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OUR NAVY AT WORK

Reginald Wright Kauffman



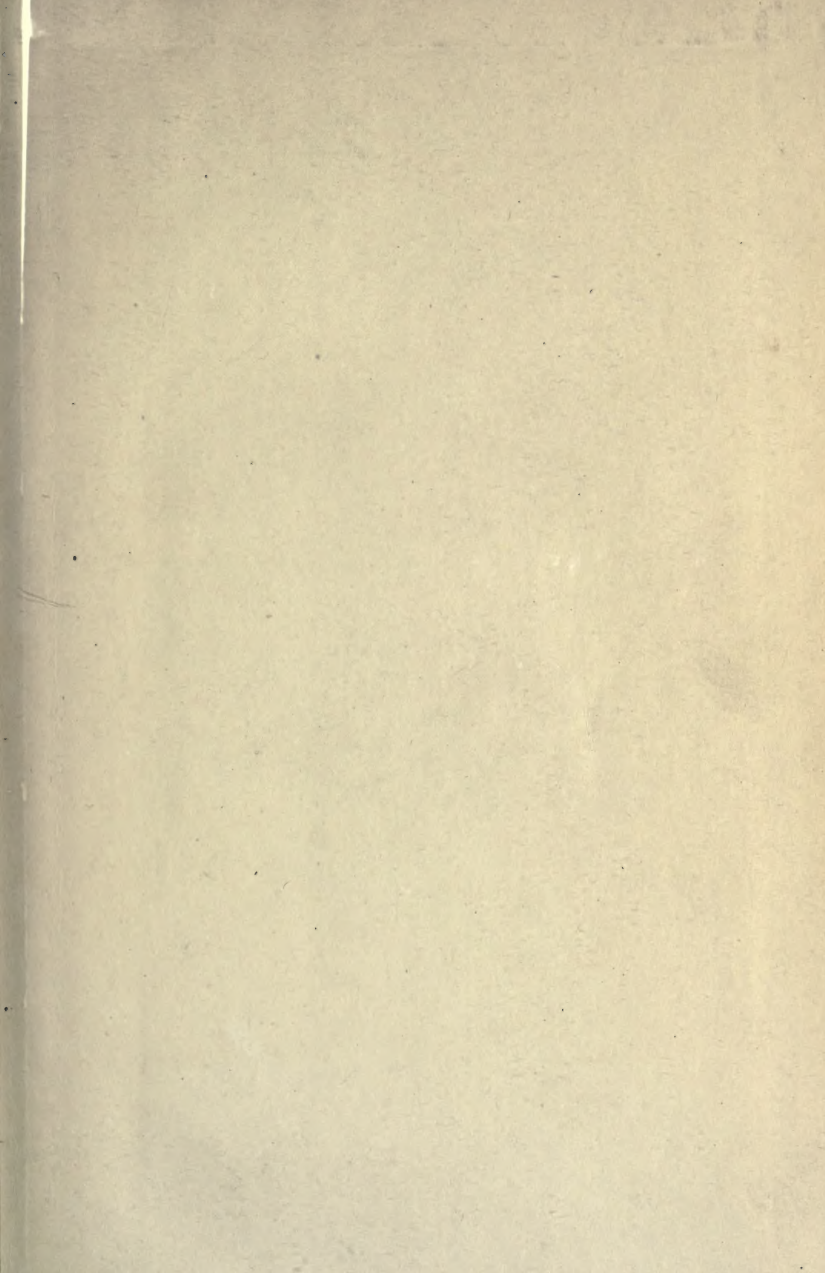
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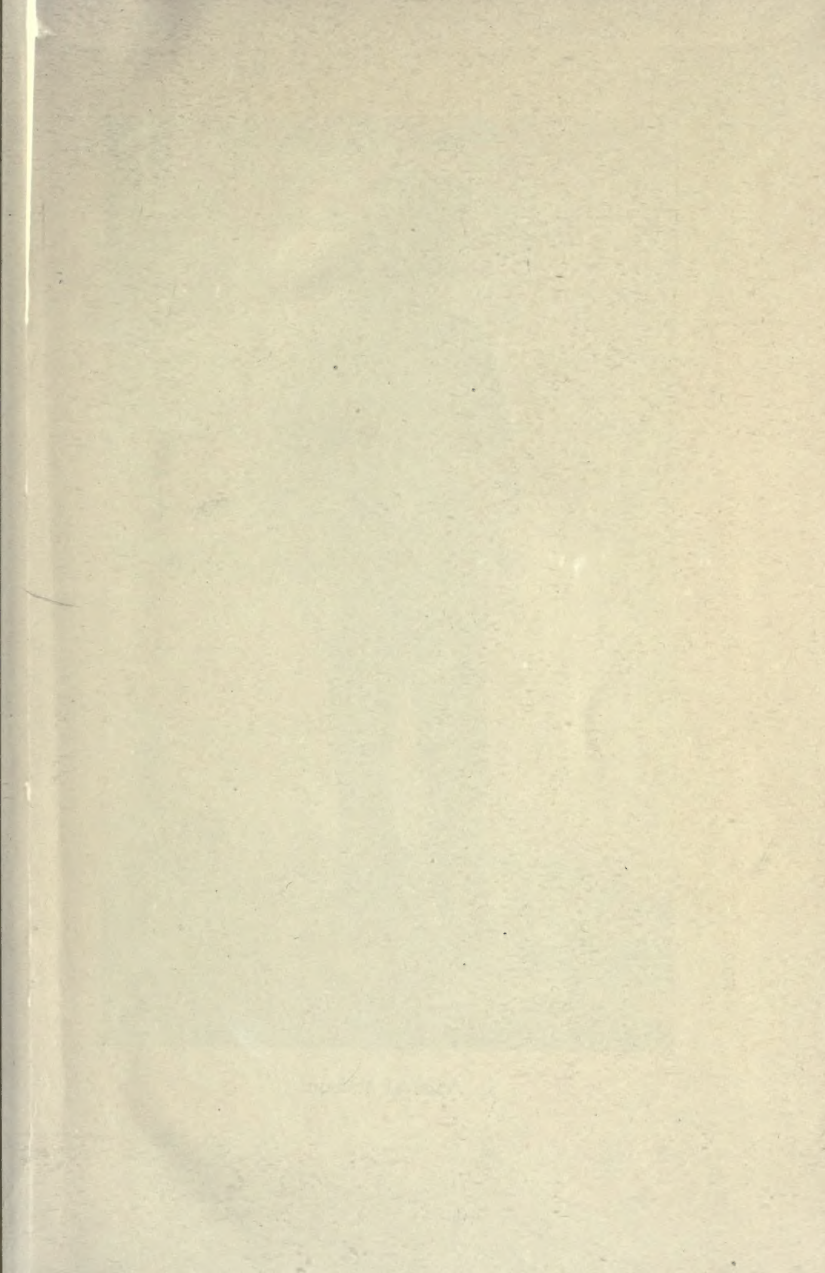
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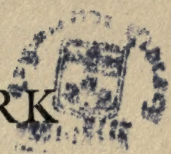
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Admiral Wilson

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OUR NAVY AT WORK

*The Yankee Fleet in French Waters
as Seen*

U.S.
K

By

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

Accredited Correspondent with the United States Navy;
Member of La Société Académique d'Histoire, France

"WE'RE READY NOW!"

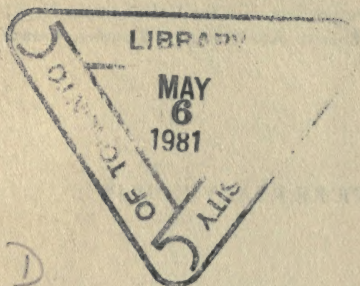
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PRESS OF
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To

REAR-ADMIRAL H. B. WILSON,

To the Members of his devoted Staff

and

To all the gallant officers and men of the U. S. Naval Forces
Based on France, so largely through whose great bravery
and unremitting hard work it has been possible to trans-
port an army to Europe and maintain it there.

PREFACE

Whatever the faults of this book, there is in it no error, no misstatement and no omission justly chargeable to any lack of facilities on the part of the author, or to any restraint on the part of the officers and men by whom those facilities were supplied. Than that accorded me, nobody could have had a better opportunity for observing the wonderful work of our Navy along the French coast.

The courtesy shown me began with the moment of my arrival at the town that serves as the headquarters-port, and has not since ceased. In addition to personal kindnesses and verbal instructions, I was given a "blanket" set of credentials that were headed by the following letter:

U. S. Naval Forces Operating in
European Waters;
U. S. S. —, Flagship.
—, France;
17th April, 1918.

From: Commander U. S. Naval Forces in France.
To: All Forces.
Subject: Accredited Correspondent.

1. Mr. Reginald Wright Kauffman is visiting U. S. Naval Bases on the coast of France in the capacity of an accredited correspondent. The Commander U. S. Naval Forces in France desires that he be given every opportunity for acquiring information for publication.

(Signed) J. HALLIGAN, JR.,
Chief of Staff.

PREFACE

That brief missive opened every door—or ought I to say “every porthole”? It was sufficient to take me to sea in troopship-convoying destroyers and submarine-hunting converted-yachts and up in the air in observation-balloons and hydroaeroplanes. It, and the good will that preceded and followed it, secured me opportunities to live with, and work with, for months together, officers of every grade and men of every rating, and there was almost no restriction put upon what I cared to report thereof.

“The only thing that you may not write about,” said Admiral Wilson, in a conversation elsewhere referred to, “are dates of sailing and the names of ships in active service. Don’t hesitate to find fault if you feel so moved. The Navy has nothing to hide, and if there is anything wrong about it, we want it known.”

“If you write with discretion and ordinary common sense,” said the chief base-censor to me, “I shall have nothing to delete.”

Such words as these, and the scope of the facilities accorded, were not only welcome; they were also surprising. I found that a journalist working with the Navy was in the position of a guest of a gentleman in that gentleman’s house.

It will be seen, therefore, that all the faults of this book are mine alone. It is true that the chapters on the office-work, the destroyers and the “Suicide

PREFACE

Fleet" were written abroad and censored—or, rather, passed uncensored—over there. Much of the rest of the volume was, however, written after my return home; in that portion I have tried to conform—and I am assured that I have succeeded—with the Navy's censorship-rules, a necessary and in almost every particular a reasonable body of precept; but it is possible that, although the entire text has since been "passed" by the departmental censor at Washington as free from any matter which might be dangerous in enemy-hands, I may have been latterly guilty of some purely technical slips that the Navy Department had not the time to correct, but that Commander Tisdale, the base-censor in France, would, in our personal interviews, have had opportunity to call to my attention. It is for these, if they exist, that I beg indulgence.

Of my gratitude to the American Naval Forces based on France, and of my admiration for them, this book is an imperfect expression; so little has been written of them that three-quarters of America is ignorant of their work; and yet, but for them—and for the similar duties performed in lesser degree by their brothers convoying such of our troops as go to Europe by way of England—we could not, to-day, have or maintain an army on the western front. Another debt of thanks that I hasten to acknowledge is one for permission to rewrite and

PREFACE

republish some parts of this sketch that previously appeared in the London *Spectator* and other magazines—and in a syndicate of newspapers that I represented during a part of the present war—a syndicate formed by the Philadelphia *North American* and from time to time including, in addition to that journal, the Baltimore *Sun*, the Boston *Post*, the Chicago *Herald*, the Los Angeles *Times*, the New York *World*, the Pittsburgh *Dispatch*, the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* and the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*.

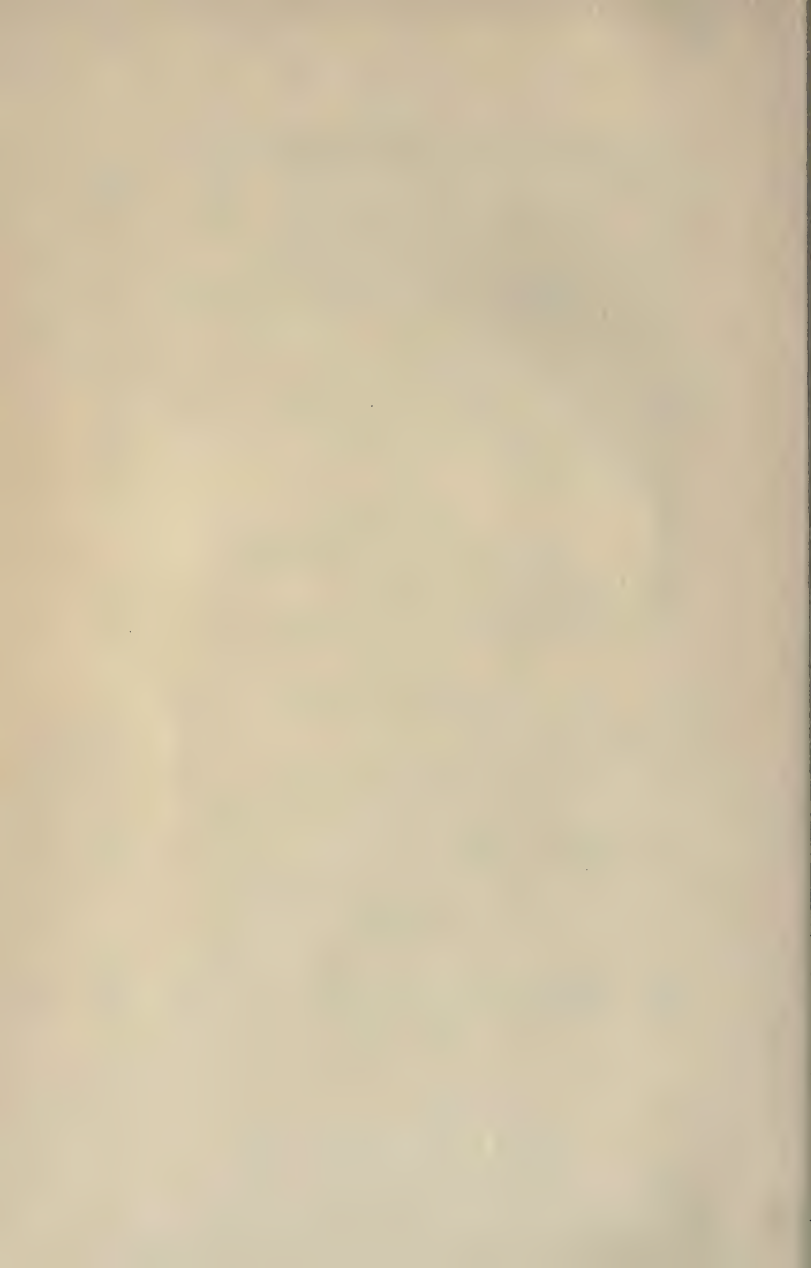
R. W. K.

Columbia, Pennsylvania.

3d October, 1918.

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Now, Mr. Wall of Wall St., he built himself a yacht,
And he built that yacht for comfort and for speed;
He didn't mean that it should go
Beyond a hundred miles or so;
He wanted something made for show,
Where he could drink and feed.

Then Uncle Sam'l went to war and hadn't any boats,
Or not enough to guard the stormy green,
And so he said to Mr. Wall:
"I'll take your six-foot-over-all
And set it out to get the call
Upon the submarine."

"A cruising-fighter? Never!" (The experts chorused
that.)

"She'll sink before she's half-way out to France;"
But Sam cut out her bathtubs white,
He painted her a perfect fright
And loaded her with dynamite:
Says he: "I'll take a chance."

"Good night!" said Wall of Wall St.; the experts said
it, too;

But Uncle Sam was sot and sibylline;
His little plan, it warn't a josh,
Wall's boat's as dry's a mackintosh;
She fights, b'gun; what's more, b'gosh,
She gits the submarine!

—EASTER-EGGS.

OUR NAVY AT WORK

PART ONE

DICING WITH DEATH

CHAPTER I

SAILING WITH THE SUICIDE FLEET

THERE was a broad streak of moonlight splashed across a leaden sea, and, all around that vast amphitheatre, circular walls of ebony. Nothing but the gently rippling waves cut by a single road: the whole world seemed as it must have been when, before man, the light of the night first came upon the darkness that brooded over the face of the waters.

Slowly a black shape lumbered into the illuminated track, moving with the clumsiness of an antediluvian monster. A prow poked forward, a funnel followed: the whole hull of a merchant steamer was there.

Then something else appeared—a mere stick dancing upright in the little waves with the monster between it and the moon. Appeared and disappeared and appeared again.

The monster gave a frightened scream; the scream of a jangled bell. It tried to turn away and run; it was in mortal terror of that fragile stick among the waves. The stick danced with a glee demoniac: it seemed to laugh at the monster.

What followed, followed swifter than the telling; it happened in exactly thirty seconds. A tiny boat—a boat not one-fifth the size of the terrified monster; a boat grotesquely painted like a harlequin—pounced out of the darkness, blazed twice from fore and aft at the stick, twisted as a coin on edge twists when flicked by a human finger, jumped directly over the stick as the stick dove below the water; passed over the spot where the stick had been—and something glinted from the stern of the little boat, and, just as she raced clear, there came a detonation that shook the rescued monster as a rat is shaken by a terrier, and churned the silver sea into hissing suds.

Bubbles came up. A thick scum of oil appeared where the demon stick had danced. But the stick did not come up again.

“The United States Patrol Squadron Based on the Fleet in European Waters”—the Easter Egg Flotilla—the Suicide Club—had saved another cargo-ship and sunk another German submarine.

That is one example, and one only, of the sort of work that has been done by one division of our Navy of which the American public has had little news: the originally christened “Mosquito Fleet Abroad,”

wherewith I early had the privilege of sailing. Every "gob"—that is to say, every sailor—knew this fleet and wondered at its work—and nobody else was, for a long time, permitted to know; yet there is not a pilot along the French coast but will tell you that, within six months after the arrival of the Mosquito Flotilla, the S. O. S. calls were reduced by more than half.

Where these sea-wasps operated, how their explosives were composed and how discharged, when and by what means they received news of the submarines' movements—these are matters that, if published, might give aid to the enemy. But enough may be told to make clear the courageous work of a branch of the service that deserves as much publicity and praise as has been given to soldiers, tanks and aeroplanes.

The job of the Suicide Club was to convoy transports and supply-ships through the dangerous areas, and to chase that craft which makes its reputation by blows below the belt; but, though they had a two-fold duty, they faced, constantly, dangers manifold. Yellow dirigibles might hover above them and their wards for a few miles of their course or all of it, hydroaeroplanes and tug-towed observation-balloons might lend the aid that regulations allowed: peril was unremitting; their orders were to hunt peril. Was a given field reported swept of mines? The "eggs" that a Boche mine-layer "lays" can be placed deep in the seas and governed, by soluble caps, to

rise twenty-four hours later. Was this course or that known to be clear of submarines? Then it was in the other, the infested course, that the Suicide Club was most required.

There is nothing heroic in their appearance; there is everything grotesque. To obtain the lowest visibility, they are painted hysterically, as if by some futurist in eternity. Perhaps the largest is of seven hundred tons gross, measures one hundred and thirty feet on the water and draws but thirteen feet. Certainly most of them were once the swiftest and most seaworthy pleasure yachts in America, in which refrigerating-plants have given place to ammunition-rooms and ladies' boudoirs to sleeping quarters of sooty men.

It was to such a boat that I was invited, not one of the Poga-boats, otherwise known as "Spit-kids"—which is Navy for the happily obsolete cuspidor—but to quite the smallest vessel in which it has even been my fortune to sail the high seas—yet we carried, or crowded, seventy men. Moreover, in rough weather we had a roll of forty-seven degrees, and if you don't believe it, you should come aboard and watch the inclinometre.

"Four-Stripes" (it is thus irreverently, but no less loyally, that the crew, with an eye to his insignia, speak of their Captain, just as they call a lieutenant-commander "Two-and-a-Half," and a junior lieutenant "Dot - and - Carry - One") — Four - Stripes showed all that was to be shown, from the "pills"

with which the submerged submarine is treated—pills known by the initial letters of their component explosives—to the bridge, whereof I was given the freedom. He told me of torpedoed steamers' boats with dead men in them—not always dead from exposure; of many men in life-preservers picked up after almost incredible hours in the water; but he spoke only under compulsion of his own experiences, and he mentioned with a smile the reason for isolating some rescued sailors from his crew:

"They weren't very clean men," he explained. "They were covered with what our boys call shirt-squirrels."

The chief quartermaster approached the navigator:

"Twelve o'clock, sir, and the chronometre is wound." He didn't say "the chronometre is round," as the traditional green man does.

The announcement was repeated to the Captain. "Make it so," said he.

"Sound eight bells," said the navigating officer to the chief quartermaster.

One of the forecastle men came up to me:

"Mess-gear set, sir. Will you take chow with us, sir?"

I took it, and I have rarely eaten a better cooked meal, or a more enlightening one. We fed in a dark hole among updrawn canvas bunks; when anything went wrong, it was "pardon me," and there was some discussion of the technical veracity of Kip-

ling's sea-verse; but the immediate vocabulary was entirely local. Can you, gentle reader, translate "Put a fair wind behind the lighthouse?" I can—now; it means "pass the salt-cellar." And, though you may understand "spuds" and guess that "red lead" is catsup, which it hugely resembles, and that "shoestrings" are—or is—spaghetti, I venture to doubt that your perspicacity would divine that "slungullion" is beef stew; "railroad hash," a mixture of "spuds" and large lumps of beef; "canned Bill," canned corned beef; "Mulligan," shredded Bill and onions, and that "fish-eyes" are tapioca pudding.

You think that these men spun wild yarns of adventure for my credulous ears? They didn't; they are living adventure—what they talked about was coaling ship.

"On a boat like this," said one of them, "every man's a 'swipe' "—by which he meant a coal-passer—"for we have to coal by hand. We do it each time we come into port. Passing coal! Some of us were more used to selling bonds, but we're all on to the job by now. We started in the first day aboard. The barges come up, one on each side, and on each side there are four men shovelling into the baskets, four men passing the baskets overhead to the deck—you have to heave them three feet above your head—two passing on deck and two dumping; twenty-four in all. We coaled from 7:30 A. M. to 11 P. M. one hundred and seven tons, and we did it

at an average rate of two hundred baskets in nine minutes, too. Get on to my eyes; don't I look like a movie-idol?"

I had noticed this before: at the lids' edge, at the lashes' roots, each man's eyes were delicately blacked as if by a makeup-pencil. It was the residuum of coal that none can remove.

"When you're all in from passing coal, and black from hair to toenails, you quit and swab-up the decks; Field-day, we call it, scrubbing-up ships and clothes; 'piping down'; I had some sympathy for the Dutchman before I got on this job, but after coaling ship for the first day, they'd got my angora; it was 'Kill the kaiser' for me."

Who are these boys? The strangest of mixtures. Most of them were bred to the sea, but though all are good sailors now, some, at the start, were amateur yachtsmen, and one or two didn't know, as they put it, "which the sharp end of the ship was." Eighty per cent. of our crew were old hands, but we had a Philadelphia policeman and a Texan ranger: our first boatswain's mate had his sheepskin from Cornell; there was a Lehigh senior in the fore-castle and a Harvard postgraduate assisting in the radio-room.

"She has a good roll," I sputtered to one of the men on watch as I "went up topside," which is to say, as I clambered to the bridge.

"Yes, sir," was that common seaman's answer. "She always had that reputation as a yacht. My parents told me so: they used to cruise in her."

A moment later, below me, a petty officer was shouting to a grimy gob:

“Hey——” (and the tar’s name was that of one of America’s best-known yachtsmen); “that you with them dirty shoes muddying up this deck? Go below an’ take ’em off!” He turned to me: “You see, the Black Gang—that’s the stokers an’ men that works around the kettles, the engines, I mean—they comes up for a breath o’ air in their ‘steamin’-shoes,’ the shoes they wear at work, an’ they’re all lousy with oil an’ coal.”

“Bathing in a bucket!” I heard that yachtsman remark: “Two quarts of water twice a day! I’ll never get used to 5:30 in the morning and cold water on my feet.” But he laughed as he said it, and there wasn’t a more able worker aboard.

Another hand put it to me in this fashion:

“So many days afloat, and so many in port, while another section of the fleet’s at sea; that’s the rule here, and when you’re at sea with these boats, you’re on the job every minute. It’s ‘Merry Christmas; get busy,’ and ‘Knock off work—and carry pig-iron.’ All the time, if there’s nothing else to do, you can ‘break out’—I mean you can get—a pot of red lead and paint a protecting coat of it over some of the ironwork. When we’re in harbour, we have our Rope-Yarn Sunday, which is what we call our mid-week half-holiday; but, except for liberty-parties ashore, that’s about our limit. Afloat, the limit of work is the limit of endurance; but that’s what we’re

here for, and even if we don't get any brass bands and cheering crowds in this service, we're not kicking."

