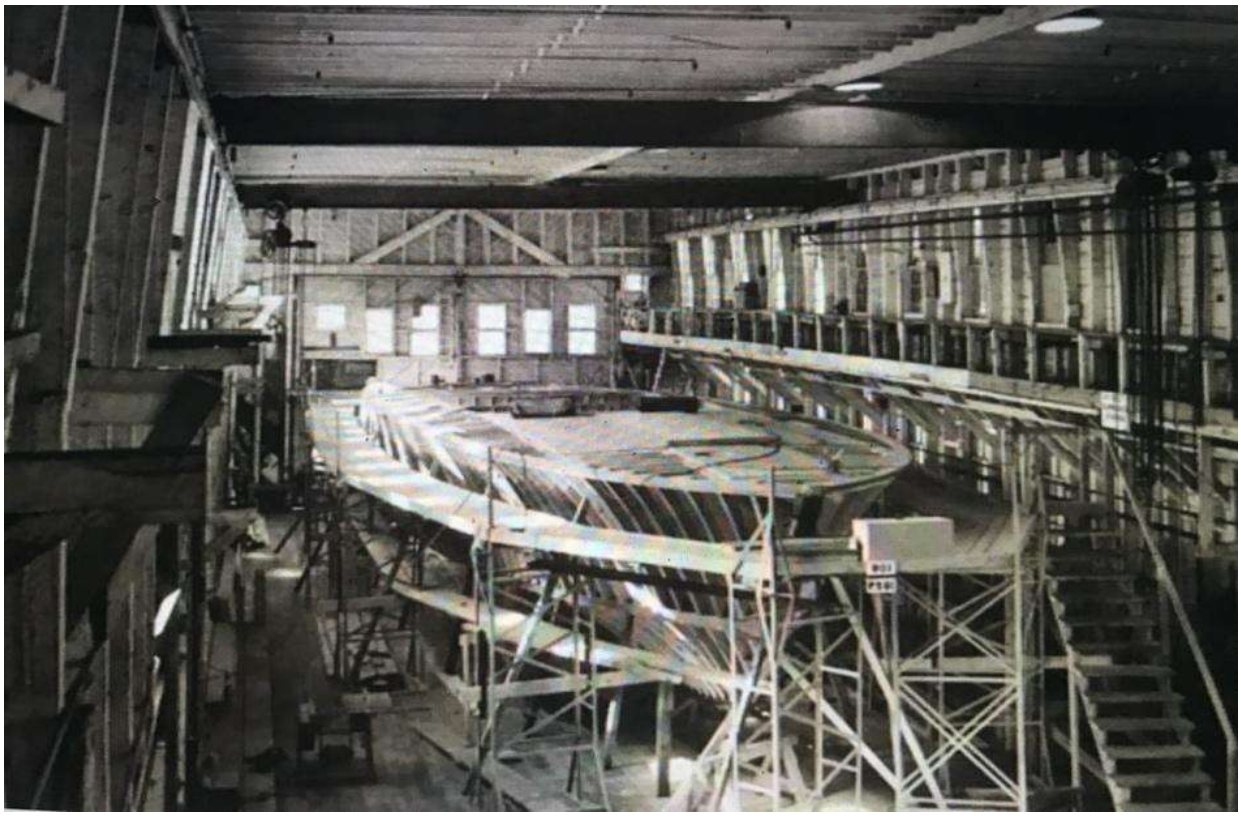


Figure 6. 85-Foot Crash Boat P-561 under construction at the Herreshoff Boat Yard, Rhode Island.

85-foot Crash Boat P-561 under construction at the Herreshoff Boat Yard, Rhode Island. Several of her sister boats would go on to serve with the OSS. Photo by Thomas P. Brightman from Herreshoff collection.

American Air-sea Rescue Boats or Crash Boats

During WWI, both the Allies and the Central Powers recognized the value of rescuing downed airmen from the sea. While aircraft were quite expensive, even then, the aircraft could easily be replaced. However, trained pilots were much harder to replace, requiring increased training times, resources, and human life. Rescue operations mainly in the English Channel, Southern North Sea, and the Adriatic Sea were quite active. They were usually carried out by smaller conventional naval assets (i.e., destroyers, minesweepers, motor torpedo boats, motor launches, armed trawlers, and drifters). The specialized

craft concept designed explicitly for air-sea rescue would be developed between the World Wars and accelerate rapidly as WWII approached. The idea was not only re-proven but critical during the Battle of Britain, where many British and allied airmen were saved from the English Channel by Royal Air force (RAF) rescue boats. These rescued pilots would be put right back into combat and contributing to Britain's defensive prowess.

Additionally, Axis airmen were also saved but would be sent to Prisoner of War camps. Typically, the crash boats would be sent out before a bomber or fighter mission in the waters under the aircrafts' pathway. They would patrol the routes and recover airmen whose planes experienced mechanical failures and ditch into the sea on the outbound leg. More commonly, they rescued those Airmen whose aircraft suffered extensive battle damage and were forced to ditch their planes. The rescue boats would also be adapted for special operations, such as agent landings, recovery, and re-supply missions. The British shared these hard-won lessons with their future allies, the United States.

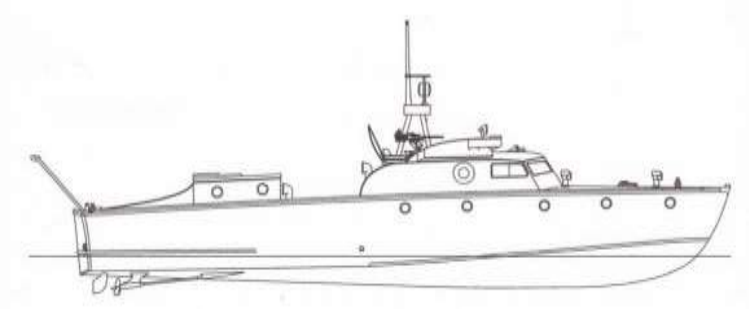


Figure 7. WWII US Air Sea Rescue/Crash Boat, 63-foot design by Dair Long.

Figure 8. A WWII US Air Sea Rescue/Crash Boat, 85-foot, a scaled-up version of the 63-footer above.

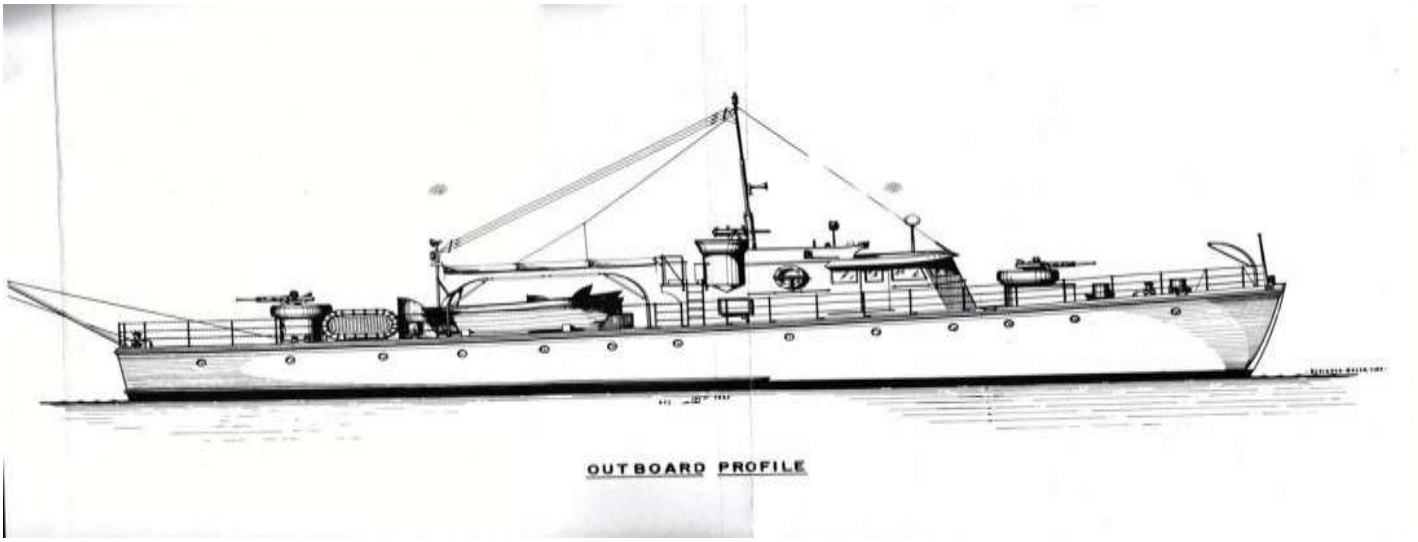


Figure 9. A WWII 104 foot US Air Sea Rescue/Crash Boat Variant that is more like a sub-chaser.

Though not precisely to scale, drawings of the three WWII US Air Sea Rescue/Crash Boat types. The top one of the 63- foot designs by Dair Long (courtesy of Al Ross). The middle drawing is of the 85-foot Crash Boat, a scaled-up version of the 63-foot craft, and then the larger variant boat of 104 feet is much more like a sub-chaser.

The Americans would develop three primary designs for their own ARB/Crash Boat Program and put them into large-scale production for themselves and their Allies. Naval architect Dair Long designed the 63-foot gasoline-powered class crash boat, which resembled a scaled-down PT boat with two twin .50 cal gun mounts in tubs and a scaled-up 85-foot design powered by two gasoline 1,250 hp Packard marine engines. Both the 63 foot and 85-foot crash boats looked similar to the US Navy PT boat. In fact, the 85-foot crash boats were converted to resemble 80-ft ELCO PT boats for the movie *PT-109.* The 63-foot Crash Boats were used in *McHale's Navy* on Universal Studios' back-lot lakes to simulate PT's at their island bases. A larger converted Vosper MTB was used on the ocean for sequences at sea to simulate 78-foot Higgins PT boats. The third class of ARB was 104-foot long and resembled a submarine chaser. However, the third-type ARB was not known to have been used by the OSS. From these standardized boat plans, American Boat yards from coast to coast produced 740 of the 63-foot craft, which would be known as "Miami's" by British and Americans. Different American Boat Yards built over 140 of the 85-foot boats, and 158 of the 104-foot boats were constructed at different American boat yards. By contrast, ELCO would manufacture 326 PT Boats. Higgins Industries would build 199 PT Boats. Huckins would make 18 PTs, and several other yards would produce 146 Vosper-type MTBs for foreign use. This was much less than the total number of 63-foot ARBs alone.

