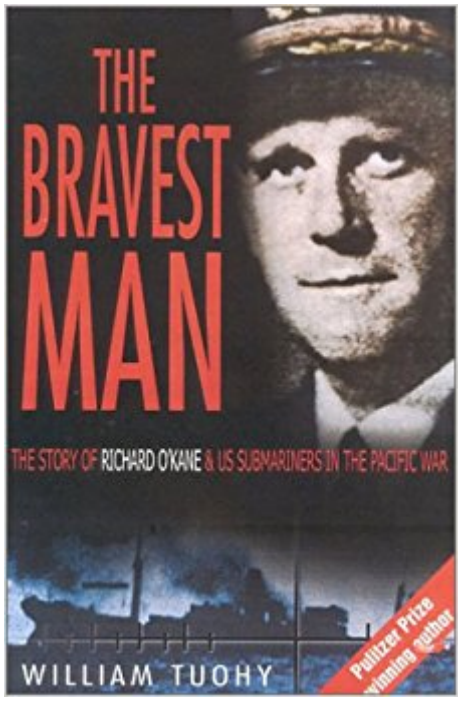
The Bravest Man



Synopsis

Written by a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, this tells the true story of an all-American war hero, Dick O'Kane and gives insights into the secret troubles of the U.S. Navy.

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Customer Reviews

Pulitzer Prize winner for his Vietnam War reporting and Navy veteran William Tuohy was a career journalist with the Los Angeles Times.Ã Â He lives in Los Angeles.

Chapter One Ã¢â ¬Å“Wahoo is ExpendableÃ¢â ¬Â• At the first, pale light on a January morning in 1943, Wahoo carved through the calm waters of the South Pacific with her crew at full alert. In the breaking, shimmering dawn, the sleek, matte-black American submarine strained on the surface at full speed, 18 knots, her powerful diesel engines leaving a boiling wake astern. Wahoo was approaching the Vitiaz Strait, a narrow waterway separating the Solomon Sea from the Bismarck Sea off the northeast coast of the big island of New Guinea. The strait was a maritime chokepoint, patrolled by Japanese aircraft and anti-submarine vessels from nearby New Britain IslandÃ¢â ¬â •dangerous water for U.S. submarines. WahooÃ¢â ¬â„¢s seventy-one crewmembers shared an edgy expectancy. They were embarked on a war patrol to seek out armed, enemy ships. They would be risking all. Thousands of miles from a friendly port, they would face the enemy alone. Defeat would mean death in their own iron coffin, in a nameless deep. They were heading into a no manÃ¢â ¬â„¢s sea, and Wahoo was fair game for foe, or even friendÃ¢â ¬â •patrol planes from Australia had a nasty habit of dropping bombs on American submarines. Normal doctrine called for

Wahoo to dive beneath the surface at first light and proceed submerged. But the situation was not normal. Wahoo was holding to a breakneck pace to reach a Japanese-occupied harbor, and running on the surface would save precious hours. Now, seven days out of the U.S. Submarine Base at Brisbane, Australia, Wahoo was several hours ahead of schedule heading for her patrol area around the Japanese-held Palau Islands east of the Philippines. En route to her assigned area, Wahoo had orders to make a slight detour, if possible, to reconnoiter the anchorage of Wewak on the north coast of New Guinea, captured by the Japanese in the conquest of the East Indies the year before. It was used by the Japanese as a staging area to support amphibious operations in the Solomon Islands chain. Thanks to her four powerful diesel engines Wahoo was able to maintain an 18-knot speed, almost 21 statute miles per hour. (A knot, a nautical mile per hour, is 1.15 statute miles an hour.) To fit in the requested reconnaissance, Wahoo was running at full speed on the surface despite the proximity of Japanese airfields. Submerged on batteries, her speed would have been reduced to 5 or 6 knots at best. Though crewmembers were apprehensive, they were curiously confident. For Wahoo on her third war patrol was commanded by two officers whom they trusted, and whose leadership was soon to become famous throughout the U.S. Submarine Force. The sense of confidence was pointedly shared by the executive officer, Lieutenant Richard OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane, a handsome 31-year-old sailor with light-brown almost rusty hair, a strong jaw, firm set to his mouth, and an open face. Dick OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane was of medium height and in fine physical condition. A New England Yankee, OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane was energetic and outgoing, but sometimes sharp-tongued. His temperament was changeable, the crew thought. He could be voluble, or he could be quiet. The XO seemed by turns charming or curt, warm or irascible. But whatever his mood, he had a reputation as a hard-charger. OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane put Wahoo into commission on June 15, 1942, as executive officer under then skipper, Commander Marvin Kennedy. OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane was delighted with the vesselÃ¢â ¬â„¢s name. U.S. fleet boats were named after marine life and a wahoo is a large, swift, game fish. But Ã¢â ¬Å“WahooÃ¢â ¬Â• sounded to OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane and the crew like the name of an Indian tribe. So her battle flag pictured an American Indian headdress. Despite WahooÃ¢â ¬â„¢s early promise and well-trained crew, OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane, the number two, was frustrated at Captain KennedyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s performance as skipper on the first two Pacific war patrols. He believed Kennedy was not aggressive enough, and failed to press attacks against choice enemy targets, including an aircraft carrier. Dick OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane decided he would not make a third war patrol under Marvin Kennedy. He would ask for a transfer off Wahoo. OÃ¢â ¬â„¢KaneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s unstated feelings were shared by the enlisted men and other officers, and that mood translated into ragged morale among the crewmen,