"Rise and shine," "Show a leg," "Up all hammocks," "Heave out and lash to," "Grab a sock"—these are all Suicide Fleet slang for what the soldiers call reveille; but reveille does not begin the mosquito-man's day, because the day of the Mosquito Flotilla is continuous. Once in the schedule's cycle, a man is in the "Admiral's Watch"—passing an entire night abed—but that luxury is inevitably balanced by the "Admiral's Watch with the Belly Out," which is the watch that runs from midnight until four.

You are convoying merchantmen and transports, and these ply on forever; you are chasing submarines, and the submarine is always at his task; therefore, your work is endless, and endless the strain of it. In every weather, bridge and decks are lined with lookouts, day and night; night and day the gun crews stand to their guns, and from sun to sun the stokers shovel and the "greasers" oil; and the long monotony is a monotony of which every slow moment may well be your last. You are there to watch and rescue; there is none that will watch or rescue you.

Scouring the horizon with aching eyes, while the sickening deck heaves under them, while the sun blisters or the icy rain cuts at their faces and eats through sou'wester, sheepskin-jacket and hip-boots—looking, looking, always looking—seated in the

close radio-room with the tumult of clashing calls pricking at eardrums and stabbing brain-centres—listening, listening, always listening—penned in the stinking sweat and heat of the clanging, crowded fire-room, where the air is so full of dust that it passes to the lungs in gulps and lumps—with straining naked back tossing in coal—always feeding the never-surfeited fires, always knowing that, at the next toss, the ocean's top may descend and crush them under tons of water: these are the men of the Suicide Fleet. At sea, they never sleep with their clothes off, never work but with their life-preservers bulkily on. Lonely, determined, unpraised, unknown—and then a few days in an alien port, where the Y. M. C. A. was their first hope of social salvation; that registers their emotional experience.

“The minute they get ashore, their one object seems to be to buy everything in sight,” an Association worker told me. “They all want to get rid of their ‘bunker-plates’ (the French five and ten centime pieces), and they’re spoiling the town’s children by tossing these coppers away. Many of them know the French language, which is complex; none knows the French money, which is simplicity itself.”

One of them on our boat has let me read and make extracts from his diary—they have the lonely man’s passion for keeping a journal. “You won’t find anything in it,” he said; but some things I found that, originally set down in utter unconsciousness of their dramatic values, seem to me to indicate bet-

ter than anything any outsider could say the spirit of the service. I quote them now :

“April 5th.—President Wilson issued a proclamation calling for volunteers for the army and navy. I guess I ought to go. . . .

“May 5th.—Some of our fellows are quitting college to go to the officers’ training camps, but I feel as if it would be better to get in right away, even if I do have to go as an enlisted man. . . .

“May 18th.—Biff, ‘K’ and I came from Philadelphia to New York to enlist in the Mosquito Fleet, which is to convoy boats and chase subs. Biff was the only one to pass the physical exam., and after being rejected, I went back on the afternoon train.

“June 25th.—I came here (New York) to have an operation so as to be eligible for service. . . .”

Another date, at sea: “The engine-room force, with which I am quartered amidships, is a very motley crowd. What most of them lack in real toughness they try to make up in conversation: the really tough ones are the less objectionable, as is usually the case, but they’re all made of the right stuff. We had ‘abandon ship’ drill to-day: I’m stationed on the bridge and in the last boat to go, so if we do get smashed, I’ll be pretty sure to have a chance to see all that happens.”

Another: “Now I know what real fog-banks are. This morning, when I got up at 3:30 to take the 4-8 watch, we couldn’t see fifty feet ahead of us and were in a driving rain. I got into trouble right off

the bat. We had been ordered by the flagship to take 'dipse' soundings every thirty minutes. At 4:15, I got ready to take one by the Lord Kelvin machine, with B— and G— helping. I let the lead go over the side and told B— to pay out the line easily. He promptly let go the handle, and the whole thing (400 fathoms) went overboard before we could check it. We were nearly an hour getting it in, and the wire nearly cut my hands to pieces. K—— sighted a German sub this P. M., which turned out to be a whale."

Another: "Yesterday Harold R——, in the radio-room, intercepted an S. O. S. signal from some vessel that gave its name in code, and nothing more. As she didn't send her position, we couldn't do anything. This morning, we passed bits of wreckage and four empty life-preservers."

Three entries follow: "Some storm! Wind about 100 miles an hour. Maybe she doesn't roll! Eating is surely a problem. The dishes will not stay on the table, and most of the time is spent dodging cups of coffee. It is an interesting game to divert food and drink down one's neck inside instead of out, and eternal vigilance is the price of a stomachful instead of a lapful. . . .

"All but six of the crew have been sick. For three days we have had our meals standing up, hanging on by one hand to a stanchion or post and to a plate of sandwiches with the other. Tables and benches are useless. . . .

"The attitude of the boys is peculiar. All through the stress and strain of the storm and the uncertainty of our weathering it, the talk was not about the storm, or even submarines, but about food."

In port: "The — came in to-day. They picked up seventeen survivors of a torpedoed ship and passed a small boat with four corpses in the bottom. . . . One of my friends is in trouble: he wrote home to his girl and home to his dad, and now comes a letter from his girl saying she got the letter meant for his dad, and what his dad will say, God only knows. That's one of the troubles with having to post your letters unsealed for censorship. If the censor's too tired, he may put them back in the wrong envelopes, and maybe he'll do it anyway just for a joke.

"Another friend has dinner regularly on shore with a French family—two girls and mother. He can't speak a word of French, and they can only muster 'Good luck' when the wine is negotiated, and 'Good night' when adieus are said. The father and two brothers have been killed in the war, and these people are most grateful to all the Americans that are coming to help win it."

Again: "Returning from liberty, there were too many in our whaleboat, so about eight or nine of the men manned the dory. Just past the château, a French tug ran the dory down and smashed it. Two of our men, Olkin and Babb, couldn't swim, but Casey got 'Oil Can' and Fass got Babb." . . .

At sea again: "Nothing exciting to-day to lessen the monotonous strain of being constantly on the alert. One has to notice the smallest things in the water and report them immediately to the bridge, especially toward dark and dawn, when the subs are most active. Birds have a habit of clustering around a periscope, and sharks often follow Fritz, looking for grub, so everything one sees on the surface must be mentioned at once."

The night of the day on which I read that diary was drawing to a close. We had seen into safety the "one-lunger" — the single-funneled — tramp, which was our particular care, and watched it limp to the haven where it would be. ("These days," said Four-Stripes, "they're putting every cripple in the ocean if it can go only on crutches.") Then we turned about and worked out of sight of land. Soon a faint gray-pink would flush the east, but now, even from the bridge on which I was standing, there was visible only the leaden sea, splashed by a broad streak of moonlight, against which, as we made our way toward it through the darkness, our forward spars and rigging swayed in silhouette.

"Have we any chance of picking up a sub?" I wondered.

Four-Stripes explained that it wasn't so much a case of picking up as running down; when we heard of a submarine, we must race toward it, and when we sighted it, we must pounce upon the spot where it submerged.

"But I believe they have orders to run at sight of us," he said. "You see, we're so small and so light-draft as to be a poor mark, and they don't like what they call our 'vasser boom-booms.'" There were unpublishable reasons why, just there and then, it was a little difficult to get distress calls. "But there are three submarines operating somewhere near here," said Four-Stripes, "and of course we officers are just as anxious as the men to fill our bag with them."

"What's the call?" I asked, "the warning—that you get when one's reported?"

"That's no secret and no code; the subs know it as well as we do: 'Allo, 'Allo, 'Allo—and then the location in plain figures."

A speaking-tube beside him uttered a faint twitter. He bent to it.

"That was the radio-room talking then," said Four-Stripes, as he raised his face to me.

He pulled a signal lever; he issued quiet orders. Our tiny boat spun about in the water; men darted silently out of hatches until the deck was alive with them, each at his prescribed position. The ship plunged upon a new tack; from prow to stern the water boiled beside us.

"What was it," I ventured, "that the radio-room had to report?"

"Three 'Allos and a location," said Four-Stripes. "We're racing for that location now."

*They coal us in Latin, they swab up in Greek,
They're gun'ale-deep book-learned, the guys!
You can't understand half the language they speak,
They've tortoise-shell specks on their eyes;*

*But, once up against it, they surely make good,
An' I'd back the hull lot anywhere:
In a squall or a scrap, be it well understood,
Them kids out o' college is there!*

—COLLEGE KIDS.

CHAPTER II

THE COLLEGE KIDS AND THEIR SHIPMATES

I HAVE said that the personnel of the Suicide Fleet was composed of all sorts of men. That is true, but to a great extent it was composed of men, young men or men above the draft age, who might easily have had a higher rank in one branch or other of the service. They might, for instance, have waited and gone to the officers' training camps that were everywhere to open; instead, however, they enlisted as common seamen, and now they are so serving while hundreds of their friends are coming over with commissions in the Army.

There is Vincent Astor, serving as ensign on what was once his own yacht. There is a lad from Tennessee, who, writing his first letter home and describing the ocean to his inland family, said that it was "just the same color as Barlowe's Creek, but wider." There is young Farwell, now, if you please, deservedly a lieutenant-commander, once sent home from Annapolis because his sight was too poor, and then giving up a newly-acquired law-practise in order to take war-service on a patrol-ship. I know a promising architect, a Beaux Arts graduate, whom I discovered repainting the water-worn side of the vessel on which he was a member of the Black



Gang; and of a Harvard senior I have heard a veteran say:

"See that stoop-shouldered fellow over there by the gun?—He can't be dragged more than twenty feet away from it. Well, he used to be the best mathematician in his college class. He wasn't aboard here a week before we saw that we'd never make a sailorman of him, not in a thousand years; but it took us less than the week to see that he did have in him the makings of a perfect pointer for the gun-crew. You know what it is to shoot at unknown range. Initial range, one, five, double O—fifteen hundred yards, you understand; scale five-six—deflection. Then you fire and make a correction, basing your work on your own speed and the sub's. Well, anyway, that fellow never has to make a correction. He's a *born* pointer."

One afternoon when we had just come into harbour, and when, all about us, were capering from my first cruise with the Suicide Club, our crazily-colored sisters of that Easter Egg patrol, the quartermaster sauntered up and leaned beside me against the starboard rail.

"We've got some college men aboard," he said. "Of course, they'd all had yachting experience when they answered the President's call for volunteers, but some our bred-to-the-service fellows were inclined to laugh at until a little thing happened on the way over. Now when there's a hard thing to be done, we know the college kids can do it.

“Three days out of the port we were making, a fire started in our port coal-bunkers. Water causes such fires, you know; somebody’d left the hatches off, and there’d been a shower—away at the bottom of that pile, the coal was white hot and going strong, and we seventy-two hard hours from shore. We didn’t dare put more water on the thing, but we got up the steam hose, and at least kept it from gaining for a day.

“I had the midnight to 4 A. M. watch on the bridge. I was there when, at 2:30, the starboard bunker blew out, showing the fire had crossed the ship. We couldn’t wait for steam that time; we played a good old water hose, but inside of an hour we had three explosions over on our port side—unless we used desperate methods that whole part of the tub would go. The Captain waited as long as he dared, and then—just after breakfast—called for volunteers. It was no case for orders: what we had to have was men that would go right down into that furnace bulging with fatal gas—fellows that’d walk straight into those lungs of death and shovel away the top coal so as to uncover the burning core. That was the only way to save the ship.

“Well, sir, the first fellows to volunteer were the college kids, and the Captain gave them the job.

“They jumped into that hell in squads of four men and a petty officer for each bunker. And shovel? You ought to ’ve seen them! Each squad was to be down three minutes at a time, and the

men were gassed like miners. In the first three minutes, squad followed squad, because eleven of the kids were overcome and carried out, one by one, on the backs of the others. The doctor stood on deck with the pulmotor and pumped them through; but a lot of them were caught out of their bunks trying to sneak back and fight the gas again. It was the toughest job I've ever seen at sea, but those boys did it; they conquered the fire and saved the ship.

"Since then you don't hear much against the college kids in the Suicide Flotilla."

I looked at the quartermaster hard. Somehow, in spite of observable efforts, he had not talked precisely like a man that got his first education at sea.

"How long have you been in the Navy?" I asked.

He shifted an uneasy foot.

"Third enlistment," he answered.

I shot a bow at a venture: "What's your college?"

"Princeton," he said. "'Ninety-four," he added, and then, with an almost boyish blush: "But it was these kids I was talking about. Don't mention the fact that I'm a college man to anybody aboard. I don't want any one to think I'm putting on side."

That quartermaster's little ship has had its full share of adventure. One morning, she picked up three small boats with fifty-nine men in them. One-half of these men were from a ship that had been torpedoed a day earlier. They got away and were rescued by a passing steamer, and they had not been aboard it twelve hours before it also was torpedoed,

I asked our Four-Stripes about the treatment of rescued men—he had been telling me of his rescue of some that had been seventy-two hours in their open boats, and how some of these, having been caught when in the shower-bath, were clad in just about nothing at all.

“We get them into the drumroom and lay them there above the boilers,” he told me, “generally with their teeth chattering like a ship with loose plates in a storm. Whenever we sight life-boats, the commissary-steward starts supplies of soup and coffee. Clothes? Well, my crew generally offers its clothes until those of the rescued men are dry, and, as the crew’s clothes are the better, I’ve known instances where the rescued men forgot to change back to their own slops before going ashore. The living men are an easy enough proposition, but it always seems tough to have to race past a boat full of dead men and not be able to stop and give them decent burial.”

Convoying, it seems, presents troubles peculiarly its own, especially in time of attack, when the flotilla’s greatest difficulty is to prevent hitting a clumsy or frightened ward. “In our last brush,” said the Captain, “we were convoying an American merchantman, and she kept her wits about her. We were a bit astern of her at 3 A. M. when a submarine came up between us. Nine merchant skippers out of ten would have gone wrong, but this American swung his boat to starboard, and so we went to port and brought both our guns into play.”

"And did you get the sub?"

Four-Stripes smiled.

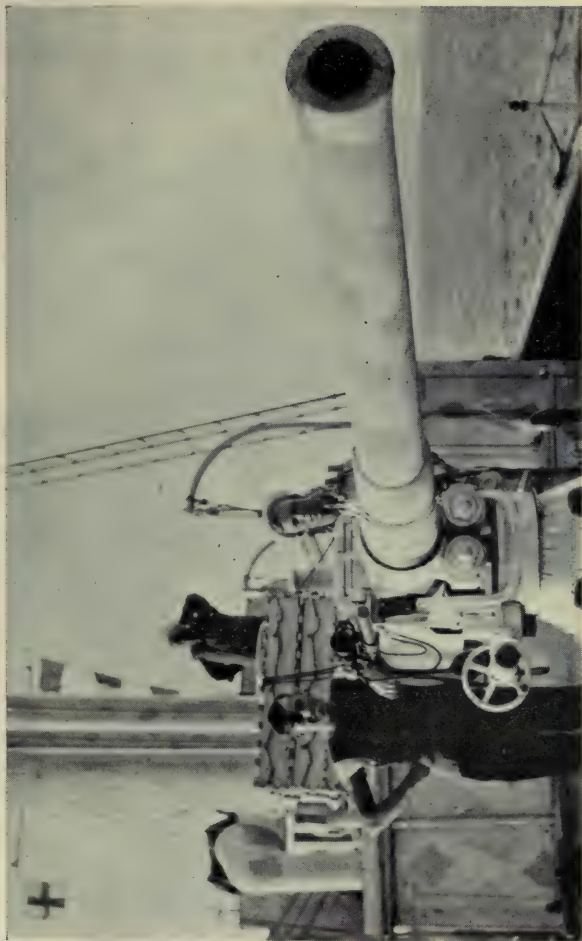
"Perhaps," he answered.

Once a submarine, driven from behind a ship bringing up the rear of a convoyed column, came up a trifle ahead and blew out the entire bow of her victim. To give warning and to call for help up to the last minute, the whistle cords of these boats are now made with a loop that may be instantly attached to a hook in the nearest wall. Thus this battered hulk's whistle was set to blowing at the moment of the explosion, and in only one minute and forty seconds, she went down, screeching like a gored leviathan, until the intruding waters strangled her. It was a sound that no hearer is likely soon to forget, and that the rescued sixteen of the crew of double that number will be sure to remember forever.

One time the *Emmeline*, that armed yacht on which I was first a guest, had in its care a merchantman with new engines that he could not slow down to the speed of the other boats in the ocean caravan. He puzzled our captain by his strange zigzagging, and between 3 and 3:30 A. M. crossed our boat's bow at least four times. A dangerous channel was at hand.

"If he keeps on, he'll go on the L—— reefs," said Four-Stripes. "Send him blinkers."

The winking-signal was given, but apparently the



Why the armed yachts are so called



Commander of a coast-patrol ship. An American type

merchantman couldn't read it. He piled up his thirty-one hundred tons of coal on that reef. The little guardian stood by, and the crew of twenty-nine was rescued.

Often attacks from submarines are invited by sheer wrong-headedness on the part of the ward; and one instance of this sort that I know of was furnished, in the case, I regret to say, of an American ship. With the descent of darkness she displayed, to Four-Stripes' horror, a stern-light that could be seen for twenty miles.

He signaled: "Dim that stern-light."

She replied: "It's only what we always carry."

Four-Stripes repeated his order. The convoyed ship tried to argue.

"If you don't dim that stern-light," signaled Four-Stripes, "I'll blow it off you."

That is the sort of man that is a captain in the Suicide Fleet. Is it any wonder that out of the first two hundred and fifty ships consigned to his care, he lost only three?

Such officers command more than their boats: they command the respect of their men, and their men's affection. I make this typical extract from a typical letter; it was not written by one of the "College Kids," but none of them could have shown a finer loyalty:

". . . The *Wanderer* is a little old yacht. I think it is the oldest in the service. Captain Wil-

son. He is a regular and an Annapolis man. A little quiet absolutely unostentatious person, but the personification of energy.

"He has done the most extraordinary things. He has been in every single mixup. He has seen lots of submarines. He has answered radio calls from all over.

"He is an entire surprise to the French by his up-to-date methods of convoying ships into harbour in the fog. They had four days of fog at L—— in which he stationed ships with lights at each buoy so that the other ships could see the course at night and thereby saved the congestion of a hundred ships. Concerning which the French commander of the port told an American officer passing through that it had never been done before.

"One time they were out in the English Channel and they got an SOS from a ship which sent out word it was being shelled by a submarine on the surface alongside. Captain Wilson, though six hours away when he picked up the call, framed a message in English saying American cruiser coming immediately, stand by your ship. The submarine sank at once and left the ship and the men who had taken to their boats returned, though the little *Wanderer* did not appear until the next day.

"When one of the Naval Engineers was asked by Captain Wilson for a Depth Charge gun on the stern of the *Wanderer*, the engineer said, 'I'm afraid that your stern is not strong enough to stand

the shock of the discharge.' Captain Wilson said, 'If we blow off our stern, we'll bring the bow in, and then they'll give us a better ship.'

"There are two German subs operating regularly around here. The boys call them 'Armen Archie' and 'Penmarch Pete.' The *Harry Luckenback* was sunk by one of them. Captain Wilson, regardless of all advice given for such torpedoing by night, which is to keep circling for fear of the submarine, regardless of any danger to himself, stopped his ship and saved practically all the men. He received a letter from the survivors written so soon after they were saved that the handwriting was still shaky."

To my way of thinking, there is just as much to be said for the other men of the Suicide Fleet as there is for the "College Kids." The latter have, no doubt, a popular appeal, but the former have a picturesqueness that is all their own. On duty, there is no choice between them, and, of course, no distinction; here I have separated them only for your passing attention, and having done so, let me quote you, even at some length, from the writings of three representatives of the non-academic jacky-class.

These men were writing accounts of their first few months at sea during the present war. It does not here concern us whom they were addressing; the only point is that, though I later received permission to make such use as I pleased of what they wrote, they did not write with any self-consciousness. It seems to me that the simple manner in which they

have told their stories is the best testimony to their worth and valor.

The first writer is a young fellow that enlisted before the war and began his active life in the Navy:

“We left New York harbour, the fifth of June, pulled down to —— and coaled ship; then we pulled to the Azore Islands, and there we coaled ship. From the Azore Islands we hit a heavy storm, which lasted two days. We arrived at our French port on the 25th of June.

“We lay there for two weeks, and then carried our first convoy out. On this first bit of convoy-work, we were rammed by the W——. It knocked us all out of our bunks, bent in our bow, and, though we were for a time alarmed, we found that the damage was slight and we made port without help.

“The second time we went out, we were about two days at sea and had picked up our convoy and were on the way in, when one of our fleet was torpedoed. She went down in four and a half minutes, and we picked up a hundred and sixty-three survivors.

“I saw a guy coming down off the starboard bow, and I threw a rope to him. He was so weak that he couldn't hold to the rope. So I ran back to the fantail, and one boy tied a rope around me. Then I jumped off the fantail into the water. They threw me a rope, and I tied it on to the man, and we both were brought on board safely. . . . We came into port with our survivors.

"The third time we went out, we were three days at sea and picked up five ships, with the assistance of four torpedo-boats and three yachts. On the way in, a big transport was hit and a huge hole torn in her side, thirty feet by forty.

"We picked up ninety-three of her crew, who had jumped overboard."

Seaman No. 2, used to be, I was told, a clerk in an inland city:

" The best yachts in the country, they fixed up and sent right over. We came in the *Vidette*, with the first eight. She was Drexel Paul's uncle's yacht, and the crew were college kids, and some old-timers re-enlisted and a few fellows that went into the service because they hadn't anywhere else to go. There is a lot of rough stuff in the Navy, but when you get right down to the bunch, they're a pretty fine lot of fellows.

"The trip across didn't amount to much; I don't know what to put in about it. No one knew where they were going. A great many were seasick and all that stuff. On the way over, just before we reached France, we heard of German raiders. We'd get all excited and chase up to see what it was, but it never came to anything.

"One morning, I was going on watch, when I happened to spy a black object on the horizon. We couldn't make out what it was. The Captain started over towards it. As we got nearer, it turned out to be a dead elephant. That's a fact. It was full of

holes. I don't know how it ever got out there, unless some ship was sunk, bringing animals from Africa for a circus.

"A little before we came into port, our convoy passed an American tanker that was sinking, and the *Sultana* went back and picked up the survivors. Just as we were arriving, the smallest yacht of the lot broke down, the *Christabel*, and she was towed in. She was an old ship, and made in England; no one thought that she would last, and there at the last minute she broke down. But she was repaired and is still doing fine.

"That was about all until we arrived here. We landed in France on July 4th, with the American flag flying. We stayed in port two weeks. Just as soon as we sort of got over our tired feeling, we went right out on patrol-duty. The first time was the worst weather for five or six months. We did patrol-duty all the time at first. Believe me, it was hard work! You couldn't eat; you couldn't sleep; you couldn't do anything. After that, it was pretty nice weather.

"Around the third or fourth time we did convoy duty, we had our first experience of a torpedo. We had a big Greek steamer right beside us, so we didn't see the sub. It came up right behind a fishing-boat. It fired a torpedo and submerged. Got the Greek steamer. Took her forty minutes to go down. We never saw the sub again; we went on and left a French aeroplane looking for it. . . ."

Finally, and at some length—for I think you will find him worth it—here is the story of a gunner's mate, second-class, who, eighteen months ago, was employed in a business-house in New York:

“On March the 27th, having received information on good authority that war would be declared on or about April 2nd, I concluded to enter the naval service. With this object in mind, I visited the office of the Naval Reserve force, 26 Cortlandt St., New York City, and was interviewed by the recruiting officer.

“After questioning me concerning my qualifications, age, etc., it was thought that I was much over the age-limit, I being over forty-five years of age. Later, the lieutenant ascertained that it was possible to enlist me for coast-defense service in America, and endeavored to have me enlist as a yeoman, but I desired active service at sea instead of being a yeoman on recruiting duty. After passing the physical examination, I was accepted as a seaman, first class, and enrolled in the fourth class division, Coast Defense. A week or so later, after interview with Captain Patton of the recruiting station, he advised me to study up various manuals and take an oral examination for gunner's mate, third class, and appear before him the following week.

“I appeared as requested and passed the examination favorably, and received my notification to call at the Naval Reserve Office, Brooklyn Naval Yard for active duty. I called as directed, and, after sub-

mitting to another medical examination, was ushered into a room and received my sailor outfit, which I was ordered to put on.

