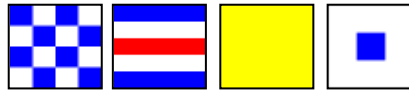


The Sinking of USS YMS-365



CDR Richard L. Bigelow, USNR (Ret.)
with special thanks to Janet Cuccinotti for providing information and pictures
about her father CMoMM Ed Johnson and the rest of the crew.



YMS-365 taken by LTJG Bigelow from ship's wherry. Date and location unknown.

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)



Top Row: Asiatic Pacific Campaign, Presidential Unit Citation, World War II Victory Medal

Bottom Row: American Campaign Ribbon, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, National Defense Ribbon

On June 26, 1945, USS YMS-365 struck a mine and sank while conducting minesweeping operations off the Japanese-held oil producing city of Balikpapan, Borneo in the Dutch East

Indies. Many of the officers and enlisted men on board the ship were injured. Fortunately, no one was killed and all the officers and men and the ship's mascot "Doc" the dog were safely transferred to another YMS and eventually to the cruiser Columbia (CL-56). The ship was listing badly and another YMS poured gunfire into it to sink it.

This is the story of how the YMS came to life, was commissioned, and participated in operations in the Western Pacific and ultimately how it sank.

US Navy Auxiliary Minesweeper 365 (YMS-365) was commissioned at the Brooklyn (NY) Navy Yard on August 30, 1943. YMS-365 was built at Wheeler Shipbuilding Company, Whitestone, Long Island, NY. The commissioning crew included Commanding Officer LT F. S. Murphy, USNR; Executive Officer ENS R. L. Bigelow, USNR; Engineering Officer V. F. Borum, USNR; 1st Class Boatswains Mate Wilson L. Brown; 1st Class Motor Machinist Mate Edwin A. Johnson; 1st Class Pharmacists Mate Henry G. Moran; 1st Class Boatswains Mate Donald J. Treskman; and thirty other enlisted men.

YMS-365 was one of some 481 Auxiliary Minesweepers built for the US Navy during WWII. The design was virtually identical to the approximately 150 British Auxiliary Minesweepers (BYMS) built in the US and loaned to the UK under the Lend Lease Act.

The ship spent the first part of September 1943 provisioning, conducting various drills, degaussing, and conducting gunnery and minesweeping drills. On September 17, YMS-365 got underway for Little Creek, VA arriving on September 18, 1943. The ship spent the next three weeks training and conducting gunnery and minesweeping drills.



Ship's bell, YMS-365.

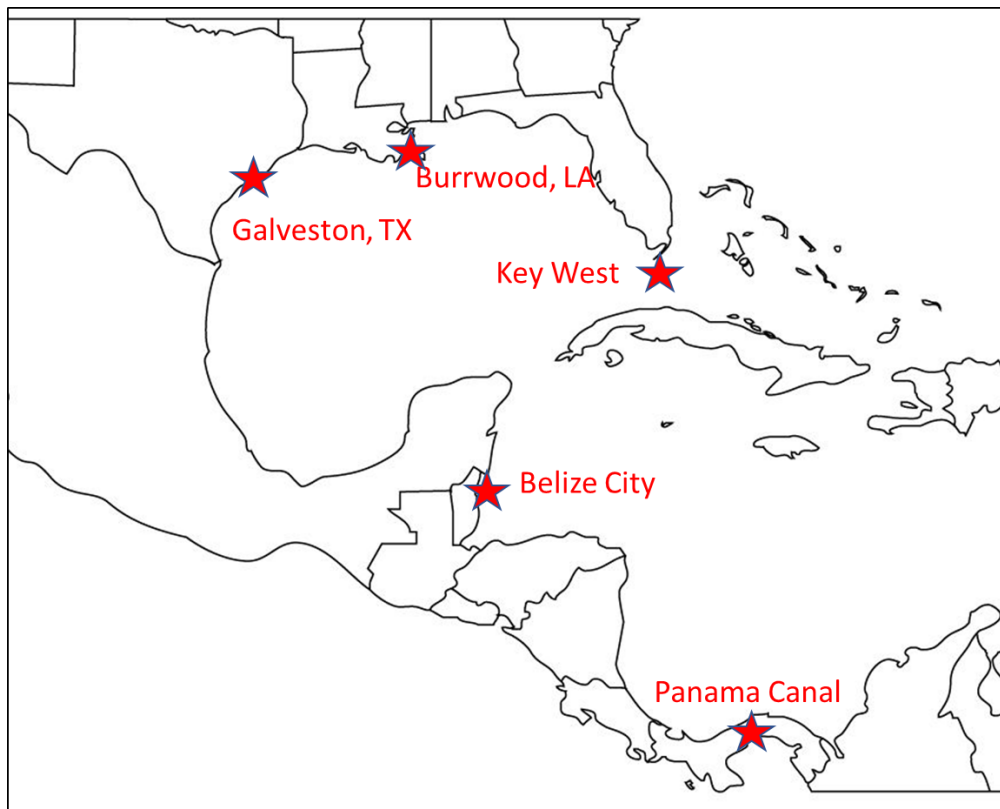
(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

On October 13, 1943, the ship departed for Key West, FL in company with YMS-308 arriving on October 16, 1943. Following a period of additional training and provisioning, the ship departed for New Orleans on October 24 arriving on at the Algiers Naval Base in New Orleans on October 26, 1943.

For the next several months, YMS-365 escorted coastal convoys between Burrwood, LA at the mouth of the Mississippi River, Galveston, TX, and Key West, FL. When not escorting convoys, the ship ensured that shipping channels were kept clear of mines.

On March 17, 1944, YMS-365 got underway with USCG Barnwell, two tugs, and four lighters for the port of Belize, British Honduras. The ship arrived in Belize harbor on March 26, 1944. On March 28, 1944, the ship departed Belize for Burrwood, LA arriving on April 1, 1944.

The ship resumed convoy and channel sweeping activities. On May 24, 1944, LTJG Bigelow relieved LT Murphy as commanding officer.



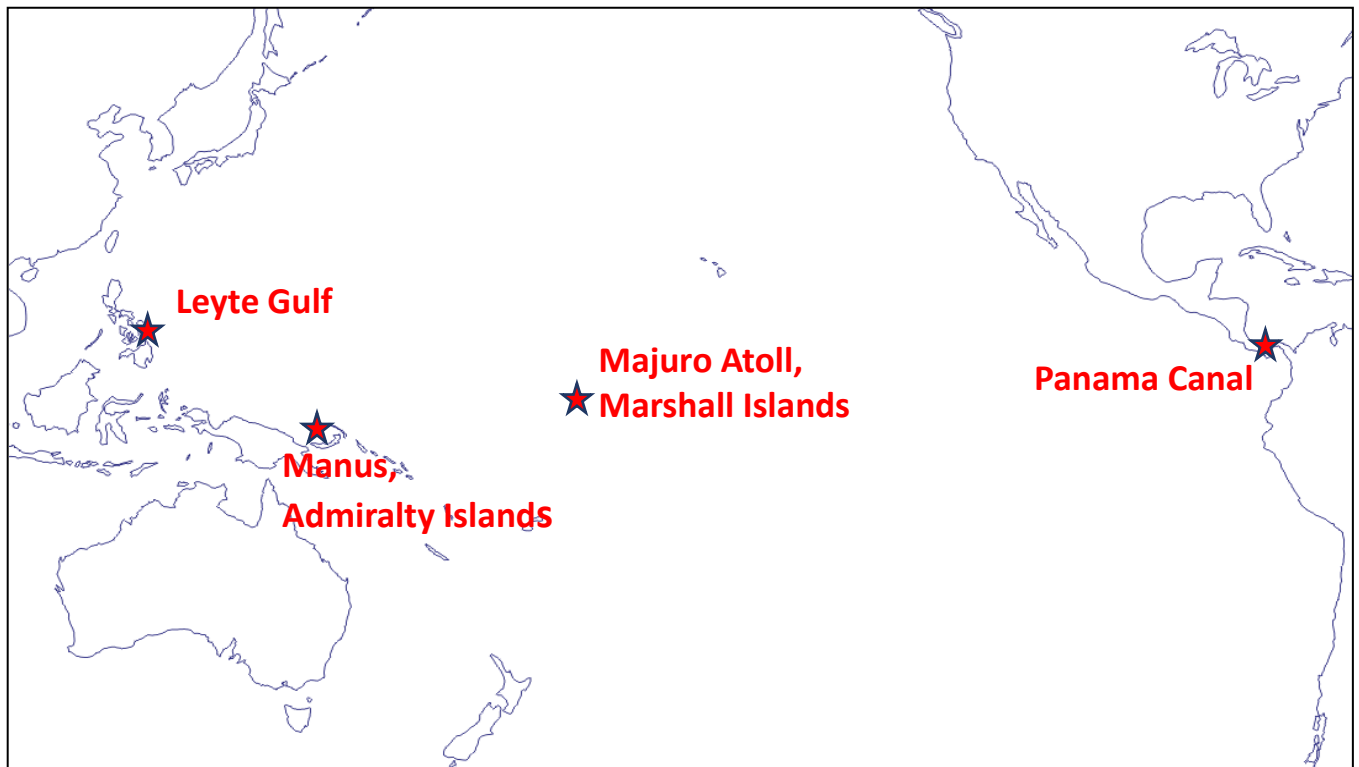
YMS-365 Operations in the Caribbean 1943-1944

