



DOLPHIN

BY
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DOLPHINS, THOSE INNOCENT folk of the sea, may be the latest tools in the government's attempts to find surreptitious assassination methods. San Diego's Naval Ocean Systems Center at Point Loma and its predecessors, the Naval Underseas Center (NUC) and the Naval Underseas Warfare Center (NUWC), have been identified as being at the heart of a series of programs that used dolphins as spies, saboteurs, and assassins.

For 15 years the Navy has been both cooperating and competing with the Central Intelligence Agency in the development of military systems incorporating dolphins, whales and sea lions.

The dolphin experiments at San Diego's Point Loma Marine Sciences Lab involving physiology, hydrodynamics, and sonar are said to have been used as a public relations cover for more classified work being carried out under NUWC direction by the Navy on San Clemente Island and at the Kaneohe Bay Research Center in Hawaii.

These programs are reported to have led to the use of dolphins in a "Swimmer Nullification" program in Vietnam that resulted in the death of 30 to 60 divers including two Americans. A similar CIA program may have had, as its ultimate aim, the assassination of Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

The NUC in San Diego built a flotation craft to house its dolphins in Vietnam. It also built a CO₂ cartridge device which it calls an anti-shark weapon but which others have identified as the murder device used by the dolphins in Vietnam.

Public affairs officer for the Naval Ocean Systems Center, Joel Merriweather, denied that the Navy had an "operational" dolphin system in Vietnam, but admitted that dolphins had been installed there for "evaluation." He claimed that the object was only to identify and locate people, not to kill them. His statement was an advance from previous Navy claims that it had "no knowledge" of a dolphin system in Vietnam. When asked about reports that dolphins are being used in anti-submarine warfare activity Merriweather said, "No comment."

Michael Greenwood, a scientist who worked for Naval Intelligence as director of the Ocean Floor program of Sea Lab III, was the first person to go public with the story of the Navy's dolphin hit teams when he testified before Sen. Frank Church's Committee on Intelligence in

Seal of Jean II (top), count and "Dauphin" of Viennois in 13th century. U.S. Navy experimentation with dolphin sonar. By comparison man's sonar looks crude.



Photos/U.S. Navy

"Dolphins have no Pidgeon. "Human dolphins and not

DEATH PLOT?

1976. There, in 150 pages of detailed testimony, he exposed the Navy and CIA "Man in the Sea" program as a cover for dolphin and whale experiments designed to murder enemy frogmen, track Russian submarines, and spy inside Chinese and Cuban waters.

During one 15-month period beginning in 1971, Naval Intelligence placed six dolphins in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, to guard U.S. ships stationed there. These dolphins, part of the Navy's "Swimmer Nullification Program," were housed in an elaborate flotation craft built in San Diego. This craft combined stables and transport for the dolphins with floating pens, a guardhouse and a support team of trainers and researchers on board.

A dolphin based on the craft would scan the water with its sonar. If the water was clear of scuba divers the dolphin would hit a "normal response" paddle. If the dolphin sensed an intruder it would hit a paddle that opened its pen gate. It would then run its snout into a cone placed in a water-level weapons rack. The cone's tip contained a heavy-gauge, hollow-point needle attached to a CO₂ cartridge. The dolphin would then swim out to the diver, plunging the needle into him. The CO₂ would explode the diver's organs from within, floating the corpse to the surface for recovery and identification.

A May 1977 *Penthouse* article claimed the Navy's dolphins in Vietnam killed 32 divers, including two Americans who strayed into restricted waters. James Fitzgerald, the former chief of the CIA's Office of Dolphin Research recently told *Parade* that the Navy's dolphins "blew up" some 60 North Vietnamese divers. The later figure is confirmed by a researcher who recently retired from the Navy Underseas Center in San Diego, but would not permit the use of his name because he feared, he said, that this information would "give a black eye to the Navy."

In a recent interview Sea Lab's Michael Greenwood, now a professor in Minnesota, said that at the end of the Vietnam War the Navy moved their porpoise system to Subic Bay in the Philippines, to guard nuclear submarines. Media sources in Scotland claim that porpoises are being used to guard nuclear subs stationed at Loch Long. The Navy denies using dolphins for physical security at any of its sub bases. The Navy also denies charges that it has sold "open-ocean weapons systems" (dolphins) to Mexico or trained dolphins to carry satchel charges of explosives for use against enemy shipping.

The history of the use of the dolphin as a "biological weapons system" goes back to the early '60s. In 1963, the CIA and the Navy began joint work on dol-

phins at the Point Magu Naval Air Station in California. Other work was started at the China Lake Ordinance Test Station near Pasadena, on San Clemente Island, and at the Navy's secret Kaneohe Bay Research Center in Hawaii. In 1965, the Navy kicked the CIA out of the program, forcing it to relocate in the East. In 1970, the Navy's Point Magu dolphin program was moved to the desalinization plant in San Diego while more classified work continued on San Clemente and at Kaneohe Bay.

Santini's on Marathon Key in Florida was one of the early porpoise training centers in the U.S. Santini, the proprietor, who perfected a method for capturing Atlantic Bottlenose dolphins, captured the dolphin that played the movie role of Flipper. Beginning in 1965, Santini provided cover for the CIA after the Navy rejected them from its programs.

In 1966, the CIA set up new offices on the Navy base in Key West, Fla. That was also the year they were reported to be experimenting with using remote-controlled sharks for attack. They attached electrodes to the corneas of sharks' eyes and attempted to guide their movements with electrical shock impulses, but the sharks' nervous systems apparently proved to be too underdeveloped.

Before its program ended in 1969, the CIA was reported to have trained dolphins to attach magnetic satchels to the hulls of ships and to plant and remove instruments from the hull of a Russian nuclear-powered ship in Havana harbor. The animals were also used to help locate a downed nuclear warhead off the coast of Puerto Rico in 1966, a job now done by California sea lions at the Inshore Underwater Warfare Group at the Amphibious Navy Base in Coronado.

Several sources have suggested that one of the aims of the CIA dolphin program was the murder of well-known skin-diving enthusiast Fidel Castro. This idea becomes more credible when it is considered among other CIA plots to assassinate Castro. Testimony before the Church committee related how two CIA death plots involved impregnating Castro's wet suit with poison and planting a booby-trapped conch shell in an area where he dived in the hope that he would detonate it as he picked it up off the sea bed.

The Navy's "swimmer nullification" program is not so much more bizarre than many other programs in the larger pattern of "defense." The Pentagon alone spends \$15-20 billion a year on research and development, much of it on sole source contracting. Competitive bidding is abandoned within the "national security" rationale. The potential for corrup-

tion and bureaucratic intrigue goes almost entirely unchecked. The indictment of four former employees of the Naval Electronics Lab (a component of NOSC) and the former director of a local think tank in late November for stealing over \$500,000 out of a \$1.5 million contract is an example. "That's only the tip of the iceberg," insists a worker presently employed at the Ocean Systems Center.

"They spent over \$200 million on just that one stupid dolphin project," says Michael Greenwood. "The Navy will only admit to about \$20 million, but then they know they can get away with that. I think if there is any justice in the world the Naval Underseas Center will be shut down. They've done more to damn and undermine democracy than they will ever admit."

"Dolphins have no interest in politics," says Robert Pidgeon of the Greenpeace Foundation in San Diego. "Dolphins live in harmony with their environment. Humans would do well to imitate the dolphins and not train them to imitate us."

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