"I tried to explain that I had left my desk open with many important papers lying around and desired to return at once in order to straighten up my affairs. It took some time to convince the officer that it was absolutely necessary for me to remove my uniform and return to my office, but at last I received the consent. . . .

"I was assigned to the *Corsair*, which used to be Mr. Morgan's yacht. After a long search, I found her in one of the numerous docks for which the Navy Yard is noted. I boarded her, and the sentry passed me over to the Bos'n, who showed me where my compartment was to be, likewise my bunk. I proceeded to make myself at home, and at five-thirty that P. M., I had my supper, the first meal aboard the ship. That night, I slept in my bunk, and, although it was quite small for me, I enjoyed a good night's rest.

"The following morning at six-thirty, reveille sounded, and I commenced my duties. For several weeks, we were busily engaged in carrying aboard ammunition, supplies, etc. About June 11th, we were hauled over to the coal-docks and had our bunkers filled with coal. Then a wagon came alongside the dock with a large number of burlap bags. We filled the bags with coal, and soon the deck was almost impassable on account of the bags.

"On the morning of June 14th, at 3:30 A. M., all hands were awakened in the most silent fashion by the chief boatswain's mate and ordered to take their station and prepare to go to sea. I hastily got into my clothes, went up on deck and found it to be a dark, misty morning, with a heavy fog overhanging, and the air cold and penetrating.

"At four A. M. we pulled up anchor and silently moved out into the stream. By midday we were well out of sight of land.

"Soon the fog lifted, and we could see several large cruisers, quite a number of armed yachts and several torpedo-boats in our vicinity. Later we were joined by the large transports, and we set off in three divisions, each division having a large cruiser, armed yachts and torpedo-boats as their escort. Our boat accompanied the first division and kept up with the fleet for several days, when we were ordered to fall back and join the second group. For five days we were practically alone at sea, somewhere between the first and second division. One morning just as it was getting daylight, we could see the top masts of the second division hovering into sight. Soon we joined up and were assigned to the special convoy of the U. S. S. —, the famous transport of the Marines.

"From time to time we would get close to this and would receive the cheers from the Marines aboard her. We in turn cheered back, and thus the days passed until we were two days off the coast of

France. Then our division was attacked by submarines.

“From what I have heard, two torpedoes were fired at the transport, one just passing her bow and the other her stern. The torpedo-boat C—— and ours followed the submarines’ wake and the C——, being the nearest, was seen to drop several depth-charges which destroyed at least one submarine, as the effects of the charge were visible by the oil and pieces of wreckage which came to the surface. Apparently there was no excitement aboard any of the ships. A vigilant watch was kept, but no more submarines were seen.

“On June 27th, about four A. M., revolving lighthouses along the coast of France were seen, and later in the day, the coast itself became a reality. About 7 A. M., we poked out noses into some quaint old harbour and lay there for the day. That evening we were given liberty, and for the first time in the experience of many of us, we were walking the streets of a foreign port.

“The transport went through a canal, and the troops disembarked amid the cheers of an excited populace. To the French people it was very evident that America had in reality commenced to be her ally, and they were actually in the war.

“For hours and hours they were singing French and American songs, and soon the streets were thronged with American blue jackets and American soldiers in khaki. We had many amusing experi-



Our sort of naval officers in France



The Aphrodite, formerly the Payne yacht, now a submarine chaser

ences when we sought to buy different things we needed, as we could not speak French nor the storekeepers English. Good-nature prevailed, and, if we didn't get exactly what we wanted, we came very near to it. The people were anxious to serve us and make us feel at home.

"After several days, we pulled up anchor for some other place in France and, after steaming for a whole day, we arrived at a quaint place which proved to be our permanent base for future operations. Our ship and another armed yacht of similar type was the first of the permanent fleet, which was soon to be organized to patrol the submarine zone. We were given liberty, and, without any hurrahs or cheers, we visited the town, and soon the people learned to know that we were the advance guard of the oncoming fleet which was soon to protect their shores.

"After several days' rest, our boat put to sea alone and did patrol-duty, searching for submarines, and returned after four days and four nights. Nothing unusual happened during this trip, but we did notice a great amount of wreckage, giving evidence that the submarines had gotten in their deadly work.

"The next several weeks were spent in cruising about the sea searching for the elusive subs, but none put in an appearance to challenge us. Later our duties were changed, and, with several newly arrived torpedo-boats, we would go to sea to meet the arriving transports and supply-ships and convoy them to

the different ports. There was no question that the submarines were in our vicinity and were ready and eager at all times to sink our ships with their precious cargoes. During July and August we continued to do this class of work without any exciting incident. Ships were met at sea and convoyed safely into port and again were convoyed safely out on their return journey to America.

“About the first week in September, we put out to sea and were out about two days when we came upon a large fleet of ships, probably twenty-five or thirty, somewhere off the coast of England. There was a great array of cruisers and torpedo-boats accompanying the fleet, and it was an inspiring sight. That evening, about six o'clock, our ship, with a French torpedo-boat, received orders to convoy four of the large ships into one of the ports. We proceeded on our way, and about an hour later one of the ships signalled to us that a submarine was sighted off her port. We continued on our way, keeping a vigilant watch, but through the long hours of the night nothing was seen more of the submarine.

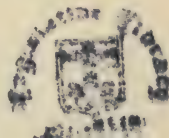
“About 7:45 A. M. next day, one of the ships signalled again that the submarine was again off her port, and later another ship signalled that the submarine was off her starboard side. All of the ships commenced firing, and at intervals, for over an hour, shots were fired at the submarine—which turned out to be submarines—whenever they poked their periscopes above the surface or when their wakes were

noticeable. Our ship led the way, but the four ships strung out, and the French torpedo-boat followed in the rear. Later a large airplane hove in sight, and we were notified by the aviator that we were over a mine-field that had been sown by the subs during the night. We got through safely, however, and landed the ships in port, no damage being done. I learned afterwards that two German submarines were sunk in this engagement.

“After spending an hour or two in port, we put again to sea. We met another convoy and brought them safely into another port. A day later we pulled up anchor and made for our own base, where we lay over just long enough to coal up and put on some supplies, when we were off again for a well-known port in England. Here we put on a large quantity of depth-charges and, after a few hours’ liberty ashore, pulled up anchor and left the port with the cheers of the English jackies ringing in our ears.

“The following morning, while on gun-watch, I observed a peculiar object skimming along the surface of the water. At first I thought it was a porpoise, but was soon convinced that it was a torpedo which had just missed us and spent itself. I made a report to the ordnance-officer, and we continued our journey without anything happening. Later I learned that two torpedoes had been fired on us on that trip.

“It was very fortunate for us that none of the



torpedoes connected with us in this eventful voyage, for, if we had been hit with that deadly cargo aboard, no one would have ever lived to tell the tale. We would have been blown to atoms.

“We got in safely, however, and distributed the depth-charges to the other ships of the fleet and proceeded out to sea again, to meet another convoy. While on this trip we sighted a sail on what appeared to be a life-boat and, on coming closer, we saw men in it frantically waving their hands at us. We picked them up and learned that they were part of the crew of a large fishing-boat that had been sunk by a German sub. Later we picked up two other boats, rescuing in all sixteen men.

“All through the month of September, we were busily engaged in convoy work, but nothing really exciting except some heavy storms intermingled with calm seas.

“On October 2nd, while we were several hundred miles out to sea and had just left a large convoy on the way to America, the stillness of the afternoon was broken by five shots in rapid succession. At first we thought it was target-practise from a ship in our vicinity. That did not deter us, however, in seeking out the cause of the shot.

“After steaming in the direction of the shots for about an hour, we sighted a large fishing-bark. Off in the distance were six life-boats containing a number of men. Suddenly two more shots rang out, and we could see a sub several miles off the port side of

the bark. We immediately pursued the submarine, which submerged. When we got over her wake, we got busy at once with our depth-charges. Whether we got the sub or not is a question for the future to decide. We returned in several hours and picked up the men in the boats, who were to the number of thirty-one. After they were safely aboard, we offered to put them back on their ship, which was still afloat and uninjured. Only one man was willing to go back, and he was the captain. Quite a number of the men on our ship volunteered to man the bark and try to take her into port. This our Captain refused to permit, deeming it unwise. A wireless message was sent out, notifying all ports that the ship was unmanned and adrift at sea. Later we were notified by wireless that an English torpedo-boat had towed her safely into port.

“At 11 :30 P. M. of this same day, the night being dark and the sea somewhat rough, our Captain changed his course, and we were somewhat startled to discover on the dark surface of the water a large German submarine. We immediately opened fire, and the submarine submerged. We got over her wake and destroyed her with a depth-charge. This was evident by the large amount of oil and wreckage seen on the surface. We were told by the Frenchmen aboard, whom we had rescued during the day, that there were three submarines all told at the time their ship was attacked. This submarine was evidently one of them and had followed us.

“About 7 A. M. on a day in mid-October, three days from land, we were taking a convoy out to sea. A loud report was heard, and one of our yachts seemed to suddenly list and settle in the water. She sank quickly, stern first, and in four minutes there was nothing visible of her except those who had succeeded in manning the life-boats or were floating on pieces of wreckage. Two of the ships which we were convoying doubled their speed and got away safely. With us at that time was the *Alcedo*, with which we returned and picked up the survivors amounting to several hundred. Sixty-seven men were lost in this tragedy. We brought the survivors back to port and then proceeded to a southerly port to convoy out another small fleet of transports.

“On October the 25th, we proceeded to sea with three large ships in the convoy, one of them being a former large liner turned into a transport. On October the 27th, at 9:30 A. M., when we thought that we had safely cleared the submarine zone, a torpedo was seen to tear a large hole forward on the starboard side of the big ship. It was thought by all that she would sink in a few moments, and her civilian crew were seen taking to the life-boats. At this moment, a great storm arose, and the sea became very rough. The torpedo-boats, which were with us, immediately made off for the other ships and got them safely through the Danger Zone. With the *Alcedo*, we returned and picked up a number of men who had taken to the life-boats and returned most of

them to the transport, which it was now evident would not sink and could probably return to port under her own steam.

“Nothing eventual happened during the months of November and December. In January, while out to sea with several torpedoboats, a hurricane came upon us and we were tossed about for forty-eight hours and thought we were lost. The Captain succeeded in bringing the ship safely into a port in Spain, where it was thought that the repairs needed would take several weeks, and the Spanish authorities wished to intern the vessel. This the Captain refused to acquiesce, and, after resting several hours, we proceeded to sea for the nearest allied port in Portugal. Here needed repairs were made. . . The ship is still doing convoy work.”

That is the sort of material that made up your Uncle Samuel's Suicide Fleet in the waters of France.

*We didn't wait, though all our folks insisted;
The hook had speedy fighting for its bait,
And so we fellows—well—we just enlisted:
We didn't wait.*

*We had to go. The pace that battle sets you
Won't let us sort of fellows be so slow;
Somehow, the fact that you are needed gets you:
We had to go.*

*So here we are—or, what's left of us, rather;
We've wandered kind of wild and kind of far;
But, still, we like the life—as you can gather,
Since here we are.*

—VOLUNTEERS.

CHAPTER III

PERILS OF THE DEEP

I FIRST sailed with the Suicide Fleet in the early autumn of 1917, and most of the incidents I have thus far recorded occurred either before or shortly after that time. Those were the days when the harlequin-yachts had but one chance of safety:

"It's this way," I remember a volunteer of forty-two explained the matter: "A sub's torpedo costs about \$25,000, and our boats have been so knocked about by this time that their marked value isn't more than \$15,000 apiece. Of course, once in a while we do so much damage that Fritzie loses his temper and thinks we're worth a tin-fish. If he ever hits us, it's good night: we're so little and we carry such a lot of explosives that we'd never know what struck us. That's the way it was with the *Alcedo*. I was aboard her."

He told me about the *Alcedo*. I repeat his words, as nearly as possible, verbatim:

"It was night, and winter, and cold. We was bringin' up the tail of a convoy. I was below, asleep in my bunk. All of a sudden—BANG!

"I didn't need to be told what that was. I was out of my bunk and at the door before the explosion was over—mebbie the explosion threw me out.

"Something had happened to the lights, and everything was pitch dark. I grabbed the door-knob—and the door had jammed.

"Don't ask me how I got that door open. I don't know. I remember jerkin' down a bunk and hammering at the door with the bunk's iron framework, and then, the next thing I remember, I was on deck.

"The way the men that was on duty behaved, you can tell that best from one story. We had a gob named Proon—something like that. He was one of the forward gun-crew and was at his station when the torpedo struck us. Nobody'd seen her coming. Nobody knew there was a sub anywhere near. We just all of a sudden got it. Well, this fellow, Proon, or whatever his name was, he was blown overboard, clear into the sea. Force of the explosion, you know. They found out afterwards both of his shoes was blown off, and one ankle broken and one sprained. But he swam back to the ship and crawled to his station at the gun, although he knew all along we were done for—and he stayed there till Four-Stripes gave the order to abandon ship. It was all over in about five minutes, but it seemed like five hours.

"About me. By the time I got on deck the show was done. There was one fellow in the fantail. I yelled to him where was the others.

" 'They're all gone,' he says. 'Lend a hand here,' he says, 'an' we'll launch this raft.'

"You see, he was tryin' to launch a raft. I helped,

but it was dark, and she was goin' down by the head, and there was only the two of us.

"When the raft was 'most ready, I says:

"'Is that a life-preserver you got on?'—It was dark, you understand.

"An' he says, yes, it was.

"So I says:

"'Well, I'm goin' to try to find one.'

"He told me not to be a fool, for there wasn't no time to spare. But I ran down to my bunk—slid 'most the way—but it was blacker down there than on deck, even. So I beat it on deck again an' tried to find the place where I knew a locker used to be. I sung out to that fellow on the fantail—he was close by—I sung out:

"'Let me know when she goes!'

"Right away, almost, just when I found that locker and was hangin' over it, he calls:

"'Here she goes, Charley!'

"And with that I jumped. There wasn't a chance of gettin' back to him, so I jumped.

"It was freezin' cold in the water, an' the water was full of men swimmin'. You'd butt into them. I bumped one. From his voice I knew it was a fellow named Coleman that they used to say had been a porter, or somethin', at the Waldorf Hotel in New York. Along with me, he got to a four-man raft; but it had five men on it, an' he seen he'd only make things dangerous for everybody else if he stayed on. So he just says:

“‘Good-by, boys, an’ good luck!’—an’ he dove off.

“I heard a boat picked him up an hour later, an’ he was ’most all in. But I was glad he was picked up.

“I got to another raft, somehow. It was bigger, but fellows kep’ climbin’ aboard till it was gettin’ overcrowded, too. There was an officer in command.

“One o’ the first fellows on her was a young Jew fellow. We used to guy him, one way an’ another, in the old days. Well, bye an’ bye, the officer he says:

“‘This raft’s overcrowded. There’s one too many on her. One of us’ll have to go.’

“Just then there wasn’t any other raft, let alone a boat, anywhere in sight, but no sooner’d the officer said about somebody havin’ to go than the Jew, he saluted, an’ ‘Aye, aye, sir,’ he says, an’ jumped off into the water.

“It was a little after that that one of the *Alcedo’s* boats come alongside, an’ she was almost empty an’ took us all off the raft.

“We couldn’t see anything, and of course the convoy’d got away as fast as it could. That’s accordin’ to orders; when a sub gets into action, the convoy must run: if you stayed to pick up survivors you might all get caught.

“So we went pullin’ along, not knowin’ whether we was headin’ for France or New York, when, just

out of nothin' at all, there was the sub right on our starboard bow. A lot of men were standin' on her deck.

"'What ship was that?' one of them asked. He talked good English. I guess he was the captain.

"A gob in our boat shouted out 'Alcedo' before our officer could stop him. He told her tonnage, too.

"But the Dutchman, he didn't seem to know the name, for he says next:

"'What was she?'

"Then our officer, he says:

"'Empty tramp. Bound home.'

"'An' who are you?' asks Fritz.

"'Twelve o' the crew,' says our officer.

"'Any officers among you?' says the German.

"'No,' says our officer. 'An' which way's land?' he says.

"The Dutchman told us one way an' went below; but he must 'a' thought better of it, for we hadn't gone but a few strokes before he was up again an' yellin' after us that just the opposite way was the right way—an' it was.

"That was the last we saw of him. We pulled for fifteen hours. Every once in a while, we'd kind o' lose heart an' quit. When you was relieved from rowin', you'd lie in the bottom an' think things. I heard one of the other boats dried their tobacco and tried to smoke, but hadn't got any dry matches, so they just threw it away because it was an aggravation there. Some of us were better off, for we were

chewers. I'd learned to chew, workin' in the steel-mills, an' I think it about saved my life.

"Well, anyway, we made land at last. I was all in, lyin' in the bottom an' all ready to die, when somebody yelled, an' I jumped up an' seen a pretty white lighthouse—I never did see anything so pretty as that lighthouse was—an' right away all my strength come back, an' I took an oar an' pulled like a dray-horse.

"We landed at a funny little French village, where they hadn't never seen Americans before, an' they made such a feast for us that we all says we're goin' back there—when the war's over. They gave us their own kind o' clothes an' wooden shoes—an' that's the way we was all dressed when we got back to the Base."

As the survivor concluded, I recollected what I had heard, from the doctors at Naval Base Hospital No. 5, who told me of the arrival of the other boats' crews, which, picked up by a French destroyer, made the same port wherefrom the *Alcedo* had started. It was night. A wireless message from the attacked convoy warned them to be ready for survivors. They cruised the harbour, and beyond it, to no purpose.

"We returned at last to the pier," said one doctor, "and almost at once that little wasplike destroyer appeared. She made a beautiful landing, but her load of survivors were dreadfully done up. One of them was so weak that he couldn't walk. He col-

lapsed and fell into the water between the boat and the pier. It was a nasty place for a rescue, but Doctor Herman dove in, with two sailors, and got him out. The sort of condition those *Alcedo* men must have been in to begin with, though, is shown by the fact that we didn't have one case of pneumonia among them."

My special informant concerning the *Alcedo* affair was doing shore-police duty when he told me his story.

"Once we got back to the Base," he grinned, "they all pulled the hero stuff on us. The Admiral gave us Paris-leave, and the Y. M. C. A. paid for the trip. We had the time of our lives."

"And now you're ashore for good?" I asked him. He grew sad again.

"For bad," he corrected. "Looks like it. There's not boats enough. I don't care for it. If I can't get back to sea somehow, I'm goin' to try to get some sort o' transfer to the Marines, or even the Army. O' course, it won't be as excitin' at the front as on the yachts, but it'll be better'n playin' cop."

It was certainly exciting work, that of the Mosquito Fleet, at times, but it was work in long shifts, too. At Bordeaux I was ashore in December with one party of officers when we met another:

"We've had leave only once since September 6th," a member of the second party told me.

"Any action?" I inquired.

"Not much this trip. Still, we've had eight sub-

scares—not a buoy or a floating box, but the real thing. Six times we had a chance to open fire and, out of that half-dozen times, our shots never but once landed more than ten feet away from the mark. Once one of the lookouts called the commander's attention to a sea-gull that didn't seem to be behaving naturally; we took a look—and that gull had come to rest on a periscope. We gave her"—he used the term that the term "depth-charge" has gradually changed to—"we gave her a death-bomb, but I think she got away."

It was on this occasion that we fell to talking of the *Antilles*. On his converted yacht, the officer that had just been speaking was present when that homeward-bound transport was torpedoed.

"She settled by the stern in four minutes," he told me, "and then the water got to her boilers and they exploded. The explosion raised the ship clear of the water. In one sense, it was a blessing; only four boats had been got over the side, and two of those capsized; there hadn't been time to launch the life-rafts, and nearly everybody had jumped into the water, but that blast shook the rafts free and spread them broadcast within reach of the swimmers. Not of all, however; as the C—— steamed up for rescue work, she sighted a jackie floating astride of an ammunition-box that turned out to have one six-inch shell left in it: he stood up on the box and wig-wagged to the C—— with his arms, to take care on account of that shell, and not to ram the loaded box."



Torpedoed—going down



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Destroyer bringing into port survivors from a U-boat victim

There was a Marine who had been so ill that he was ordered home aboard the *Antilles*. He was rescued and ordered home on the *Finland*. He set out on her and, when she was torpedoed, his arm was broken. When I last saw him he was wondering whether the Navy would trust another ship to the waves with such an ill-starred passenger.

"We were convoying the *Finland*," a Mosquito Fleet man, an officer of the W——, told the story—"and I was in the wardroom at about 9:20 A. M., when I heard the day-time sub-signal: six blasts on the whistle. I think I couldn't have been more than twenty seconds getting on deck.

"What's wrong?" I asked the first jackies I ran into.

"*Finland's* torpedoed,' they said.

"I looked at her. For quite a bit, you couldn't have told that anything had happened to her, but the convoy was running around, dropping depth-charges. The flagship signalled us that our job would be looking after survivors—it wasn't a case where running away would help, and, besides, there was a chance—we could see it at once—of saving the transport.

"A good deal of stuff had been flung overboard, and, as I watched, more came over. Then they began to get the boats off her—there was a considerable sea running—and most of them swamped. It wasn't a pretty sight by a long shot.

"We started in through the wreckage and worked

till noon, picking up twenty-six men, but it was the toughest kind of work, owing to the roughness of the water; we were pitching so that it was next to impossible to get anybody aboard. We had to go slow, and the result was that most of the rescued had been too long in the water. Some of them couldn't raise an arm to show us where they were; a lot were doubled up with cramps, and, whereas nearly all began by shouting for help, pretty soon—in about half an hour, I should say—there wasn't a sound to be heard from them.

“All of a sudden, we sighted a fellow about seventy yards away from us, practically done for and giving in. He had a life-preserver on, and that's all that was keeping him afloat; there was a moment when it was doubtful whether there was any life left in him at all. Well, there followed the best piece of rescue-work that I've ever seen.

“That man was to windward of us, and of course we were drifting faster than he was: every second increased the distance between us and lessened his slim chances, and there was no time to try to bring the ship around. Ensign English, a reserve officer, stripped and grabbed a heaving-line—a heaving-line is seven-eighths of an inch thick—and jumped into that high sea of icy water.

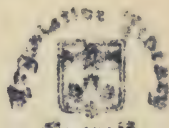
“We thought of course he'd not live to reach the chap. I never saw harder swimming. The fellow from the *Finland* was a good eighty yards away by now, but English fought through about seventy,

yards of it, fighting his way over the huge waves—and just there he found that the line wasn't long enough.

“What did he do? He swam back—back to the ship again—got a double-length rope and went after that fellow a second time! Yes, sir. And he got him—God knows how, but he got him! Chucked about in those waves, he made a noose with two Matthew Walker knots, so it wouldn't slip, and put it around the *Finland* man and drew it fast, signalled to us to haul, and then beat his way back with one hand while he helped hold up the dying man's head with the other.

“We were pitching heavily. Now our propellers would be clear, and now our prow would be fourteen feet out of water. Once the pair of them were alongside, it took us nearly half an hour to get them aboard. By that time, English was about as nearly dead as the fellow he'd saved. But he *had* saved him—at what risk and with what labour you can see from what I've told you, and—now, here's the joke: when we got that rescued man ashore, it turned out that all English's danger and heroism had been undertaken for a spy!”

One more story and I shall have done with tales of the Suicide Fleet. I have omitted, in my first chapter, the story of the submarine-chase by a boat on which I was sailing, because I wanted to report such an event in the authentic language of an expert. Here, then, at last, is such a narrative in the



words of an officer as I took them down while he uttered them:

“We left S—— (a French port) with a convoy and an escort of yachts and destroyers. It was about a month after the *Finland* had been caught, and we had a little moon and early. It was about a three-quarters moon at 6:15, but there were low clouds on the horizon that gave the green hands subscares and caused one or two false alarms. I was in my cabin at 6:30, when the General Alarm sounded. There was no time to put on a life-preserver, so I jumped out and up to my station. On my way up, I saw the light-signal for a submarine from the nearest yacht.

“For a bit nothing happened. We fussed and signalled, but we got no further news from our neighbours. It seemed forever, and it seemed as if nothing *would* happen. The sea was calm, and everything was as still as can be. Then, perhaps after twenty minutes, a yacht somewhere off in the twilight started to siren.

“We hopped around like mad. We hopped so quick that it was all you could do to keep your feet. Fifteen minutes of that, before a lookout called a sub. We jumped for it, but didn't spot anything worth a shot. We made about quickly, and, at last, there was a sure-enough periscope on our port beam, two hundred yards away and heading in the opposite direction. She was making a beautiful wake.