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

On September 3, 1944, the ship departed Burrwood, LA in company with YMS-363 en route to the Panama Canal Zone. The ship arrived at the Coco Solo Naval Base on the Caribbean side of the Canal Zone on September 7, 1944. The ship transited the Canal on September 21, 1944 and anchored in the harbor at Balboa on the Pacific side of the Canal.

On September 27, 1944, the ship was taken under tow by ATF-105 en route to the Marshall Islands.

The ship anchored in Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands on November 16, 1944.



YMS-365 Transit to Western Pacific 1944

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))



LTJG Fred Huff with latest in USN washing machines,
Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands, November 1944.

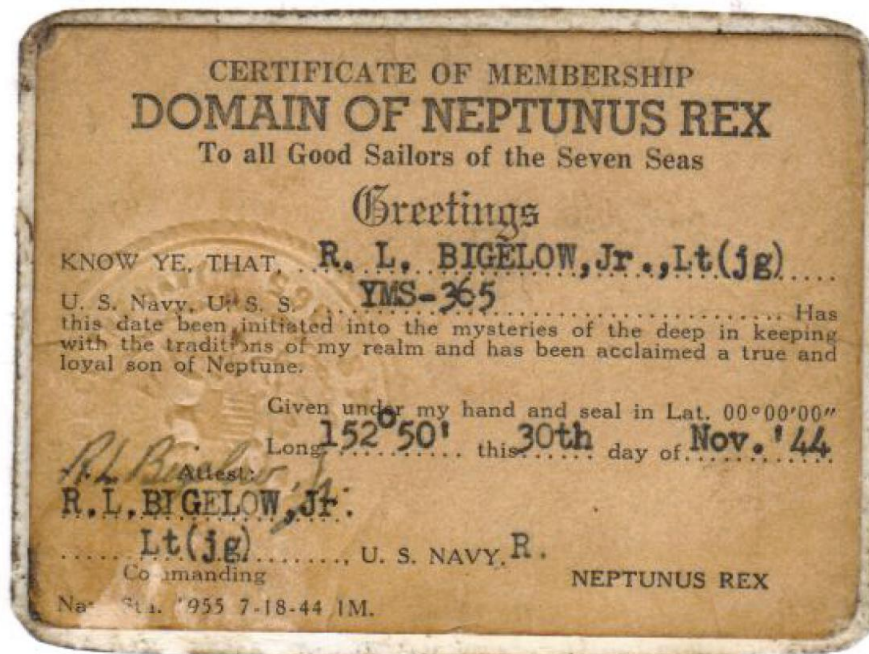
(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

The ship departed Majuro Atoll on November 25, 1944 en route to Manus, Admiralty Islands in the Bismarck Sea.



LTJG Bigelow in the wardroom.
(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

On November 30, 1944, the ship crossed the equator with appropriate ceremony.





(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

On December 1, 1944, the ship entered Manus harbor in the Admiralty Islands.

For the next several weeks, YMS-365 patrolled the harbor and ensured the channel was kept clear of mines.

On December 22, 1944 the ship departed Manus harbor escorting the 14,000 ton tanker USS IX 132 Andrew Doria en route to Leyte Gulf in the Philippine Islands. The ship arrived in Leyte Gulf on December 30, 1944.

On January 2, 1945, YMS-365 departed Leyte Gulf as part of the invasion force heading to Lingayen Gulf, Philippine Islands.

On January 3, 1945 as the convoy was en route to Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred as was recorded in the '365's deck log:

0444 GQ. Enemy planes bearing 255 T, 10 miles and closing. All ships firing at planes. Planes release two bombs on starboard side of convoy. No damage.

0710 GQ.

0728 Enemy dive bomber attempts to crash into tanker that is part of convoy. Unsuccessful. Another plane leaves area smoking and crashes into the sea.

0740 Friendly planes astern of convoy.

0755 ceased firing. Secure from GQ.

1505 All flags in convoy at half-mast in honor of casualties suffered.

1622 Enemy planes 275 T at 29 miles.

1626 GQ. Planes attacking starboard side of convoy. No damage. Friendly planes arrive in area. Secure from GQ.

On January 4, 1945 as the convoy was en route to Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

0048 Three enemy aircraft circling overhead. Enemy drops no bombs.

0305 secure from GQ.

0320 GQ. Enemy aircraft circle overhead and drop no bombs.

1002 Enemy planes 180 T 10 miles. Sound GQ. Friendly planes 215 T 12 miles and closing.

1013 Friendly planes announce that enemy planes had been splashed 152 T at 12 miles.

1605 Enemy planes at 225 T at 16 miles.

On January 5, 1945 as the convoy was en route to Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

0805 GQ. 0817 Two enemy planes at 150 T 28 miles.

0900 Secure from GQ.

1030 Enemy plane 050 T 17 miles.

1032 Friendly planes tally ho after enemy plane.

1034 enemy plane 090 T 9 miles. Our plane on his tail.

1040 Our plane reports to have splashed enemy plane.

1552 Two Jap destroyers 101 T 63 miles speed 25 kts, cse 320 T. Three convoy escorts depart to take care of Jap destroyers.

1700 GQ. Two enemy planes 230 14 closing.

1729 Jap plane coming along stbd side of convoy.

1732 Jap plane shot down. 2nd plane shot down. Jap plane attempts to crash into LCI(G) – hits bow of LCI(G).

Note: The invasion at Lingayen Gulf took place from January 6 – 9, 1945.

On January 6, 1945 as the convoy was en route to and entered Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Jap planes reported at various distances and bearings. None came closer than 9 miles.

0450 GQ. Jap planes in area.

0540 Jap planes 270 5 miles.

0610 Jap plane shot down off stbd beam of convoy.

0731 Jap planes attack astern of convoy. Friendly planes in area.

0905 assume minesweeping formation.

1115 Jap plane flying low off port side of convoy.

1245 Jap plane crashes into DMS off port quarter; another Jap plane crashes into APD off stbd quarter.

1432 unit closes up to proceed with minesweeping operations in Lingayen Gulf.

1620 GQ. Jap plane attacking ships off port beam.

1825 forming to retire to sea for the night.

On January 7, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Steaming in convoy retiring for the night from Lingayen Gulf into China Sea.

0135 Jap planes in area. GQ.

0145 Jap planes drop two bombs on convoy.

0200 secure.

0445 GQ. Jap planes attacking.

0729 ships on starboard side firing at Jap planes.

0735 Jap planes left area. Secure form GQ.

0915 Begin to sweep mag gear; lowered acoustic hammer.

0945 540 kw generator not working. Drop out of formation to attempt repairs. Can't repair. Stream O type gear.

1225 rejoin formation and sweep with O gear in Damantis area of Lingayen Gulf.

1408 sweep cable hits bottom/shoal near beach.

1735 recovered all sweep gear. Retired for night into China Sea.

On January 8, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Retiring in formation into China Sea.

0645 Returning to Lingayen Gulf. GQ. Jap planes in area.

0652 friendly planes astern closing.

0718 friendly planes still in area.