Note: for this article, the Boat Yard that built the craft and length will be listed in parenthesis after the number such as P-564 (Herreshoff 85) indicating an 85-foot boat built by the Herreshoff Boat Yard.

Stills from the Universal Studios back-lot lake, where the television show *McHale's Navy* was filmed in the 1960s.

Note: The small size of the 63-foot crash boats doubling for 78-foot Higgins PTs (15 feet of difference), particularly the scale of the forward .50 cal. HMG and gun tubs with only single .50 cal. HMGs and compare them with the 85-foot Crash Boats with twin .50 cal. HMGs throughout this article.

Figure 10. A still-shot from the Universal Studio back-lot Lake.

Figure 11. A photograph of a PT Crash Boat used on the Universal Studio back-lot Lake.

Figure 12. Pages from the OSS "Secret" Maritime Unit (NARA RG225, Entry 33, Box 16 Declassification Authority NND8877133).

Mediterranean Theater

The OSS would begin maritime operations in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, then called METO. There would be a mixing of craft - using local boats in the Aegean and Adriatic, and hitching rides with conventional naval forces (principally with Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 15 (RON-15) from North Africa into Italy. After the September 1943 Armistice, most Italians of the *Regia Marina* (Italian Navy) would fight with the Allies as co-belligerents. Others would remain with the Axis under the Fascist *RSI* government, thereby creating an interesting situation where both sides were using the same motor torpedo boats, the Italian MAS and MS classes. These two-classes of boats became the preferred type of clandestine naval craft along with local fishing-type boats for special operations. The OSS crash boats and crews would be detailed for operations in the Adriatic before being transferred to the Ligurian Sea, operating off the Italian and French Coasts.

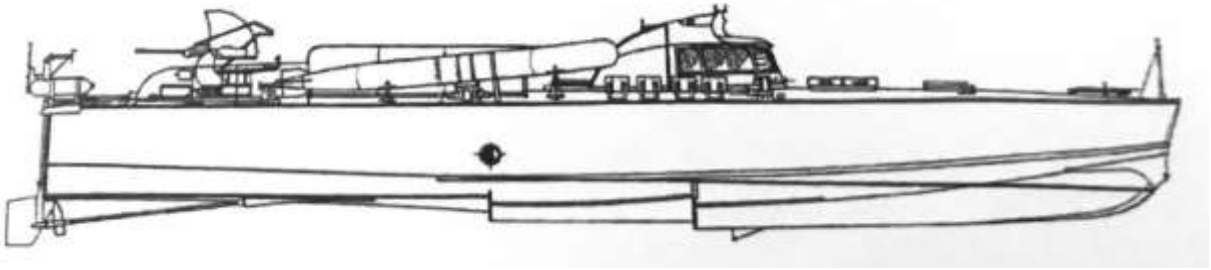


Figure 13. Drawing of Italian 60-foot MAS 500 Class Motor Torpedo Boat.

This was the most common type of Italian MTB and significantly evolved from their First World War designs armed with a 20mm cannon, two torpedoes and depth charges. After the September 1943 Armistice, a number of these craft and crews joined the Allies while the remainder soldiered on with the Fascist *RSI* forces and some were taken over by the Germans as S boats (What Allies called E-Boats). It was an ideal craft for clandestine operations, since both sides were using this type of craft (Drawing courtesy of Ermino Bagnasco via Stephano Bagnasco).

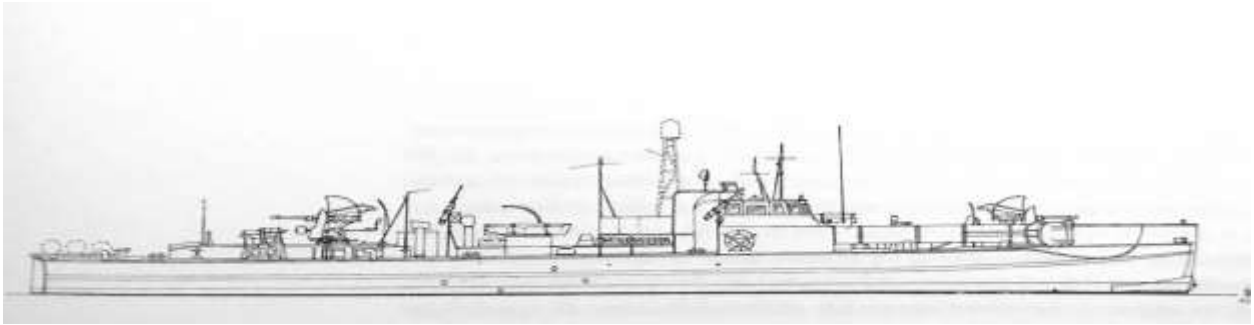


Figure 14. Drawing of the 60-ton C.R.D.A. MS class Motor Torpedo Boat.

This larger MS class MTB was developed from the longer rounded hulled Lurssen designed Yugoslavian MTBs. The Italians captured this type in 1941. Two would escape the Fascists to fight with the Allies. The Italians produced their improved version, the MS. The MS boats were armed with two torpedo tubes, two 20mm cannons, and additional machine guns. Two boats in the class were MS 74 and MS 75; they were modified to carry miniature submarines, explosive motorboats, or miniature MTSM torpedo boats in the stern and had a quad 20mm cannon mount. Like the MAS boats, both sides used these craft after the armistice, and a joint Italian and British Chariot (mini-sub) operation was launched from the MS 74. This operation sunk the Italian aircraft carrier *Aquila* which was then in Fascist hands. (Drawing courtesy of Ermino Bagnasco via Stephano Bagnasco).

Figure 15. A 60-ton MS Boat Operating out of Ancona, Italy with the OSS on the Adriatic.

A rare photo from the collection of Italian Naval Historian Ermino Bagnasco; A 60-ton MS Boat was operating out of Ancona, Italy, with the OSS on the Adriatic. Note: She was painted a dark gray for night operations. (Photo courtesy of Ermino Bagnasco via Stephano Bagnasco).

Figure 16. Caiques Supply Routes.

Large caiques (fishing type boats) would ferry supplies from Alexandria in Egypt to Cypress, then smaller caiques would resupply secret bases in "neutral" Turkey. From Turkey, the caiques boats would infiltrate and ex-filtrate men and supplies into occupied Greece. Page from the OSS "Secret" Maritime Unit Brochure (NARA RG226, E33, Box 16 Declassification Authority NND8877133).


Figure 16. A smaller single-masted caique.


Figure 17. A larger dual-masted caique.

Depicted above (Figure 16 and Figure 17): A smaller single-masted caique and a larger dual-masted caique. The OSS used both for infiltration and ex-filtration in Greece. The OSS would locally contract the caiques with local captains and crews. American OSS men (like Lt. Jack Taylor) supervised insertions, extractions, and re-supply operations in the Aegean Sea. Similar local craft would be used by Taylor, Hans Tofte, and John Hamilton (a.k.a. actor Sterling Hayden) in the Adriatic Sea. Interestingly, Taylor would reportedly use the LARU rebreather and fins during operations in the Aegean Sea. Almost every caique had a different make and type of engine. Eventually, a number would be re-fitted with standard British diesel tank engines, greatly simplifying supply and repair and improving reliability and speed. Though Lt. Taylor requested high-speed

boats and SMG swimmer operatives (frogmen), no American types (PTs or Crash Boats) were available, and the Aegean was secured before the SMG frogmen were dispatched into the theater. (Photos from NARA RG 226, Entry 144 Box 77).

Despite Lt. Jack Taylor's[1] multiple requests to get boats like the British were using in 1943[2], no American fast boats were supplied before combat operations ceased in the Aegean. Lt. John Hamilton USMC (a.k.a. Sterling Hayden) was also operating local fishing type boats with the Yugoslavian Partisans. Hamilton had made the same request while operating in the Adriatic Sea. He identified a number of captured Yugoslavian Lurssen designed gasoline powered MTBs. The Lurssen MTBs had been used by the Italians since 1941. These MTBs were docked in allied controlled Southern Italy, but their use was refused.

It was not until 1944, that two dedicated OSS crash boats and crews: P-568 (Petersen 85-foot) under the command of Lt. William H. Pendleton, and P-584 (Burger 85-foot) under the command of Lt. Ward Ellen, would be detailed to the Adriatic. The Italian MTBs and other local craft were the preferred platforms for clandestine work. Based out of Bari, Italy, they would conduct their clandestine missions behind enemy lines on the Dalmatian Coast, Albania, and up the East Coast of Italy. Later, in 1944, it was recognized that Adriatic operations were winding down. P-568 was the first OSS Crash Boat to be transferred into the Ligurian Sea. P-568 would be followed by P-584. Additionally, Lt. Richard Kelly and his OSS MU men, working with the Italian San Marco Group (sea commandos) were first temporarily transferred to SO, from the MU, which would become the SO Maritime Section, in Italy on the Adriatic Sea. This was how easily men and functions transferred within the OSS.

Notes:

1. **A Maritime Section founder, before Pearl Harbor and the first progenitor for the modern Sea Air Land (SEAL) Commandos.**
2. **The British were using Motor Torpedo Boats (MTBs) and Motor Launches (MLs) to supplement and/or supplant the locally contracted caiques for clandestine infiltration, exfiltration and resupply missions.**

Figure 18. Two 63-foot Crash Boats at Bastia, Corsica along with a Higgins PT Boat. Note the small cabins aft of the pilot house.

Meanwhile, on the West Coast of Italy, there was a large base in Bastia Corsica which included American RON-15 and the British 19th MGB Flotilla, as well as Cobelligerent Italian MAS boats. The American PTs and the British MGB/MTBs would conduct conventional MTB operations against the German and Italian shipping as well as supporting Beach Jumper operations for (Douglas Fairbanks' deception group, which used a number of crash boats, principally 63-foot Miami types for landing feints and other unconventional operations) and OSS and British Special Operation Executive (SOE) operatives and agents. The Army Air Force would send two American-type crash boats, P-402 and P-403, up to Bastia from Casablanca. P-402 was commanded by Lt. Moritz, while Lt. Pratt commanded P-403. The crews consisted of two engineers, two deckhands, a coxswain, and the captain.

Interestingly, P-403 had an unusual supernumerary, an orphaned North African boy of about 12 years old called "Pete." Pete was reported to be able to see and smell things on the water long before the crew could and acted as the boat's "radar." or early warning system. The British officers in charge of Bastia operations had some fun amongst themselves with the American's "special "radar," but Captain Slocum RN, the senior officer of the Allied Coastal Forces in Bastia, instructed the American's not to take their "special radar" on combat operations.