“We'd had plenty of time, and everything was

ready. We fired two shots, and the second was some shot, I tell you! It hit that periscope—hit it square and blew it to bits.

“That seemed to fuss her. She looked like she was starting to submerge all the way, but she cut right under our stern, where we could take another easy pot at her. We came around, let the swirl of her submergence get about abaft our beam and let down two depth-charges, one right after the other.

“I guess we were quicker letting those charges down than our speed could guarantee. Almost, anyhow. All I’m sure of is, there was the gulderndest explosion you ever saw—or felt. I am secondary fire-control, and I’m aft, right where those T. N. T. cans begin their work; well, sire, the whole dog-gasted ocean came up—wreckage, oil, water and what looked like the bottom of the sea.

“I fell on the deck. When I picked myself up, the fellows were all cheering. It got right hold of you, and it wasn’t till the cheering was over and even the bubbles were well astern, that I had a chance to feel scared. Then I found that the skipper had been knocked down, too.

“We circled and headed right back through that wreckage. There were two or three men floating in the middle of it, but they were dead men—dead men in life-preservers, bobbing up and down in a lot of black, sticky-looking stuff. By that time, I was a bit scared—and by that time it was all over.”

As, however, I have intimated, these tales of the

Suicide Fleet far afloat, though tales hitherto untold, are bits of ancient history. With the arrival, last winter, of more destroyers in French waters, these took up that deeper-sea tasks which had at first been the task of the harlequin-yachts: the Mosquito Fleet had done its pioneer work and was detailed to coastal convoy and patrol-duty.

The life that they now lead the Mosquito men have woven into a rough song, which they sing to the air of *Tipperary*. I noted it. It goes:

They send us out each evening
 For to hunt the coast-convoy;
 It's under way at 8 P. M.,
 Full speed, hearts full of joy;
 But when we get to Rubber,
 Zinc, or Copper down the bay,
 We hear those ships are hours late,
 And to ourselves we say:

CHORUS:

It's a long way to meet the convoy,
 It's a long way to go;
 There's no rest that way upon, boy,
 Unless you touch Bordeaux:
 Good-by, *Continental*,
 Farewell, *Grand Café*;
 It's a long, long way to Rue de Siam—
 But we'll get back there some day!

The metals mentioned in the stanza are code-words employed in orders, and the true significance

of them one is not permitted to divulge, but the Continental and the Grand Café are places of convivial resort at the Base, and the Rue de Siam is that street there which our jackies, remembering the Brooklyn Navy Yard, have named Sand Street.

The song goes on :

We sail all round and round the bay,
And ne'er a ship we see,
Although we sail till sunup and
Are searching carefully.
At last we get a radio :
"They're fifty hours out"—
There's nothing else for us to do
But swear and put about.

CHORUS :

It's a long way, etc.

I'd like to be the Boss at Base
For just about a week :
I'd ship the whole Flag Office on
A cruise of hide-and-peek ;
I'd start them nowhere every night,
To chase themselves till day ;
I'd make them wish that they all were
Back in the U. S. A.

CHORUS :

It's the wrong way our boats to send, boy ;
It's the wrong way to jog ;
It's the wrong way to treat a friend, boy,
Or a little yellow dog ;

But the Boss the Base is on, boy :
We'll get our chance again ;
It's a darn dull job, this coastal convoy,
But we'll still be sailormen !

Putting, perhaps, the same feeling into prose, a Mosquito Fleet skipper said to me :

“What we're on now is a regular yachting-cruise. Why, we go to bed with the ports open ! Our guns are almost getting rusty ; they haven't been used, except in practise, for six weeks. Last trip I caught a member of the gun-crew asleep at his post, and I could hardly find the face to blame him. All the taste of fighting we get is listening-in by radio to raids out at sea. That's our chief indoor sport.”

Nevertheless, the men that talk thus do so only because their recent past has set them so severe a standard of comparison. As a matter of fact, to bring merchant ships, laden with important freight, along the Atlantic coast of France in time of war is to perform a task of no little responsibility and no small danger. Only the increased efficiency of other branches of our naval service has reduced the dangers of direct submarine-attack ; the dangers from submarine-laid mines are still sufficient, and the natural perils of that coast are little short of enormous. The Mosquito Fleet's present duties are performed by night and in darkness ; there is a certain commander that had been so doing his share of them for seven months ; not long since, he for the first time “made the run” by day ; when he had passed the

shallow channels, the needlelike rocks and the half-submerged reefs and had landed safely at the Baseport, he was frankly horrified by what he had seen.

"Have I been going over such a course all this time without really realizing it?" he gasped. "Going over it and leading other ships? By cricky, if I'd seen what I was doing the first time I tried it, I don't believe I'd have had the nerve!"

But he would have had. The nerve of the Mosquito Fleet's officers and men has added a new tradition of honor to our Navy.

*The spider sits in the web he span—web
he span—web he span—
The spider sits in the web he span,
Waiting the fractious fly;
Never a hurried or worried khan,
Perfectly pleased with his pretty plan,
He's a regular gentleman—
Say, do you wonder why?
Being predestinarian,
Well he knows that the web he span
Is going to can, if anything can,
Poor little Conrad Fly.*

*The Admiral waits at his desk ashore—
desk ashore—desk ashore—
The Admiral waits at his desk ashore,
Talking to every tub;
Over a thousand miles or more
(Radio, flash and semaphore)
These are his orders: hear him roar:
"Sink me another sub!
Peel her plates and pick her core,
Cop her Cap. for a trip ashore;
Throw the rest to the ocean's floor,
Bread for Beelzebub!"*
—THE ADMIRAL.

PART TWO
ROMANCE ASHORE
CHAPTER IV

THE SPIDER IN HIS WEB

ANEW office-building in an old town. Across the busy street, an open square, in which a French band is playing. About five hundred yards down-hill, a magnificent harbour—so far as the work of Nature is concerned, the equal of New York's.

You climb a flight of stairs—another—four—because the war stopped construction just as the elevator was about to be installed—and you enter a right-angled hall off which opens a suite of eight apartments. Through their closed doors come the tapping of telegraph-instruments, the staccato clatter of typewriters.

You might well imagine yourself at the headquarters of a great brokerage firm in Chicago: instead, you are at a battle-front. You are in the engine-room of that vast power-system which is conveying the fighting men of America through the war at sea to the war on land. These are the executive bureaux of the United States Naval Forces operating in French waters.

Not one American in five thousand realizes what

it is that these offices are doing. Not one in one thousand is actively conscious that such offices exist. The traditionally "Silent Navy" of England is strident in comparison with the silence that has walled in the work of the Navy of the United States here accomplished. Life-belted, seasick soldiers, squeezing their way to the crowded rails of incoming transports—these cheer till they are hoarse when, still far from land, the ducking destroyers appear out of nothingness, hop about them in the Danger Zone and herd them safely portwards; but, save for the members of the staff themselves—and they either can't or won't write about it—few indeed have a thorough-going conception of the tremendous job that is being done.

It is a job without equal in all the history of warfare. The Great King sent his hordes from Asia to Greece; Hannibal brought his Africans into Italy; Cæsar passed through Gaul to Britain; Napoleon crossed the Alps, he penetrated Russia. But America, against an enemy equipped with all the devices of modern science for war on and under water, is ferrying an army millions strong across the Atlantic Ocean by means of the United States Navy.

In plain terms, the task is this: To get our men-ships and our supply-ships in and out of the Danger Zone with the utmost speed consistent with the utmost safety.

This means that, since the question of tonnage is vital, the empty outgoing boats are almost as im-

portant as are the boats that come in laden. It means a system of communication by radio, telephone and telegraph, of which the complexity staggers comprehension. It means co-ordinating plans whereby unlighted ships on a naturally perilous coast—convoys converging from a dozen points of the compass towards one point at one time—may send out and receive reports for the avoidance of mines, of submarines and, what is no less dangerous, of one another. It means the establishment of much such an office as would be required if all the railway traffic of America met, near a given point, on a single-track line—the office of a sort of omniscient train-dispatcher.

That is the office opposite the open square in which the French band is playing at this port.

Even if not one gun had been fired at sea before the August of 1918, for us ours would-still have been, thus far, a three-quarters naval war. There was a night last autumn when one German submarine sank four American boats in French waters; Teutonic sea success on such a scale has ended—and if you could look at a certain map, you would see why.

That is a changing map in this office, indicating, in some measure, what the office is for, and how it goes about it—a big map drawn on a large scale. It covers a shore-line terrible to sailors even in the days of peace, the entire shore-line of France, to wit, from a point on the Channel near western Flan-

ders to that point on the Bay of Biscay intersected by the Spanish border. From the spot on this map made for the port of which I am now writing, the Base or headquarters town, lines are drawn inland to Paris, to Rome, to Switzerland, northward to England and eastward to a score of dots along the land battle-fronts: the lines indicating routes of communication and information for the Navy.

Along the map's line of coast, openly evident in big harbours, hidden away in tiny inlets and tucked between the rocks of islands out at sea, are disks of many colours—the destroyer, submarine, armored yacht, mine-sweeper, balloon and hydroaeroplane bases that, divided between American and French forces, send out reports and ocean-policemen up and down, in and out, afloat, in the sky and under the water, from St. Jean de Luce to Dunkirk.

It is a low, level and lofty spider's web that is set for every ocean menace; it is an intricate, ever-moving line of defense and attack that guards the transport long before the transport sees it. It is what alone gets our men to France, and what alone, once they have arrived, gets there the means of their maintenance.

“You may see it all and write of it all,” said the Admiral—and if you can picture a good-humored Thaddeus Stevens, a little fuller in the face, you can envisage the Admiral. “We haven't anything to hide, and we hope we haven't anything to be ashamed of. There's nothing to be concealed except

what would help the enemy. If there's anything wrong with the Navy, we want it known!"

Rather an unusual welcome! But then the Admiral was "playing safe"; the Navy has almost nothing of which it need fear the exposure.

It is working from what, to an American, is perhaps the most foreign seaport in France. The Phœnicians, it is said, laid out the foundations of that portside castle in which the bulk of our men ashore are quartered. Cæsar, whose work is claimed everywhere, of course, improved it, and it was "completed" in the fourteenth Louis's time by that military architect who perfected the fortress of Verdun. The deafening noise of wooden shoes makes daylong tumult in its streets. Through it, since this war began, have passed troops, English, Russian and Italian, and to-day, among the crowds of white-coiffed native women, walk soldiers American, English, Portuguese, French, Algerian, and Cochin-Chinese—and each sort leaves its mark.

Imagine the Admiral at the center of the web. From him radiate threads to all the naval posts and all the inland points that I have previously mentioned. Then other threads—threads direct and crisscross. To the Army, via the coding officer and superintendent of ports; to the staff-representative in Paris and through him to the French Ministry of Marine; to our Paris naval attaché, the chief of aviation, the heads of the troop and store escort; the commander of the United States Navy in European

waters. More—threads to the Base's bureaux of purchases and payments, the liaison officer, communication, naval intelligence, counter-espionage, cable censor, war-risk insurance, interallied radio, United States Army ports, French government departments, Versailles War Council, Naval Liaison Committee, the Allied Naval Council in London. And so on, et cetera and so forth. Directly under the Admiral's control are a few little items like the following:

Vessels at this port,	Yard Boatswain's office,
Coastal convoy escort,	Radio repair-shop,
Tug fleet,	Naval magazine,
Naval port officer,	Naval hospitals,
Marine superintendent	Shore patrol,
with army,	Docks,
Supply office,	Canteen,
Repair-shop,	Oiling stations,
Repair-ship,	Coastal stations,
Barracks,	Coaling stations,
Supplies,	Pay-office.
Personnel department,	

After taking care of his part of the matters involved therein, the Admiral should need some sleep. As closely as my lay mind can figure, he ought to manage to get quite two hours out of every twenty-four—if his bedside telephone doesn't interrupt him.

Each division has subdivisions under it. The Naval Constructor is in charge of material and supplies, and the office of Material and Supplies has bureaux for contracts, fuel and provisions, not to



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Admiral Wilson, chief of fleet in France, and Admiral
Moreau



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American sailors in parade celebrating the first anniversary of our entry into the war

mention one deputy-supply officer in every district. The innocent-appearing head of "inspections" branches out into ship organization, gunnery and a mysterious department labeled "Doctrine," that, as you will later see, has no relation to theology. "Operations" stretches down to "Movement Orders"; "Public Works" controls "Civil Engineers"; the Flag Secretary commands a dozen branches of which the least are boards of examination, promotion and investigation.

Consider again the office of Communication: it has three subordinate offices, those of the "Coding Group," which seems to concern itself with the manufacture of new codes; plain "Codes," which destroys old ones and files documents, and "Radio," which governs three subdivisions, ending in one that has progeny of its own.

I was trying to explain the situation to James Hazen Hyde. I said the Admiral and his staff reminded me of a trust president and his lieutenants putting through some gigantic and endless deal in "industrials."

"The Admiral," said Mr. Hyde, "must be like the late E. H. Harriman. He was the only man I ever knew that could talk over three long-distance 'phones on three different subjects at one time."

The Admiral and his staff sleep in rooms just below their office. That is, they say they sleep. I asked the Admiral's orderly if he had ever seen him in bed, and he said:

“No, sir.”

Anyhow, that bedside telephone is a fact. The rooms are pleasant and, unless I am very much mistaken, I used to sit, long before I went there to dinner, in some of their easy chairs when they were in the smoking-room of a certain North German Lloyd liner. The point, however, is that I did pass a recent evening in the Admiral's living quarters—one long remembers American oysters and American ice-cream found in wartime France!—and that I then had a chance to see how this man's is a day-and-night job.

It all began very easily and comfortably, and the Admiral, after a long day's work, spoke of how good it was to draw his chair close to the open fire. One of the three guests had to leave early, because, although he was our host's nephew, he had volunteered as a common seaman and had to be aboard ship betimes. That orderly of the commander, a Lehigh graduate with six months' experience of the service, muttered in the hall:

“This is the most democratic Navy I ever saw: an admiral helping a gob on with his coat!”

But then we settled down for a quiet evening. The only mention of war was made when “Upstairs” sent in the radio-caught German press-report for the day just finished—over there, we set store by that portion signed “Ludendorf”—and we had talked for perhaps half an hour of a dozen other things, of storms at sea, of strange lands, of the beauty of

the square rigger and, most of all, of home, when "Upstairs" again interrupted. It brought this telegraphic message :

"U. S. S. —, with No. 1 hold flooded, drawing twenty-six feet forward, beached in exposed position one thousand feet off Audierne breakwater, sand and rock bottom, at low water. Ship pounding heavily and filling. All compartments flooded. Two ten-inch pumps make no headway. Divers from ship report six feet of skeg carried away. Extent of damage to hull not known, but probably holes under holds 1, 2 and 4. Officer No. 188, assisted by subordinate, who is experienced wrecker, directing salvage operations; but reports vessel can not be floated without salvage equipment, including boilers, pumps, divers and lighters. Advise."

A night-and-day job, you see!

*Balloons and hydroaeroplanes,
Which in the heavens be,
And all you little dancing ships
That dart about the sea,
Remember, though you get away
To any farthest place,
There's some one that's a-watching you
From back here, at the Base.*

*Suppose your rudder gets a-jam?
There's gossip in a whale!
Your oil-gauge doesn't register?
The air's a tattletale!
And would you try to hurry back
And give the news a chase?
It's sure to beat you homeward and
To meet you at the Base.*

*So when you've failed to spot the sub
That limping homeward goes,
Or when you make your contact late,
Don't say: "Nobody knows";
But polish your excuses up
And pull your wisest face:
They'll be asking awkward questions, when
You see them at the Base.*

—STAFF.

CHAPTER V

THE MEN BEHIND THE SHIPS

COME back with me, please, to that suite of new offices in this old town from which radiates the intricate web circumscribing the vast activities of the American Naval Forces based on France. There is adventure hidden there.

The Admiral's workroom boasts the large, clean-swept desk of a chief-executive whose big business is systematically administered; you have the sense of a ship so well ordered that, though it moves with the highest efficiency and at top speed, the discipline is invisible, the machinery inaudible. It is when you pass into the next office, the office of the chief of staff, that you begin to see the well-greased wheels go round. There is a sign on its outer door:

Chief of Staff and Staff Representative
for
Y. M. C. A., Y. M. H. A., K. of C. and
Y. W. C. A. Workers
and
Itinerant Doctors, Detectives, Authors, Investi-
gators, Commissioners, Naval Officers off
Station, Ladies in Distress,
Birds of Passage
and
The Closure of Saloons and Bars.

Some light-minded fellow-officer put that sign

there, yet it is a laugh with the truth in it. Admiral Wilson's chief of staff does indeed have to take care of the matters detailed in the sign as well as anything else in his multifarious naval duties that turns up meanwhile.

He checks and reports to the Admiral, for instance, all the bulletins of every sort of activity in our fleet's zones of operation—of which more later. Under his eye is kept a day-by-day record of the work done by every boat of every sort, a diary of each, rather like the books of a factory's time-keeper, so that neither men nor engines may be overworked to the point of inefficiency. He deals with all requests for leave—real comedies in the making and the bared bones of living tragedies. I recall one succinct petition :

“Reason: Mother just sent to hospital in New York, fatally ill; wife about to have child.”

To him, too, falls for answer the bulk of the correspondence; I mention some of the general heads under which were grouped the mass of one day's documents that I saw in the wire basket on his desk :

Installation of Ice-machines.
Replacement of Damaged Boats.
Request for Communication Officer.
A Question of Pay Accounts.
Installation of Electric Leads through
Gun Mounts.
Ventilation Nets for Three Destroyers.

Requests for Leave.
 Orders with French Factories.
 Inspection of Armed Guards.
 Towing Winches Needed.
 Kite Balloons Required.
 Bill for Pumping Vidage Pits.
 Applications for Employment.
 Campaign Orders.
 Pilotage-Pay Disputes.
 Personal Records of Certain Officers.
 Permits for Truck Drivers.
 Construction of New Oil Tanks.

As if this were not enough, the chief of staff has a good deal to do with the formulation and transmission of doctrine. He is a kind of college of cardinals, or, rather, a congregation of the Naval Holy See.

Doctrine, I have elsewhere said, is not theological in the Navy, but it is to the Navy what the other sort of doctrine is to the Church, what policy is to statecraft. It is formulated to obviate the need of the repetition of general principles in each instance of individual movement, but it has to be kept constantly up-to-date in order to meet those changes of procedure on the part of the enemy that are as constantly kept up-to-date in order to meet it. For instance, every time a convoy goes out, it is necessary that its commanders, and the commanders of its guardian ships, balloons and hydroaeroplanes, should each be informed of such developments in the coastal situation as might in any way affect any special

commander; but, again to use the ecclesiastical figure, it should be a work of supererogation to detail the general methods of the enemy and the general methods to resist or avoid them in their usual expression. The aim of a convoy is such-and-such; therefore, these members should be so-and-so and those this-and-that—submarines have been attacking thus; therefore, transports ought to form in the following manner, destroyers in the next following; whereas, in the event of onslaught or sinking, the first-named boats ought to maneuver in this fashion, the second-named in the other fashion. And so on. A business complicated and fluent, but weighty and important, abstract in the learning, concrete in its results, a matter of life and death.

There is no need here to go into the Flag-Office or into the office of the stenographers; no need to tell of the filing-system and the card-catalogues. Enough that they are there, and that, though modern business methods have tarnished the romance of naval warfare, as waged by Barry and John Paul Jones, they have applied the new polish of system, which only renders the basic romance the more effective. Such inventions as wireless telegraphy have made this sort of thing imperative.

The wireless telegraphy of these administrative offices is received in and sent out of a little room around the corner of the hall, into the commonplace center of which dart, out of the air and over countless miles of sea, sharp cries of distress and

brief chants of victory. All day and all night men with intent faces sit here over instruments always operating. They comb the sky, listening-in on three different wave-lengths, they receive requests for help and send out orders to give assistance far up in the English Channel and far out across the Bay of Biscay.

And they hear other things than appeals. Once I entered the room with Commander Evans, the son of Robley Evans, Admiral. A worker spoke without raising his eyes from the key.

"Caught something, sir," he said.

"What is it?" asked my companion.

"German message coming in, sir."

"Code that our code-room knows?"

"Yes, sir."

We got it five minutes later. It was neatly typed and handed to the Admiral by his aide. And it was something that the Germans didn't want us to know.

You might think that they became hardened, those operators, that they came to regard each call for help as some hospital internes regard a "case." They don't.

"We got an S. O. S. from off the coast of Iceland yesterday," a staff officer told me, "and the receiving operator couldn't understand why we didn't dispatch a destroyer."

Yet they are unusual men. One of them recently had a difficulty.

"I inherited nine thousand dollars and a voice,"

he said. "I spent the money and four years in Paris on the voice. Then I enlisted when we came in the war, because I thought I ought to. Now, when it's too late, I get the one big chance of my life—I get an offer to sing in Paris at the Opera."

He didn't lose that chance. He was promptly detailed from Base for day-work at our Embassy. You can hear him, if you are in Paris, singing two evenings a week on the famous stage that is at once the envy and despair of every aspirant to operatic fame.

Sometimes that radio-room can trace the cruise of a German submarine solely by the wirelessed reports of its victims.

"In the old days, before we got the situation in hand," said an operator, "we once got quickly successive reports of a series of sinkings. By the latitude and longitude sent us, and by the similarity of the methods of attack as well as by the times given, we could tell that these were the work of one single fellow. He knew the French coast as if it were his own parlor floor—they all do—and he was going right ahead at the steady rate of one sinking per night. We were worried, because we had a convoy due in, right across his general field. Then we got news of his eleventh sinking. We knew his type generally carries only a dozen torpedoes, and, you bet you, we were relieved."

"Did you wait for his twelfth?" I asked.

"We never heard of it," said the operator.



A commander with the author at his right



Winning smiles—Types of our fighting men

The officer that was with me whispered the end of the story: "That fellow never got home."

And he told me how he knew it.

While he spoke, the operator was recording another sort of message. It was received in code, of course; but decoded it read:

"Blank convoy, ocean escort U. S. S. —, expects to arrive at latitude so-and-so, longitude so-and-so, 6 A. M., April 30th. Before reaching this point, it will be on a course — degrees true. Course after passing this point — degrees — minutes. Speed, — knots."

This was a piece of routine work, but it is routine work of the most vital import. Every convoy keeps these offices constantly posted as to its progress, the reports are recorded in the daily chart in the chart-room, where the activities of submarines and the presence of mines are also marked down, and so every movement in the zone may be dealt with by orders sent out *via* radio.

Nearly all messages go and come in code, and there are at least a score of codes, each changed at frequent intervals. The code-room is between the executive offices and the operator's office, and only a pair of holes in the intervening walls offer communication. If the message is outgoing, it is written in plain English by one of the Admiral's staff, handed under the momentarily raised slide that elsewhere covers a wall hole and, in the code-room, translated

into cipher, whereupon it is passed through the corresponding hole to the radio-room for transmission. If the message is incoming, this process is reversed, and the message is translated by the code experts for the staff.

You are familiar with library reading-rooms in which a printed sign commands "Silence," but you do not know the silence of that code-room unless you have been there—or have been, at one time or another, shut in a padded cell. Locks and keys, bolts and bars, combination safes and outdoor guards protect it, and at its desks sit men with the most concentrated faces in the world. One of these was introduced to me, and I saw him working.

"We found him in the armed-yacht fleet," I was told. "He'd enlisted as a common seaman. He is forty-odd years old, a Harvard graduate *magna cum laude* in the classics, speaks six modern languages, is rich in his own right, is president of a famous musical society, makes poetry and publishes his own volumes of verse. It turned out that he had written a couple of books on hieroglyphics and made a hobby of cryptograms. We thought he'd be just the man for this job—and he is. He has only one fault—when part of a received or intercepted message has been garbled in transmission, though we might easily guess the garbled portion by its connection with the rest of the context, he insists on attacking that first, as if it were a jigsaw puzzle, working it out, letter by letter, or sign by sign, and

writing a complete memorandum on just how each mistake must have occurred."

And then I went into the chart-room—

But the chart-room is a place for the instantaneous registration of romance-in-being.

And that romance must be "Continued in Our Next."

Three Hello's and a "location"?
Put the Old Man wise, you dub!
(Three Hello's and a location
Means a sub!)