0807 stream acoustic and O gear. Begin sweeping in Port Saul area of Lingayen Gulf.

Retire for the evening to China Sea.

On January 9, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Steaming in formation retiring to China Sea for the night.

0533 Flash Red and Control Green while returning to Lingayen Gulf.

0730 sweeping in area of Lingayen in Lingayen Gulf.

0915 recover sweep gear and clear area so that troops can land. Receive fuel and supplies from USS AM 323.

1105 GQ. Jap planes in area.

1115 Secure from GQ. Steaming with unit in southern end of Area Escolata in Lingayen Gulf.

1855 Jap planes attacking ships in Area. Ships put up heavy AA fire. Jap plane shot down by ships off starboard bow.

1950 Secure from GQ.

Anchored in southern end of Escolta area, Lingayen Gulf.

On January 10, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Anchored in Lingayen Gulf.

0603 GQ. Small craft screening this ship in anchorage.

0640 Jap planes attacking ships in anchorage. Ships putting up heavy AA fire.

0714 Jap plane drops bomb near ship anchored close by.

1900 GQ. Jap planes attacking ships in anchorage. Heavy AA fire.

1901 Jap plane shot down near ship.

1916 Jap plane shot down off starboard bow.

1932 secure from GQ.

Blacked out for night.

On January 11, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Anchored in Lingayen Gulf.

0659 GQ. Jap planes in area 160 T 12 mi.

0709 secure from GQ.

0810 GQ. Anchor aweigh. Moving about harbor looking for supplies.

1257 dropped anchor in Area Shackle, Lingayen Gulf.

1853 GQ. Jap planes in area. Heavy AA fire. Secure from GQ.

On January 12, 1945, during the invasion of Lingayen Gulf, the following occurred:

Anchored in Area Shackle, Lingayen Gulf.

0657 GQ. Heavy AA fire. Jap plane shot down.

0756 another Jap plane shot down. Another Jap plane shot down in vicinity of APD causing fire on APD which seems to be under control.

0930 underway from anchorage.

Anchored in Area Shackle, Lingayen Gulf.



**April 1945: Crewmen from USS YMS-365 seen on Leyte Island, Philippines
Top row left to right: BM2c Jessie M. Kelly, SoM3c LaVerne D. Harwig, CY Edmond O. Pelino, GM3c James J. Wells, PhM1c Charles H. Morgan.**

Bottom row left to right: S1c William W. Jones, EM2c George J. Powell, S2c Ruben D. Pasamonte, S2c Jacob G. Weber and S1c Benjamin T. Nordyke, Jr.

(Credit CMM Ed Johnson, USNR)



Little Doc and Big Doc

(Doc and Chief Pharmacists Mate First Class Charles Morgan catch up on some sleep)

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)



April 1945: Unidentified crewmen from USS YMS-365 seen on Leyte Island, Philippines.

(Credit CMoMM Ed Johnson, USNR)



**GM2c John W. Woodward, S1c William C. Bones and
GM3c Russell D. Richardson seen on USS YMS-365.**
(Credit CMoMM Ed Johnson, USNR)

The Si

Lingayen Gulf



Bigelow, USNR (ret)

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

For the next month, the ship remained in Lingayen Gulf patrolling the area and sweeping for mines. There was only limited Japanese aircraft activity during this period.



Ashtray made from shell of 3"/50 round from YMS-365. Bottom view of shell is on the right.

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

On February 13, 1945, YMS-365 got underway as part of a convoy headed to Leyte Gulf. The convoy entered Leyte Gulf on February 18, 1945. YMS-365 anchored in San Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf on February 18, 1945.

On March 6, 1945, YMS-365 got underway as part of an assault group headed to Zamboanga as part of the overall invasion of Mindinao – the second largest island in the Philippine Islands.



Zamboanga, Mindanao, Philippine Islands

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)



Crewmen of USS YMS-365.

Top row left to right: BM1c Donald J. Treshman, PhM2c Walter J. Wolak, S2c James D. Robertson, S2c Edward Kologinski, SoM3c Joseph F. Pomager.

Middle row left to right: MoMM2c Edwin Mordenski, MoMM2c George E. Brown, CMoMM Edwin A. Johnson, MoMM2c George E. Todd, Cox Henry J. Scarino, SC2c William R. Quirk, MoMM2c James E. Szukics and StM2c Joshua C. Wiley.

Bottom row left to right: MoMM2c Alfred F. Martorano, S2c Dale E. Spitler, EM2c George J. Powell, QM1c Charles B. "Chick" Silcox, GM2c John W. Woodward, S1c William C. Bones, GM2c Russell D. Richardson, MoMM2c James I. Mitchell

(Credit CMoMM Ed Johnson, USNR)



YMS-365 minesweeping operations. Location unknown.

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)



Filipino bumboat alongside YMS-365 in Zamboanga, Philippine Islands.

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

On March 8, 1945, the ship entered the Basilan Strait between Zamboanga and Basilan Island and began sweeping the channel. For the next several weeks, YMS-365 conducting minesweeping and patrolling operations in the Basilan Strait in support of operations in Zamboanga.



Japanese currency used during occupation of the Philippines.

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))



LTJG Cushman and CMM Johnson examine Japanese canoe off Zamboanga, April 29, 1945.

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)



“Doc” standing a bridge watch on YMS-365.

(Credit CMM Ed Johnson, USNR)

On March 31, 1945, YMS-365 got underway as part of the invasion force headed toward Jolo and Sanga Sanga Island.





Moro islanders at Tawi Tawi, Philippine Islands (1945)

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

NOTE: At this point in time, the detailed chronology of YMS-365 from deck logs ceases. All logs for the period 1 APR – 26 JUN 45 were lost when the ship was sunk. Some information is available from other ship's logs and command logs.

On 19 APR 45, YMS-365 picked up five Japanese prisoners of war from an open boat south of Negros Island. The boat had been spotted by a U.S. plane. One man was wounded. All needed medical attention. The prisoners were transferred to LST-635 for transportation to Army authorities at TACLOBAN, LEYTE. Captured articles and papers were retained aboard YMS-365 for delivery direct to intelligence authorities ashore. The following information was obtained from the prisoners, whose service numbers could not be determined:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank or Rate</u>
MANZO YAMASAKI	Major
TOLKUJYO WATANO	First Lieutenant
KENITIKA ITO	Second Lieutenant
SIZUO NARUMI	Sergeant

MATSAUGU YOSHII

Private First Class

(Official records of LST GROUP SIXTY-FIVE, Echelon Report, LEYTE to MANILA 6-14 April 1945)



Fred Fischer and Fred Huff

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

While steaming in the Dutch East Indies, an unverified “Splice the Mainbrace” evolution reportedly occurred. The ‘365 had recently provisioned and had an abundance of stores on board – including a locker full of meat. At some point in time, the ‘365 met up with a certain New Zealand Destroyer. The NZ vessel had been at sea a long time and was just about out of stores.

So the '365 swapped some meat for 40 cases of Heinekens beer. At the first opportunity, the CO declared "Splice the Mainbrace" and the crew enjoyed some fine Dutch beer.

In late April, 1945 YMS-365 sailed to Morotai, Dutch East Indies where it remained for about a month. On April 29, 1945, LTJG Fred Huff relieved LTJG Dick Bigelow as Commanding Officer.

At the end of May, 1945, YMS-365 participated in the invasion of Brunei Bay on the northwest corner of Borneo. This invasion was fairly routine and the '365 experienced little opposition.

In early June, 1945, the '365 headed down the Makassar Strait between Borneo and Sulawesi to the vicinity of the well-defended Japanese stronghold of Balikpapan, Dutch East Indies. Balikpapan was an important oil production center. It was attacked by Japan in January 1942. The Japanese Army defeated the Dutch garrison and massacred many civilians.

The '365 arrived in the Balikpapan area in mid-June. In contrast to the relative ease of the Brunei invasion, it became clear that the Japanese would not give up Balikpapan without a fight.

The harbor at Balikpapan was heavily mined. In mid-June, YMS-50 hit a mine and was hit by 3" shells from the beach. No one was killed, but the '50 sank. YMS-335 was hit by a shell from a shore battery killing nine members of the '335's gun crew. YMS-10 took a hit from a shore battery which did not explode.

