

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



THE ALAMO SCOUTS

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In the Southwest Pacific Theater, before the Philippine Islands were retaken, Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, realizing he did not have real time intelligence, created an all volunteer elite unit, consisting of small teams capable of operating deep behind enemy lines. Volunteers were to be drawn from his Sixth Army combat units and the unit was to be named the Alamo Scouts after Krueger's hometown landmark.

The original nucleus of Scouts were trained at The Alamo Scout School near Cairns on the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland, northeast coast of Australia by Lieutenant Commander William Coultas, an officer of the Royal Australian Navy, and US Army Lt. Colonel Fredrick Bradshaw. The six to eight weeks coursework which included immersion language training, reconnaissance, and jungle survival skills would later be formalized by LTC Frederick W. Bradshaw. The School was moved to Fergusson Island, off the eastern coast of New Guinea. Men interviewed who expressed only the burning desire to kill Japs would never see the Alamo Scouts Training Center. Following the multiphase selection process, finalists were selected and attended a rigorous six-week training program at the Alamo Scouts Training Center which focused on eight major skill areas: Rubber Boat Handling, Intelligence Gathering, Scouting & Patrolling, Navigation, Communications, Weapons, and Physical Conditioning.

Although nine classes of 250 enlisted and 75 officers graduated from the Alamo Scouts Training Centers from 27 December 1943 to 2 September 1945, only 117 enlisted men and 21 officers actually became Alamo Scouts. The remaining graduates either became instructors or were returned to their units.

The Alamo Scouts evolved from a simple reconnaissance unit in New Guinea to a sophisticated intelligence collection and commando unit, supplying and coordinating large-scale guerrilla operations on Leyte and Luzon. They are credited with two successful prisoner of war camp liberations. The first was in New Guinea where 197 Allied prisoners were freed. In January 1945, they provided forward reconnaissance and tactical support for the Sixth Ranger Battalion and Filipino guerrillas in the rescue of 511 Allied prisoners from the Japanese Cabanatuan Prison Camp on Luzon made famous by the movie "The Great Raid."

In July 1945, as part of Operation Olympic, the proposed Allied invasion of the Japan, the Alamo Scouts were chosen to spearhead the pre-invasion reconnaissance of Kyushu, the Allied launch site. When the Japanese surrendered, the Alamo Scouts instead landed in Wakayama, becoming a key element in the US occupation. They were disbanded at Kyoto, Japan, in November 1945.

The Alamo Scouts battle credits include 37 known missions in the Bismarck Archipelago and New Guinea. In the Philippines, on Leyte, the Alamo Scouts conducted 13 missions in support of the Allied landings and 54 intelligence gathering missions behind enemy lines on Luzon. Never numbering more than 70 volunteers, the Alamo Scouts earned 44 Silver Star Medals, 33 Bronze Star Medals and four Soldier's Medals by the end of the war. In more than 80 hazardous missions, they never lost a man in action.

In 1988, the Alamo Scouts were individually awarded the Special Forces Shoulder Tab in recognition for their services in WWII and are included in the unofficial lineage of the current United States Special Forces.