Ten of us here in a 10 x 10
Room with a ceiling ten feet high,
Rapid-reading radio-men,
Listening while the fleets go by.
Murmurs, cries, appeals, and warnings,
Nightmare-shrieks and fighting-jeers
Clamor through the black receivers
Clamped forever at our ears.
Day and night, and nothing doing;
Only routine rounds pursuing
On the station;
Then, from somewhere mid-Atlantic,
Shrill, staccato, helpless, frantic,
Three Hello's and a location—
Some poor devil (wish him well!)
Blown to bits and bound for Hell.

"What a lovely summer morning!"
All the Old Man's callers say.
(Here's a rammed barque off the Sables,
Wants assistance right away.) . . .
All except the watches sleeping
Through the star-calm August night—
(Armen Archie's off St. Palais,
Laying eggs of dynamite.)
"The Milford Haven convoy's caught!"—
The Drayton's on that trip.
"Ariel's propeller's busted."—
Tell the mother-ship.
"Where is transport No. 80?"—
"Chaser 63 is gone."—
"Where in thunder is the Harvard?"
(Anchored down in Quiberon!)

*"Mines fresh placed in Channel 7"—
Change the route for convoy 2!
"There's a powder-boat a-blazing"—
Tell the chief: that's all we do.
Tell the chief of staff, and hurry,
So's he'll tell the Admiral;
He'll give orders; we must listen
For another crowding call.
Day and night, and nothing doing?
Only routine rounds pursuing?
But for us, where would you be?
Little, nervous men and sallow,
We sit here and—" 'Allo! 'Allo!!
'Allo!!! 5:2; four-nine three!"*

*Three Hello's and a "location"?
Put the Old Man wise, you dub!
(Three Hello's and a location
Means a sub!)*

—THE DASH-DOTTERS.

CHAPTER VI

ADVENTURE BY WIRELESS

ABOUT that chart-room in the shore-offices at our Base-headquarters, from which are directed all the intricate activities of our Naval Forces along the wide coast of France and far out to sea. It is in the chart-room that there is registered, immediately the sleepless radio sends word of it, each detected manifestation of the enemy afloat, each advance of each transport or cargo-ship, each movement of each American destroyer, armed yacht, observation-balloon and hydroaeroplane.

There is no outside handle to the door of that apartment. When closed, it locks automatically—from the inside. The chart-room is no place for interruption.

So soon as you enter it, you perceive why.

It is well named. Charts—charts—charts. On the walls; on the huge drawing-table that nearly touches every one of the four walls. Comprehensive charts and detailed; all the coast and all the ocean, and then the coast and ocean seemingly yard by yard. There are the necessary instruments about; there are some technical books on the mantelpiece (but I caught sight of a Baudelaire among them!), and the door is adorned with a rogues' gallery of

photographs of German submarine-commanders, the notorious Otto Steinbrink and others—such prints as you see in police-stations, portraying escaped prisoners and criminals with prices on their heads;—but that is not all, for the rest of it is charts and nothing else besides, each chart dotted by scores of little markers continuously on the move in accordance with information continuously received.

First of all, in this room, there is the general chart. It occupies all the big table, and on it everything is marked, permanent and passing. Then there are the moonlight, tidal, aerial and weather charts and reports, drawn up weekly or daily as the case may be, by coastal or weather experts, the details noted periodically and transmitted in code, by radio, to our ships at sea. Also there, and also to be noted and transmitted, are daily messages from our Navy's representative in the French Ministry of Marine at Paris, giving all the news from all European waters and locating every mine known to be extant, every enemy submarine known to be active.

"And that's not all," said Commander Kurtz, presiding.

It wasn't. No purely local information—and the term "local," in naval mouths, covers, it seems, miles and miles of coast and sea—no purely local information, I say, is considered good if more than two days old. It is Oslerized at the age of forty-eight hours.

"You see," said this cicerone, "it's hard to make

predictions from a daily chart, because submarines are, unfortunately, not oysters—they can move and do. So it's necessary for us to keep up, and send out, fleet-bulletins and information-slips from weekly and monthly charts which pretty well cover the area that each submarine is working in."

He showed me the file of monthly charts, hung one above another on the wall. These deal with the American zone in French waters and the especial area for the safety of which Admiral Wilson and his staff and fleet are actually responsible. A dot marks the place of each success of each German submarine—every dot records the sinking of an Allied ship. That chart covering the first month of the present American régime looked like a fly-specked section of wall-paper in a long-unoccupied house that a new housewife has just moved into; the chart for the month preceding my first visit there resembled the same section of wall-paper after the good housewife has been at work on it.

Remember always that the job of this office and its fleet is safely to get the scores of convoys in and out of the American zone. The chart-room's part becomes, then, obvious. Daily, at a given hour, its codifications of the sea-situation are sent out, in those ever-changing cryptograms, by the radio-corps to all Allied ships known to be in or approaching our region; and daily too, a certain series of warnings—though of a nature that can not help the enemy—are similarly thrown broadcast in plain English for

the benefit of approaching neutral or friendly craft that have not notified us of their intentions.

Enter messenger from the code-room (he enters every five minutes). He hands a typed slip of paper to Commander Kurtz, or to whatever officer happens to be in charge at the moment.

"Coastal Convoy No. 21 passes such and such a point."

The pin symbolizing Coastal Convoy No. 21 is moved on a trio of charts.

"Mine-area reported ten miles north of ———, between such and such points."

More pins are produced—gray ones—and stabbed into the parchments.

Then:

"Channel 10 barred to navigation."

Next:

"Submarine sighted in this latitude, that longitude." (Yellow pins this time; the yellow sign of smallpox!)

"Coastal Convoy No. 30 passing ——— light."

"Coastal Convoy No. 21 now sighted twelve miles off ———."

So new pins go in, and old ones are moved forward or back—each pin labeled—and, meanwhile, the news thus recorded is being transmitted to the ships at sea, even to the transports bringing in our boys from far out upon the ocean. To watch the movements of those pins upon the ruled charts is like watching the progress of a football-game as it is re-

corded on the automatic bulletin-board outside of a newspaper-office, except that there are a hundred balls "in play."

The general chart is, you will recall, that upon the table. On the right-hand wall therefrom hangs that especially devoted to mines and submarines. We were one afternoon standing before the latter when there were handed in a pair of messages received within a few minutes of each other. Both told of an enemy submarine sighted; the two spots indicated were near together.

The recording-officer whistled as he shoved home the yellow pins.

"We've got a store-ship convoy coming in right there with one destroyer," he said; "and she's just about due."

Quickly he verified his fears by a consultation of the general and convoy charts. He had been right. Generally there were more destroyers, but on this occasion some accident—some accident that, in ordinary circumstances, would have been trivial—had upset the regular scheme. He set the radio-room to flashing out its warnings.

There was an ugly ten minutes.

"It's a double convoy," said the officer. "A little east of where that sub is, the British destroyers are to meet the fleet, cut out the ships bound for England and head them for home. Then our fellow brings the rest in here." He paused—a moment. Then he added: "Or tries to."

The code-room messenger came in. We grabbed his slip of paper :

“Warning acknowledged.”

Again we waited. Presently :

“Have made contact with British destroyers as per previous orders. They have cut out (here followed the number) ships and are proceeding.”

We breathed a little easier. Still easier we breathed when we heard that our destroyer and its wards were safe within the harbour’s submarine-nets. It was then that there came a fourth message ; it came from the British portion of the convoy : they had been attacked thirty minutes after leaving the American zone and entering the English and had lost a ship and half of its crew.

“But all the Allied navies are doing good work,” the recording-officer said. He expatiated on what the French have accomplished—“miracles,” he called them—in spite of material reduced before the war. “And,” he said, “when the big need for land-fighters arose in the crisis of Mons, the French Navy sent thousands of its sailors—there aren’t any better in the world—to shoulder muskets inland.” He went on to speak of the British boats and their triumphs, but of these things Americans have already been informed. My part, here and now, is to write of the Americans in French waters, and I record one out of many scores of instances of American assistance to a British ship in these waters only because it happened then to come under my direct notice.

We were in the chart-room, plotting out, as its reports came in, the progress of an American convoy. That convoy was still well out at sea; it had not entered what is technically the Danger Zone, and the guardian American destroyers, dispatched from this port to meet it, were not yet due to "make contact." The radio-room received a warning from the English observation-service; it was decoded and brought to us: an unexpected enemy submarine had just been reported by a British transport carrying Canadian troops, far out there and in the course that our convoy had been directed to pursue. Imagine, if you can, the rush to recode and transmit this news, with orders of a change of course to the convoy and a new contact-point to the destroyers. It was done, however, in fifteen minutes, and the convoy and destroyers met and came, by a fresh route, safe into port.

Of all these things the chart-room keeps a detailed diary, precisely such a log as a ship's master keeps on his voyage. It is full of tragic narratives, that communication-book, but of late its stories show an increasing tendency toward the "happy ending." There are even recorded cases where a prowling submarine seems to have run away merely because its wireless-operators overheard our buzzing messages about them and knew thereby, even if they could understand no more, that we must be sending our destroyers to their neighborhood.

Take, for example, this bit of "intercepted log":

The date is somewhere in late April. The first part was "caught" by our radio-men; the whole was duly entered in this chart-room's diary. I change only the names of the boats involved.

"1:15 P. M.—British merchant-ship *Emma* sends: 'To all British men-of-war. Am being chased and shelled by enemy submarine, longitude —, latitude —.'

"2:20 P. M.—Message from the *Emma* has been picked up by the U. S. Destroyer *Lawrence*, which replies to the *Emma*: 'What is your speed?'

"2:25 P. M.—*Emma* answers: 'Eight knots on a course of — by —.'

"2:30 P. M.—Destroyer *Lawrence*, which is with Convoy No. 99, signals its fellow-destroyers that are with that convoy to remain on that duty and adds that it itself is 'going to the aid of the *Emma*.'

"2:32 P. M.—*Lawrence* radios Base-headquarters: 'Am going to aid of British merchantman *Emma*, which is being shelled and chased by enemy submarine at longitude —, latitude —.'

"2:45 P. M.—*Lawrence* reports to Base-headquarters: 'Am on my way.'

"3 P. M.—*Emma* radios: 'Submarine has ceased firing and submerged.'"

Either that submarine read the message, or else it saw the smoke of the approaching *Lawrence*. The point is that that attack was discontinued, and the British ship saved.

We were in the chart-room early one morning.

A convoy bearing thousands of American troops, called for because of the big German offensive that began in March of 1918, was due at a given spot on the ocean at 6 A. M. The destroyers that were to bring it in had set forth. Atmospheric conditions were bad for wireless-work, and communication had first become faulty and was then lost altogether, an event that does not happen often, but is most disconcerting when it does occur.

Then, without warning, radio-communication from another source than our destroyers or the convoy became active. A German submarine was reported at a point south of that at which our convoy was soon to arrive, but uncomfortably close.

We tried to get the destroyers, and failed.

We tried to get the convoy: no answer.

Again news of the submarine. It was going north. It was nearer the convoy. Orders were shouted. Messages shot from chart-room to cypher-room, and from cypher-room to the room in which the staff's wireless-operators work.

A third report of the submarine. Having proceeded still farther north, it was seen by a big French fisherman, who had been blown out of his course, almost at the spot at which the convoy was due.

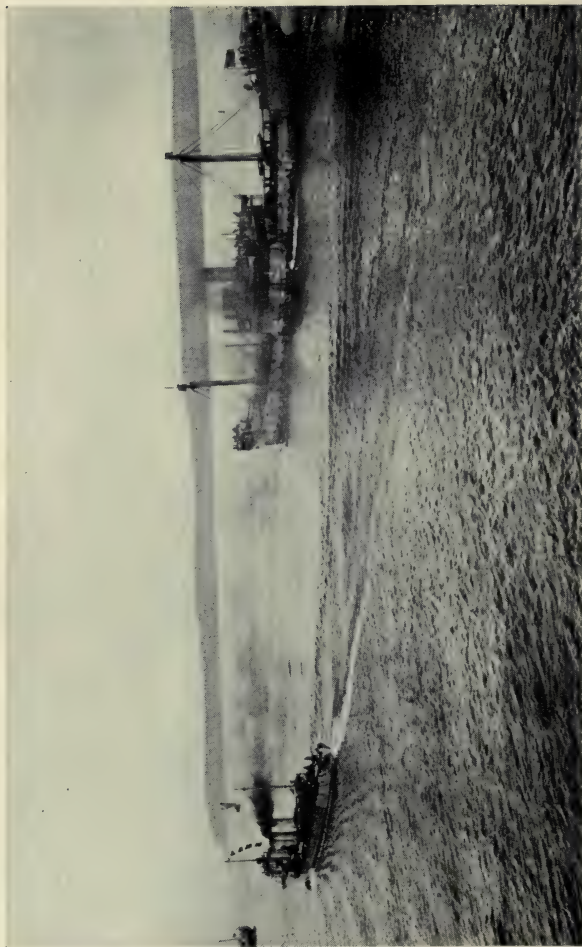
You could hear the loud snapping of the wireless from our wireless-room. It was like the cracking of the whip in the muliteer's song in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. But it was echoless: we got no reply.

Ten minutes passed. . . .



© *Committee on Public Information*

One of the ships that made up the largest convoy that ever crossed the ocean—France



© Committee on Public Information

U. S. convoyed vessels entering the harbor at Brest

Fifteen. . . .

Twenty:

We sat there, prepared for the convoy's S. O. S. that would mean a hideous disaster.

Twenty-five minutes:

Would even so much as the S. O. S. reach us? If we could not get the convoy, could it get us? Could it get word to the destroyers? We came to the point where, accepting catastrophe as inevitable, we hoped only that the destroyers might be called forward in time to rush up and save from the water a few of those thousands of soldiers' lives.

Then came another report of the submarine: it was a little to the northward.

Still another: It was miles to the north.

It was a submarine homeward-bound. The convoy was safe!

Much of the work of Base-headquarters may have seemed to you, as I have written it, dull matter, mere stupid routine, although, in reality, it is the grinding mill in which, if one of the hundreds of cogs slips, a ship may go down, and your boys with it—or supplies or ammunition that was destined otherwise to save your boys from disaster. But to be there in those offices, and especially to stand in the chart-room as the messages slip in through the air for registration and action, is as if you were standing beside the desk of a news-editor in a newspaper-office at Los Angeles during the big San Francisco fire.

Often records of the progress of a dozen ships are being received at the same time. On a May morning, from five or six such records, I disentangled this one. Again I change only the names:

"10:28 A. M.—Message from the French merchant-ship *Victoire*: 'S. O. S. 473, 150. Being torpedoed thirty miles west of ——.' " (It was a point just outside of our zone, and, just at first, one which we had no destroyers free to send to.)

"10:30 A. M.—Same message regarding same ship, transmitted by other ships that had picked it out of the sky.

"10:47 A. M.—From the *Victoire*: 'Torpedo missed, but submarine has risen and is shelling us. A shot just missed us by thirty metres.'

"10:52 A. M.—From *Victoire*: 'No. 1 —— S. O. S.; —— SS. SS. Being gunned. Latitude ——, longitude ——. Speed, ten knots.'

"11:15 A. M.—U. S. S. *Perry*, to the *Victoire*: 'Keep on that course. Am heading for you.'

"11:55 A. M.—From *Victoire*: 'N. —— S. O. S. —— SS. SS. Being gunned. New position, —— degrees, —— minutes, N.; —— degrees, —— minutes, W.'

"12:45 P. M.—U. S. S. *Perry* to Base-headquarters: 'Have rescued *Victoire*.'

What has our fleet done to change the submarine situation in our zone along the west coast of France? Those monthly charts and their decreasing fly-specks tell the story. Here it is in plain figures:

<i>Month.</i>	<i>Number of vessels sunk by submarines.</i>
October, 1917	24
November	13
December	4
January, 1918	9
February	1
March	0

Since the March of the present year, there have, of course, been some submarine successes, but the general toll exacted by the underseas boats has been kept at a minimum.

Largely, that is the result of our destroyers' work, assisted by the observations made by hydroaeroplanes and observation-balloons, and of the direction of such work from the Admiral's office. It is a pretty good record, thank you, as it stands. There is excellent reason to believe that it will soon be even better.

Said one of the men that ought to know :

"Of course, I want the war to end soon—if it can end soon conclusively in our favor—but, from a purely scientific point of view, I could find it in my heart to wish for a year's continuance. Why? Because I believe that, if we manage things properly, we can, in twelve months, wipe the submarine from the ocean, can make it a useless and out-of-date war-weapon—as much out-of-date as the once famous 'Wooden Walls' of England—by the autumn of 1919."

For my part, when he said that, I could have found it in *my* heart to wish his desire already accomplished. For I was going to sea in a destroyer on the evening of the day on which he spoke!

Did you ever go a-sail astride a rabid, ructious ram?

O, lamb!

(Rattle him down!—Rattle his bones!

Rattle him down, I say!)

*Where you gave up all your supper, yet you never gave
a damn?*

(Rattle him down!—Rattle his bones!

Rattle him down, I say!)

*Well, that's the life I'm livin', that's the kind o' guy
I am:*

*I'm a seahorse-bareback rider for your three-ring Un-
cle Sam.*

(Battle him down!—Battle him down!

Wrastle his last month's pay!)

Take his coin, an' mine—an' then,

Good night for him an' me;

For we're both destroyer-men

Puttin' out to sea.

*We're the Turbine Kids with watertight compart-
ments 29!*

(Oh, fine!—

Rattle us down!—Battle our bones!

Trundle us anywheres!)

We carry fuel to cart us from N'York to Palestine;

(Rattle us down—Battle our bones!

Trundle us anywheres!)

We've got a cruising-radius that covers all the brine:

*If you think o' takin' service, why it's us you'd better
jine!*

(Battle us down!—Rattle us down!

Who in the thunder cares?)

Here's the rest o' what we had;

Take all our ready tin;

We're goin' with the tin-pans, lad,

Bringin' doughboys in!

—TIN-PAN THOMAS.

PART THREE

SCOTCHING THE SUBMARINE

CHAPTER VII

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD I WILL DESTROY THEM

A THICK volume of typewritten manuscript lay on the desk in the Captain's cabin.

The pile of manuscript was entitled "Doctrine." The passage I read contained the principles that were to direct the voyage on which we were about to embark.

"This boat," said the Captain, "is in command. With a number of other destroyers, we are to take a homeward bound group of supply-ships through the Danger Zone. Out there, when we've said good-bye to our 'empties' and sent our regards to Broadway, I'll open a sealed envelope given me this afternoon at the Admiral's office. In it I'll find orders to proceed with my destroyers to some point or other out at sea where, at a given time, we will meet an incoming convoy of troopships. These we must bring safe to France."

He was a tall, lean man, this Captain Fremont of

the W——, with a thin face, good-natured but firm, and the most alert eyes that I have ever seen. Like all the commanders of destroyers I have met, he had the quick gestures and impatience at delays of any sort, which correspond with the mechanism of the destroyer itself. There were little lines about his mouth, the lines drawn by a responsibility realized and met, but never allowed to crush, and, though he was still in his late thirties, his dark hair, as with that of most men who live afloat, was touched with silver as if sprinkled by spray. He had commanded one of that fleet of destroyers which were America's first offering to the world war—to the English inquiry, on their arrival, as to when they would be ready to fight, they answered:

“WE ARE READY NOW.”

I was to have the Captain's cabin for my own—the Navy does nothing by halves—and the Captain was donning his working clothes and throwing duplicates to me.

Most of us have imagined the commander of a United States fighting-boat as going upon active service erect in the tight-fitting uniform with its pocketless jacket and high collar that looks so well on dress occasions, but that the officers of six or more years' standing are now hoping to decide by ballot to exchange for a more comfortable style for sea-wear. We have mental pictures of Farragut lashed to his mast as if he were going on parade.

Nothing could be more unlike the officers of a destroyer setting out to sea. The Captain, and everybody under him, wears hip boots; two, or even three, sweaters; a fur-lined reefer, and a life-preserver. There is not much left of the curves of the human form divine, but the result looks uncommonly like business.

"Got some woolen underclothing?" asked the Captain. "It's always best to be wearing flannels if you go over."

To "go over," I gathered, meant to be flung into the sea. I said I scarcely expected the experience.

"Oh, we never know at this job," said the Captain, "and so we always go prepared."

As you prepared, I found, so you remain. When you sleep, it is in your clothes, no matter how long you are at sea. The officers have other things to do than shave; the tiny shower-bath, forward under the bridge, is used only when you have returned to harbour.

"Friend of mine, commanding the destroyer N——," said my Captain, "tried a shower on the last trip out. A periscope was sighted, and he had to go on the bridge in his suds. Uncomfortable. Cold, too."

He left me. I heard shouted orders and the ringing of many bells. Immediately, the destroyers first herding their big charges into the open, and then preceding, following and flanking them, we got under way.

If I were to attempt a technical description of our boat, I should begin by saying that it was oil-burning and then proceed with some such table as this :

Length over all, 315 feet, 3 inches;
Beam, 29 feet, 8 inches;
Draft, 9.4;
Displacement, 1095 tons;
Watertight compartments, 29;
Fuel-oil, ditto, 10;
Fuel-oil capacity, 92,687 gallons;
Tubular boilers, 4;
Masts, 70 feet;
Horse power, 17,000;
Maximum speed, 32 knots;
Four-inch rapid-fire guns, 4;
Twenty-one-inch twin torpedo-tubes, 4;
Men, 120;
Officers, 15;
Four Parson's marine steam turbines,
with reduction-gear propeller-shafts.

Incorrectly stated though it probably is, all that might mean much to a technician. To me it means little. Here is what I know and what I saw :

The boat is oil-burning and has a tremendous cruising-radius. She can go the whole way from Brest to New York and back at twelve knots an hour without taking on a fresh supply of fuel. In these particulars she is like all of her type, of which there are too few. Upon necessity I have known her to rush through the water as an express-train rushes over its rails. Smokeless, save when smoke is wanted, she can instantly hide herself in a greasy

cloud as completely as a cuttlefish concealing its whereabouts in its own secretions. She turns on her toes, answering her helm as a horse answers the response of a spurred huntsman.

Before I came to realize her capabilities, the destroyer on which I found myself looked, to my landsman's eyes, a grotesquely unwieldy creature. As we came aboard, her camouflage made her seem a sea-clown. She carries boats for about one-tenth of her complement. Her iron main-deck, at the stern of which was the high-piled slide of the depth-charges, is, mostly, unrailed; it is not five feet above the waterline; it is not more than thirty feet wide at its widest, and, at sea, it is generally and perilously awash. Forward, with an effect of topheaviness, is a four-story building: the wardroom and officers' quarters, surmounted by the glassed-in-charthouse, topped by the bridge and capped by the foretop and flashlight station. Below, she is as full of machinery as a watch—a miracle of compactness. If you imagine a watchcase loaded with its works and then every cranny filled with high explosives, you get this boat's relative proportions of gear and death. Her duty takes her, in the unlighted night, dashing among her mighty and cumbersome charges; yet, with plates that are of mere pasteboard thickness, she carries what the lightest collision might fire to instant life, blasting her to such bits that no trace of her would remain.

The dangers that hourly encompass our destroy-

ers operating these waters are fourfold. They are submarines, mines, collisions and the perils of a treacherous coast.

The submarines? Well, in British waters there is a group of American destroyers known as the "Hunting Fleet," which is sent out to areas where hostile underseas craft are reported to be operating and is told to attack subs. The duties of convoying destroyers in regard to submarines are made evident in that passage from the "Doctrine" to which I have referred; they must, first of all, protect the convoy, but, precisely to do this, they must ram or gun such an enemy as appears on the surface and drop depth-charges over such as submerge—drop and get away with all possible speed lest they be blown to bits themselves in the process. The destroyer is a bad mark for a submarine's torpedo, but, once in a while, that mark is hit, and then the destroyer's explosives themselves do the rest: there follows—simply a disappearance. The *Jacob Jones* was a case decidedly in point. After eighteen hours in the winter water, some of its crew were found keeping themselves alive, and comparatively warm, by turning over an elliptical raft and, themselves in the water, singing, *Where Do We Go From Here?*

The whole ship had disappeared within four minutes; but, during that time, one lad on deck, instead of trying to save himself, had struggled with the fastenings of a motor-boat, which would, if launched, be of inestimable rescue-value, and, to

hasten his task, was standing in the boat itself. An officer, just as the four minutes drew to a fatal close, was pulling himself out of the water to a bit of wreckage. When the depth-charges began to take final effect, the officer saw the seaman in the motor-boat throw up his hands—saw the two sides of the motor-boat bend upwards and imprison him and then sink.

As, with blackened lips and chattering teeth, the survivors were lined up ashore, the officer who had seen that sailor's gallantry reported the act as one of extreme bravery, for which, though dead, the boy who had gone down in the motor-boat should have his name cited. When the roll was called, the "dead" boy answered, "Here!"