The British leadership was unsure how to employ the crash boats because, as at 28 knots, they were slower than the PTs, MGB's, and MAS boats and not as heavily armed. The engines were also not silenced. RON-15 took the Crash Boats and crews in hand. The Army boats and crews were berthed and cared for by the PT sailors and their Royal Navy counterparts. However, at last, one special mission did come up. The German's launched an amphibious raid on the island of Capraia. The OSS was eager to learn of the damage sustained and the current situation on the island. P-403, now commanded by

Lt. Flack, was ordered to take OSS Officer Peter Karlow to Capraia for a damage assessment. However, Karlow was temporarily called away, and OSS Lt. Scarignani was sent in his place. Later in the day, Karlow arrived at the docks in Bastia and insisted on being taken to Capraia immediately. Karlow was sent on MAS-546 and passed by P-403. The Italian MAS crew mistook it for a British Vosper MTB returning from the island. When MAS-546 arrived, she hit a mine, severely wounding many crew members and Karlow. P-402 was sent to assist. Much to the relief of the British, Italians, and Karlow, this was precisely the type of mission the Crash Boat crews was were trained to perform. They efficiently transferred the wounded aboard and returned to the base at Bastia for better medical attention.

After that, the British and OSS would find several uses for the American crash boats:

- March 10, 1944, P-402 landed stores on Gorgona Island in *Operation Big Game V*.
- March 15, 1944, P-403 landed stores for the OSS on Capria Island in *Operation Possum*.
- March 22, 1944, P-403 landed stores on Gorgona in *Operation Big Game VI*.
- March 26, 1944, P-403 landed stores on Gorgona Island in *Operation Big Game VII*.
- March 27, 1944, P-403 recovered three escapees from Elba in *Operation Possum.*
- March 28, 1944, P-403, MGB-657, and MGB-653 brought back dead and wounded from an enemy raid on Gorgona, during *Operation Big Game VIII*.
- March 31, 1944, P-403 exchanged personnel and completed *Operation Big Game IX*.
- April 9, 1944, P-403 removed personnel in *Operation Big Game X* on Gorgona, with Italian MAS-543.
- April 12, 1944, P-403 removed personnel from Capraia in *Operation Possum.*
- May 28, 1944, P-403 exchanged personnel on Gogona Island in *Operation Seneca V*.

P-403 would have many more successful runs, landing stores and exchanging personnel for the OSS:

- May 28, 1944, Capria, *Operation Omaha III*.
- June 3, 1944, Capria, *Operation Omaha IV*.
- June 10, 1944, Capria, *Operation Omaha V*.
- June 10, 1944, Gorgona, *Operation Seneca VI*.
- June 16, 1944, During *Operation Locust*, P-403 and US PT-218 (from RON-15) would land four personnel and dingy men near Spezia. However, they were attacked by an enemy convoy and forced to retreat. Personnel successfully recovered on June 23, 1944.
- June 17, 1944, P-403 would attempt to rescue POWs near Bonassola during *Operation Scram I* for A-Force (a MI-9, POW escape network) but were turned back by heavy weather.
- June 19, 1944, P-403 would be successful rescuing POWs in *Operation Ferret*, recovering the men. However, due to a compromise at the rendezvous with an enemy convoy, two dingy men had to row over 90-miles through enemy waters back to Capria.
- June 23, 1944, the crash boat would recover the OSS Locust party and dingy men.
- June 24, 1944, successfully landed stores on Capria in Operation *Omaha VI* as well as landing stores and personnel on Gorgona *Operation Seneca VII.*
- July 17, 1944 evacuated OSS personnel on Capria *Operation Omaha VII*.
- July 21, 1944, exchanged OSS personnel from Gorgonia in Operation *Seneca VIII*.
- July 30, 1944, P-403 s last mission for the OSS would be during *Operation Seneca IX*, where she would evacuate a malaria patient from Gorgona and land relief.

P-402 would be sent to the Adriatic and complete several missions for the OSS, MI-9, MI-6[3], Popski's Private Army[4]. P-402s first mission would be *Operation Hull,* an MI-9 POW recovery mission of twenty-two POWs on May 22, 1944. This would be followed by:

- June 12, 1944, P-402 would land PPA men on the River Tenna in *Operation Astrolabe I*.
- September 22, 1944, P-402 would land three agents for MI-6 (SIS) in Istria[5] (now Modern-day Croatia) in *Operation Strange*.
- November 24, 1944, P-402 would land four men and stores for the OSS near Ravenna in *Operation Bond VI* 5.
- December 16, 1944, P-402 and British MGB-180 would land three agents for the OSS in the Ravenna area in *Operation Bee*.
- March 11, 1945, P-402 would land stores in the Po River area for the OSS in *Operation Bee II*.
- April 8, 1945, P-402 and British MGB-191 would land stores for the OSS and evacuate 12 POWs and land an IS-9 reconnaissance party near the Chioggia area while evading an enemy convoy in *Operation Hornet IV*.

- April 13, 1945, P-402 and MGB- 191 would embark POWs in the Venice area in *Operation Hornet V*, and land four IS- 9 in the northern Gulf of Venice on in *Operation John IV*, though the dinghy's crew failed to return. [6]

Notes:

3. **MI-6 is Great Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS).**
4. **A British Special Forces group led by Belgian Major Vladimir Peniakoff a.k.a. "Popski."**
5. **Now modern-day Croatia.**
6. **Adapted from Brooks Richard's tables.**

The P-568, under the command of Lt. Pendleton, was the first dedicated OSS crash boat to arrive on the East Coast of Italy and was followed by the P-584 under the command of Lt. Ellen. Both crash boats were operating out of Bari, Italy. These boats were used on missions in the Adriatic, including operations to Albania with OSS and SOE. However, the main problem they faced was that neither boat had radar, and no radar sets could be procured locally; this equipment was critical in the mine and E-boat infested waters where they would be operating. Concurrently, there was much discussion in official reports and message traffic about transferring both boats and crews to SEAC and closing down the Maritime Unit in Italy by March 1945.

On January 13, 1945, there was an explosion onboard the P-584. It was believed to have been caused by a heater in the captain's cabin. Lt Ward Ellen and Chief Melvin Hollis were both burned severely, and Cook, Horace C, Morris, suffered broken ribs. P-584 was afloat but out of commission. The crew of P-584 was held for an inquiry on accident but later released.

The OSS crash boat P-568 began conducting supply runs to Niece, France, for the OSS, which was then in Allied hands in February 1945, and then shuttling VIPs to the island of Capri in March, which had become a rest camp.

There was still a lot of message traffic about the crash boats and crews going to SEAC. Initially, P-584 was to be turned back to the Army for repairs, while P-568 was to be loaded as deck cargo on a merchant ship destined for SEAC. It was decided to turn both crash boats back over to the Army, while the crews were sent to SEAC. This ended OSS-operated Crash Boat activity in the Mediterranean. However, as Capri's Island was a VIP base, OSS personnel most likely utilized Crash Boats on administrative duties and leave. The OSS and military forces in Europe were quickly gearing up for action against the Japanese.

Figure 19. Though a Special Operations PBY Flying Boat Operation Map, it depicts the South East Asia Command Theater where OSS Maritime Unit men would operate. OSS Training Bases would be on the Island of Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka). Operations would range from India (including parts of modern Bangladesh) and Burma (now Myanmar) down to Sumatra (now part of Indonesia). Map is from NARA Record Group 226, Entry 99, Box 62 Declassification Authority NND843009.

SEAC

The OSS objective in SEAC or the Burma/India Theater of the CBI was to support the Allies defense of India and Burma's upon the United States entry into the war. The OSS would later support the Allied offensive in Burma, Thailand, Malaya, and the most western part of the Dutch East Indies (principally Sumatra). They would eject the Japanese from Burma and conduct intelligence collection, psychological operations (morale/propaganda), reconnaissance, and sabotage in the theater. OSS crash boats first appeared in late 1943. Our research suggests that there may also have been standard Army Air Force or Navy craft and crews assisting with OSS operations in this theater, as in the METO.

The first dedicated OSS Crash Boat Flotilla arrived in late 1944 and were soon in action alongside their British counterparts. The British used both Fairmile system motor launches (ML), harbor defense motor launches (HDML), MGB/MTBs, and Vosper MTB types. These were very similar to the types of small combatants encountered in the Mediterranean.

Before the war, Fairmile Marine developed a system of plans and construction for the Royal Navy and adapted for small boat building yards across the empire capable of producing MLs, HDMLs, RAF Crash Boats, and MTB/MGBs. These combatant crafts would be crewed by Commonwealth sailors from across the empire and serviced by depot ships and shore bases, just like the American PT boats.
Additionally, like their American counterparts, some Commonwealth boats would participate in occasional special operations missions. A select few would be detailed as dedicated units, devoted exclusively to conducting special operations.

With their repair ship *HMS Barracuda* and depot ship *HMS Kedah*, the British would provide significant support for the OSS crash boats in this theater. The OSS men and boats participated in various covert operations across the Bay of Bengal and down Burma's Arakan coast. Sailing into rivers, creeks, marshes, and swamps called *chaungs* ranging from hydrographic reconnaissance, agent insertion/extraction, resupply, direct action (raids) and recovery of downed airmen with OSS OG and MU men. This included the first American limpeteer attacks against Japanese shipping. These types of covert attacks are best described as combat swimmers using limpet mines, LARU scuba, masks and swim fins to sink ships. The combat swimmers would covertly place these mines or explosive charges against a hull of the ship, beneath the waterline. Sometimes they required the coordination support of flying boats and waterborne bases to execute the movements and accomplish these hazardous missions in enemy controlled waters. They would sometimes work with their British counterparts, other times they would operate independently.

Similarly, it would be very much like what US Navy Mobile Support Teams would be doing with SEALs and other Special Forces units off the coast of North Vietnam and in the Mekong Delta's waterways less than twenty years later.

As with operations in the ETO, Lt John Babb's *Maritime Unit History of the Arakan* is incomplete; MU operations continued well after the "formal" disbandment of OSS MU Operations in SEAC (June of 1945). SEAC MU personnel were conducting a wide variety of operations in June, July, and August 1945.

Likewise, while junior MU officer Lt. Babb reported, "The Crash Boats did not have the best engines and were not silenced." Walter Mess, who was the Commanding Officer of the OSS Flotilla, said, "The engines were not only souped-up, but he clocked his P-564 (Herreshoff 85) at 52-53 knots." He also had silenced them with eight inches of insulation in the engine room and had the exhaust vents ducted underwater. P-564's deck log also confirms replacements of the silencers during maintenance in Ceylon in 1945.

