

FROGMEN

Britain's frogmen disclose one of the war's best kept secrets. The underwater swimming apparatus looks like a carnival novelty in the safety of a swimming pool. On the D-day invasion of Normandy it was a different story. Then the frogmen were on the beaches before the main assault began. With their large webbed feet, diving suits and special breathing apparatus they were trained to lead the war's most hazardous operation. To the British invasion troops waiting to take their first crack at Hitler's European fortress, the frogmen must have looked fantastic wallisian figures.

Many frogmen had previously served in midget submarines and human torpedoes - maybe that's where they learned to crash dive.

Of course the Navy didn't call 'em "frogmen" - nothing so simple as that. Officially they were L.C.O.C.U.s "Landing craft obstacle clearance units" and they certainly could clear obstacles. Here's how they cut through anti-submarine nets.

In the first two days of the invasion, frogmen cleared 2,400 obstacles, most of them with mines attached. Altogether it must have been a frog's life.

Nobody knows yet whether frogmen suits will be on sale now the war's over. If they are, maybe Pathe cameramen will bring back an interview with the Loch Ness Monster.