On June 23, 1945, the '365 joined YMS-364 and YMS-49 sweeping areas close to the beach. Three other YMS's were supposed to be part of this group, but they reported engine and/or sweep gear problems and did not participate. The '364 took a shell through the chart house (a dud – no explosion) and retired back out to sea. The '365 opened fire with its 3"/50 destroying some houses and pill box on the beach. The '49 took fire from the beach and retired to sea.



Ship's mascot Doc and friends.

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)

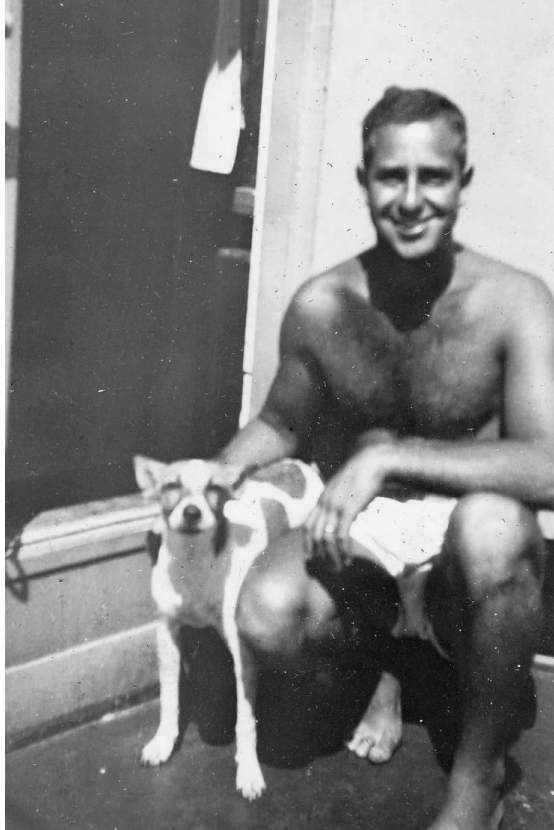
The '365 was ordered to proceed along the same path that the '364 and '49 had taken. As the '365 is headed straight towards the beach about a mile off shore, a shell splashed about 30 yards astern. The CO orders GQ. As many as eight shells land very close to the '365. The '365 returned fire with more than 100 shells. When the paint melted off the barrel, the 3"/50 crew decided to let it cool down.

These operations continued on June 24 and 25, 1945. On the evening of the 25th, four Japanese Betty bombers attacked the formation. The planes came close enough that they were in '50 cal range. The '365 hit one of the attackers and it splashed. The Bettys dropped a lot of bombs, but didn't hit any of the ships.



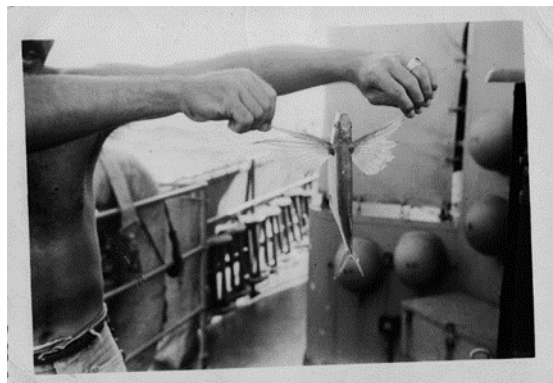
Chief Johnson on board the YMS-365 somewhere in the South Pacific.

(Credit CMM Ed Johnson, USNR)



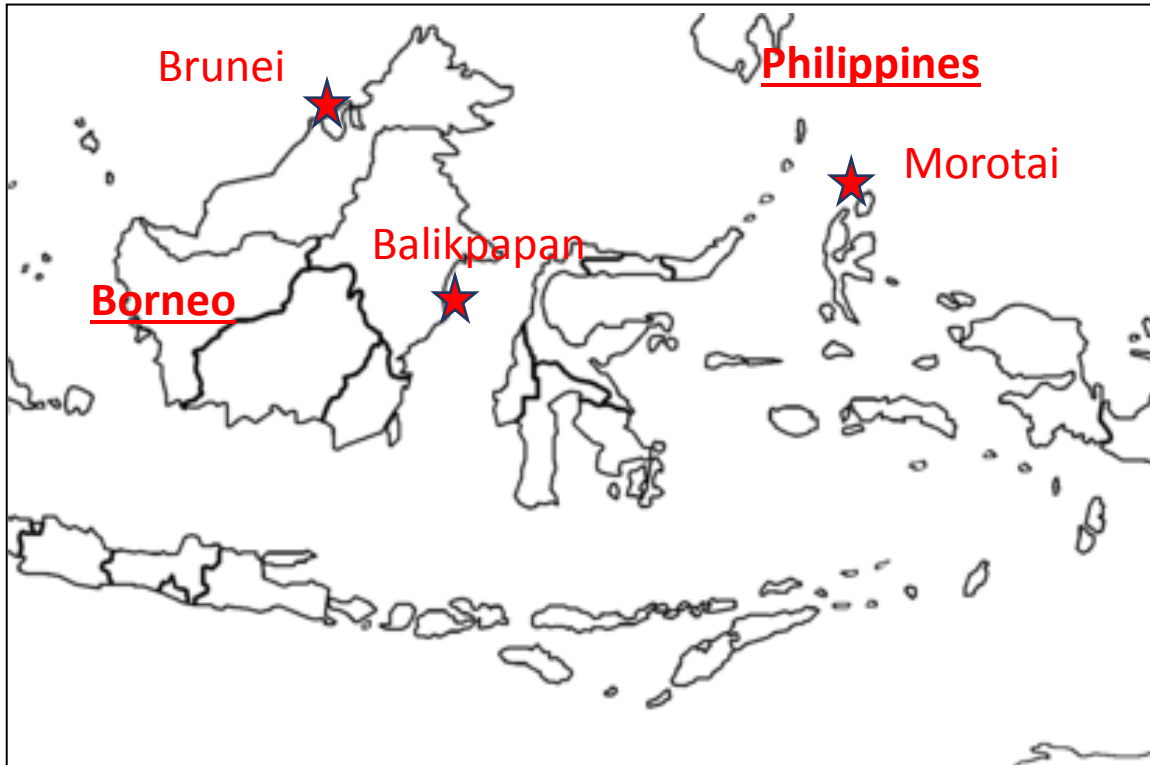
QM1c Charles B. "Chick" Silcox on USS YMS-365.

(Credit CMM Ed Johnson, USNR)



Flying Fish – somewhere in the Pacific

(Credit LTJG Dick Bigelow, USNR)



YMS-365 operations in the Dutch East Indies.

(Credit CDR Rick Bigelow, USNR(ret))

On June 26, the '365 swept and destroyed two contact mines. At 2 PM local time, the '365 was doing another sweep in the area where it had been fired upon a few days before. The following is an edited transcript of the account of LTJG Donald C. Cushman – gunnery officer and a survivor – in a letter sent to former shipmate LTJG Fishman, who had been detached from the YMS-365 in April 1945.

“LTJG (Fred) Huff and ENS (Kendall) Niesses were on the flying bridge with (Seaman First Class Cletus) Burch and (Seaman First Class William) Jones when the '365 hit the mine. Most of the black gang and the other boys off watch were crapped out under an awning on the fantail or in the galley. Goelitz and I were in the wardroom – he was seated

and I was on my way out the starboard end and was right in the passageway by the bulletin board when the ship was hit. We must have been hit square in the generator room because it just plain vanished. The bulkhead between the engine rooms was intact and holding but the rest of the room was gone as were half of the officers' staterooms. If anyone of us had been in the sack, he would have been blown away.

"I must have rattled around inside that passageway like dice in a shaker. I remember climbing up on my feet again, climbing over a lot of debris, going out the door, and the next thing I recall is being on the flying bridge trying to lift the mast, flag bag, and other crap off of Huff who was trapped and pinned under all that stuff up on the top of the forward wind break rail.

"Niesses and Burch were thrown clean from the flying bridge to the forecastle and evidently Huff was caught by the falling mast just as he was going over the rail. Jones was still up there with the same leg he had broken once before broken again. Both were conscious though dazed.

