

UDT

The Navy's Frogmen

The U. S. Marines are not the first men on the beach when our armed forces invade enemy shores. Others have gone before them — swiftly and silently in the night.

They drop from speeding boats or stealthily slip from submerged submarines a mile or more from the beach and swim underwater to the shore. Enroute, they make soundings to determine the depth of the water. They gather information about the kind of bottom, the slope of the beach, the off-shore currents. Underwater obstacles are rigged with explosive charges. Once ashore the quiet invaders attach more explosive charges to tank-traps, barbed wire barriers, and other man-made and natural obstacles.

Silently and swiftly then, the shadowy figures disappear into the sea. Seconds after reaching the safety of their boats, a series of tremendous explosions wrack the beach and its approach waters. The path is clear for the U. S. Marines.

It's a dangerous and risky business but vital to the success of an amphibious landing. The men who do this job are the Navy's "Web-foot Warriors" — "Frogmen" — or, specifically, U. S. Navy Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) members.

Only a man who possesses a high degree of self-confidence, physical stamina,

swimming ability, endurance, ability as a team-worker, a "never quit" spirit and a healthy respect for water, darkness and explosives earns the right to wear the title "UDT Man." These are the qualities he must have to keep him alive in his hazardous work.

A rigorous 24-week training course weeds out those who can't take it. For Atlantic Fleet Sailors the first part, 16 weeks long, begins at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia, and ends at the U. S. Naval Station, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico.

During his first 16 weeks, the candidate must prove that he has the physical strength to weather demands put on "frogmen" — long underwater swims, rugged obstacle courses, underwater combat, mental harassment, and sudden demands from treacherous seas. Each volunteer undergoes practically every type of physical exercise from simple pushups to long-distance runs and, of course, swimming.

Aspiring "frogmen" roll out at 5 a. m., have 30 minutes to shower, shave and dress and stand "ready for inspection." At 5:40 a. m. comes the first taste of the day's physical training, with pushups, pullups, and other "warm-up" calisthenics. At 6:30 a. m., after 40 minutes of exercise, each man is

ready to run — for 20 minutes.

A welcome break featuring a hearty breakfast awaits the trainee at the end of the run — and by then he has really worked up an appetite. After breakfast, and another inspection, come semaphore signaling drill, military drill, and life-saving demonstrations. Another run, then lunch and an interesting afternoon.

An introduction to explosives, military and commercial, is an afternoon topic — so are the safety precautions for the handling and stowage of explosives. A trip over the obstacle course brings a man to dinner with a ravenous appetite.

Instructors test endurance and willpower with timed long and short distance swims, forced marches and the ever present obstacle course. Ability, agility, and morale are tested and improved through beach games, competitive sports, boat team competition, judo and rope climbs.

Minds get a workout too, from lectures, demonstrations and practical work in reconnaissance, chart reading, demolitions, life saving, UDT operations, photo interpretation, communications, intelligence, hand-to-hand combat, first aid and beach surveying.

The sixth week of UDT training is appropriately