Mess stated that Crash Boat engines could not be heard from ten feet away at low speed. A trait that would be consistent with Vietnam-era purpose-built Special Warfare craft: such as the Light SEAL Support Craft Mk-I, Mk2- (Strike Assault Boat), and Medium SEAL Support Craft, which ran high-performance Ford and Chevrolet gasoline engines but were very quiet at low operational speeds due to insulation and ducting exhausts underwater. Though all would agree, a boat with silenced (significantly muffled) diesel engines would have been superior to the gas-guzzling, high octane, maintenance-intensive Packard marine engines or later Fords or Chevys. The P-564's logbook disclosed a fuel consumption of six gallons per mile at 1,400 RPM, which gave an approximate speed of 12-14 knots depending on sea conditions. Higher speeds would have consumed much more gas.

Typically, as OSS operations in one theater or area closed, personnel would be sent on to the next theater or transfer to a new assignment.

Note in Figure 20 Gene Ward is using a British BREN light machinegun. Photo courtesy of Erick Simmel Collection.

The second photo (below) is a view of the Burma Yenangyaung Oil Refinery being taken out by MOST SECRET joint British/US operations in 1945, led by SOE Force 136, & conducted with elements of British SRU Swimmers, RM 285 & OSS MU trained underwater Swimmers in a sub-surface to land, infilled/exfil roles another operation, not in LT Babb's report. Image originally via Robert Butt and David Abrutat. Caption and Image courtesy and (c) Erick Simmel Archives all rights reserved www.maritime.org

Figure 20. OSS MU men conducting combat operations in Sumatra in August 1945, two months after procedures "ceased," according to Maritime Unit History of the Arakan.

Figure 21. A view of the Burma Yenangyaung Oil Refinery being taken out by MOST SECRET joint British/US operations in 1945.

One of the first dedicated OSS crash boats to arrive in SEAC was a 63-foot Miami captained by Ensign William B. Sheppard, USNR. Along with Chief Geter K. Hornsby USN [7], MM2 Aaron Chayes USNR, MM2 Richard Fitzsimons USNR, RM2 Wellman Page USNR, and S2 Edward Osowiski USNR, completing the crew. The crash boat was transported onboard the *Cape St Elias* as deck cargo on November 22, 1943.

Notes:

7. ***This is a rare example of a regular Navy Man in OSS service; the vast majority were reservists.***

Colonel Carl Eifler, commanding officer of OSS Detachment 101, learned of a downed B-24 off the Burma coast, just as the crew had unloaded the crash boat in Calcutta and removed its shipping cradle, on November 26, 1943 Colonel Eifler hastily organized a rescue party.

Ensign Sheppard and his crew had never worked together nor sailed the crash boat, which had not yet been outfitted with radios or armament. Eifler gathered top-rated men, including experienced Army Air Force and Naval navigators, a LCDR doctor, and a civilian who built and operated a handmade radio transmitter/receiver. They loaded the crash boat with thousands of gallons of 100 octane gasoline and armed her with a half dozen Thompson submachine guns, more for morale than real firepower. On November 28, they set off and used the first leg of the trip down the *Hoogli* River to calibrate their speed based on engine RPMs versus time and distance, then raced off across the Bay of Bengal.

Colonel Eifler, Major Fergusson, and LCDR Wilson all took their turns at the helm, relieving Ensign Sheppard. At 0740 the next day, they sighted the bomber's crew and recovered them suffering from wounds and exposure. They used the Thompsons to sink the rafts. The crash boat crew adjusted their speed to pass the large Japanese garrison and aerodrome

at Akyab during the night. Then they returned across the Bay of Bengal, where the wounded and supernumeraries were airlifted out by Catalina flying boat. The total round trip was 910 miles, of which 250 were in enemy-held waters. Despite being one of the most detailed OSS operational reports encountered by the authors, Ensign Sheppard never mentioned the boat's number and referred to her as a "ship" throughout, but so would other Army OSS men in their deck logs later in the war. As of the Winter of 2021, the authors have not seen another mention of Ensign Sheppard and his crew in OSS Maritime files.

Figure 22. A local craft being contacted by OSS men on a British Submarine.

In some cases, it should be noted that this was part of the mission to obtain local craft for OSS men and interrogate local fishermen about Japanese troops and shipping. However, as LCDR Lee explains below, it was also routine for submarines to be pulled away from special operations commitments to chase Japanese warships, merchantmen, and even German U-boats, by higher command. Or sometimes submarine skippers would abandon their special operation commitments to pursue "high value" shipping targets like praus, junks, and sampans; most larger Japanese merchantmen having been sunk by submarines and aircraft by this stage of the war. (Photos from NARA Record Group 226 Entry 99, Box 62 Declassification Authority NND843099).

Figure 23. Another local craft being contacted by OSS men aboard a British Submarine.

The OSS used conventional British fleet submarines for some covert missions in the interim, particularly on very long-range operations in SEAC. The British utilized this capability in many multiple theaters: NATO, METO, SEAC, and the Pacific. However, LCDR Derek Lee RNVR, head of the MU in SEAC, wrote scathing a conclusion at the end of his report on *Operation Durian* (that he participated in), dated August 30, 1944. It sums up the issues with submarine operations:

> **CONCLUSIONS:** 1. Captain, Officers and crew of *HMS Severn* showed us every courtesy consideration and hospitality. No way responsible for failure. 2. Many times vented my belief the use of subs in our work except where need is essential is far from satisfactory. I am a long way from retracting this belief. Have observed control of home base diverting subs. Their time becoming short and becoming shorter in comparison to patrolling. If not suitable to do the job time is wasted. Even if accomplished the ferry party remains idle for long periods. 3. If nothing else I have had opportunity of seeing coast on which many operations can be affected. At present time, activity on coast seems to have been completely suspended except for occasional fishing vessels and sampans in the area of the Malacca Straits. Apart from these and few aircraft in the area, though possibility in transit and not on A/S patrol we saw nothing else. We noted many apparently deserted islands, and the weather would be considered more moderate throughout. In my opinion surface craft can and should be put into operation on this coast if we are to obtain a continual flow of intelligence. {*Signed*} Derek Lee LCDR RNVR.

Note: *Operation Durian was to be an insertion of native agents; however, the conducting submarine was drawn off the mission by the command in Ceylon to hunt for a U-Boat destined for Penang (Malaya). The HMS Severn never contacted the U-boat, and consequently, the agent landing was not completed. This was all too common during Special Operations Missions, where headquarters called off the dedicated submarine to hunt for other targets [sometimes the results of Ultra (German) or Magic (Japanese)intercepts] or the submarine's commanding officer decided to go hunting regardless of the consequences for the agents or operators. One of the biggest disasters in this regard was during Operation Rimau, where*

the commander of HMS Tantalus, LCDR Hugh Mackenzie, decided to go off on a wild goose chase hunting Japanese shipping and did not keep the rendezvous (November 7, 1944), showing up two weeks late (November 21, 1944). All of the 24 operators were killed either in the field or executed by the Japanese. Though Allied submarines would conduct many successful and sometimes harrowing special operations; special operations were never a priority for ***any*** *Navy, and many times the submarines were deemed "too valuable" to risk on a particular operation or were frankly unsuited for shallow water operations, where fast high-speed or native craft were.*

In late 1944, an OSS Maritime Unit including a headquarters element, a swimmer group (Special Maritime Group (SMG) II and later SMG III, crash boat flotilla, and Major Peddicord's OG group cosnsisting of an additional eight officers and 30 enlisted men, formed up under the command of LCDR Derek Lee RN in Ceylon. Actual preparations for boat support began much earlier, thousands of miles away. The dedicated OSS crews of P-563 and P-564 took these Herreshoff 85-foot crash boats from the yard to be modified at unknown locations as the OSS RON-2(2) boats were modified at Fyfe's in New York. They were sent to New Jersey in September 1944, where their cradles were built before they were loaded as deck cargo (in October) destined for Colombo, on the island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

P-564 was under the command of 1st Lt. Walter Mess, Quarter Master Corps, and nicknamed "Jeanie" after Mess's wife. The rest of her crew was: 2nd Lt. John A. Swayze, WOJG James H. Flynn, M/Sgt. Earl L. Williams, S/Sgt. Lester H. Linville, T/Sgt. Harry F. Johnson, T/Sgt. Louis K. Woodland, Sgt. Willard R. Floyd, Sgt. Benjamin W. Brunaugh, T/5 Joseph E. Viola, Cpl. Joseph P. Jones, and Cpl. Robert L. Philpott. Arriving in early December, the boats and crews began working up and exercising at Trincomalee and China Bay.

Figure24. P-564 "Jeanie" Captained by Lt. Walter Mess, Army Quarter Master Corps; note this was primarily an Army crew.

Lt. Walter Mess was one of those prewar Donovan men spying for President Roosevelt. He had many hair-raising adventures in Europe, Africa, and Asia before becoming the Flotilla commander in SEAC. Photo from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of *Maritime Unit Arakan War Dairy* via Erick Simmel collection.

Meanwhile, on December 8, 1944, the first OSS MU men began to set up an advance base at Teknaaf on the Arakan coast in what is now Bangladesh. This base would be named Camp Ritchie, in honor of Captain Dolan Ritchie, an OG man killed in a training accident in Ceylon. More of the unit arrived shortly afterward and procured 50,000 gallons of 100 octane gasoline and 12,000 gallons of three types of lubricating oil for crash boat operations. The first OSS Crash Boat, P-563, was expected on December 16, 1944, but it had an accident and returned to Calcutta for repairs. P-564 would also have an accident on December 25, 1944,

bending a propeller. It was later repaired by the British at an RAF workshop. This kept her out of action until the following month, when she returned from Calcutta for repairs.