who were all volunteers prepared to risk their lives on patrol. Wahoo, with only one confirmed enemy ship sunk, had not made much of a record. Captain Kennedy may have had his excuses, but the crew did not want excuses. They wanted a good record. They wanted to sink enemy ships. What buoyed the morale of Dick OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane and WahooÃ¢â ¬â„¢s men was the presence of a dynamic new skipper, Lieutenant Commander Dudley W. Morton, thirty-five, a tall, dark-haired, broad-shouldered athlete, with ham-hands, a friendly smile, and an approachable manner. Morton exuded confidence and ability. He was familiar with the crew, having made the second war patrol aboard Wahoo as the Prospective Commanding OfficerÃ¢â ¬â •the PCO, or Ã¢â ¬Å“makee-learnÃ¢â ¬Â• in sub slang. Kentucky-born and Florida-raised, Morton acquired his nickname, Mush, short for Ã¢â ¬Å“Mushmouth,Ã¢â ¬Â• at the Naval Academy because of his heavy Southern drawl. Mush Morton liked roaming the boat chatting with the sailors. WahooÃ¢â ¬â„¢s engineer, Lieutenant George Grider, thought Mush was built like a bear and playful as a cub. Dick OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane was familiar with Mush MortonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s record. Morton was a varsity football player and wrestler who had been in command of the ancient submarine R-5 in the Atlantic. Mush had vainly fired two torpedoes at what he thought was a German U-boat. Transferred to the Pacific as a Prospective Commanding Officer (PCO), Morton was assigned to the venerable Dolphin as relief crew skipper. He looked the boat over, took her out on a training exercise off Pearl Harbor, and decided the sub was too creaky and should be retiredÃ¢â ¬â •or assigned solely to training duties. Ã¢â ¬Å“Dolphin is a death trap,Ã¢â ¬Â• Morton told the executive officer. Ã¢â ¬Å“IÃ¢â ¬â„¢m going to try to get off her. I advise you to do the same.Ã¢â ¬Â• This high-handed attitude, which branded Morton a maverick in the eyes of some squadron commanders, resulted in his removal from command of Dolphin. He was on the verge of being Ã¢â ¬Å“surfacedÃ¢â ¬Â• out of submarines to regular duty when he was rescued by a senior staffer, Captain John H. Ã¢â ¬Å“BabeÃ¢â ¬Â• Brown, also an Academy football player. Brown kept Morton in the PCO pool at Pearl Harbor. He was assigned as a PCO passenger aboard Wahoo for the second war patrol, which left Pearl Harbor traveling through the South Pacific to Brisbane. Mush Morton was determined to vindicate himself and Babe BrownÃ¢â ¬â„¢s confidence in him. During WahooÃ¢â ¬â„¢s second patrol, Morton shared OÃ¢â ¬â„¢KaneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s view that Captain Kennedy was far too cautious. The higher authorities in Brisbane concurred, and on the last day of 1942, Mush Morton was given command of Wahoo. Dick OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane was impressed by Mush MortonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s first action on taking control. Calling the crew together, Mush said quietly, Ã¢â ¬Å“I am glad to have everyone of you aboard Wahoo personally. What I have to say can be stated simply. Wahoo is expendable. We will take every reasonable precaution, but our mission is to

