

~~SECRET~~/NOFORN

PROJECT SUN STREAK

23 Mar 90

WARNING NOTICE: INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

PROJECT NUMBER:	0765 (Tng)	SESSION NUMBER:	1
DATE OF SESSION:	21 MAR 90	DATE OF REPORT:	23 MAR 90
START:	1356	END:	1402
METHODOLOGY:	BY SOLO	VIEWER IDENTIFIER:	052

1. (S/SK) MISSION: To describe the target site (Combat diver's school) in Stage 1 terminology, working solo.
2. (S/SK) VIEWER TASKING: Target site number only.
3. (S/SK) COMMENTS: No Physical Inclemencies. 052 correctly determined the 3 major gestalts of the site on the first full IAB sequence. No incorrect or minor gestalts were found.
4. (S/SK) EVALUATION: *3*
5. (S/SK) SEARCH EVALUATION: N/A

MONITOR: SOLO

HANDLE VIA SKEET CHANNELS ONLY

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CLASSIFIED BY: DIA (DT)
DECLASSIFY: OADR

052

21 March 96

Ft. Meade

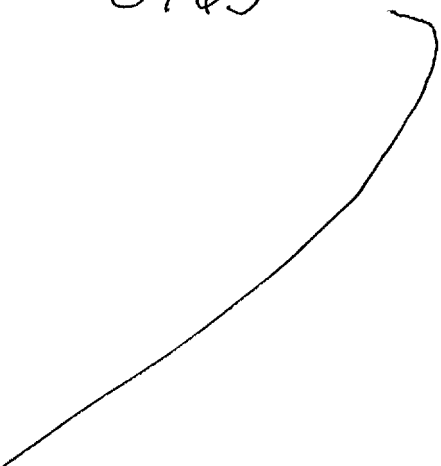
1356

Solo

PI: none

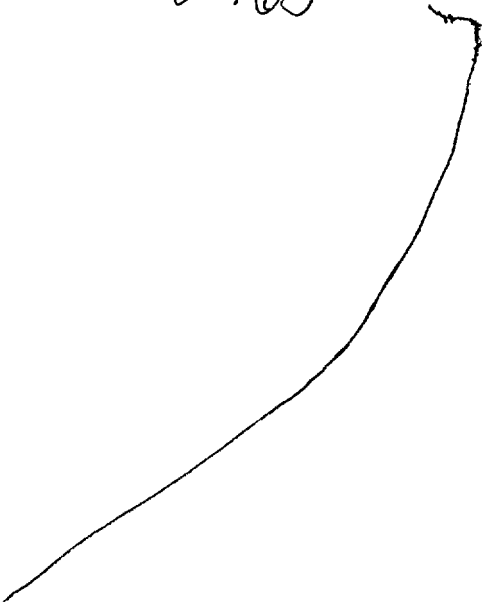
AV: none

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(A. Wavy Across
soft
U B. Water

U A. Angle
hard
U B. Structure

U A. Rapid down
fast
U B. Motion



Clockwise from top left: Flutter kicks are a part of nearly every day's training. • Halfway through a set of crossovers, students hang on the wall, gulp in air and prepare to go back under. • During a morning pool session, class members poke their heads under to watch a demonstration.

their mouths would be off, forcing them to hold their breath repeatedly.

Bobbing requires the diver being tested to stand in the pool's shallow end facing one side. On an instructor's command, he begins working his way to the deep end by descending and rising in a saw-toothed pattern. At the pool's deep end, he drops to the bottom, puts his swim fins on his hands and begins bobbing straight up and down for two minutes. After that, he bobs back to the shallow end.

Crossovers, the more dreaded of the two, look and sound even simpler. Divided into two groups, the students face each other from both sides of the pool's deep end. When the whistle blows, both groups duck under and cross to the other side. To avoid a colli-

sion, one skims along the bottom, the other just under the surface. A few seconds after surfacing on the other side, the whistle blows again, and the exercise repeats itself. Depending on the width of the pool being used, the exercise can continue for up to three minutes.