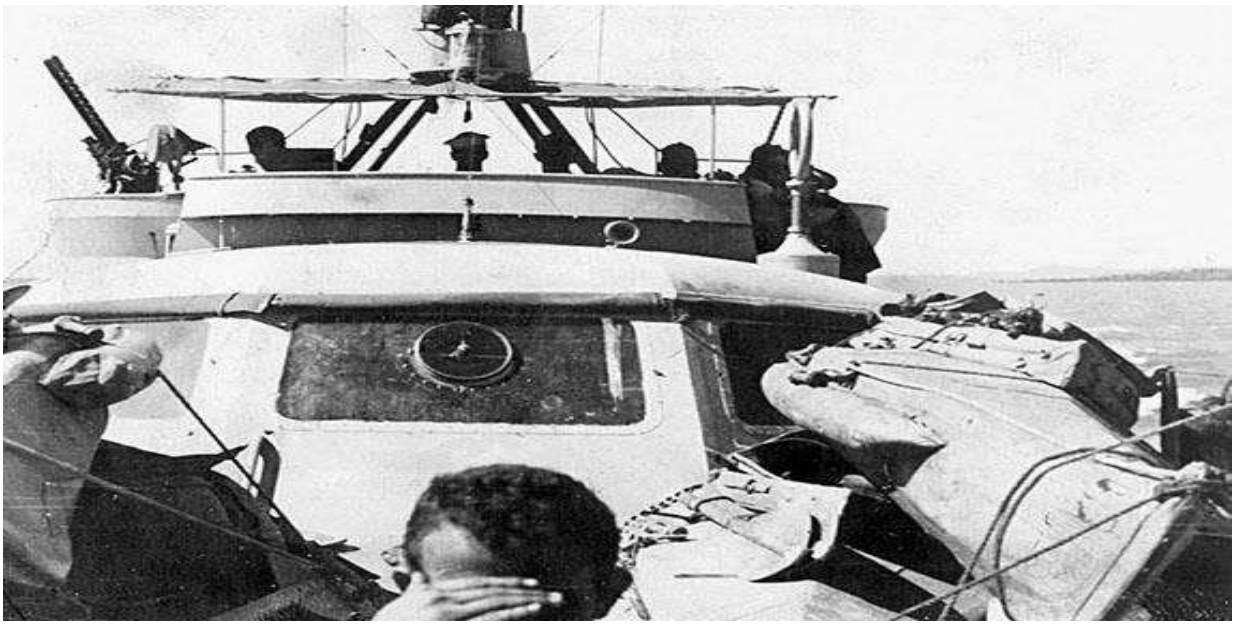


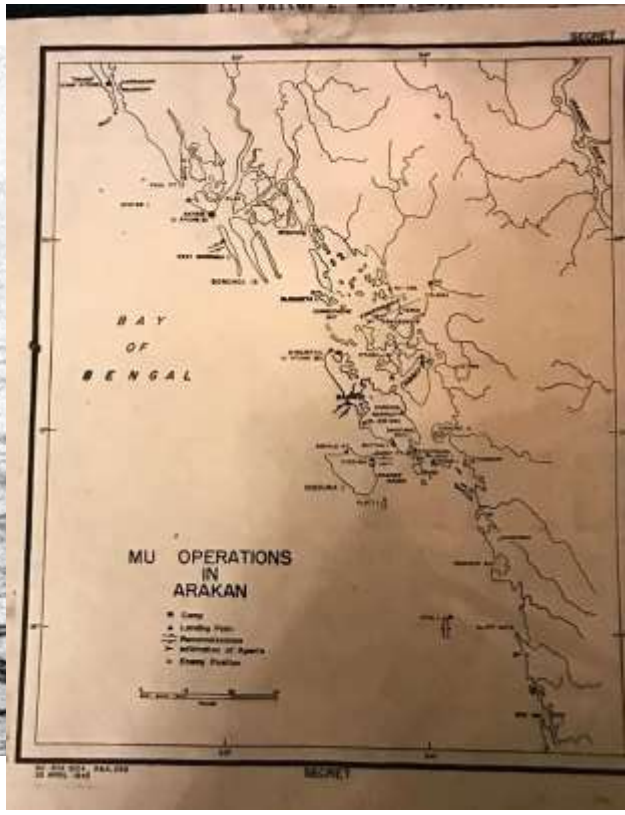
Figure 25. P-564 an 85-foot boat during Operation South Dakota.

Note the kayaks tied down on the front deck. OSS men used kayaks and inflatable rafts (LCRs) during WWII. Photo from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the *Maritime Unit Arakan War Dairy* via Erick Simmel collection.

In the interim, the SEAC Maritime Unit flying boats on clandestine missions, going deep into enemy territory by clearing landing areas of local craft, setting up buoys for landings, and refueling the flying boats. Luckily, both planes and boats used 100 octane aviation gasoline.

One unusual technique used for refueling both the crash boats and PBYs was to load fuel drums into DUKWs, amphibious two and ½ a half-ton trucks, on land, then have the DUKWs motor out to the aircraft or boat and hand-pump/transfer the gasoline into the plane or boat. There was absolutely no smoking during these dangerous operations! The crash boats would take on the extra fuel to increase their range often packing the decks with additional 55-gallon fuel drums as deck cargo. Once the fuel had been transferred into the boat's tanks (typically underway). The drums were then thrown over the side and sunk by gunfire.

Also, by order of the Flotilla Commander, Lt. Walter Mess, the crash boats would retain their Army numbers and recognition markings - white stripes and star and bar insignia, externally appearing to be merely Army Air Force rescue boats on routine search and rescue missions as part of their cover.



On December 29, 1944, the MU with its OG cadre packed up with the British and moved to Akyab, now in Allied hands. All the men turned too, and established Camp Ritchie II. The MU and OG continued clandestine operations with British MLs. The OSS men were conducting a lot of hydrographic and nearshore reconnaissance using kayaks, rubber rafts (LCRs= landing craft rubber), swimmers along the enemy coast, and into the mosquito and crocodile-infested chaungs (swampy rivers, canals and streams).

In mid-January 1945, Mess and the P-564 left Ceylon for Akyab. However, by that time, the MU Unit advanced with British Forces again to Kyaukpyu, Burma (now Myanmar) on January 21, 1944, and established Camp Ritchie III.

After shuttling personnel from Akyab, Lt. Walter Mess and crew arrived on January 23, 1945, with the P-564 and began operations with British MLs, HDMLs, and MTBs. P-564's first mission was *Operation Cleveland* on January 25/26, 1945, followed by *Operation Target* on February 1/2, 1945. P-564, in company with ML-441, transported two kayaks, three LCRs, and 23 men: landing them three miles from the beach near Chaduba Creek. There was an accidental discharge of a .30 Caliber machine gun by OG man Sgt. Perkins during the operation, which otherwise went smoothly.

Figure 26. Refueling froma DUKW amphibious 6x6 truck.

A very dangerous operation with high octane aviation gas.

Figure 27. MU Operations Map in Arakan.

Figure 28. An OSS Boat works in the Chaungs. Note the white stripe on the bow of the Crash Boat. Mess wanted them to appear as regular crash boats on routine air-sea rescue duties to mask their clandestine duties.

On February 2, 1945, P-565 [Herreshoff 85 foot] under Lt. Anderton and WO Crutchfield arrived in Columbo as deck cargo. P-565 would spend her entire career in Ceylon, as a training boat for the OSS. Ceylon had a number of OSS and British special operations training and administrative bases. She would also have an autopilot installed later in the year and finally be decommissioned on July 1, 1945.

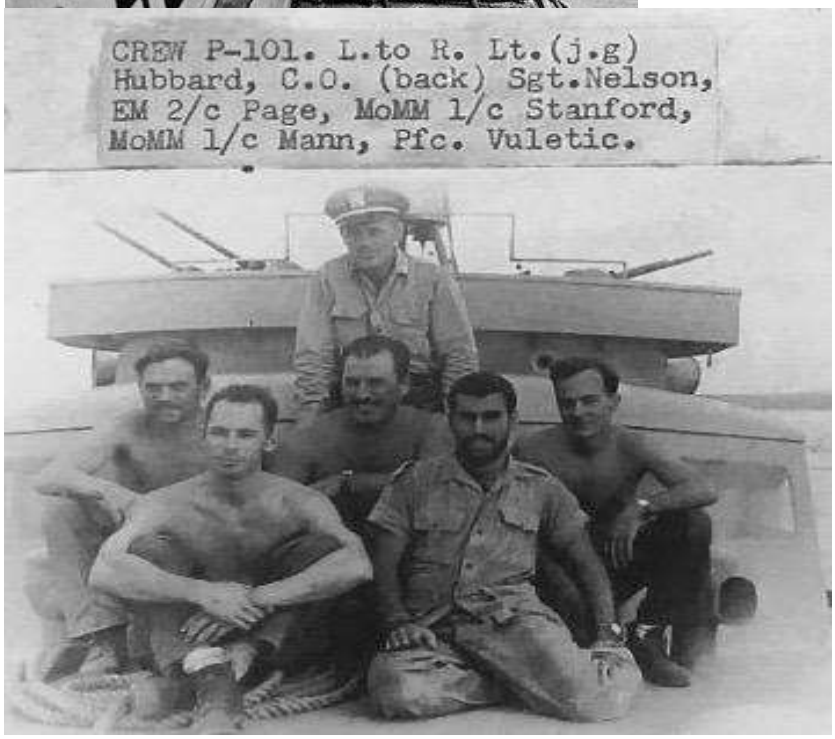
Note the white recognition stripe on the hull can be seen in the first photo on the left. These areas were very tidal convoluted, crocodile and mosquito infested, swarming with Japanese. This was like a mix of MST-1 coastal operations and MST-2 riverine operations during the Vietnam War. Photo from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the *Maritime Unit Arakan War Dairy* via Erick Simmel collection.

Figure 29. An entrance into the Chaungs.

Lt John Booth left and Chief Jim Eubank (below), both USCG/OSS men with swimming gear on the deck of Mess' P-564 and XO John Booth with hat and sunglasses [Erick Simmel Collection]. Bottom Left: Japanese merchantman sunk by OSS limpeteer attack. Bottom Right: A motorized submersible canoe (MSC or "Sleeping Beauty") on a training mission in SEAC. Very similar to current NSW operations with combat swimmers and SDVs, but a lot less gear. (Photos from NARA file FPK 226).

On February 6, 1945, Mess' P-564 was on *Operation Snatch*. At 1830 hrs., Mess and P-564 would take Lt. Babb, the Operations Officer, twenty officers, and enlisted men to Madi Gandi, accomplishing the drop at 2030 hrs. then anchoring at 2135 hrs. and setting the watch. At 0200hrs. the next morning, the shore party would be recovered, and they would all return to base later that day. On February 11, 1945, P-564 would pick up MU equipment, Lt. Babb, two additional officers, and four ratings and conduct *Operation North Carolina,* an eight-swimmer insertion utilizing four kayaks at 2015 hrs. in a bay at 19 degrees-40' North and 93 degrees-45'East. The crash boat anchored out then and set the watch. The next day she recovered the party, laid up until dark, and inserted them near Tulla Sallaman Island at 2000 hrs. There they experienced a 4-5 knot current, however the anchor would not set while they waited for the shore party. They recovered the swimmers early in the morning before returning to base. After their return, they immediately took LCDR Lee and a group of nine to Akyab on an administrative run. This was a much higher tempo mix of combat and organizational missions, particularly for a so-called "backwater" campaign.