sink enemy shipping. We are going out there on this war patrol to search for Japs. Every smoke trace on the horizon, every contact on watch will be investigated. If it turns out to be the enemy, we are going to hunt him down and kill him.Ã¢â ¬Â• Morton paused. Ã¢â ¬Å“Now if anyone doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t want to go along under these conditions, just see the yeoman. I am giving him verbal authority to transfer anyone who is not a volunteer. Nothing will ever be said about your remaining in Brisbane.Ã¢â ¬Â• A half-hour later, just before sailing time, Morton checked with Yeoman Second Class Forest J. Sterling, the shipÃ¢â ¬â„¢s clerk. Ã¢â ¬Å“Any customers, Yeo?Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬Å“Not a one, Captain.Ã¢â ¬Â• Morton grinned. Ã¢â ¬Å“ThatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s the kind of stuff I like in a crew.Ã¢â ¬Â• Now, sailing into combat, Wahoo had a captain and an executive officer who seemed to form a command team infused with fighting spirit, which radiated a mood of cockiness and assurance. Mush Morton clearly placed full trust in Dick OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane, and the exec repaid his skipperÃ¢â ¬â„¢s faith with loyalty and expertise. Dick OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane was eager to fight. At the U.S. Sub Base in Brisbane a few days earlier, he learned that his first submarine, the elderly USS Argonaut, had been reported overdue and presumed lostÃ¢â ¬â •after a depth charging by a Japanese destroyer in waters near New Britain, not far from the WahooÃ¢â ¬â„¢s present transit area. What better way to avenge this personal loss, OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane thought, than by using the training he gained from Argonaut to help Wahoo score against the enemy? After three war patrols, OÃ¢â ¬â„¢Kane knew that submariners liked being on a boat with a good combat record. They wanted skippers and execs who could conduct a war patrol that would make them proud. As for the crewÃ¢â ¬â„¢s view, Yeoman Sterling sensed Wahoo was different this time out, with a strong spirit growing in her. There was more of a feeling of freedom, of camaraderie, Sterling thought, of men being trusted to get their jobs done. The ship was no longer uptight but relaxed, though still taut and alert. The yeoman thought that Wahoo would make her own luck. Heading for Wewak, Mush Morton posted additional lookouts at the bridgeÃ¢â ¬â •rather than submerging at a much-reduced speed. Daylight surface running was a new innovation, since U.S. subs usually spent the day submerged when they were anywhere near enemy air searches. MortonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s bold tactic did not sit well with everyone. Some Wahoo junior officers, going into battle under the aggressive new skipper, had qualmsÃ¢â ¬â •and wondered whether their skipper wasnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t taking too many chances. George Grider, a tall, thoughtful pipe-smoker from Memphis, Tennessee, believed some of Mush MortonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s bolder comments during WahooÃ¢â ¬â„¢s second patrol reflected the absence of a reasonable degree of caution. Running on the surface in daylight near Japanese airfields seemed to Grider to be rash, if invigorating. With Captain Morton on the bridge, Grider was Officer of the Deck (OOD) when the lookouts spotted a