He was asked how it happened that he was alive.

"I felt myself going down and down," he said, "and I kept holding my breath. When I knew I couldn't hold my breath an instant longer, I made up my mind that I *would* hold it an instant longer, and then, somehow, I seemed to be shot up to the surface."

Perhaps an explosion in the submerging destroyer tossed the lad back to life. At that, it was his will-power that saved him. In the little boats on an open ocean, the men themselves say that survival often depends upon one's will.

"Why, one man," I was told of another occasion, "was one of the finest specimens of manhood I ever saw. Physically he hadn't a flaw. But, hours be-

fore we sighted land, he gave up and collapsed in the bottom of the boat. We had to threaten to shoot him to make him take an oar. And yet some men that, to look at, you'd think would just naturally give up, decide they'll pull through—and they do; that's all."

The presence of mines is wirelessly, when discovered, both directly to such ships as are within call and to the base, whence the news is again distributed. But discovery depends upon at least one explosion. That may happen safely in the drag wires of a sweeper patrolling a suspected area, or it may happen, less safely, to a merchant ship—or a destroyer. Then there is no destroyer left to do any reporting.

Collisions present a danger that I have already indicated. My Captain put it succinctly:

"Ships that pass in the afternoon," said he, "are more comfortable than ships that pass in the night."

As for the coast in our French zone of operations, it is mostly the coast of the notorious Bay of Biscay. The sea romances of your boyhood—of Marryat, of W. H. G. Kingston and Clark Russell—were full of it. Its storms are famous—and infamous; its tides tremendous; lancelike rocks spring out of deep water, and about them swirl currents that run at from two to seven sea-miles an hour. Our destroyers take, on every cruise, a pilot licensed by the French Navy; he is generally a Breton-born, of the best race of sailors in the world; his government has

demanded ten years of schooling for him before conferring its license or diploma, and ten years of schooling in France is harder than ten years in America; he has this coast by heart; he is friends with each tree along the shore; he knows when a seaside cottage is repainted and, at the first glimpse of a rock stabbing out of a twenty-four-hour fog, will call that rock by a pet name. Yet even the best of pilots, working under the most capable of captains, can not always save a ship against the contrary strength of a Biscay storm, and the descending water brings, at such times, a peculiar danger to destroyers.

I recall one case in point. The seas were rushing over the main deck. They beat on the lashed depth-charges. Each charge held enough explosive to wipe the boat from the ocean's top—and one of them broke loose.

Instantly a sailor had vaulted upon it. Its loosened cording in his hands, he sat astride of that rolling keg of death as a cow-boy keeps his seat on a kicking broncho.

"Hey!" he yelled to his comrades. "Stand by and lend a hand! It won't do for this colt to get away from me!"

Now, it was my assignment to see the destroyers that live this sort of life, take out through the Danger Zone "empties" that the tonnage-lust of the Germans hungers to sink, and meet at some nameless

dot upon the ocean, and bring in, a convoy of transports laden with your sons and brothers. There is no use pretending that I looked forward to my job without apprehension.

*A hundred men in a watchcase ship,
We fellows put to sea,
With a place to sleep (if your foot don't slip!)
And a cargo of T. N. T.
(A place to sleep—when there's time to sleep!)
And we eat when we get the chance—
On a boat that goes
On its toes
And nose
In a dangerous dervish-dance:
Dodging the subs and the convoy's blows,
We're bringing your boys to France!*

*Our port is a point on the ocean's top,
A decimal far afloat;
We sail to a specified salty drop
To meet a beam of a boat—
A beam of a boat and a couple more
And four or five besides,
Each loaded down with an army-corps,
A-bucking the untamed tides;
Jammed and crammed in a sardine-tin,
Periscope-crazy and sick as sin,
Here are the doughboys coming in—
Our job's to bring 'em in!*

*They're half of them dotty and all of 'em scared,
And, oh, but they cheer as we,
In our cockleshells
Atop the swells,
Bob out of a snarling sea:
There's naught too good
For our brotherhood*

*When the Danger Zone's to span;
But once ashore,
It's "One knock more,
For he's only a sailorman!"*

*(O,
Gus!)*

*"The soldier starts his brave career;
He never knows a touch of fear"—
But who in the hell was it brought him here?*

U S !

—BRINGING 'EM IN.

CHAPTER VIII

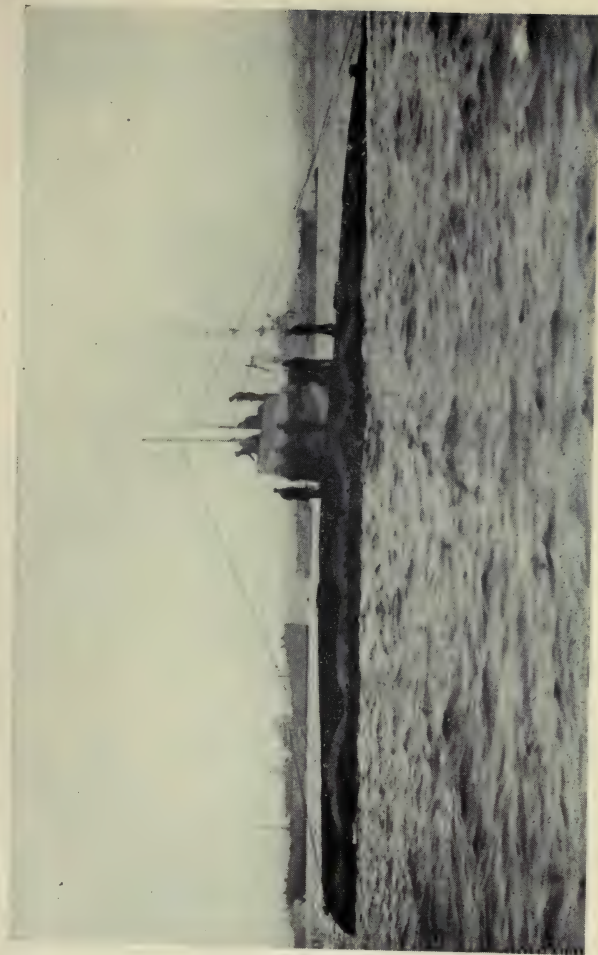
ON BOARD A DESTROYER

WHEN all the story of this war is told, it will be seen that, of our Navy's part, the great work was the work done by the destroyers. The Mosquito Fleet is more picturesque, and no less brave; no less brave and absolutely necessary are the men of the transport service, the mine-sweepers, the hydroaeroplanes and the observation-balloons. But it is to facilitate the task of the destroyers that nearly all these operate. In the body of our Navy, as constituted for the purposes of the world-conflict up to the present time, the destroyers are the backbone. Only a Melville or a Dana could do them justice, and if I have written more of other branches of the service, it is because I am sadly conscious of being neither a Dana nor a Melville.

"Always proceed with a scientific irregularity and remember that the enemy sees everything that you do."

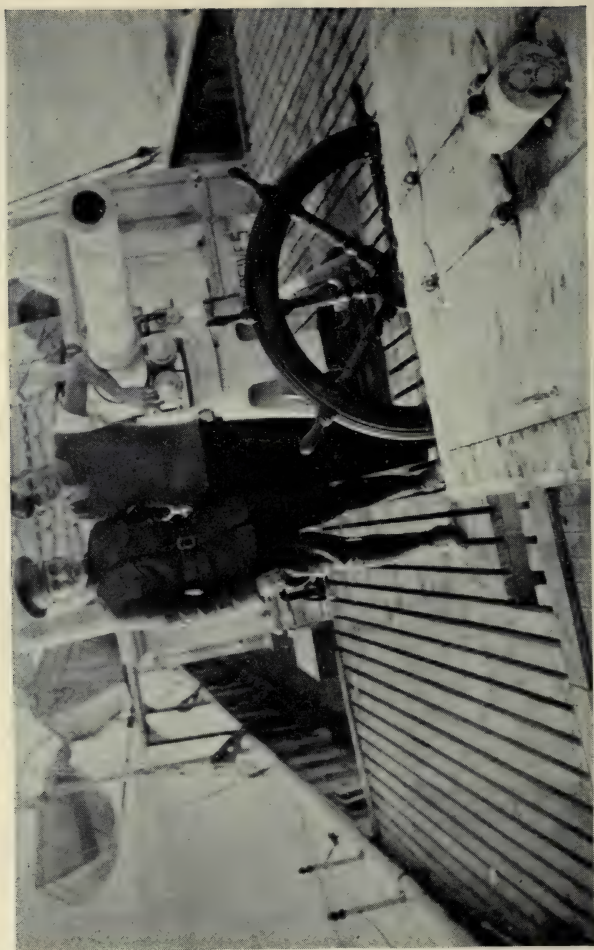
On this principle the destroyers work in their care of each convoy. Roughly speaking, of course, there are certain other facts to be remembered. For instance:

1. The speed of the convoy must be ordered in—such and such a way.



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A submarine



A sub-chaser

2. It is well to have the commanding destroyer do—so and so; the other destroyers doing—this and that.

3. A submarine's best position for attack is—etc., etc.; therefore, and so forth.

The guardians know that unseen enemy eyes are ever upon them, and that too closely to follow any hard and fast rules is to invite attack. So maneuvers are unremitting.

They are ordered by every sort of signal, and each order must be executed instantly if collision is to be avoided. There is the radio for dark as well as distance; the flash-lamp for twilight; the two-arm or two-flag semaphore for close quarters by day and the unbroken procession of parti-colored bits of bunting, each bit a letter or a phrase, which bobs to the foretop—"Rot! Quack!" our Captain called them off by the queer names assigned to each, every name beginning with the letter required and all devised so that the man who pulls the halliard will not confuse letters of a similar sound.

There is the smoke signal, too. A quick manipulation of the blower in the engine-room, and a boat is hidden—and stifled. Its mention leads one to the impenetrable smoke-screen, now in use in every navy of the world.

"I was the innocent originator of that form of defense," said our Captain. "I was commanding one of a bunch of oil-burning destroyers off Long Island. We were in a war-game and waiting to 'attack'

some dreadnoughts. Something happened to one of my blowers, and we were nearly strangled and altogether hidden from our flagship. She signalled me a severe call-down, but when the dreadnoughts appeared, we were all ordered to repeat by design what I had done by accident. It won us that action in the war-game and passed into doctrine."

You no sooner set foot on one of our destroyers than you realize that, save for them, there could be no security for any of our soldiers sent to France, and your particular destroyer has no sooner cleared the harbour than you begin to wonder whether the chief part of the crew's education isn't devoted to the art of walking on the hands with the feet in air. That kindly destiny which created me immune from seasickness did not prevent my knowing that I was sailing in a topsy-turvy craft, and I never knew a type so consistently uncomfortable as this one.

Do you think waves look high from the rail of your transport, Private Doughboy? Wait till you are rolled across the main deck of a destroyer and vainly try to look over hissing crests that arch the foretop, cover the zenith and break upon the very center of the vessel. Now you will be frantically clinging to a rope, while your slender boat, breathing like an Alpine climber, stands on its propellers and staggers up a blank wall of angry blue; comes a moment when the destroyer is dizzily balanced on an inch of water with yawning precipices before and behind; follows, down the former of these, a tobog-

gan-plunge, which you are sure will drive your nose into the bottom of the sea. The waves that she doesn't go over, she goes through; those which don't break above her pound the hull with blows that rattle her plates and set the soles of your feet atingle. She rolls so much that her main deck, designed to be only a few feet above still water, is under the surface; she has a pitch of incredible degrees, and there are times when, infuriated by the onrush of a particularly high swell, she will stand on her nose and hit it with her tail.

"Do you have any cases of seasickness?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," said the Captain. "Some men are seasick every time they come out in a destroyer. If they merely have an acute case on each trip, they just have to grin and bear it and go about their work, but when it comes to chronic hemorrhages, as it does in many cases, the fellow's no use to us, and we have to get him assigned to land-duty or put on one of the big battle-ships."

Eating is a mere matter of skill. I can easily imagine a destroyer rolling and pitching so swiftly that one movement will neutralize another and the food remain stationary on its table. In our case, space was so limited that there were bunks along either end of the wardroom—bunks railed so that the sleepers would not be tossed out. We sat on these and, our knees elevated by the rail, could just protect our plates in the hollow of our laps. One day a junior officer, whose physician was dieting

him, hesitated about a plate that a reeling steward offered. Were peas carbohydrates? Before a decision could be reached, peas and steward were through the open door and rolling toward the depth-charges astern.

The crew's quarters on a destroyer are not proportionately more confined than the officers', but they are not roomier, either; yet, though there is no coddling in our Navy, a pupil in a young ladies' seminary is not better looked after than a bluejacket. His clothing is ordered each morning in accord with the prevailing weather conditions; if he is on duty at meal time, his food is kept warm for him in the galley. I remember one seaman's answer to a question as to what he had for supper.

"Beans an' jam," he said. "I thought they might 'a' given us potatoes. Somehow jam don't go well with just beans."

I repeated this to the Captain. I thought it mildly amusing.

Not so the Captain. He had the cook up instantly, for an accounting. It appeared that my sailor had forgotten to mention bread, sardines and one or two other items of the menu. Beans had not been, in his mind, a substitute for potatoes: he could remember nothing but the lack of the thing he most wanted.

It is only after supper that the commander of a destroyer in charge of a convoy gets a few moments of leisure. Then the radio-room, which is forever

sending him messages received, sends him the intercepted communiqués, including the German, and he may read the Navy Department's reports on sewage-disposal in the York River, which, since he is still officially attached to a fleet a part whereof is stationed in America, punctiliously come to him. Later he must climb to the charthouse, under the bridge. When he isn't on the bridge itself, he is in the chart-house, all night long. Such sleep as he can snatch he snatches there, and every little while a sailor comes to bale out the inches-deep water that a random wave has flung forward through the always open door.

My first night with the outgoing convoy proved typical. Orders to the ships that we were guiding snapped hither and yon. On a big table, a younger officer plotted out our course, set down the bits of news now and again wirelessed from the Base, and calculated to a nicety just how certain we were to collide with some northbound or southbound convoy before morning. About once every thirty minutes, one of our big, blundering wards would all but run us down, and we would have to spin about and get away with a suddenness that took our legs from under us.

"Schooner reports she's been torpedoed at such and such latitude, such and such longitude."

The Captain would study the bit of paper handed him:

"That looks like Hans Rose's work."

He could tell a real torpedo from a false alarm, even on paper.

“Every transport that comes in,” he said, “has seen subs. To hear those tales, you’d think submarines were as thick out here as rails on a fence. I’ve had them give me stories about seeing four and sinking two when there wasn’t one within one hundred miles. A submarine submerging makes a mark in the water like a bass snapping at a fly; a torpedo has a wake that the porpoise loves to imitate. At this time of year these waters become very phosphorescent, and then things look queer.”

They certainly must. I copied the formal report of one of the “submarine-sightings” as made by a transport-master just ashore from his first transport-voyage. It ran—I change only the ships’ names—thus:

“The *Athena*, with guns loaded forward and aft, was proceeding in convoy to France with numerous other craft. The gun-crews were all at their stations and the lookout carefully kept; the Captain was on the bridge and had scarcely slept for several days. On —th March, about 4 P. M., being — hours from the coast and the escort expected soon, a torpedo was sighted to starboard, one hundred and fifty yards away, running part of the time submerged, then jumping clear of the sea, like a large fish chasing its prey. We blew six whistles as a warning to every one in the convoy, then fired a salvo from the forward gun. One of the shots, which were fired

directly into the rays of the sun, struck fair on the bridge of our convoy-mate, the *Bernadette*, who had not the time to turn. The shell did not explode, but passed over the ship, close beside the legs of the Captain, mate and officer of the deck, who were all on the bridge at this part of the trip. The torpedo having vanished, and it appearing from the action of the *Bernadette's* captain that the shot had angered him, the Captain of the *Athena* ordered 'Cease Firing!'

There was a brief memorandum appended to this report. It ran as follows:

"Other commanders declare torpedo a fish. Mate of *Bernadette* deposes he saw neither torpedo nor shot, but was near when something fell."

My destroyer Captain, in hurried moments between duties, had a good deal to say of real submarines.

"There are two that have been working about here pretty regularly," he told me. "The boys call one of them Armen Archie and the other Penmarch Pete. But the worst damage the subs have done is off the Irish coast. I was stationed there for a while. One day I saw a Russian square-rigger, with three tons of Australian flour go down five miles from shore. In such cases, we have to stand by and pick up survivors; we give each rescued man a slug of whiskey and a bath in bichloride: the whiskey revives him, and the bichloride—well, our boats would swarm if we didn't use that. Once in a while we're

almost too quick—I saw one sub submerge before my eyes with all her fake sails set.”

He told of another. Around it was dumped a barrage of depth-charges. A week later, damaged, it hobbled into a Spanish port and was interned there.

“There are three official grades of anti-submarine successes,” he said: “absolute, probable and possible. To prove the first, you must bring in a German; for the second you must produce at least a piece of rigging; the third you are credited with if the crew’s evidence of oil and wreckage mounting to the surface is convincing. The Admiral himself conducts the investigation as soon as you make port.”

This is not the most comfortable sort of conversation to precede bed when you are on a destroyer with a convoy in the Danger Zone. My dreams on the first night out were troubled. The boat made noises such as used to be made when, back home, the servants carried the table-silver up-stairs and bumped the baskets against the banisters in passing. The ship buckled and plunged and rolled; to lie on the high-sprung bunk was to risk a broken neck; that must have been merely for show, anyhow; one had to seek the low bench and hang fast to that—and the effect was that of rather rough bob-sledding down a very long hill. Besides, the codes were kept in the Captain’s cabin, where I was housed, and these had every little while to be consulted. Out of the walls where tubes led to the bridge, came muffled calls

compared with which President Wilson's "voices in the air" are happy. It was somewhere near to dawn when I decided to go on the bridge.

Did you ever have a nightmare in which, amid splashing spray, you walked a pitching slack-wire suspended above Niagara Falls? Climbing, in darkness, to the bridge of a destroyer is like that, and, once arrived, you are still in a shower-bath—the water is flung up there every time the boat hits a "big one." The rail is buttressed with leather-covered cushions, but even those do not protect you against all bruising, and, what with lookouts, wheelmen, signalmen and engine-room directors, there is always a party of twelve crowded there.

"Average speed twenty-five!" bawled the Captain—no speech less than a yell is audible on a destroyer's bridge at sea.

Dimly I could discern a man pulling a lever. . . .

When morning broke, there were only our fellow-destroyers visible.

"Where's the convoy?" I wondered.

"Gone on its way," I was told. "Didn't you hear me order a speed of twenty-five an hour ago? That was when we said good-by to them. Now we are beating it down to another point to make contact with the incoming fellows."

For a long time nothing happened. I was beginning to think that nothing would happen. Hanging on to the rail, I must have dozed a bit. Then, though he spoke merely as if he were reporting an

expected lighthouse, I heard one of the lookouts saying:

“Periscope two points off the port bow, sir.”

I was wide awake now.

“Look there,” said a pointing junior officer. “It’s the prettiest submarine wake I’ve ever seen.”

The lookout had scarcely uttered the words when the siren sounded. It was “general quarters.” As a boxer in the ring whirls about after rushing and passing his opponent, so our destroyer whirled about in the sea and changed for the mark in the water that, however clear it might be to the trained eyes about me, was invisible to mine.

I know what happened, but what I was conscious of observing was simply an ordered dash of men to a score of preordained stations. There were bells. The Captain leaned over the rail, one hand upraised.

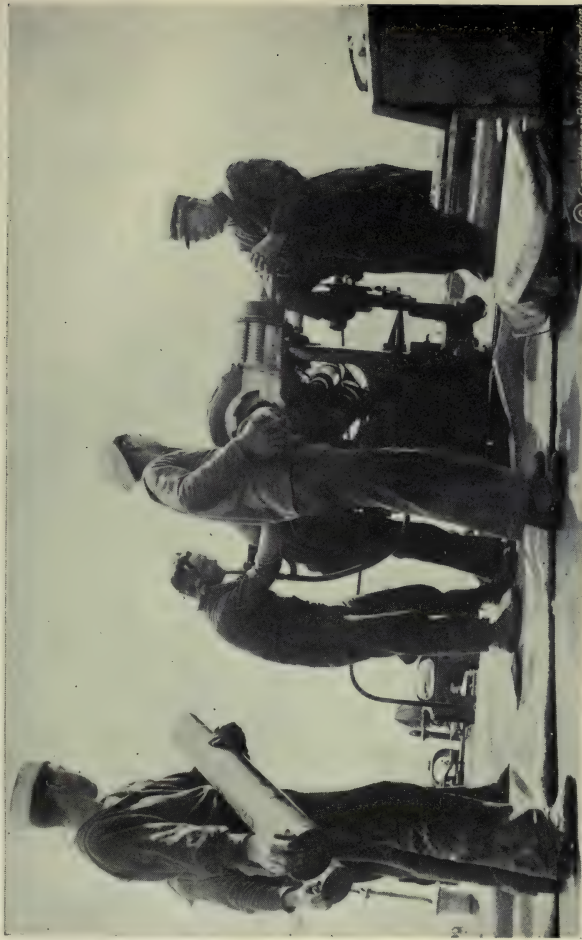
“Now,” he called.

Down an inclined pair of rails and over our stern an iron carton rolled. It splashed into the sea.

“Full speed ahead!”

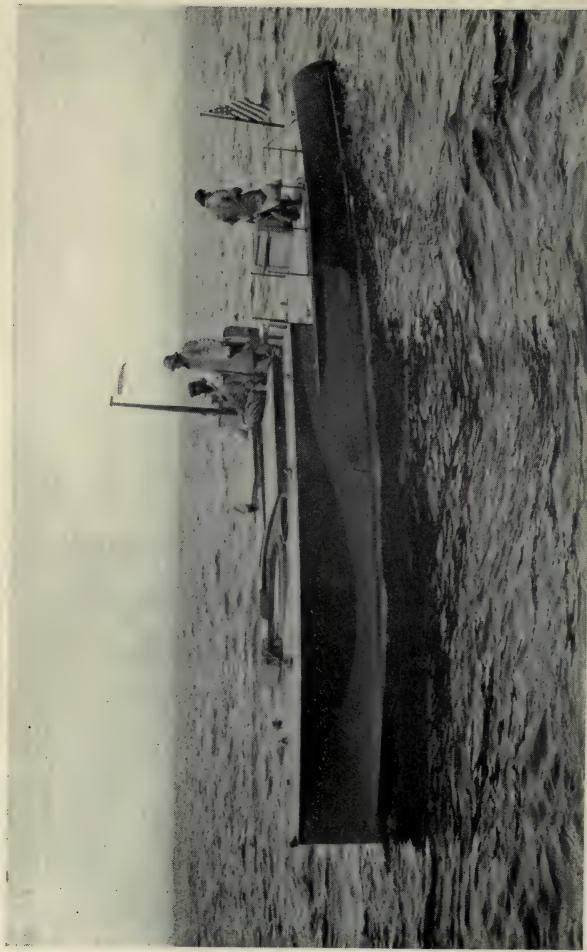
We jumped forward.

Then we seemed to be lifted out of the water by a blow from underneath, whereupon an unseen hand grasped our boat in the air and shook it. Astern, the ocean’s surface rose into a little hill: a hill at first all boiling blackness and then churning white. Close behind us, but safe enough away, for all that—so far as we were concerned—the depth-charge had exploded.



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Gun crews ready for action



New type submarine chaser

© Underwood & Underwood

The Captain said it wasn't a submarine, and he ought to know. He was rather angry, and he had, no doubt, a right to be. But he had shown me what his ship could do and that he knew his business.

I am trying to write this story in the order in which it happened, yet I know that to the general public, after a false submarine alarm, the only thing not an anticlimax would be a real submarine, and I have, I am glad to say, no real submarine to offer. If events had only occurred otherwise, we might have preceded the incident of the depth-charge by telling how we searched for our incoming convoy; how we proceeded with the destroyers so disposed as to have a vision of about seventy square miles; how, noting a pair of rain squalls advancing on us along parallel lines, we so maneuvered as to dodge, dry, between them; how we sought to "make contact" with our wards by smoke and radio, and how the Captain swore when those wards were an hour late.

"All those fellows are way behind—way behind!" he grumbled. "Here it is nine o'clock in the morning and we're all over the appointed spot and they're nowhere. I'll bet they've done something phony—the prime vertical slits won't lie. I'll give them ten minutes more and not another second. They might be shoreward of us, so I'll have to race back if they don't show up soon.—Radio!—get that radio-room! —Can't you pick up those transports?"