Photo left of the P-101 crew from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the *Maritime Unit Arakan War Dairy* via Erick Simmel collection.



Below two other views of P-101. Note her unusual turrets, which are much taller than normal, as well as the scaffolding abaft of the bridge. Also, see the rubber rafts and a native craft on her stern like Special Operations operators to this day. Lastly, she is quite a mystery boat - the P-101 number was assigned to a 104-foot Crash Boat, yet she is clearly a little 63- footer, most likely the result of a trade between the Army and Navy. Again, Flotilla leader Walter Mess wanted all of his boats to appear as regular air-sea rescue craft and not draw attention to what they were really doing.


P-101 returning from operations.

On February 12, 1945, Ltjg. Ralph N. Hubbard Hubbard's P-101 with her crew: Sgt. Ingolv Nelson, EM 2/c Wellman Page, MoMM 1/c Clarence H. Stanford, MoMM 1/c James P. Mann, and Pfc George Vuletic arrived. The OSS MU detachment was now ready to conduct all OSS operations. British forces were still crucial to maintenance and support. P-564 would be involved with the operation *South Dakota* on February 16, 1945. They picked up LCDR Lee, Lt. Babb, Lt. Booth, Lt. McDivitt, and seven ratings. They departed at 1300 hrs. and reached their rendezvous point, but there was no LCA? However, Sgt. Woodland had an

accidental discharge of his .45 and nearly hit Lt. Babb. Lt. Mess would take two stripes from Sgt. Woodland and confine him for 28 days after their return. The P-564 would repeat the operation the following night, successfully rendezvous with the LCA. The shore party would conduct a reconnaissance of *Ramree* Island. The Crash Boat rendezvoused with the LCA at 0645 hrs. It ran aground in soft mud. Fortunately, no significant damage occurred. However, PFC Joseph Viole was brought up on a charge of falling asleep on watch, and received seven days restriction, from Lt. Mess.

Figure 36. P-721 and crew. This crew was more uniformly Army Airforce.

Photo from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the *Maritime Unit Arakan War Dairy* via Erick Simmel collection.

The P-101 was followed by P-721 (a Miami 63- Footer). She was commanded by Warrant Officer Junior Grade (WOJG) Alfred O. Nemi Army Air Force and his Army crew, which had been assigned to the OSS by Eastern Air Command. The OSS flotilla was very busy. Typically, two boats would go out on a mission for mutual support in case of a firefight or a breakdown. The crash boats would patrol to the objectives, called *"pinpoints."* The operatives would proceed to shore in their kayaks and LCRs conduct their missions: hydrographic reconnaissance, body snatch, meet with agents, and return to the crash boats. They would return the way they came in via kayak or LCR. This was very similar to what the Navy SEALs would be doing in Vietnam a little over 20 years later, supported by the predecessors of SWCCs, the men of Mobile Support Teams 1, 2, and 3. On a few occasions, the Crash Boats were engaged by Japanese shore batteries, though mostly the missions were entirely covert. However, on one particular mission behind enemy lines they came under Japanese shore fire. The unit's doctor and SCUBA instructor, Army Medical Corps Captain, Christian Lambertsen[7], was onboard in the thick of the action.

Note:

8. **Captain Lambersten was the inventor of the Lambertsen Amphibious Respiratory Unit (LARU), and who coined the term *"SCUBA"* (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus).**

Figure 37. A photo of Foul Island from Operation Boston.

MU sailors on P-564 pioneered a technique using high quality Leica cameras stabilized on the turret mounted .50 cal. HMGs to take panorama shots like these. Photo from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the *Maritime Unit Arakan War Dairy* via Erick Simmel collection.

An excellent example of a joint MU/OG operation is *Operation Boston*[8] and *Operation Rugby*[9]. A joint reconnaissance of Foul Island, which was in the middle of the coastal shipping lanes. On May 20, 1945, Mess's 85- foot P-564 and Hubbard's 63-foot P-101 left Kyaukpyu Harbor loaded with gasoline, four kayaks, and eight MU swimmers under the command of USCG Ltjg. John Booth and USCG Chief James Eubank. They also had three LCRs for Army Lt. O'Jibway's OG scouts. The swimmers and OG men were separated on the boats for operational security. When they arrived at Foul Island, the swimmers paddled their kayaks near shore before sending swimmer scouts into the beach. After the beach was scouted and secured, Lt. O'Jibway's men were called in and landed in their LCRs to further scout the interior of the island. Meanwhile, LT John Babb and USCG Chief Becker would use a kayak to circumnavigate and reconnoiter the rest of the island. The kayaks and LCRs would be hoisted aboard the crash boats. However, before returning to base, the men on P-564 would take soundings and use Leica cameras that were stabilized on the Crash Boats turret-mounted .50 cal. HMGs. They took panoramic photographs during slack water. This was a technique Mess, and his men had recently perfected. They reported Foul Island was uninhabited with no food or water source. They did however find a British cache of military stores. Knowing there were no Japanese coast watchers on Foul Island, the 14th Army could now proceed confidently toward Rangoon.

Notes:

9. **Operation Boston is a MU code name.**
10. **Operation Rugby is an OG code name.**

Photos from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the *Maritime Unit Arakan War Dairy* via Erick Simmel collection.

On February 23, 1945, P-564 would take a Lieutenant and three enlisted men to Hug Bay on a return trip to Calcutta for repairs; she would go back to Ceylon and be ready for action after a significant overhaul. However, on May 23, 1945, she would collide with the vessel *Shelia* and sustain damages that would necessitate further repairs at the Patent Ship Dock.

Figure 38. General Donovan (Center) visits the MU and OG in SEAC.

Figure 39. General Donovan has a + on his chest.

Figure 40. Here is the shift with OSS MU Boats working more with the SI as opposed to direct action. Photo from the late Dr. Christian Lambertsen's copy of the Maritime Unit Arakan War Diary via Erick Simmel collection.

When Mess took P-564 back to Calcutta for repairs, Lt. Hubbard then took over from Lt. Mess as Flotilla commander on the Arakan Coast. P-563, under the command of Jesse Hughes, would join the flotilla. In Mid-March 1945, the Crash Boat Flotilla's missions would shift from supporting reconnaissance and snatch jobs along the Arakan Coast and up the *chaungs* to agent landing and re-supply. These would include *Operation Akron I, II, and III* between March 21 and 22, 1945, where they would use *Foul Island* as a lay-up point (knowing it was unoccupied). By March 28, 1945, P-101 and P-721 returned to Ceylo*n* via Calcutta. P-563 would stay until April 3, 1945, conducting missions. On April 16, 1945, P-563, P-101 and P-721 would be in Ceylon and sailing with the P-564 on non-combat operations.

P-496 (Cambridge Shipping 85-foot) and P-497 (Cambridge Shipping 85-foot) were sent to Rangoon to conduct operations in early May 1945. However, P-497 suffered a broken generator and never conducted combat operations. P-496, under the command of WOJG, Maisey reported for duty and was active in the theater. Lt. Mess would meet with the crew of P-565 in *Ceylon* on May 6, 1945. On June 10, 1945, J. A. Whipple would be transferred from the crew of P-565 in Ceylo*n* to an active boat in Rangoon, likely P-496. The P-565 Crash Boat was decommissioned on July 1, 1945, in Ceylon, thus ended her deck log. Walter Mess volunteered for parachute operations going into Burma and Thailand, building airstrips (very much a prototype for our current SWCC), as would a number of the MU swimmer operatives. The SEAC forces regrouped during the summer and prepared for a move south, down the Malaysian Peninsula. Along with that came a large transfer of OSS personnel to support "Amphibious Roger" and future operations on the China Coast, including pursuing Japanese forces. Major combat operations ended abruptly in August 1945, as the OSS was wholly dismantled, and their remaining functions were transferred to the War and State Departments.

Training Operations at Area W-A, Catalina Island

Figure 41. The OSS Camp at Toyon Cove at the "Old Boys School."

The secluded area is not too different to this day, which is now the Catalina Island Marine Institute. Catalina was and is still an area frequented by combatant craft crewmen from BSU-1 to today's Special Boat Teams. Photo from NARA via Erick Simmel.

Training in Southern California area W-A (Catalina Island)

Initially, during the days of COI (back in 1942), the US Coast Guard were used as unwitting water taxis for the OSS. They provided transportation for the OSS to and from the mainland from Back Bay (Newport Harbor) to the COI and later on to the OSS camp (called area W-A) located at Toyon Cove. Toyon Cove was formerly the Catalina Island School for Boys (which closed in 1941) and the Isthmus camp. USCG LCDR Howard Shelby oversaw about fifty Coast Guard sailors and boats assigned to Catalina. The USCG conducted their training missions out there but were also told that they were to provide transportation for the (covert) OSS personnel. Without asking prying questions, they efficiently hauled their passengers back and forth from the mainland.

Catalina was a significant West Coast training base for OSS known as Area "W-A." There would eventually be multiple OSS training camps on the Island. Foreign nationals, including Asians of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean descent, would become part of the Maritime Unit's SI and members; particularly SMG (Special Maritime Group. The combat swimmers and diving commandos) would also end-up training there.

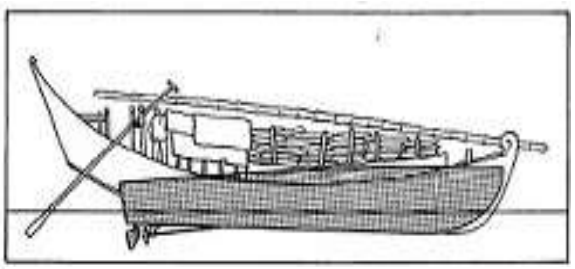


Figure 42. X-Ray view of A-2 Disguised as Mandalay Wood Boat.

Figure 43. X-Ray view of A-3 Disguised as Cantonese Harbor Craft.

Figure 44. X-Ray view of Army Rescue Boat Disguised as Irrawaddy River Steamer.

Proposed OSS Javaman television guided radio-controlled explosive boat development from Hacker A-2 and A-3 speed boats to 85-foot crash boats. Note different configurations of proposed false superstructures. OSS drawings from the Jim Gray collection.