plane in the far distance. Grider prepared to scramble down the bridge hatch for the expected crash dive. Ã¢â ¬Å“LetÃ¢â ¬â„¢s wait till he gets in to six miles,Ã¢â ¬Â• Mush Morton said quietly. Ã¢â ¬Å“Great Lord,Ã¢â ¬Â• Grider thought, Ã¢â ¬Å“weÃ¢â ¬â„¢re under the command of a madman.Ã¢â ¬Â• The enemy plane closed to 61/2 miles and then veered away. By not diving, Morton saved hours. The tactic had worked, Grider grudgingly admitted, but he wasnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t sure he was in favor of it. Entering Vitiaz Strait, from WahooÃ¢â ¬â„¢s flying bridge Captain Morton watched the skies for Japanese planes. A lookout reported a Mitsubishi bomber that had sneaked in four miles away. Ã¢â ¬Å“Clear the bridge,Ã¢â ¬Â• Morton ordered. Ã¢â ¬Å“Dive! Dive!Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬Å“ahoogah, ahoogah.Ã¢â ¬Â• Two raucous blasts sounded from the diving klaxon. Lookouts tumbled below through the bridge hatch to the conning tower, followed by Grider and Morton, who ordered, Ã¢â ¬Å“Take her down.Ã¢â ¬Â• The bridge hatch clanged shut. The Quartermaster dogged it down. Ã¢â ¬Å“Green board,Ã¢â ¬Â• reported Chief of the Boat, Russell Ã¢â ¬Å“PappyÃ¢â ¬Â• Rau at the Ã¢â ¬Å“Christmas treeÃ¢â ¬Â• control board. Ã¢â ¬Å“Pressure in the boat.Ã¢â ¬Â• Wahoo slipped quickly beneath the surface. The main air induction valve had slammed shut with a wheeze. Water gurgled into the ballast tanks as air hissed and sputtered out. Throbbing diesels abruptly stopped as the ship shifted to battery-powered, electric drive to run smoothly under water. Wahoo was closing Wewak and Morton decided to run submerged the rest of the day. In the control room, the officers discussed tactics. George Grider suggested that the instruction Ã¢â ¬Å“reconnoiterÃ¢â ¬Â• meant to take a periscope look outside Wewak harbor, and simply note the shipping activity. Captain Morton countered, Ã¢â ¬Å“No, boy, the only way you can reconnoiter a harbor is to go right into it and see whatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s there.Ã¢â ¬Â• With that, George Grider glanced in consternation at fellow officersÃ¢â ¬â •Roger Paine Jr., lean, dark-haired with a ready smile who ran the torpedo data computer; and Richie Henderson, tall, thin, and serious. It was clear, Grider decided, that the captain had advanced from rashness to outright foolhardiness. It would be crazy for Wahoo to submerge and enter an enemy harbor whose very location on the map they couldnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t pinpoint. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

This book makes a good match with Wahoo. Richard O'Kane was the Executive Officer on Wahoo and authored that book. He then became a naval and submarine legend on the U S S Tang. If you like action, accuracy, and professionalism reading about WWII, you can't go wrong with these two books.

Until the atom began to provide energy for submarines, underwater boats were usually named for fish. Shark, Trout, Albacore. And Tang. One would think this powerful warboat was named after a aggressive fish unafraid even of sharks. But tang is a generic word for many species in the scalpelfish family, so named because a bone in their tails can put a dandy slice through your finger. Indeed, numerous representatives of the colorful tang are in the 6 inch class and make a fine contribution to a saltwater aquarium. In The Bravest Man: Richard O'Kane and the Amazing Submarine Adventures of the USS Tang,Pulitzer Prize winning author William Tuohy weaves a multi-colored blanket of history about the silent service of the early 1940s, and especially about the Tang and her only commanding officer, Commander Richard "Dick" O'Kane, a Naval Academy graduate from the early 30s. Tang sank 27 Japanese ships altogether, the highest kill rate of any American submarine in the war, and on her third patrol alone she took out 10 merchant ships. That kind of record should mean Tang is tied up at a seaport somewhere in the United States where the mind-boggling exploits of her crew can be told and re-told and admirers can tour the cramped insides. First, however, Tang will have to be found on the bottom of the Pacific, re-floated, and made watertight. Tang didn't go down because of enemy action. She sank herself. One of the Navy's dirty secrets during World War II was the high failure rate of its torpedoes. The Bureau of Ordinance in Washington rejected what the captains of the submarines said about the torpedoes, and indeed some of their complaints are not presentable for a family website. The torpedoes sometimes dove far too deeply and passed harmlessly beneath their targets. In other attacks they bounced off the side of Japanese ships as though they were rubber balls, never exploding. And worst of all was when the torpedoes attacked their own mother boats. After nightfall on October 24, 1944 Tang attacked an enemy convoy, sinking and damaging several ships. At 2:30 a.m. October 25, O'Kane decided to fire the last torpedo in his inventory at a ship he had already hit once but hadn't sunk. The electrically powered fish was dispatched from a stern tube, heading straight for the target. But then it turned, and turned some more and its target suddenly became the USS Tang. The torpedo struck with a thundering explosion and the boat went down quickly. No one knows with absolute certainty how many American-made torpedoes sank their own submarines, but it may have been a dozen more. When a submarine is blown up she almost always goes down with all hands and there's no one left to give witness. In the case of the Tang, however, the boat was in fairly shallow water and some of the crew managed to escape from the bottom. Captain O'Kane was on the bridge when his torpedo struck the Tang and was blown over the side into the sea. Later picked up by a Japanese patrol boat, he was transported to Japan and prison camp. O'Kane's weight dropped from 170 pounds to less than a hundred, and he refused to be reunited with his wife and