The foretop interrupted the answer:

"Smoke a point and a half forward of the port beam!"

We changed our course immediately. A little later, one of the bridge lookouts corroborated the foretop's report. It was the transport's smoke; and the other destroyers began to smoke in reply. The first sight had been made from a distance of eighteen miles; the sight from the bridge at twelve.

"Got a transport!" called the radio-room tube.

"Never mind her now," said the Captain. "We've got her up here. Listen for a contact signal.—Get up on the foretop, quartermaster.—Standard speed twenty knots.—Contact 240, distance 10.—Gear sixty.—What jig are they on? Three? And ten miles to the south'ard? Why, their course—. I'll bet Jerre Peters. He ought to change twenty degrees in the next two minutes."

There had been along the horizon a faint gray band. Gradually upon it I saw ships take shape until they looked like pictured ships on a wall-paper border.

There was some beautiful boat-handling. At one moment we went through that convoy—so one officer put it—"like a dose of salts"—great, gray liners, the decks packed with cheering doughboys, every one of them wearing his life-preserver.

"There are twenty-five hundred aboard this one," said our Captain. "On that thirty-five hundred. The big fellow has eight thousand. You there, star-

board lookout, look for subs; don't watch the convoy! Fox, Quack, Numeral!"

The signal-flags were dancing up the halliards.

So we took them Franceward. Days we went and nights. It is no easy matter to avoid collision, when zigzagging with a clattering convoy by sunlight; in stygian darkness, governing movements by fallible clocks, it is an exhausting performance. Your nearest destroyer mistakes you for an enemy and tries to run you down, your biggest transport is a second tardy or its clock runs an instant slow, and you all but graze as you dart from under its suddenly towering prow; somebody's steering-gear goes wrong; morning finds a troopship, suffering from acute rudder trouble, chasing its tail nine miles astern of the convoy. It is nervous work, that of the fleet's commander and of every man engaged. There is not a second of sleep for any one, and the land, even on a day of rain, rises from the water like a garden of beauty.

"Engine-room, standard speed twenty. Left rudder, twenty-five to thirty. Run up 'Follow me.' Ease rudder!"

We came in. Our own destroyer glided up to its particular buoy and stopped there with the nicety of a runabout entering its garage. All the men on all the transports were cheering again.

They always do. They ought to. The destroyers deserve it.

*Your wife, she's your allotment-girl;
Your kid's your next of kin;
But a mighty close relation
Is the ship that brings you in!
She sickens you; you curse her out;
You call her "This damned tub";
But you count upon that transport
To dodge the subtle sub!*

*From New York Town to Quiberon,
'Twixt Hampton Roads and Dover,
There's no one you depend on like
The ship that brings you over!
So when your feet are dry ashore
And she is far awash,
You owe it to the transport that
You lived to fight the Boche.*

*A blackened hold with crawling bunks,
Five high and seven deep;
There isn't room to vomit, and
There isn't room to sleep;
You get an hour in the air
For twenty under hatch,
And when you do not have to drill,
They let you sit and scratch.*

*But never mind: you'd never see
Brest, Boulogne, Bordeaux, Dover,
Except for that old rattle-trap
Which somehow got you over;
The transport's kind o' shopworn, and
She takes too many such
As you are, but, except for her,
You wouldn't fight the Dutch.*

*A liner and a lady once
The transport was? Correct!
So, 'cause she knew those better days,
You treat her with respect!
Just a bit of reverence
To all her silvered hair,
When the steerage is first-cabin, and
There ain't no cabins there!*

*So now that you are safe ashore—
Or dead ashore, b'gosh!—
Remember 'twas the transport that
Conveyed you to the Boche;
From New York Town to Quiberon,
'Twixt Hampton Roads and Dover,
Your one best bet was this old tub
That somehow brought you over.*
—SONG OF THE TRANSPORT CREW.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SUBMARINE

“**I**N spite of the sinking of the *Justicia*, I believe that the Germans are dissatisfied with the results of their submarine warfare. I believe that Sir Eric Geddes, the British First Lord of the Admiralty, was right when he said that the ‘submarine is held.’ But I also believe that it is not enough that the Germans, who are extremists, should be dissatisfied, or that the submarine should be ‘held.’ I believe that the Germans should be made to realize that the submarine is a failure—in other words, I believe that the submarine should be crushed. Is that easier said than done? I am not so certain.”

The man that was talking to me probably knows as much about underseas warfare as anybody in the Allies’ navies, and the paragraph just quoted is the gist of his opinion then expressed. His name it would, for reasons presently obvious, be unwise to disclose; his acquaintance with the matter in hand is, however, sufficiently patent in his words themselves. He speaks with authority.

“Let us look first,” he continued, “at the bright side of the picture. In a perfectly true sense, the submarine is Germany’s confession of failure to control the surface of the seas. That is to say that the

German submarine is a creation of the British Grand Fleet. England's power on the water was too strong for the Germans to attack it there, and so they had to develop the existing means of attacking it from below; anybody will admit that, could they have hoped for a good old-fashioned victory on the waves, they would have attempted one. But—again thanks to the Grand Fleet—they haven't even been able to succeed in their under-water attack, and that is proved by the fact that they have directed their efforts not against the Grand Fleet, which it goes without saying they would prefer to destroy, but chiefly against merchantmen. A much longer delay of victory ashore may eventually force the German dreadnoughts into the open; the demands to be shown something for their money by the German bourgeoisie, which was taxed to create those dreadnoughts, may compel such an action; but the German government will, if it can, hold fast to the theory of 'The Fleet in Being'—to the theory that it is well to have the asset of an unharmed force on one's side when one comes to sit down at the peace-table. Meanwhile, the submarine campaign against merchantmen and transports will continue.

“Again, there is that domestic dissatisfaction with the results of such a campaign which I have already referred to. There are now a good many German disciples of the Herr Professor Flamm, of Charlottenburg, who, writing in *Die Woche*, wanted fewer men saved from torpedoed merchant-ships.

He even took a hint from the English, who don't publicly report the sinking of a submarine: he wants all wreckage of submarined vessels so thoroughly destroyed that their unexplained disappearance will spread greater terror—and, as I say, he has his followers who are proof sufficient of the German people's growing doubt about Admiral Von Tirpitz's promises.

“And finally, there is an argument to be made even on the supposition that Germany cleans up more of England's merchant-marine than she has yet succeeded in destroying. In the Napoleonic Wars—in the days of the great Nelson, mind you—England took exactly 440 French ships as against 5,314 English ships taken by the French: in other words, England then lost 40 per cent. of her entire tonnage—and yet she recovered.

“That would seem to bear out our own Admiral Mahan's theory. He granted the harassment caused a country by serious interference with its commerce; he admitted that such interference was a most important secondary part of naval warfare, not likely to be abandoned till war itself shall cease; but he insisted that to regard it as primary and fundamental, as ‘sufficient in itself to crush an enemy’ was ‘probably a delusion,’ and he thought it was certainly so when that enemy possessed such a widespread commerce and such a powerful navy as are possessed by Great Britain.

“Well, all this may apply to the present war; but

what of the next? England's next? Our own—wherein our naval position will be somewhat similar to England's? Germany may learn from her failures—or other potential enemies may. They may learn that the failure is not one of method but of force,—not of kind, but of degree. That is why I say that we must crush the submarine now.

“We've now had nearly a year and a half of Germany's ‘unrestricted’ submarine-warfare, and what have been its results?

“The English are proudly pointing to the fact that, in nearly all that time, although the Germans have sunk more than a thousand British ships of various tonnage, they have themselves lost, in the endeavor, what is calculated as pretty nearly half of their total underwater fleet. It is added that, of late, submarines are being sunk as quickly as the Germans can build them, and, on top of this, there comes the statement of Sir Eric Geddes.

“You have seen that I don't think the Germans themselves were particularly pleased with their achievements. They can't disguise from themselves their failure to fulfill their prophecies. Here is their expert, Captain Persius coming out in cold type with the declaration that their previous hopes were absurd; and even Vice-Admiral Galster grants that his willing eyes can't shut themselves to the truth that neutral shipping hasn't been frightened from the water and that England is not yet on her knees.

“But both the English and their enemies overlook,

it seems to me, other elements than the submarine that enter into the present state of affairs. For instance, England's food shortage, although accentuated by the activities of the submarine, is in part due to a world shortage that the British Isles would have felt, in some degree, if the submarine had been quiescent. A writer in the *London Daily Mail* also points out that the English government has muddled its food question by so far eliminating its ship-owners, and replacing them with a lot of not very competent officials, that no end of delay has resulted in the direction of the movements of shipping and that, therefore, carrying-power has been reduced. To get the true view of England's relation to the submarine-menace, you mustn't only count the tonnage of the ships sunk; you must also take into consideration the world food-shortage on the one hand, and, on the other, must compare the number of ships sunk with the number of ships in transit during the period under discussion.

"But any farsighted naval man will tell you one thing. He will tell you that, for their own future protection, the British Isles will have to find a means, during this war, of stamping out the submarine; to think that it is sufficient to 'hold it' is a positive peril. The nation that replied in the past to England's blockade on top of the sea by a counter-blockade underneath the sea is likely, at any time in the future, to initiate a new and more successful underseas blockade. Because Germany didn't suc-

ceed in starving England in 1917 is no guarantee that she won't try again in 1950.

"The submarine began in America, as most of the inventions perfected in this war began—and, as with most of them, our redtape bureaucrats let it get away from them. Then the perfected plans were passed, as in the case of the Lewis gun, to England; but England, in those days, was careless—she mistrusted any new thing, and her then comfortable naval officers didn't like the idea of the hard living and messing about with enlisted men enforced by the submarine—and so she pigeonholed the plans. When she heard that France was playing with the idea, English naval authorities caused the publication of statements belittling it and, owing to the influence of the tradition that Britannia knew everything about the waves that she was ruling, the French took this British authoritative opinion and—left canny Germany to develop the underseas craft.

"Because of her geographical position, her trade and her scant agriculture, England should have tackled the submarine-menace years ago. Now that she's learned a thing or two, she must see that she has got to scotch it if she values her existence.

"When you get down to it, what do any of us—even the experts—know about the German sub, anyhow? As a matter of fact, the obtainable data isn't much; it has been best summarized by the Engineering Committee of the American National Research

Council, and it amounts, in primer terms, to about this:

“The submarine is a relatively small, submersible boat, carrying generally only one gun and a crew of from thirty to forty men, and most deadly because of her torpedoes. These torpedoes are effective at ten thousand yards; they are really little automatic ships, driven by their own engines and steered by their own steering-gear—the latter set according to calculations just before the torpedo is launched against its victim—and they can travel under water at from eight to ten knots, which is equal to the speed of the average merchantman, or on the surface at from eighteen to twenty knots, which is far faster than the average merchantman can run away from them.

“The submarine goes hunting alone or in pack-formation. It has a possible cruising-radius of anywhere from four thousand five hundred to eight thousand miles, if it doesn't exceed an average speed of from ten to twelve knots for surface travel. It can keep out of port for about a month—maybe a few days more at a pinch—and the Germans have been using not only supply-bases off Iceland and oil supplies submerged at sea, but also, as the British fleet recently discovered, ashore in Iceland and Greenland.

“The submarine's usual track for undersea-travel is not less than fifty and not more than one hundred feet below the surface; the gyroscope compass is



Explosion of a depth-charge in French waters



© Committee on Public Information

German submarine damaged in encounter with U. S. patrol yacht interned in Spain

used. Submergence is possible to a depth of two hundred feet, and the best tactic consists of lying on a proper sea-floor and using listening devices to detect the approach of the prey. When the ocean is very deep, the submarine, which prefers a dive of about fifty feet, will go down into it only a short distance, but that is not altogether satisfactory, because it then has to maintain steerage-way to keep its level of submergence, which makes its speed from two to four knots. For underwater travel, the old German types could count on doing ten knots, the newest must make half again as much. On the surface—and, for the unaccustomed eye, it is almost as hard to see a submarine's hull as it is to see her periscope—the maximum speed is from fourteen to twenty. It is also possible for a good submarine to take a sort of up-and-down course, now nearly on the water and now well under it.

“Its game, of course, is, warned of a vessel's approach, to rise high enough to get an observation with a periscope—the newest types have three periscopes—secure a favorable position and then let drive with a torpedo. The latest models, if they're not too deep, can come up and get their observation in as little as fifteen seconds—none of them takes more than a half minute, and from their greatest depth of submergence, they can rise in from one to four minutes. We used to think they aimed their torpedo best by changing the direction of the submarine, but that doesn't seem true of the new sort.



all we are sure of is that the torpedo can travel nearer the surface in smooth water than in rough, but that its best average depth is ten feet."

I asked about the submarine's defects.

"They are plentiful," said my informant. "On the surface, the submarine is dangerous only to herself in the presence of a ship properly armed and properly manned; her one or two guns can bring a harmless merchantman to terms—nothing more. She is defenseless against air-attack, having a hull that is of necessity a mere egg-shell; she can be easily rammed to bits or broken wide open by a direct hit from a well-directed gun. Moreover, when completely submerged, although not deaf, she is blind, and is liable to crushing by the slight shock of a depth-charge exploded at some distance from her."

Then I was curious as to how far from the sides of a ship a protecting shield or net, which would explode a torpedo, ought to be placed for safety.

"That," said my informant, "depends on the depth of the torpedo, the strength of the ship's sides and the weight of the explosive charge. Considering the usual torpedo and the usual merchant-ship, say twenty-five feet. Anyhow, though naval experts disagree on most things, they are of one mind on this—the distance would have to be so great that the net or shield idea, though here and there in use, is not by any means what some persons hoped it would be. We might get a sound-device that would catch or register the submarine's rudder or propeller

movements while cutting out all conflicting sounds; but that, in its perfected state, is still to find.

“So far, if I may commit an Hibernianism, most of our ways of meeting the submarine are ways of avoiding it. I mean that we depend to a large extent on warnings sent by radio to ships at sea, which are, to be sure, well enough, and on such navigating devices as zigzagging. Now, zigzagging is all right in itself: the submarine sees the merchantman, or troopship, notes his course, maneuvers to get her own torpedo-tubes in play, submerges and lets drive; but meanwhile the intended victim has put her helm over to starboard or port, as the case may be—has zigzagged, in other words—and the submarine, which loses turning power as well as speed by submersion, has had her calculations knocked into a cocked hat: she must begin all over again. That sounds well, but zigzagging makes a long voyage; many worthwhile merchant-ships do less than eight knots, and the zigzag doesn't appreciably lessen the risks for a boat doing under ten.

“In my opinion, the successful weapon for use against the submarine is one already to hand. I mean the destroyer. She is quick, she is fatal, she is a difficult mark. The only trouble is that neither we nor the British have enough of her. We Americans were promised one new destroyer a week after January 1st, 1918, and in the four following months we got exactly two, of which one was immediately laid up for repairs. However, construction will

increase and efficiency with it. If this war lasts another eighteen months, the submarine will have become a negligible factor, and it will have been the destroyer that made it so.

“Frankly, I believe that the sub is being held even now, as Sir Eric Geddes says it is, and I believe it is, therefore, no more than a partial success in the present war, necessitating only greater efforts in ship-production and causing only the minimum of suffering. But I am just as certain that England, on her part, must consider the matter of big destroyer-fleets before she gets into her next war. And so must we.”

Oh, say, we can see from a hell of a height
What you stupidly miss till it's blown you to glory
(To wit: the sub's hull undersea) and alight
With a pounce on the same that is sublimatory;
Not exploding in air, why, our bombs do not glare,
But the bubbles proclaim that the sub's no more there.
O, Boy, it's a ten-to-one shot that the wave
Has closed evermore o'er the submarine's grave!

From on high, dimly seen through the waves of the
deep,
Where the pestilent periscope noiselessly noses,
What is this which the breeze helps to grape-vine and
leap,
Now its top's where its bottom was, head where its
toes is—

Or "are," if you'd rather. No refuge can save
The sub of the Dutch and the sobs of the slave:
This breeze-tossed affair that poor Heinie and Gus
Have watched with despair and dismay—it is us!

Oh, thus be it ever; so long as we fly,
May we still put it over our Teutonic fellow:
May observer and pilot and pigeons on high,
While the motor revolves and the little bombs bellow,
Remain without fright through the perilous flight,
For, by jiminy-cricket, we're serving Fritz right!
So long may the Star-Spangled Banner yet wave
(And us!) o'er the submarine's watery grave!

—FLY-COPS (HYDROAEROPLANES.)

PART FOUR

TAKING CHANCES

CHAPTER X

UP IN THE AIR

ON the surface of the sea there was nothing visible; but over the waters, and high up in the air, floated two big, black birds. They flew in the manner of turkey-buzzards, but more swiftly. Like turkey-buzzards, they circled as o'er unseen carrion. Their flight was accompanied by a low whirring noise. It was like the sound that the distant saw-mill used to make back home, when you were a boy.

Suddenly one of them swept downwards. As it did so, the noise increased to a roar. The bird ceased to be black and became yellow, with dashes of blue and red upon it.

Then, out of the waters, from some little trough of the waves, there came an incredible shot.

The descending bird lurched to one side, righted itself, quivered. For an instant, it seemed to remain stationary in air. The next, and it struggled upward. It was plain that the bird had been hit in some vital spot by that aquatic sportsman and that it was trying to regain its mate.

It never succeeded. Again it paused. It quivered

again. Then, with a sudden despairing roar that grew in violence as the descent increased, it plunged down. It struck the water with a great splash. It partially submerged, came up, floated.

Two hundred yards away, a long, low gray wave showed itself, a wave that tossed with the other waves, but did not break as they, a solid wave. On it appeared silhouettes, the silhouettes of men. Some of them were busied about a gun. The gun spat at the wounded bird in the water.

One of the silhouettes lifted a megaphone to its lips. It said:

“Surrender!”

An answering silhouette—two of them—became discernible on the back of the broken, bobbing bird. One of these had a megaphone also.

“Not on your life,” he replied.

The voice of the first speaker came clearly:

“If you don’t,” it said in an accent only slightly German, “we shall blow you to bits. Then you’re either dead or prisoners, anyhow.”

The other voice replied again, and its accent was pure Yankee.

“Aw, go to hell!” it said.

The gun spat. Its shot touched the intervening water, skipped as a stone that a boy “skips” in the river, and tore away one of the wings of the bird.

Then, all in a twinkling, there was a giant hiss and a tremendous roar. A broad flash appeared from the crest of the solid wave on which the Ger-

manic sportsman had been standing. The wave seemed to rise on end. It seemed to blow up and sink. It left bubbles, and a black scum, and wreckage—and some dark forms struggling in water.

The solid wave had been a Teutonic submarine. The birds were hydroaeroplanes attached to the American Naval Forces operating in French waters. While dealing with the one that was wounded, the submarine had missed the unwounded plane, and that, at considerable risk to the observer and pilot of its fellow, had dropped a bomb and wiped its and their enemy forever from the ocean's face.

Incidents of this sort are not daily occurrences along the coast of France, but they are increasing in frequency, and they are at once in the line of duty and the chief fillip of delight in the otherwise dull lives of our hydro-aviators. Hidden away, through dreary days and nights, in little coves and inlets and on almost desert islands, these men become, at stated intervals, the scouts of the nearer sea. Besides guiding the convoys, they must scour their destined lanes. To their high vision, the sea loses all refraction and presents a smooth surface; not only is their circle of observation larger than that of a ship afloat: they can see any foreign bulk that is suspended a considerable depth below the water—it may be only a whale, or it may indeed be a submarine, but they can see it. They can detect, sooner than a vessel, the wake of a periscope, and they can detect mines. They must bomb the

submarines and mines, or at least mark the latter by phosphor bombs, notify the convoy when it is within reach and report, by carrier-pigeon or radio, to the home-station and the Naval Base.

At that Base, I once found the chief of staff groaning over a newly-received order. It read:

Arriving to-day, to construct hydro-aviation station:

Carpenters' mates	375
Boatswains' mates and riggers..	122
Bricklayers and masons.	38
Electricians, firemen, machinists	75
Radio-constructors (similar proportion)	250

"And," said the chief of staff, "we've got to be ready to house and feed these 860 extra men at a moment's notice!"

The station that I first visited was in full operation. To get there involved a day's swift motor ride from the Base, ending in a long drive across apparently endless sea-marshes and over a long bridge to an island that was no more than ancient sand-dunes rising a little above the level of the sea. There was a row of low, wooden barracks and, near by and between the ocean and the inlet, three vast barns, with semicircular canvas roofs of green and blue: the hangars where the scouting-birds nested.

"Better put out your cigarette," said the com-

mander. "It's against the rules to smoke near the hangars."

I obeyed, and we entered, our steps ringing loud on a cement floor.

All around us were those planes—I was about to say those "amphibious" planes, but these live, of course, in the air as well as on land and in the water, and they are a thing still so new that we have not yet coined the necessary adjective. Yellow they are of body, and their tails are tipped with the tricolor of France—half boat and half bird, constructed to fit on light-wheeled trucks for transportation ashore. They reminded me of racing-shells and long-ago days when Harvard crews raced Yale on the American Thames.

"Length of hull, thirty-four feet by three," the officer was saying; "fifty by five across the wings. Notice those wing-tip pontoons; they are intended for maintenance of balance when on the surface of the water and to prevent the waves from washing over the wings and pulling you in."

He told me that, to the expert flyer, the plane becomes a part of his body and responds to its commander's will as readily and as rapidly as his arms and legs: the hydro-aviator is of centaurian blood. A naval Captain, the commander of the destroyer *Stewart*, once confirmed this:

"We were ahead of a convoy," he said. "I was on the bridge and a plane was circling pretty far ahead. All of a sudden it saw something. First it

dropped a smoke-bomb to mark the place for us; then it swept right toward us. We were going full speed ahead. The plane got alongside—but in the air, you know—and then swooped down and crossed just above the bridge. In spite of its noise and ours and the wind's, that plane came so low that, when its observer talked to me through his megaphone, I could hear every word he said."

The *Stewart* charged the marked spot and dropped a depth-charge. There is excellent reason to believe that she "got" the submarine, which the plane had discovered completely submerged.

"It's all perfectly simple," said the officer that was showing me the hangars. "When you go after a sub, all you've got to remember is to come up against the wind, release your bombs together and then drop phosphor-pots to mark the place."

At this camp and the others that I visited, our hydro-aviators tend toward a type. They are slim and lithe, with quick eyes and lean faces and the admirable habit of silence. The average age is twenty-three, and the preliminary home-training covers a matter of six months, followed by hard practical work at some such station as that at Pensacola. For the most part, the men now serving in our hydro-aeroplane service in France are young volunteers that offered themselves when we declared war.

Though they serve in the air and live ashore, their language and customs, like those of the Marines, are purely naval. Many of them have never been on

the ocean, save for their trip across in the transport, but they are all subject to severe reprimand if, while on duty, they employ any but sailors' terms: they cleaned their mess-halls before I lectured to them there, and they called it "swabbing the decks"; though their commanding-officer, whatever his rank, is called "Captain," all his subalterns are addressed as "Mr."

"It's this way," a mechanic in a sailor's uniform explained. "If an officer says to me, 'Tell Jones, Seaman 2-c., to report to the Captain of the Yard,' why, I say, 'Aye, aye, sir,' and if a petty officer talks to me, I've got to say 'sir' to him; but among ourselves we—well, we talk like home."

I turned to a man standing beside him.

"Isn't it rather dull out here?" I asked.

"It's not for me," he answered, "for I'm on the Alert Section, and the Alert Section doesn't get liberty."

"There's nowhere to go when you do get it," the first man supplemented—"less it's in bathin'," he added.

The flight commander took me over to see the pigeons, which are by no means the least important section of the personnel at every hydro-aviation station. There they were, at least a hundred of them, presided over by an expert detailed to take care of them and responsible for both their performance and well-being. Their house was a pigeon-palace; not even show-birds and prize exhibition-birds are better

looked after. Every plane that leaves the island takes with it a basket of pigeons; as soon as the sought convoy is sighted, or a mine or submarine observed, two pigeons—they work better in pairs and are safer against attack from hawks—are released, bearing news of the event, and hurry homeward.

It was a pilot who came abroad with our first destroyers that told me first of the work of the mere men:

“Without hydroaeroplanes,” he said, “the quickest convoy and the keenest destroyers are sort of near-sighted: any time a sub’s liable to pop up unlooked-for and give them a tin fish; but we can see into the water to a depth of a hundred and fifty feet, and we can’t ourselves be seen through a periscope. Generally speaking, we fly at a height of from two hundred to three hundred metres.”