The evolution of *Project Campbell* > *Javaman* > *Bagpipe* > *Moonfish:*

The OSS Initially conceived *Project Campbell* in March 1944 to use remote-controlled, television-guided explosive boats. These boats would be disguised as native craft and used against Japanese shipping and coastal targets in the Pacific and CBI. *Project Campbell* would grow into *Project Javaman*, with larger craft, and then evolve once again into *Operation Bagpipe,* a.k.a. *Operation Moonfish. Its targets would be* between the Japanese Home Islands of Kyushu and Honshu. The OSS program would also intersect and diverge with the Navy's "Stinger" programs (1943-1944). They used the same principles and concepts of radio control and television guidance systems, including the same procedures and many of the same people to turn LCVPs, PTs, DEs, and much larger AKs into demolition vessels. *Operation Campbell was* formally established in March 1944 at Little Creek, Virginia. The OSS R&D department and Army Air Force began using Hacker 34-foot, 11 inch speed boats powered by 500 hp Kermath engines, called A-2's (A-2 speed boats). These A-2's were slaved by remote control and guided by a television camera on a gyrostabilizer from a tank gun mount to deliver 5,000 pounds of explosives at a top speed of 40 knots. The project then moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, and the A-3 speedboat came online; this 37-foot Hacker craft also had a Kermath engine capable of 46 knots and delivering the same payload. In August 1944, an A-3 was tested against the 5,000-ton freighter *SS San Pablo* in the Gulf of Mexico, sinking her in less than two minutes.

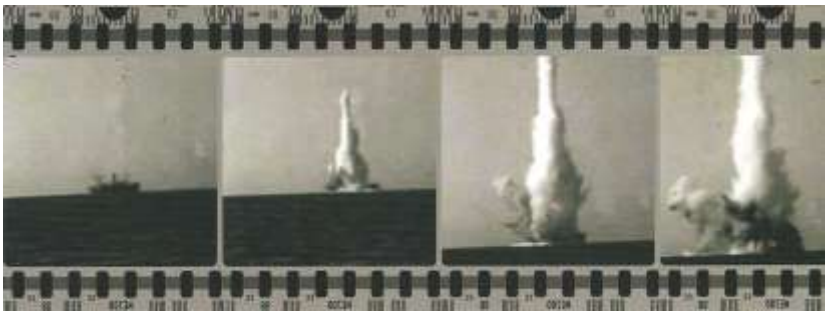
Figure 46. A Hacker Speed Boat converted to look like a fishing boat.

Photos courtesy of Andy Small from NARA Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 285 Declassification authority NND887139

Figure 45. Loading explosives into a Hacker Speed Boat.

Figure 47. Same boat with a "Dummy Sailor" operating the tiller.

Figure 48. Photo of Hacker craft heading towards SS San Pablo. Courtesy of Andy Small from NARA Record Group, 226, Entry 139, Box 285. Declassification authority NNDD887139.

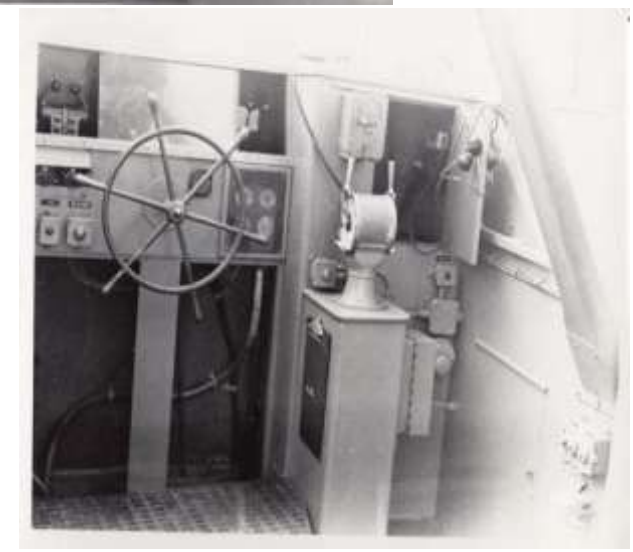


Photos courtesy of Andy Small from NARA Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 285 Declassification authority NND887139

Figure 49. Sequence of explosion courtesy of Carlos Ruth US Crash Boats.

*Figure 51. Part of Television Remote controls Top**si**de (exterior) on an 85-foot Crash Boat.*

Figure 52. Part of the Television Remote Controls (Pilot House, on an 85-foot Crash Boat.



By March 1945, the project now known as *Javaman* had grown into a cadre of 152 people utilizing newer and larger craft (85-foot Army Rescue Boats) with two 1,200hp Packard marine engines, capable of carrying 50,000 to 60,000 pounds of cast TNT charges (Navy Mark 14 Mod 0 or Mod 1). These TNT charges were packed together and initiated by a Navy Mk 9 demolition charge. The remote-controlled demolition boats were called *"Missile Boats."* They were usually guided by a mother ship, typically another 85-foot ARB to a point near the target, where any crewmen still aboard would be recovered. Then the remote-control would then be passed to B-17 flying overhead for the final approach and detonation on the objective. The Japanese fleet and merchant targets rapidly disappeared due to the Allied submarine and air offensives. The Kanmon submarine tunnel lay 25-feet beneath the seabed, linking the Japanese home islands of Kyushu and Honshu. The tunnel was selected as a target. Elaborate plans were made to accomplish this objective. OSS documents reference Operation *Javaman*, Operation *Bagpipe,* and Operation *Moonfish.*

Figure 53. An 80-foot Elco hull for the Navy's parallel Stinger Program.

80-foot Elco hull for Navy's parallel Stinger Program and interior photo of hull packed with explosives. This is the same way explosives were packed in the 85-foot crash boats for Javaman. Photos courtesy of Ted Walther via PT Boat Forum.

Figure 54. Interior view of 80-foot Elco hull packed with explosives.

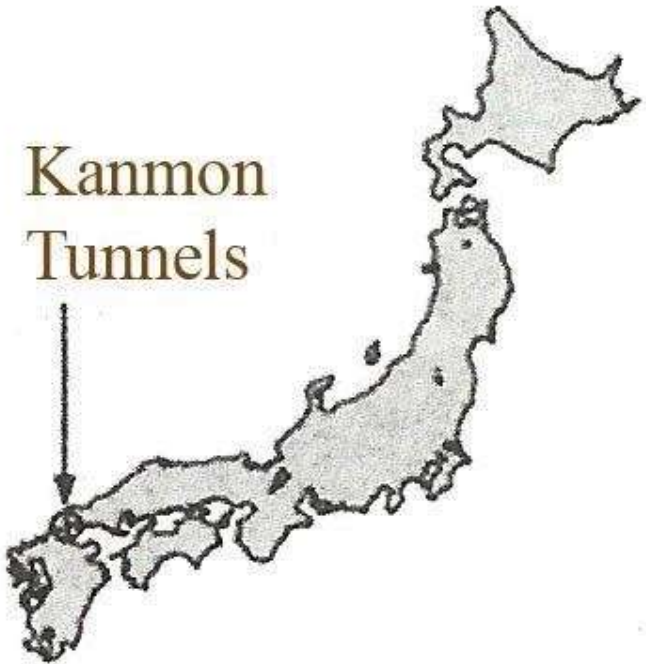


Figure 55. Map of Japan and area where the tunnels were located. Photo Courtesy of Bill Lee via Carlos Ruth.

A flotilla of six modified Javaman 85-foot ARBs and four to six B-17s based out of Okinawa would support the mission. All the ARBs would have false superstructures designed to look like Japanese fishing vessels. Two ARBs would be designated as support craft, and the other four craft would be missile boats. The missile boats would be further modified with Primacord scuttling charges. The modification was intended to blow off the bow and stern, then use the anchor and chain underneath the primary demolition charges to ensure the charging bundle got to the seafloor on target.

The ARBs were also heavily armed with concealed guns. After leaving "the Bunkhouse" (secret base in Okinawa), the flotilla would travel on a moonless night towards their objective. About 25-miles away from the target, the caretaker crews would abandon the missile boats in rafts to be recovered by the ARB mother ship, leaving a sole pilot to steer the missile boat toward the objective. As the ebb tide turned to slack water and about ten minutes after the sun rose, the B-17's would take over guidance, and the missile boat pilots would abandon ship in a rubber raft to be recovered by the second ARB mother ship. In contrast, the missile boats proceeded remotely-controlled to their target. There would be two flights of two B-17s with additional remote-controls (RC), with two RC operator stations per plane, there was built-in guidance/control redundancy for each missile boat. At close proximity to the target (based on dead reckoning, SRC-71 7B radar, and LORAN equipment) the operators in the B-17 would initiate the scuttling charges to sink the missile boats. The missile boats had four detonators: impact, timed, hydrostatic, and magnetic fields to ensure they would detonate the primary charge bundle. All the boats were booby-trapped to make sure no American technology would fall into Japanese hands. If the operation had to be canceled due to fog or sea state, it would be re-launched the following night or during the next favorable lunar/tidal cycle. With the sudden end of WWII, in August 1945, the government canceled the *Javaman* program and all its assets were transferred back to the Army, at Eglin Field in Florida.

Figure 56. 85-foot Television Guided Crash Boats in formation. Note that no crews were onboard. Photo courtesy of Any Small from NARA Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 285 Declassification Authority NND887139.

Javaman differed markedly from Country Craft which were also designed to look like indigenous boats, such as lug rigged junks, but were in fact heavily armed motorized craft. Country Craft were used operationally by British Special Operations forces towards the end of the war.

OSS Drawings of a country craft designed to look like a sailing junk. Courtesy of Jim Gray Collection

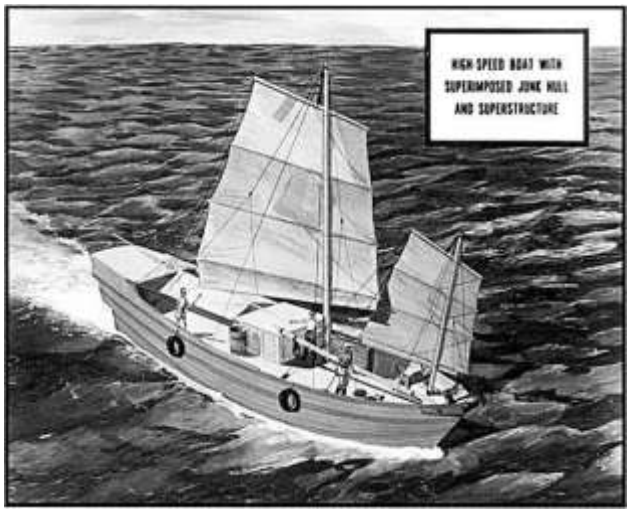


Figure 57. OSS Drawing of country craft designed to look like a sailing junk. Though really a High Speed Boat with superimposed junk hull and superstructure. Drawing is courtesy of the Jim Gray Collection.