"The immediate danger was that the ship would capsize – at least the forward part because she assumed a decided list to port and there were only a few longitudinal beams, mostly just the bulwark on either side, holding the ship together and when those tore loose, over she'd go and Fred Huff, for one, would be a dead duck.

"I called for more men and ordered the rest to stay aboard and we finally freed Fred. I gave that boy all the credit in the world for although trapped and pinned down as he was and realizing that if the ship rolled over that he was a goner, he remained calm. He asked me to take command and I said "what for" – you'll be free in a minute (although it took us about ten minutes) and then the only thing he asked was whether we would stay up or not. Hell, yes – we'll stay up – at least long enough for us to get everyone off.

"As soon as Huff was free, I took a quick canvas of the joint. It was impossible to get communications as the wardroom was full of wreckage and water was up to the bench on the port side because of the list – so to hell with them – ain't worth a man's life to get them.

"While we were clearing Huff and Jones down to the forecastle and seeing to it that all the boys were either there or on the fantail, Tobin was wig-wagging back to the '364 to come alongside and they proceeded to do so.

"(Pharmacists Mate First Class Charles) Morgan, thank God, was not hurt and was all over the ship like a jack rabbit and did one hell of a good job. Chief (Motor Machinists Mate Edwin) Johnson was also OK and did a damn fine job. He secured the main engines immediately – the bulkhead between the engine rooms still held and the engines were purring like a couple of kittens – and dogged down the port in the bulkhead and then helped like hell in freeing Fred.

“The '64 came alongside finally, and none too soon for me for we were rapidly being swept up on the beach and we were in just about the same place where we had been fired upon a couple days before. We tied the ships together with a one and four line and proceeded to transfer the men. Just as Fred and I started to climb aboard the '64, our forecastle rolled out from under our feet and capsized to port. The '64 had to chop her lines to keep from getting fouled up with us.

“Immediately, I called to (Yeoman Chief Oscar) Pelino for a muster, but he was one step ahead of me for he had already taken one and everybody was present. Thank God. Everyone got out alive. I couldn't hardly believe it, but Pelino said he was sure.

“I was about to give a sigh of relief when I looked back at what was left of the '65 and what I think all of our crew who could still walk also saw – the little dog “Doc” bob up to the surface of the bow and that was still above water and climb up on it. At the same time, I heard the tin can give orders over the MN to another YMS to come up, shell and sink what was left of us.

“Damn, hell, they aren't gonna shell little Doc. He was one of us and I was damned if I was going to see him go like that. I grabbed the MN, called the can and told him that our little dog, a shipmate if ever there was one, was still aboard and requested permission to go back and get him. Believe it or not, it was granted - though we would have gone back whether it was given or not. The '64 backed down to 25 yards of where Doc was and we all called to him to like mad – but the little guy wouldn't jump off and swim over.

“Chief Johnson then stripped down, swam over to him and threw him into the water. Once in the water, Doc swam like a shot and straight as an arrow to the stern of the '64 where I was reaching down from a kite hanging over. He even beat the chief back. Once aboard, he was the happiest little dog I have ever seen and damned if he didn't make the rounds again like he used to do every morning, wagging his tail till I thought it would wag off and kissing everyone in the ear or the cheek.

“The '64 took us to the Columbia (CL56) and put us aboard where their doctors went to work. As I remember, the guys were hurt as follows:

“Huff had a bone or two chipped or broken in his leg and heel and several cuts about the face.

“Neisses landed on his back on the forecastle and badly bruised his back and cut his chin open.

“Goelitz suffered a broken nose.

“Jones broken leg.

“Burch slightly broken back – not a complete break.

“Todd a broken arm and Pappy a slight concussion. Both were sitting on the starboard midships .50 cal and were thrown back to the fantail and were lucky they weren’t killed. Pappy was kind of out of his head for three or four days.

“(Electricians Mate Second Class Henry McGlaughlin) Mac had his forehead split open so that you could see his skull and also a fairly bad cut over one eye.

“Shorty was in making up a bunk and somehow escaped with nothing more than a few broken ribs.

“A number of other guys suffered nothing more serious than a few minor cuts and bruises.

“I had the top of my noggin split open and both knees fouled up somehow.

“Nobody it seems was right over the explosion – a couple of Motor Macs and a gunners mate had just been shooting the breeze around the gen room hatch a couple minutes before and just decided to go up to the galley for coffee. You know how damn popular the mid-ships part of the ship was for crapping out but amazing as it may seem, there wasn’t one soul between the wardroom door and the stack (which ended up cocked over on its ear). A lot of guys had just been there and several of us were just heading for the area - I for one was about to step out the starboard wardroom door and as it was, was only about two feet from where the ship blew.

“I tell you, Fish, we were a lucky bunch of guys and our friend upstairs sure must have had his eye on us.

The crew was transferred from YMS-364 to the cruiser USS Columbia (CL-56) which had first rate medical facilities.

Several of the crew were transferred to the Naval Hospital on Samar Island, Philippines. Eventually, all the crew was transferred back to the continental U.S. When the Second World War ended a few months later, most were released from active duty.

June 26, 1945 was not a good day for YMS’s at Balikpapan. An hour after the YMS-365 struck the mine and eventually was sunk, YMS-39 also hit a mine and rapidly capsized and sank. Three crew members were killed. The rest of the YMS-39 crew survived and was also transferred to the USS Columbia (CL-56).

YMS-365 was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for operations associated with the invasion at Balikpapan, Borneo, Dutch East Indies. The ship also earned the Pacific Theater Ribbon, the American Theater Ribbon, and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one star.

The crew held at least two reunions in the 1980’s.

LTJG Fred Huff (New Orleans, LA) returned to New Orleans, graduated from Tulane and Loyola Universities, and became an accountant. He eventually relocated to Pensacola, FL where he passed away in 2005 at the age of 89.

LTJG Richard Bigelow (Hazleton, PA) became an instructor at the NROTC Unit at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL after he was relieved as CO of YMS-365. After the war, he graduated from Dickinson (PA) Law School and became a lawyer in Hazleton, PA and then a county judge. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. He had two children and two grandchildren. He died in 1988 at the age of 72.

ENS Kendall D. Niesess (Fullerton, CA) returned to Southern California and became an educator and school principal in Orange County, CA.

ENS Harry G. Goelitz (Oak Park, IL) returned to Oak Park and ran his family's construction company. He passed away at age 30 in 1952.

LTJG Donald C. Cushman (Wilmette, IL) returned to Wilmette. He was one of four Cushman brothers who served as officers in the Navy during WWII. (Wife Marilyn). He moved to Green Bay Wisconsin after the war and eventually to Sturgeon Bay, WI. He was VP of Sales for Fort Howard Paper Company.

Chief Motor Machinst's Mate Edwin Johnson. Chief Johnson returned to the US and left the Navy saying he had enough of war. He married Margaret Jennings and they settled in Chicago where he operated a locksmith and lawn mower repair business. The family eventually moved to a new house in Addison, Illinois. They had four children. Chief Johnson passed away at age 68.

Seaman First Class William H. Shannon earned a bachelors degree from William and Mary, a MA and PhD from the University of Maryland and was a teacher and administrator in Maryland for thirty-one years. He had four children and eight grandchildren. He died in 2004 at the age of 85.

Chief Yeoman Edmond O. Pelino left the Navy in 1946 and returned home to Bridgeville, PA where he owned and operated a furniture and appliance store. He had four children and eight grandchildren. He passed away in 1989 at the age of 68.

Electricians Mate Second Class George Jerry Powell (Philadelphia, PA) returned to Philadelphia. He was an electrician for the Delaware River Port Authority and Fox Chase Cancer Center. He had four children and seven grandchildren. He passed away in 1995 at the age of 73.

LTJG Fred B. Fischer (Lexington, KY) (S/N 269097) left the ship on April 27, 1945 and returned to Kentucky. He became Chairman of the Board of the Henry Bickel Construction Company. He had a son and four grandchildren. He passed away in 1989 at the age of 73.

A cartoon rendering of Chief Johnson's heroics is shown below:



The official Navy Department Press Release was consistent with LTJG Cushman's account of the sinking.