family until he had put on weight so as not to frighten them by his appearance. In March of 1946 O'Kane was ordered to report to President Truman at the White House where the Chief Executive placed around the sailor's neck a blue ribbon with a piece of metal attached to it. Dick O'Kane had been awarded the Medal of Honor. The Bravest Man goes far beyond the story of Tang and her crew. The author details many other war patrols of boats sailing from Pearl Harbor and Midway Island, including that other World War II phenomenon, USS Wahoo. It's never pedestrian writing, but there are parts of Tuohy's immaculately researched book that will be of more interest to serious students and scholars of submarine warfare. The Bravest Man was published by Presidio Press June 27, 2006. sells the paperback as part of its Prime program for $7.99 and the Kindle version also for $7.99.

"The Bravest Man: Richard O'Kane and the Amazing Submarine Adventures of the USS Tang" is a pretty good book. However, an addition to the already long title to the book should have been "...the Amazing Submarine Adventures of the USS Tang and a bunch of other American submarines." Apparently there was not enough information available to fill the book with Captain O'Kane's exploits, so the author added many more tales of many more submarines, skippers and admirals. This is not a bad thing, just something to be noted.There are probably better books about WWII submarine warfare including "Silent Running, My Years on a World War II Attack Submarine" by James F. Calvert and "Undersea Warrior, The World War II Story of 'Mush' Morton and the USS Wahoo" by Don Keith.William Tuohy's book "The Bravest Man" did include many interesting facts not included in other WWII submarine books, such as the maximum diving depth of the subs, details about the amount of fuel and water aboard ship, number of submarine casualties, and tonnage of Japanese ships sunk.Captain Dick O'Kane was an amazing and fearless commander who was the most successful American submarine commander of WWII. He was a no nonsense, get the job done officer, and highly decorated veteran.Well done overall, not the best, but well worth reading.

My interest in submarine operations in WW II in the Pacific dates back at least 60 years. My library includes the encyclopedic US Submarine Operations in WW II which I had read twice before age 16 as well as many of the books referenced in The Bravest Man's bibliography. Much of the material in this book was familiar, but I found a lot of new information and insight in three areas. The author deserves credit for shining a light on problems of skippers who were not up to the challenges of war time command. He also provided a lot of information on the problems and personalities of the divided command and the personalities involved in the defective torpedo issues. Other sources

have mentioned these issues, but The Bravest Man provided a lot more information and insight.Before reading the book I had read the reviews, both positive and negative. Some of the criticism is justified. Proof reading should have been better and a few repeated items should have been caught by editing. Other criticism seems nit-picking. This book gives a readable, accurate account of the submarine war in the Pacific. Reports of the actions of others provides a frame of reference. For anyone with an interest in military history, I would recommend this book highly.

This book is not exactly all about O'Kane. In fact, his command of the Tang does not begin until page 195. The author really is telling the story of submarine warfare in the Pacific and there is a lot to tell. His account of O'Kane's skills as a sub commander deliver as promised including the sinking of the Tang by one of its own torpedoes. The account of O'Kane's accomplishments will have a different perspective if put into the context of the whole Pacific submarine offensive. Sub commanders suffered under the weight of poor planning and poor leadership from some of their commanders. If readers are looking for a book about heroes, this is a must read because the sub commanders and their crews were certainly heroes who fought with their single ship against whatever surface ships come over the horizon.

Bundle: Menage MFM MMF MMM MM Gay BDSM Man of the House Forced Submission Younger on Older Man Innocent Woman Voyeur