Figure 58. OSS Drawing of country craft after superstructure and hull section being jettisoned for getaway. Drawing is courtesy of Jim Gray Collection.

Figure 59. St. Petersburg, Florida, Operating Area Map. Photo is courtesy of Andy Small from NARA Record Group 226, Entry, 139, Box 285 Declassification authority NND887139.

Domestic OSS Training and Evaluation in St. Petersburg

The OSS used Crash Boat P-445 to test motorized submersible canoes nicknamed *"Sleeping Beauties*" in the Saint Petersburg, Florida area, The P-445 (Petersen 85-foot) was modified with a small crane on the stern to hoist the 600-pound, 12.67-foot miniature submarines in and out of the water. The Sleeping Beauties were an early battery-powered swimmer delivery vehicle designed and built by the British. It would operate in the same restricted waters as the *Javaman* project for test and evaluation before going into combat in SEAC (Oil refinery attack above) and the Pacific (see Operation *Rimau* above).

Figure 60. P-455 conducting tests of a "Sleeping Beauty" Motorized Submersible Canoe in the St. Petersburg area. Note the covered secret craft on the stern and its boom.

Figure 61. Tests of a "Sleeping Beauty" Motorized Submersible Canoe, at the stern of P-455.

Photos of P-445 conducting tests of a "Sleeping Beauty" Motorized Submersible Canoe in the Saint Petersburg, FL. area. Note covered secret craft on stern and boom. Photo courtesy of Andy Small from NARA Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 285 Declassification authority NND887139

Figure 62. Conducting tests of a "Sleeping Beauty" Motorized Submersible Canoe, in the St. Petersburg, FL area.

Legacy:

The OSS was completely decommissioned along with the Beach Jumpers by 1946. The PT boat program and Underwater Demolition Teams were drastically reduced by the end of the War. The PT boat program consisting of over 45 Squadrons and thousands of support personnel over 50,000-64,000 men total would be reduced to a single developmental squadron in 1946 and eventually fade away in the 1950's.

However, the Maritime Unit's hard-won lessons and other small craft operators' experience would not entirely be forgotten. An exceptional man would ensure that would never happen, Phil Bucklew. He possessed a wealth of knowledge concerning special boat operations from WWII as well as post war Naval Special operations. Later in the Eisenhower administration, when counter-insurgency operations were being dusted-off, Navy Captain Phil Bucklew, America's premier sea commando, would help establish the Navy's new Naval Operational Support Groups (NOSG). To better understand the bridge between World War II and the modern era a brief insight of Bucklew's fascinating career needs to be included:

Phil Bucklew enlisted in the naval reserve in the early 1930s, while in high school, to earn extra money. He would play both college and professional football and go on to coach and manage professional football teams before WWII.

Experiences that would be very beneficial in due time. When the US entered WWII, Bucklew tried to enlist in the paratroopers but was told he was too big to join. So, he returned to the naval reserve. While in Gene Tunney's Navy physical training program, Bucklew volunteered for the Scouts and Raiders and was trained to drive landing craft by the USCG. Bucklew then volunteered for combat duty. He believed that future instructors should have combat experience and that's what he planned to do. He was very happy as a Chief Petty Officer and had even refused multiple commission opportunities until he was excluded from an "officer only" planning meeting during *Operation Torch*. That changed everything! Bucklew would earn his commission after *Torch*. During the *Torch* landings, he was in the first wave of landing craft and then go back-out and round-up the boats that had gotten off-course. Bucklew would then do something unique; he would ride back with the Navy Leadership (Admirals and Captains) while talking about football. His experience and prowess on and off the grid iron were a natural draw for them and allowed him to network with the top brass.

The next year, Bucklew was in a kayak during the Sicily Landings as a Wave Guide. He would once again ride back with the Admirals and Captains talking about football, their favorite topic. It was his networking tool, and it worked like a charm. Soon, he found himself working with the British and training Army men in the field for special operations. The Scouts and Raiders training of Navy men in the States was too far behind the times for upcoming landings. Bucklew was once again on the water during the landings on the Italian mainland. He was right in the mix of it all, with large caliber shells skipping over his head. Afterward, he found himself in a familiar company discussing football! In Normandy, LCDR Bucklew would go ashore clandestinely, collect sand samples, and conduct other valuable reconnaissance. Again, as a wave guide during the French invasion, he would go ashore and do "whatever was needed." Afterward, he led the group that wrote the after-action report on the invasion. He was surprised to learn it went out under his name, as the first "Bucklew Report." Bucklew was then sent to be the head of the Scouts and Raiders at Fort Pierce, Florida. Bucklew quickly wrangled his way out of that training command and into Admiral Milton "Mary" Miles SACO/OSS command in China. There he would conduct the only successful overland beach reconnaissance with his partner and Chinese Guerrillas, because Fleet leadership believed submarines were "too valuable" for an insertion/extraction. They found no good exits into China's interior from their section of the coast. After the Japanese surrender, he would remain on Admiral Miles' staff, write the CBI Theater reports and be General Tai Li's (a.k.a. Dai Li) bodyguard in Shanghai. Note: Tai Li was a cross between Donovan and Kang Shen, with a healthy Nationalist Chinese corruption dose thrown in.

After the war, Bucklew would return to coaching football at Columbia University, teaching Navy ROTC classes, getting his master's degree, and scouting for professional football teams in his free time. While at Columbia, he would often go up into the stands and talk football with the war-weary chain-smoking Columbia College president, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

When the Korean War started, the Navy asked, "Where are the Beach Jumpers?" before the Inchon landings. Well, they were gone, and Bucklew was recalled into service and ordered to reactivate them. Bucklew knew that he needed to gather relevant data to better train his men. Not only did Bucklew go to the archives and read Douglas Fairbanks Jr.'s classified reports, but he had many Top-Secret documents downgraded, so his staff and men could read them and learn the lessons of their WWII predecessors.

The resurrected Beach Jumpers would be built by Bucklew from the ground up. He added many more electronic signals deception tactics to the sound and light displays from WWII, completely modernizing the enterprise. Scrounging for everything, including boats, they obtained some 63-foot crash boats. The Beach Jumpers would also test a variety of small boats for the CIA and work alongside the UDTs. This is why so many civilian craft ended-up in the military and clandestine service: Power Cat 23T's, Bertram Moppies, and Gulf Coast crew boats. He would successfully appeal to the Fleet Admirals not to transfer the UDTs to training commands, but instead have the UDTs continue to be an active component of the Fleet's amphibious capabilities. Bucklew would go on to also serve a tour with the CIA. However, (where outwardly he was reorganizing the structure of the Pacific Fleet in Korea. He was clandestinely working with the South Koreans on a variety of secret projects, including propaganda operations launched from the WWII PT boats (which the U.S. government had given them.) He would then do staff work on Amphibious commands, and the Navy intelligence school.

Beginning later in the Eisenhower administration, there was a renewed interest in counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare, especially with all of the guerilla wars in the former European colonies, including Asia-Malaya, Indochina, Indonesia, Africa-Algeria, and Kenya. This period would usher in the rapid expansion of COIN units and unconventional warfare in the US Military and has been generally credited entirely to President John F. Kennedy (JFK). For the Navy, Bucklew was at the heart of their Special Operations renaissance, proposing a Naval Operations Support Group (NOSG). Especially

since then, Admiral Rivero didn't want any sailors wearing green berets or doing anything he deemed *"special,"* especially in muddy water, *"no puddle pirates!"*

The NOSG would support the *"Amphibious Fleet"* with the components of the established Beach Jumpers (operational deception), and Underwater Demolition Teams (hydrographic surveys and demolition), and two *"new"* elements: Sea Air Land (SEAL) Teams and Boat Support Units (BSU). The SEAL Teams were to be sea-commandos, modeled along the lines of the OSS MU/OG/SI teams from the CBI. Though Bill Hamilton did not know about the OSS SMG men, his mentor Francis "Red Dog" Fane sure did through UDTs in Hawaii and Dr. Lambertsen's post-war assistance and encouraged Hamilton to establish the SEAL Teams in OSS tradition unbeknownst to Hamilton. Bucklew who had first come into contact with the OSS MU in England had become very familiar with the MU's capabilities while under Admiral Miles, thereby providing an amphibious and airmobile unconventional warfare capability for the Navy acceptable to the CNO and Admirals.

The BSU would provide dedicated boat support for the NOSG's Beach Jumpers, UDTs, and SEAL Teams, as well as unconventional small-craft support and direct-action missions. He had learned about the necessity of having dedicated support-craft and crews from his own experience's and those of S&R, OSS, CIA, and Beach Jumpers.

The UDTs would provide the men for the SEAL Teams, but they would be quite different; they would again be seeking additional training from the Army and Marines to become intelligence collecting and intelligence-driven amphibious, and air deployable Special Operations Forces. The Admirals looked to Bucklew for direction, and he had the credentials, corporate knowledge, and the connections to get the job done! No one in Naval Special Warfare comes close to Bucklew's knowledge, and no one in Special Warfare surpasses his legacy except *"Wild Bill"* Donovan!

Two NOSGs would be stood up, one for each coast, in the Kennedy Administration. NOSG-1 men on the West Coast would see a tremendous amount of action during the Vietnam War supported by SEAL Team- 2 deployments from the East Coast NOSG-2. Like South Korea, Vietnam was in the Pacific Fleet's Area of Operation (AOR), so the West Coast units engaged in combat operations and received the lion's share of funding, material, and personnel. BSU-1 was by far the largest component within the NOSGs on each coast. We should always remember that the entire complement of NOSG-1 was not much more than 900 men for BSU, Beach Jumper Team-1, SEAL Team-1, UDT Teams-11, and 12. The NOSGs would later become Naval Special Warfare Groups (NSWG) in 1970. The UDT Teams would become SEAL Teams in 1983, and the Boat Support men would become the SWCCs of today's Special Boat Teams. Today's Special Boat Teams continue to evolve and carry forward the special operations and combat search and rescue missions of their World WWII OSS progenitors!

Figure 63. SBU-12 Fountain High Speed Boat with combat rubber raiding craft tied down to the bow during Desert Storm (1990-1991). Faster and lighter boats, same concept, generations later. Photo courtesy of Jack Spratt.

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