N A V Y D E P A R T M E N T

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PRESS AND RADIO

SEPTEMBER 12, 1945

MINESWEEPER BROKE IN TWO FROM EXPLOSION OF MINE

Sweeping mines under fire of Japanese coastal batteries on D-minus-5 day, at Balikpapan, Borneo, the USS YMS 365 was blown in two when a contact mine exploded under the amidships generator room. Eighteen officers and men of the ship's company of 33 were wounded.

The 136-foot minesweeper was operating only one mile off the beach selected for the assault landing. It was within easy range of the shore batteries which had been harassing the small craft since the beginning of the hazardous operation on D-minus-15 day. Four vessels were struck by shells.

The YMS 365 was lost June 26, 1945. Her loss was announced in a Navy Department Communique on July 18, 1945. The commanding officer, Lieutenant (junior grade) Fred C. Huff, U.S.N.R., of 3100 DeSoto Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana, was conning the ship from the flying bridge. With him were Ensign Kendall D. Neisess, U.S.N.R., of Fullerton, California, and Cletus Irvin Burch, Seaman, First Class, U.S.N.R., of 390 Fifth Street, Linton, Indiana.

An influence mine had just been exploded by the ship's sweep gear. Then the contact mine explosion tore a segment from the hull and left the fore and aft sections still afloat but tenuously connected by a few strakes of deck and hull planking.

Lieutenant (junior grade) Huff was pinned to the deck of the flying bridge when the mast fell on him. Ensign Neisess and Burch were hurled through the air to fall on the forecastle deck many feet below. Burch sustained fractured vertebrae, while Ensign Neisess was badly cut.

Lieutenant (junior grade) Donald C. Cushman, U.S.N.R., whose father, Ralph Dudley Cushman, lives at 1315 Ashland Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois; Ensign Harry George Goelitz, Jr., U.S.N.R., whose mother Mrs. Mary Evans Goelitz, lives at 525 North East Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois, and Ruben D. Pasamonte, Seaman, Second Class, U.S.N.R., of Panama City, Canal Zone, were in the ship's wardroom when the blast came. All were injured, none seriously.

"We rattled around in there like peas in a bucket," said Lieutenant (junior grade) Cushman. "All loose gear flew through the air."

Edwin Johnson, Chief Motor Machinist's Mate, U.S.N.R., of Green Bay, Wisconsin, took eight men to the flying bridge and was able to extricate Lieutenant (junior grade) Huff from beneath the broken mast which crushed his legs to the deck.

147098

Meanwhile, Charles H. Morgan, Chief Pharmacist's Mate, First Class, U.S.N.R., of 1237 Clairmount Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, was treating the injured. He found that George E. Todd, Motor Machinist's Mate, Second Class, U.S.N.R., whose mother, Mrs. Ruth Basel, lives in Garfield Heights, Ohio, and Lawrence George Herron, Motor Machinist's Mate, Third Class, U.S.N.R., whose wife, Mrs. Lawrence G. Herron, lives at 614 Holly Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota, and whose mother, Mrs. Marie M. Lettenmaier, resides at 1033 Beach Street, St. Paul, Minnesota, had been standing on deck almost directly over the explosion center. They were hurled many feet into the air and struck deck near the fantail.

During this time the YMS 365 had been proceeding directly toward the enemy-held beach, with the main engine running out of control. Johnson went below and secured the engine.

However, a strong current continued to set the ship shoreward. It was in this area, the day before, that the Japs had straddled the YMS 365 with eight projectiles, some of which landed close enough to shower water on the deck.

Although injured, Damon Edward Cooper, Boatswain's Mate, First Class, U.S.N., whose wife, Mrs. D. E. Cooper, lives at 2904 Columbus Avenue, Anderson, Indiana, made his way to the forecastle and let go the anchor, bringing the ship up less than three-quarters of a mile from the beach.

Soon the YMS 364 came alongside to remove the crew. Lieutenant (junior grade) Huff, last to leave, had just stepped from his ship when the vessel broke in two, the bow section capsizing immediately.

The survivors now saw the mascot of the YMS 365 swim out of the wreckage and clamber to the keel of the capsized bow section. The dog, known as "Doc," had adopted the ship in Galveston, Texas, two years before.

Despite the danger of Jap shell fire, the commanding officer of the YMS 364 urged by the survivors, obtained permission from the officer in tactical command to lie to while Johnson dived overboard, swam to the wreck and brought the dog back with him. "Doc" returned to the United States with the rest of the crew and is now waiting in California for his next ship.

This operation was the sixth for the YMS365. Previously the vessel had swept for mines at Lingayen Gulf, Zamboanga, Tawi Tawi, Jolo and Brunei Bay.

In addition to these mentioned above, the following officers and men were wounded in the mine explosion:

William "C" Bones, Gunner's Mate, Second Class, U.S.N.R., whose wife, Mrs. W. Bones, lives on Route #2, Box 28, Linton, Indiana, and whose mother, Mrs. Ruth Bones, has the address, P. O. Box 1103, Saginaw, Michigan.

Jessie Martin Kelly, Boatswain's Mate, Second Class, U.S.N., whose usual address is that of his guardian, Mrs. Mattie Taylor, Poulan, Georgia.

Edwin Mordenski, Motor Machinist's Mate, First Class, U.S.N.R., whose mother, Mrs. Antoinette Mordenski, lives at 3884 29th Street, Detroit, Michigan.

Stephen Joseph Nagy, Ship's Cook, Second Class, U.S.N.R., whose wife, Mrs. S. J. Nagy, has the address, P. O. Box 302, Fords, New Jersey, and whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Nagy live at 186 Fifth Street, Fords, New Jersey.

Edmond Oscar Pelino, Chief Yeoman, U.S.N.R., whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. James P. Pelino, live at 521 Baldwin Street, Bridgeville, Pennsylvania.

George Jerry Powell, Electrician's Mate, Second Class, U.S.N.R., whose wife, Mrs. G. J. Powell, lives at 1521 East Alcott Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Jacob George Weber, Seaman, Second Class, U.S.N.R., whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Weber, lives at East Tawas, Michigan.

Henry L. McLaughlin, Electrician's Mate, Second Class, U.S.N.R., of 42-04 Saul Street, Flushing, Long Island, New York.

William W. Jones, Seaman, First Class, U.S.N.R., of Shreveport, Louisiana.

The YMS 365 was built in the yards of the Wheeler Shipbuilding Corporation, Whitestone, Long Island, New York, and was commissioned in August, 1943.

The last formal muster of the crew prior to the sinking took place on April 1, 1945. The following was reported to the Navy Department as part of the quarterly report sent to the Navy.

The muster and disposition of the crew after the sinking of YMS-365 as of June 26, 1945 is shown below:

	Name	Rate	Transferred to
1	Bones, William C.	GM2c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
2	Brown, George E.	MoMM2c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
3	Burch, Cletus I.	S1c	Fleet Hospital, Samar, Philippines
4	Cooper, Damon E.	BM1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
5	Harwig, LaVerne D.	SoM2	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
6	Herron, Lawrence G.	MoMM3c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
7	Johnson, Edwin A.	CMoMM	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
8	Jones, William W.	S1c	Fleet Hospital, Samar, Philippines
9	Kelly, Jesse M.	BM2c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
10	Kologinski, Edward	EM3c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
11	Martorano, Alfred F.	MoMM1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
12	Mitchell, James I.	MoMM2c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
13	Mordenski, Edwin	MoMM1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
14	Morgan, Charles H.	CPhM	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
15	Nagy, Stephen J.	SC2c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
16	Newman, Arthur S.	S1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
17	Nordyke, Benjamin T.	S1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
18	Pasamonte, Ruben D.	S2c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
19	Pelino, Edmond O.	CY	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
20	Pomager, Joseph F.	SoM3c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
21	Powell, George J.	EM2c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
22	Shannon, William H.	S1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
23	Shaw, Billy J.	Cox	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
24	Spitler, Dale E.	S1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
25	Stewart, Robert E.	S1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
26	Tobin, George D.	SM1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
27	Todd, George E.	MoMM2c	Fleet Hospital, Samar, Philippines
28	Weber, Jacob G.	S2c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
29	Wells, James J.	GM3c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco
30	Yeager, Herman G.	F1c	US Navy Receiving Station, San Francisco

BM1c – Boatswains Mate 1st class

BM2c – Boatswains Mate 2nd class

BM3c – Boatswains Mate third class

CMoMM – Chief Motor Machinists Mate

Cox - Coxswain

CPhM – Chief Pharmacists Mate

CY – Chief Yeoman

EM2c – Electricians Mate 2nd Class

EM3c – Electricians Mate 3rd Class

F1c – Fireman 1st Class

GM2c – Gunners Mate 2nd Class

GM3c – Gunners Mate 3rd Class

MoMM1c - Motor Machinists Mate 1st Class

MoMM2c – Motor Machinists Mate 2nd Class

MoMM3c – Motor Machinists Mate 3rd Class

S1c – Seaman 1st Class

S2c – Seaman 2nd Class

SC2 – Supply Clerk 2nd Class

SM2 – Signalman 2nd Class

SoM2 – Sonarman 2nd Class

SoM3 – Sonarman 3rd Class

Minesweeping Order – Attack at Zamboanga, Mindinao, Philippine Islands March 30, 1945

YMS 365

U. S. S. YMS-71
Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

File YMS 71/A4-3

TOP SECRET

Minesweeping Order
No. 3-45.