The crossovers and bobbing exercises the students go through during the first two days of training are freebies. If a student gives up during a bob or refuses to get off the wall on a crossover, there is no penalty. On day three, however, such an infraction would mean immediate dismissal.

For the most part, students who balk during the exercises do so for psychological reasons, explained Raymond Sears, a retired Special Forces

master sergeant and one of the school's two civilian instructors. "An average person can hold his breath for 60-90 seconds," Sears said. "Put that same person on the bottom of a pool and he'll come up gasping after 30 seconds. Out of the water, he knows all he has to do is open his mouth when he needs to. It's different under water, and some people just aren't made for that type of stress. It's a little like climbing mountains. Some people are good at it, some aren't."

SFC Bill Wheeler, a Special Forces weapons NCO from Fort Lewis, Wash., and the student class leader, agreed. In his opinion, crossovers are the hardest part of the course. "The trick to controlling the urge to panic is relaxing," Wheeler said. "We're



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Thoms began to falter during the morning's fourth crossover when he surfaced halfway across the pool. He managed to get to the wall, but when the whistle sounded, he wouldn't budge.

While he hung there gulping in air, several instructors converged on him yelling, "Off that wall, mister!"

Several times, Thoms managed to let go before the three required warnings could be given. Each time, he only made it a few feet before surfacing and thrashing back to the wall. Finally, Casteel ordered the instructors to get him out. It was over, and Thoms knew it.

After working his way to the pool's shallow end, he stood and watched his classmates continue with the exercise. Before it was over, another student would join him.

Those who make it past the stress exercises begin open-water dives during the second week. At this point the failure rate drops sharply as the students, now comfortable operating under water, begin to study the finer points of combat diving.

During the last three weeks, Clark said, students learn to navigate under water, exit and enter different types of watercraft, conduct ship-bottom searches and move toward a target in 12-man teams.

Because of the diverse missions of units sending students to the school,



Above, 2nd Lt. Justin Thoms (left) listens to instructors during voluntary remedial crossover training. • Top, Thoms gasps for air during the next day's exercises.

little time is spent covering beach-side operations. That training, Clark pointed out, comes once the graduate returns to his unit.

"Scuba diving is simply a means of infiltration — a way to get somewhere you're not supposed to be," he said.

"The dive team's mission could be to recon and secure a beach, to take out a communications or air-defense site, or to find and establish a parachute drop zone close to the shore.

"It's a lot like airborne and air-mobile operations. But of all of them, it's the most difficult. Airborne operations are over in minutes and you're pretty much delivered by an aircraft that can get you right over where you need to go.

"Scuba missions require more planning and practice because more can go wrong," Clark continued. "They also require several delivery vehicles, such as an aircraft, a boat that is parachuted into the water along with the team, and finally, the body. There's no way we can teach a guy everything there is to know about scuba operations in just four weeks."

Although the school's graduates may not know it all when they leave, the silver diver's badge is still a coveted thing around special operations units.

The way Clark sees it, the badge signifies an elite status within an already elite circle.

For class leader Wheeler, earning a badge simply meant getting some good specialized training and improving his chances of getting into one of his unit's scuba detachments. At 32, Wheeler was too old to go around chasing the badge just so he could say he had it. He had been dropped from a course earlier this year because of a stress exercise the first week, and he was determined it wouldn't happen again.

"Compared to how I felt at this point last time, I'm a lot more tired, but mentally I'm a lot more confident," he said. "I think I'll make it this time."

As for his earlier failure, Wheeler didn't point the finger at anyone but himself. As class leader, he dealt with both the instructors and the students on a regular basis. "Nobody here wants to see someone else flunk," he said. "The students have a lot of cohesion. The only way to make it through this is to help and motivate each other. The instructors are good, too. They may yell at us, but we know there's always a point to it — they have to put us under stress sometimes. But when we have a question or see them one-on-one, they treat us with the respect and dignity accorded a fellow soldier."

Although he didn't earn one last summer, Thoms recognized what the badge represented. Like Wheeler, he can come back and try again. "I want that badge," he said. "To me, it stands for the toughest school in the Army, and it says a whole lot about the guy wearing it." □