TASK ORGANIZATION

MINESWEEPING UNIT
TASK UNIT 76.10.5
U. S. S. YMS 71 (Flagship)

30 March 1945.

76.10.5 MINESWEEPING UNIT

Lieut. SALTmarsh

YMS 71(F), YMS 8, YMS 50,
YMS 365.

4 YMS

1. Information as contained in Commander Seventh Amphibious Force Representative - Zamboanga Attack Order 1-45.
2. This UNIT will conduct combat minesweeping operations off designated landing beaches at SANGA SANGA ISLAND, in support of landing at SANGA SANGA, to ensure safe entry of transport units. This UNIT will conduct clearance minesweeping of TAWITAWI BAY on SUGAR Day and SUGAR Day Plus One as directed by OTC. Further this UNIT will conduct clearance minesweeping of areas as listed in Appendix 1 to Annex F of Commander Seventh Amphibious Force Representative - Zamboanga Attack Order 1-45, as shown in Annex A of this order.
3. Areas and positions referred to are as indicated in Commander Seventh Amphibious Force Representative - Zamboanga Attack Order 1-45.

When directed by OTC off SANGA SANGA ISLAND at approximately 0630 SUGAR Day proceed designated landing beaches SANGA SANGA in Starboard Quarter formation and commence clearance sweep of landing beach area for MOORED AND ACOUSTIC mines to depth of twenty feet. Flagship will act as guide ship and lead ship of formation. Lead ship will stream both sides Gropesa gear and will conduct sonar search ahead for MOORED mines. Lead ship will not stream acoustic gear. All ships less lead ship stream starboard side only and stream parallel pipes astern. All ships use 200 fathoms of sweep wire, one Mark 9 cutter and two Mark 11 cutters on each side, 4 1/2 fathoms of depressor wire; use float pendant same length as depth of sweep.

File YMS 71/AA-3

TOP SECRET

30 March 1945.

MINESWEEPING ORDER

No. 3-45.

~~SECRET~~

Order of ships will be YMS 71, YMS 50, YMS 8, YMS 365.

During sweeping keep just inside of float of leading sweep, distance approximately one hundred yards between bow of ship and leading float.

Sweeping will be accomplished in clockwise direction working from outer limits toward the center of area to be swept. Turns will be made with a minimum of rudder. All ships have two dan buoys ready to be dropped to mark obstructions, uncharted reefs, mines, etc., as may be directed.

~~Upon completion of beach sweep at SANGA SANGA proceed if directed by OTC to TAWITAWI BAY and continue sweeping to depth of twenty feet for moored and acoustic mines. Should situation at SANGA SANGA not allow for prompt entry into TAWITAWI BAY Ships of UNIT will upon completion of SANGA SANGA beach sweep recover gear and await directive from OTC to commence sweeping of TAWITAWI BAY.~~

TAWITAWI BAY will be entered through area ~~HAIG~~ and HAIG and sweeping will be conducted of following areas in priority as shown to depths as indicated:

JOHNNY WALKER

Connection:

Van Duzen

3. 20	HAIG AND HAIG	20 Feet
1. 40	JOHNNY WALKER	40 FEET
2. 40	BLACK AND WHITE	40 Feet

Subsequent to SUGAR Day sweeping in TAWITAWI Bay will continue based on previous days operation. Should no mines be found on SUGAR Day, all ships of UNIT will stream both sides of Oropesa gear, closing in to swept waters and recovering inboard side, upon discovery of mines.

LCS Gunboats of ASSAULT SUPPORT UNIT will accompany formation when directed by OTC, remaining in swept waters, to afford fire support and act as destructor vessels for mines swept. Destroyers of ASSAULT SUPPORT UNIT will accompany formation when directed by OTC, remaining in swept waters, to afford fire support.

Subsequent to SANGA SANGA and TAWITAWI BAY sweeping, sweeping of SULU Areas will commence as directed by OTC. Annex A lists type of sweeping and sweeping data for Areas.

Be prepared to be towed.

Be prepared to provide counter battery fire.

Reliable Guerrilla information and reports from PT sources indicate positive moored mines from Bongao Island to Sangasiapu Island and between Sangasiapu Island and Lea Island. Mines are possibly land controlled although latest army intelligence indicates not now electrically operated. Mines reported are shaped like our 50 gal. oil drums and are floating on surface. Latest army intelligence, reports also that Guerrillas have cleared a channel between Sangasiapu Island and Lea Island. Accordingly minesweepers will initially approach Johnnie Walker area with caution and will initially proceed to destroy any mines on surface. As possible every effort to procure Guerrilla pilots for mined waters of Tawitawi Bay will be made.

File YMS 71/A4-3

TOP SECRET

30 March 1945.

MINESWEEPING ORDER

No. 3-45.

Provide anti-aircraft fire against enemy planes. Cause all lookouts to be particularly alert for suicide planes and suicide boats coming especially from shore area. It is highly possible that many small boats may be present in TANITAWI BAY considering enemy forces estimated on the island of BONGAO. This plan is effective on receipt.

4. Ships fuel and water to capacity prior to leaving ZAMBOANGA. Fill lubricating oil tanks prior to leaving ZAMBOANGA. Report daily at 0800 to Task Unit Commander percentage of burnable fuel on hand. After gunnery action report by 1500 quantity of three inch ammunition expended.
5. Communications in accordance with Annex D to Commander Seventh Amphibious Force Representative - Zamboanga Attack Order 1-45.

When streaming and recovering sweep gear, indicate the progress of the operation by the use of "ABLE" flag as follows:

DIPPED	Started streaming or recovering.
TWO BLOCKED	Completed streaming or recovering.

Haul down "ABLE" on signal from lead ship.

Practice strict radio discipline. When ships of UNIT are called as UNIT via voice radio answer up in order of ships. COMMANDER MINESWEEPING UNIT in U. S. S. YMS 71.

Ernest O. SALTWARTH
Lieutenant, U. S. Naval Reserve
Commander Minesweeping Unit
76.10.5

ANNEXES:

(A) MINESWEEPING DATA BY AREAS.

Authenticated:

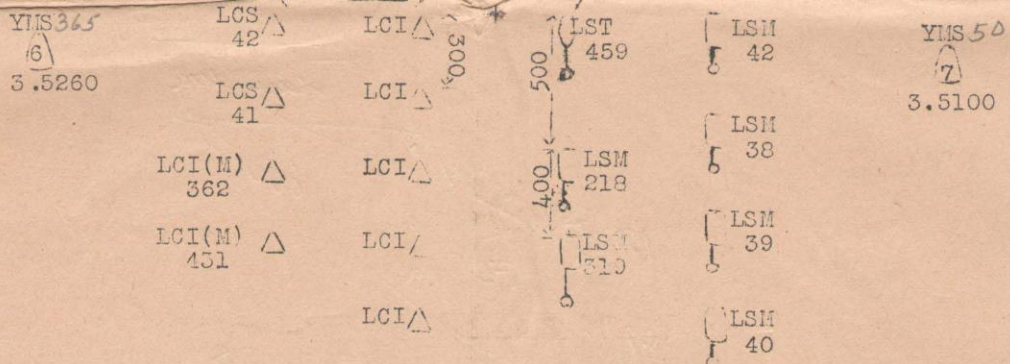
Van D. Grum
Van D. GRUM
Lieutenant (jg) USNR.

TOP SECRET

APPENDIX 10 TO ANNEX "B"

COM7THPHIBFOR REP - ZAMBOANGA ATTACK ORDER NO. 1-45.

DD 1
 YMS 2/ 2,5000
 (2) Sauffley
 2,5320 OTC
 YMS 8
 (3) 2,5040
 DD 4 Waller 3290
 DD 5 Philip 3070



SC 741

Standard Interval: 600 yds.
 Standard Distance:
 Between LCI's: 300 yds.
 Between LSM's: 400 yds.
 Between LST & LSM: 500 yds.
 Fleet Guide in LST 459
 Fleet Center Between 2nd and 3rd columns.

LEGEND

- Screening ship
- LST
- LSM
- LCI
- Tow

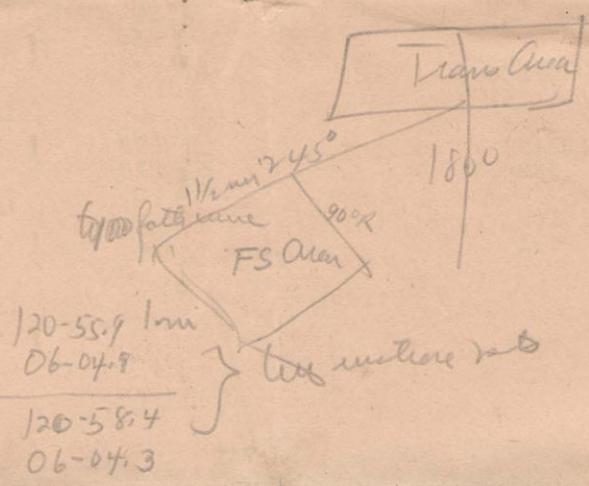
Appendix 10 To ANNEX "B"
 CRUISING DISPOSITION

25 feet
 300 fathom
 Port
 3 intermediate one end.
 Potatoes - England

save gear
 0415-0430 -

Transit Area
 06-08.3 SE corner
 125-01.1 1/2 mi long
 1 mi deep
 near E & W (Bay side)

comes to about 180°
 from center of
 Trans. area



2 B Tomson
 1st - 1/2 intermediate
 30 feet
 150 fathom mine at
 depression.

DISTRIBUTION

One Copy Each

Com 7th Phib For
Com 7th Phib For Rep - Zamboanga
Com Des Ron 22 (WALLER)
CTU 76.10.3 (LCS 42)
CTU 76.10.4 (Lt. DEVANEY)
WALLER
SAUFLEY
PHILIP
LCS 41
LCS 42
YMS 8
YMS 50
YMS 365

TOP SECRET

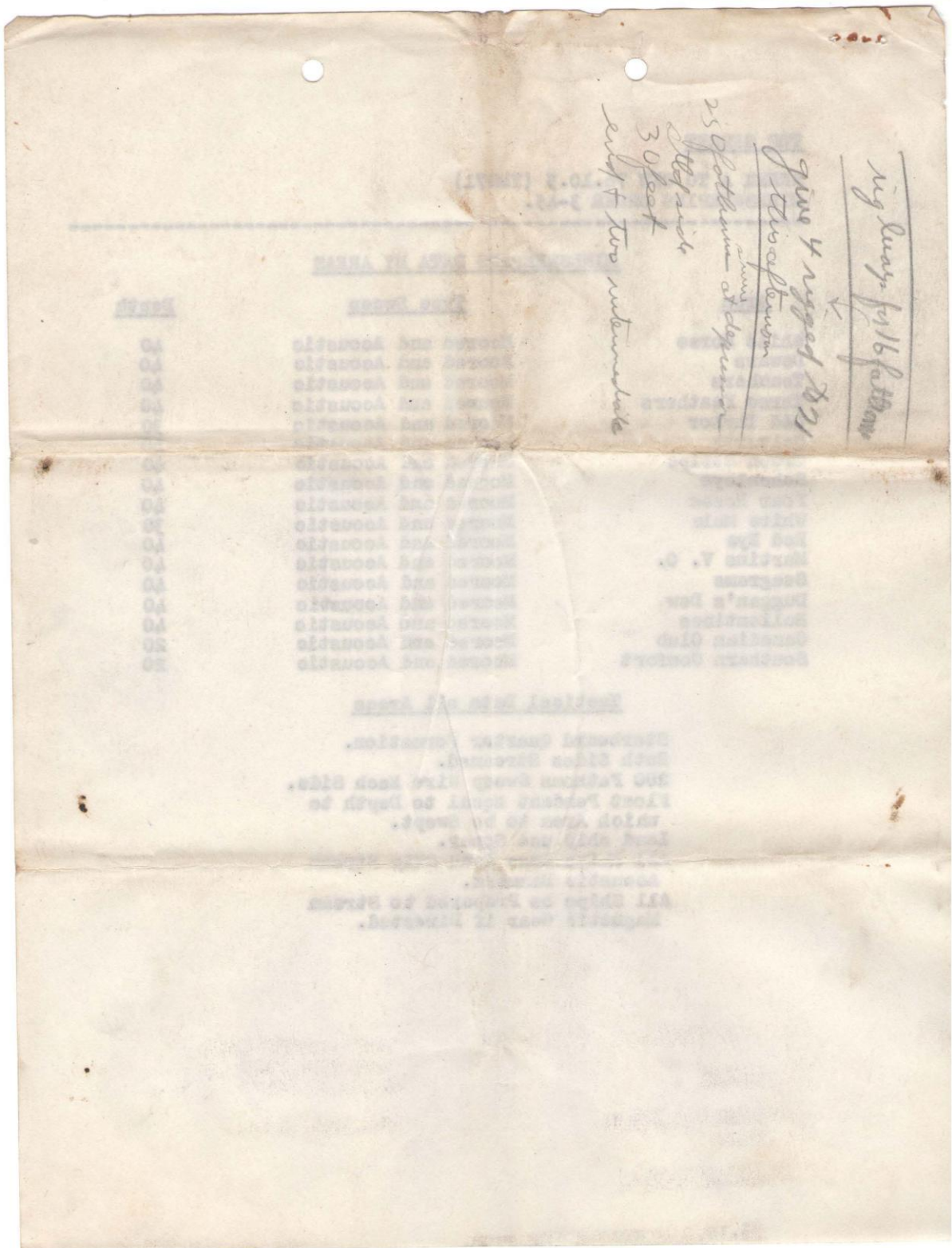
ANNEX A TO CTU 76.10.5 (YMS71)
MINESWEEPING ORDER 3-45.

MINESWEEPING DATA BY AREAS

<u>Area</u>	<u>Type Sweep</u>	<u>Depth</u>
White Horse	Moored and Acoustic	40
Dewars	Moored and Acoustic	40
Teachers	Moored and Acoustic	40
Three Feathers	Moored and Acoustic	40
Old Taylor	Moored and Acoustic	30
Calverts	Moored and Acoustic	40
Green Stripe	Moored and Acoustic	40
Schenleys	Moored and Acoustic	40
Four Roses	Moored and Acoustic	40
White Mule	Moored and Acoustic	30
Red Eye	Moored and Acoustic	40
Martins V. O.	Moored and Acoustic	40
Seagrams	Moored and Acoustic	40
Duggan's Dew	Moored and Acoustic	40
Ballantines	Moored and Acoustic	40
Canadian Club	Moored and Acoustic	20
Southern Comfort	Moored and Acoustic	20

Tactical Data all Areas

Starboard Quarter Formation.
Both Sides Streamed.
200 Fathoms Sweep Wire Each Side.
Float Pendant Equal to Depth to
which Area to be Swept.
Lead ship use Sonar.
All ships Less Lead Ship Stream
Acoustic Hammers.
All Ships be Prepared to Stream
Magnetic Gear if Directed.



rig heavy fly 16 fathom

give 4 rigged 2021
Chicago

25 fathom at depth

30 feet

only 4 two intermediate

10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10

Vertical line of force
Horizontal Quarter
The bottom edge of the
line should be kept
from being too
low and the
line should be
kept as high as
possible.