I ventured to remark that that was rather high.

“Hydro-aviation,” said he, “is the best grade of plane work. You’ve only got to look at the question of landing to see that. In land flying, when you come down, you just hit your tail on the ground—you know you’ll just slide down—but at sea, you come down as if you were falling.”

He explained that our stations were working in conjunction with the French and that, as yet, we were using French planes.

“The hard thing to master,” he continued, “is the signals. There are more confounded signals than

there are things to signal about. For instance, if Allied subs are working with a convoy, word is sent us beforehand, but those subs have signals to identify them, just the same. Before each flight, every observer going out is given a copy of the signals agreed on with the convoy, and if he doesn't know them by the time he sights that convoy, he's liable to get into the worst trouble he'll ever get into this side of the grave. Everybody knows a red pennant on a plane means power-trouble, don't they? Well, that's because it always means the same thing; but these signals that mean different things every time—gee whiz!"

The hydroaeroplanes—they weigh about three thousand pounds each—travel, when on active duty, at an average speed of sixty miles an hour; they carry fuel that will feed their six-hundred-pound motor for four hours; and they also carry two bombs, a machine-gun, the already-mentioned pigeons, a wireless apparatus, a pilot and an observer. The observer takes care of the ordnance, instruments, reconnaissance, navigation and signals; what his superior officer, the pilot, takes care of, beyond mere mechanics, I have not yet been able to discover: the reason why an observer outranks a pilot is a mystery second only to that which, in poker, allows a flush to beat a straight.

"Allowing for the time of year," said my informant, "we mostly work between 4 A. M. and 10

P. M. Each station has a zone of the ocean to take care of; we pick up a convoy when it enters our zone and carry it on till the folks from the next station meet it at the beginning of their zone: it's rather like policemen patrolling their beats and meeting at the end of them.

"Our standing orders are to approach vessels at an altitude low enough to identify them. Then the chief of the flying-station stays over the convoy and circles about within half a mile of it; there, and when he's on any other sort of job, he sends radio reports home every fifteen minutes. The rule is that at least two planes must always start together and must keep in sight of each other; when there are four planes out, they work in pairs. Two hours after one section has gone out, another is sent to relieve it; if one plane out of two or three is crippled and has to return to the Base, then the whole lot must return, too. The detonators are attached to the bombs only when an action is imminent and never when we're near a friendly ship; if any bombs are released, one plane has to go home and tell about it—radio or pigeon won't do. Of course, we've all got to be home by dark."

Into any lengthy description of my own flights I need not go. Like a big fish or a small viking-galley going stern-foremost, the plane looked as it was hauled on its cart from the hangar and as, a moment later, it was being towed by a long rope to which

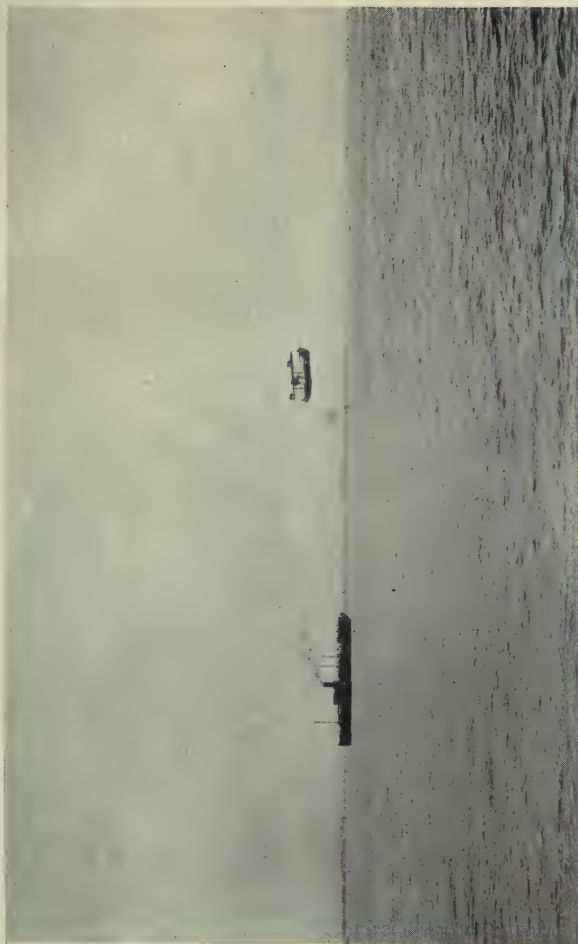
clung men soon neck-deep in the water of the inlet. Swathed in their strange flying-clothes, the pilot and observer made that inspection which the regulations require shall be made of each machine before every flight. Here are its appalling admonitions :

Power-plant :

Be sure that there is water to cool the radiator ;
See that the gas and oil supply are sufficient ;
That the motor is warmed up to proper temperature ;
That the revolution-counter is working ;
Also the oil-gauge ;
That the gasoline-supply cocks are open ;
And ignition perfect ;
That each of the two magnetos works independently ;
Examine the auxiliary air-lever ;
Regulate the throttle-valve ;
See that there are no leaks in gas, oil or water lines ;
And that the propeller is properly aligned ;
As well as that the necessary emergency tool-kit is complete.

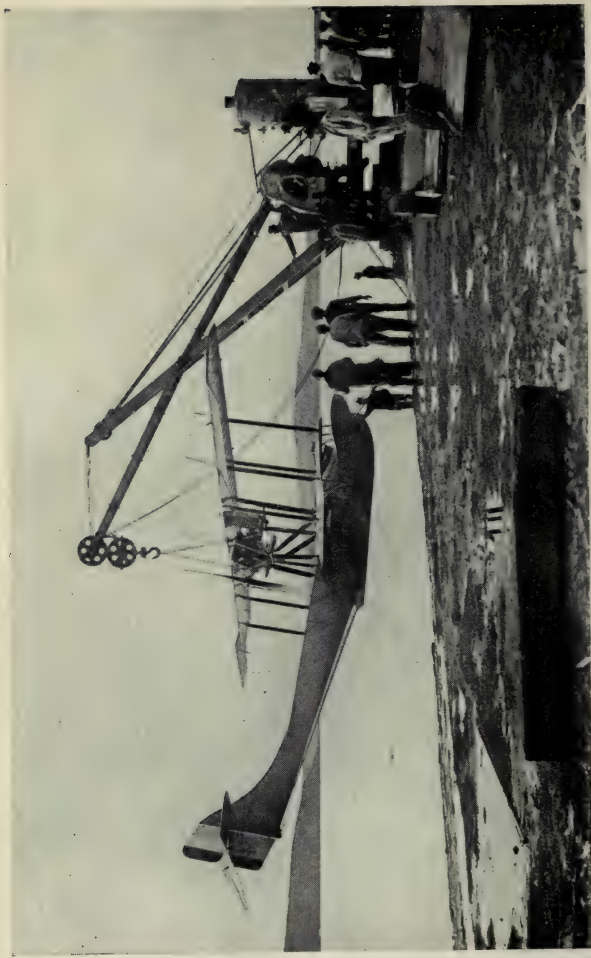
Structure :

Have the controls in perfect working order ;
All the safety-wires in place ;
Each wire unbroken and at proper tension ;
All pullies lubricated ;
No broken spars or torn fabric ;
No water aboard from that shipped during the last trip ;
Tow-line attached ;



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Hydroaeroplane hovering over battleship



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Italian hydroaeroplane preparing for flight over enemy territory

Ballast adjusted;
Barograph at zero;
Clock set and running;
Speed-meter in order.

Ordnance :

Corpets in working-shape;
Releasing-devices lubricated;
Bombs in place (if going for bombing-work);
Detonators in place, properly secured and safely
locked;
Bomb-sights in perfect condition;
Gun in place and working;
Ammunition provided.

Accessories :

Four pigeons, with message-holders in place,
with pencil and pad;
Pistols and one box of cartridges;
Four phosphor-pots;
Ditto distress-signals;
Field-glasses, chart and pencil therefor;
Note-book;
Four signal-buoys, with board and pencil at-
tached;
Signal-flares, with suspension-wire and weight;
Signal-book, sea-anchor, box of matches;
Two pieces of chalk;
Cup for spreading oil;
Radio set in working order;
Three life-buoys;
Emergency-rations;
Wire-cutter.

One behind the other, there are two circular holes in the body of a plane. In these, each on a chair that is so low as to leave little more than his head visible above the surface, sit the pilot and observer, the former forward—his binoculars almost continually at his eyes, clustered about him the compass, altometre, chart, clock, wireless apparatus, sights and bomb-releases—the latter nearer the center, a compass beside him, too, and the oil-gauges, air-pressure and speed indicators and fire-extinguishers all within easy reach.

“Watch out for the woodwork!” That is the warning given every passenger. “We’ve got a twenty-horse-power motor, but the body of a plane is only three-ply birch. Even a rough landing would bust us, and every fifty hours there has to be an overhauling.”

When you go up in a hydroaeroplane, you know it. With a mighty shout, the men in the water cast off the rope; the motor, directly overhead, begins a whirring that drowns the mechanics’ cheers; there is set up a vibration compared with which the greatest vibration of the smallest automobile is the mere rustle of a leaf; the vehicle glides over the surface of the sea; the pilot leans forward and pulls something, or turns something—and the forward end of that winged, three-ply birch-canoe rises gently into the ether. You are going up; you are flying; you are afloat on nothing with only the sky above and the receding ocean beneath.

There is not much conversation; in fact, the noise of the motor washes out nearly every other sound, and, I have been told, there is no discernible noise during any battle in the air. If you are not a good sailor, you are seasick, and if you are not bundled up from toes to head, you are miserably cold. It takes you some time to make up your mind to look overside, and when you do, it is to see only flat water below you, with here and there a toy sail upon it, and, perhaps, off to right or left, the land, which looks like nothing so much as the make-believe made-in-Germany land that the children used to set around the base of Christmas-trees.

The pilot draws the lever toward him when he wants to mount and pushes it away in order to descend; he turns his wheel in that direction in which he wants the plane to tilt, and to turn the craft his feet press either the right or the left of the pair of pedals at the bottom of the hole in which he is squatting. These are the facts, but you don't at first realize them; at first, the pilot is likely to begin your initiation by working "All out," which is to say at full speed, and then all your attention is centered in getting your breath and wondering how short a time will pass before the seemingly inevitable fall.

"It's a great life," said my observer, as he clambered, at last, out of his craft on its return to the good dry land.

"If you don't weaken," added the pilot.

"It's a merry life," said the observer.

The pilot looked at the sky; he looked at the smiling sea.

"And a short one," he concluded.

*Fighting? Fighting's very well;
Fighting's something quick!
Work-and-waiting, that's the job
Makes a fellow sick.*

*Get a bullet in your chest—
Dead before you show it.
Try to drink the ocean up—
Dead before you know it.*

*Dying's such a speedy thing,
Where's the time for tears?
Working just goes on and on,
Weeks and months and years!*

—BASE-MEN.

CHAPTER XI

TWO HARD JOBS

THE hardest things about war are its dull spots, and the worst of the dull spots are that they are, as often as not, among the most important. In modern naval warfare—at least as one sees it on and along the coast of France—not the least vital work is the dreariest, and this is done by two very different sorts of men: to wit, the men of the observation-balloons and the stevedores. The former sound romantic and the latter prosaic; as a matter of fact, both are picturesque figures enough, and both have tasks that are as stupid as they are vital.

1: THE OBSERVATION-BALLOONS

Fill the baskets,
Fill the baskets,
Fill the baskets there!
We're the guys
That serve as eyes
Floating in the air—
Floating in the seasick air—
High above the waves;
If we wouldn't be for you
Glasses—didn't see for you—
You'd be in your graves;
You'd be underneath the sea,
Swallowing the green,
Entrees for the fish you'd be,

Subbed and submarine ;
Down among the sharks you'd go,
Serving bloody wine,
'Cause your transport stubbed its toe
On a German mine.
Well, we'll keep you safe, I guess !
Up here eating cloud,
We are just a little less
Than the angel crowd.
Cast your eye upon us
When you say a prayer :
We're the guys
That put you wise.—
Pull the baskets,
Pull the baskets,
Pull the baskets there !

—*Hot-Dogs.*

The first thing that the eastbound transport sees, after it has been met by our destroyers, is the low line of cliff that is France; the next thing is a scattered group of dots in the sky. As the boats draw nearer, these dots assume bulk; they begin to look like kneeling elephants swaying in the ether: they are the observation-balloons that are sent out daily to scour, with their tireless eyes, the nearer waters and to report immediately the presence of every submarine below the surface and every doubtful craft, or craft unaccounted for, above it.

The observers work from high-rimmed baskets suspended below the great gas-bags; the balloons themselves are connected with their stations by cables—in other words, they are what are called “captive-balloons”—and the operators are connected

with earth by traveling telephones or radio, or both. Like the hydroaeroplanes, the balloons make it possible for their operators to see far below the surface of the water over which they float; they are less expensive than the flying-machines and can remain in air much longer; they require practically no mechanical skill on the part of the men that they carry; but their field of operations is necessarily more limited, and they are in no sense engines of offense. They are, in effect, to the coast-guard what an advanced observation-post is to an army in the field.

Compared with other forms of air-activity that of the man who goes aloft under a naval observation-balloon is safe. His brother operator, hovering about the trenches along the Marne or beyond Toul, may be shot down by a shell from below or by an aeroplane from above, but he is almost never subject to enemy-attack and is practically immune against it. He flies at a height which few naval guns are constructed to attain and over a field where the German is operating in such a manner that his sole desire is to remain hidden at every moment save those connected with torpedo-launching.

Nevertheless, the balloons sometimes achieve puncture, on their own account; accidents—cause undetermined, because no witness survived—have resulted in fires; baskets have overtipped in storms, cables have severed and the great bags drifted, helpless, out over the sea.

Less comfortable work than that of the observers

it is difficult to imagine. Elsewhere in this book I mention the purely personal fact that I am not—or never have been, up to date—subject to seasickness, but I defy any man that is new to it to ascend in one of these swaying sky-trawlers and not seriously believe, for a while, that his digestive organs are about to play him tricks. The baskets, large as they seem when they are pulled up, by pulleys, from the earth to their post below the ready gas-bag, are narrow and cramped; a dull, steady cold settles down on the observer and eats into his vitals; yet, provided by the Base with information as to the appearance and nature of every ship that has a right to come, during his stay in the air, within his sight, he must remain up, frequently from sunrise to sunset, and, his binoculars glued to his eyes, take turn and turn about with his companion, scouring with aching vision the level-seeming surface of the sea.

Even when not on active duty—if you can call such duty “active”—the life of the balloonist is scarcely amusing. His station is generally at a distance from any town, and his existence is about as lonely as that of a shipwrecked crew on a coral-reef. Mostly his chief interest is in writing and reading letters. At one balloon-camp that I visited one out of every three men, for the past week, had been writing home to his wife, who hadn't written him for a month, to say that if the wife let another month go by in silence she would not get her allotment.

“There was one unmarried fellow,” continued the censor that told me this, “who sent a note to his girl; it read simply: ‘Now don’t be a durned fool and get married to some other fellow while I’m gone.’ There was another whose letter consisted of exactly eight words:

“ ‘Dear Ethel:

‘Thank you. Don’t write again.

‘BOB.’

But mostly they are prolific correspondents, and I am a bit stumped by the chaps that write in Yiddish.”

It is not to be supposed, however, that these men are a down-hearted lot. I saw a boxing-match that was arranged for them and that was presided over by a chaplain, a Catholic priest, whose father used to be a well-known railway president before the government took over the railways; he told the audience at the start that there must be no malice in any of its comments and no efforts to excite the performers to anything but clean sport: whether the admonition was needed or not I don’t know, but I never saw boxing that was better enjoyed, and the sole remark made by the onlookers at the only slow bout was one urging the hesitant combatants to “drop a nickel in the piano-player.”

Once I talked to the men at such a station. I was fresh from the French front and asked them what

they wanted me to tell them. There was a unanimous answer:

"Tell us when we're going home!"

I was a bit taken aback. I said that they were going home just as soon as we had whipped the Kaiser.

"You wouldn't want to go home before that, would you?" I inquired.

The shouted "No!" that answered me shook the rafters of the shed.

At another time, with a group of these men that had liberty, I was to ride on a motor-truck to the Base-town. Something or other happened to the truck as we gathered around it: the driver said so and demurred at attempting to start.

"You got four wheels an' an engine left, haven't you?" the men demanded.

The driver sullenly owned to so much.

"Then go!" they insisted.

We went. We went singing. We went like schoolboys when school closes. At a drawbridge before the entrance to the city, there was a jam: quite a French crowd was held up because of a dispute, which it eagerly took part in, between the policeman on guard and two carters, each of whom vociferously claimed it as his right to cross that bridge first. In France, a policeman always argues before he arrests; he argues regardless of the fact that he has previously determined just what course of action to pursue. Our fellows for a while watched

this particular argument—they knew no French, and so couldn't properly be said to be listening to it—with huge enjoyment. Then they began to realize that the minutes of their precious liberty were slipping away.

“Hey!” called one of them. “Don't you people know you're holding up this war?”

A negro stevedore appeared from nowhere—how he got out of his cantonment I should not like to say—and he, acting as interpreter, had a way cleared for these Americans, who, he said, were “on important military business.” He came from New Orleans, that fellow, and he spoke a bit of old Creole French.

2. SHUT-INS

That Kaiser-man, Ah'm tellin' you,
 He's des' the devil's double;
 Ah guess he's never seen me, but
 He sure has caused me trouble:
 Ah thought Ah'd come to France to fight
 An' let him have a clip—
 An' what you think they set me to?
Unloadin' ship!

There's somepin' ailin' in ma haid:
 Ah never was a rover,
 Ma job was good—ef Ah warn't cracked
 Ah'd never have come over;
 Ah'm sleepin' in the open here,
 Ah'm doin' 'thout ma fun,
 Ah'm kerryin' tons o' *delayed* freight—
 Why not a gun?



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Off duty on board a U. S. S.



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War balloon departs from French base to bombard German stronghold at Metz

Ah didn't lak the ocean much—
That sub-yarn ain't no jolly—
En Ah'm goin' to ast th' Culnel fer
To send me home by trolley:
Ah don't mind workin' every day,
Er workin' every night,
But, bein' bawn a fightin'-man,
Ah'd like to fight.

—*Stevedores.*

Perhaps, strictly speaking, those stevedores— they seem to be all negroes—have no place in a book about the Navy. Strictly speaking, at all events, the Navy is not responsible for them: they do not belong to it; they belong to the Army. Of old, our transports were an Army care; when a long and tedious array of complaints resulted in the shifting of that marine burden to the shoulders of the Navy Department, which were in the nature of things better fitted to bear it, the stevedores, through some oversight, did not go along; but, since they had to unload stores from Navy-controlled boats for transfer upon Army-controlled railway trains, they came, while so employed, to form a sort of link between the two branches of the service, and so they are now doing a formidable part of America's work along the French coast, concerning which work as a whole no book would be complete without some mention of them.

Primarily, then, their duty is the hauling ashore of pretty much everything, except the soldiers, which our ships bring abroad, but generally con-

fused with them are vast numbers of other men of their race who are now drafted, again enlisted volunteers and yet again hired contract-labourers. So far they have not, as any Army officer put it to me, "mixed well": those in one sort of work are sufficiently human to look down on those in another sort; the "reg'lars" expect the "contract-trash" to defer to them; the southern negroes do not care for those from northern states, declaring that the latter "ain't real niggers, nohow," and those from the northern states sometimes assume an air of superiority that aggravates their fellows. There have, consequently, been some rather lively battles, and the issue is not yet determined.

Herbert Corey told me of one encounter that he witnessed between a labourer from New Orleans and a stevedore from New York. When the fight was over, its volunteer referee sent for the New Yorker's brother, who was working near by.

"Now," said the referee, "right hyere's the two ov 'um. Pick 'um out to suit yo'self. Which is yo' brother en which is t'other'n?"

At that French port at which we are constructing our largest docks, an Army man, an officer of Engineers, complained bitterly:

"In one ship," he told me, "we had six hundred of the stevedores sent over here without any hospital corps and without any doctor; you can't imagine the condition those poor fellows were in. Taking all our negro labourers in a bunch, it is safe to say that

fifty per cent. are physically unfit. They are unsuited to this climate and go down easily before pneumonia and tuberculosis; hundreds of them are all the while laid up from work by minor ills, especially rheumatism; many contracted diseases coming over; more were in bad shape when they left home. We ship from three to twelve negroes daily to Base-hospitals, and when a fellow is sent to a Base-hospital it means that he is a very sick man. Out of fifteen hundred drafted negroes assigned to us as labourers, a large proportion either had phthisis or was in a late state of a social disease when they got here. Others got in as bad a state because we couldn't keep them out of the longshore cafés. The net result was that, right at the start, four times as many stakes were driven daily by our own enlisted men of the Engineers as by the same number of outside labourers on the same job."

One remedy to mere slackness, thus far only imperfectly tried, but consistently efficacious, has been the enlisting of the contract-labourers. As soon as one of them gets into a uniform, his bearing and his work alike improve; he is, as he would say, "better behaved," and his health improves accordingly. I heard one man, whose betterment was scarcely twenty-four hours old, accosted by an unregenerate that, a day previous, had been his bosom friend. The uniformed personage gazed with scorn at his slouching interrogator.

"What's that?" he demanded. "Git away, nig-

ger. Ah wouldn't be seen on the street wif yo'. Ain't yo' seen these here black French sojers from Africa what dresses in sheets? Tha's what yo' look lak: yo' look lak a —— —— A-rab! Yo' clo's is aflappin' lak a shirt on a fence washdays."

He was tremendous, this scoffer, a veritable giant. A few mornings later, I saw him crossing the big city square. Somehow or other, he had evidently been detailed to conduct a prisoner, a German officer, from one part of the city to another. The officer was perhaps just arrived from a distant prison camp; anyhow, he had a large box with him, almost the size of an old-fashioned Saratoga trunk. It was a hot day, the officer was a little man and fat; but it was he, and not the giant, who shouldered that box.

Once I saw him falter and appeal to his guard. Would the latter carry the box? The latter would not. The most that he would do was to permit a brief rest. On the German's part, there was a pocketward movement of the hand that indicated the proffer of a fee, but the response was a refusal and a peremptory punishment in the shape of an order to march on: the erect negro in Uncle Sam's uniform was not to be hired to carry luggage for a Boche prisoner.

At our Naval Base, the soldiery have attempted to solve the problem of the negro's exuberance by forbidding him the town. He has to work, by day

shift or night, on the docks, and to sleep there, too. He may not leave them; he is confined within a stout, high, well-guarded stockade. It is a rather mournful life and one that no unprejudiced observer can not help wishing to see bettered. I was informed of it when speaking in a Y. M. C. A. hut inside the railings, of the meaning of which railings I was then ignorant. I was looking out on a sea of sad, black faces, and I made what must have seemed a foolish appeal to my hearers to be good boys whenever they went into town. Instantly, a wailing chorus interrupted me:

"Don' yo' be afraid o' that, Mister. They won't let us go outen th' yard!"

It was one of these working captives from America that consulted an Army doctor with the complaint that "sompin's the matter wif ma haid."

"What do you mean?" asked the doctor. "Got a knock on it?"

"No, suh; I ain't had no knock on it; ain't been a fight fo' mos' a week now."

"Headache, then?"

"No, suh; but dey's sompin' wrong wif it."

"Mean you have earache?"

"No, suh. Ah—Ah mean—"

"Well, it can't be that your eyes are troubling you?"

"No, 't ain't ma eyes, suh; but dey sure is sompin' wrong wif ma haid."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, tell me your symptoms!"

"Symtims? Yas, suh. Ah got a lot o' symtims. Yo' see, doctor, it was dis here away. Ah had a soft snap back home. Ah had a wife that was a good pervider, an' Ah was mighty fond o' that woman, an' she was real' in love wif me; an' Ah had a nice house; an' Ah had a good job up Baton Rouge way. Ah didn't have nuffin' to complain 'bout, yit Ah done come over here. So dere must be sompin' wrong wif ma haid, doctor, else Ah wouldn't never've come over here."

He wanted to be sent home as mentally unfit. He said he would rather be allowed to go to the front and fight for his country than go home, but, failing a chance to carry a gun, he wanted to return to Baton Rouge.

He was not alone in this attitude. I heard one of his comrades sighing:

"Ah guess Ah ain't never goin' to git a chance so much as to see that there Kaiser-man, an' Ah guess he ain't never so much as caught sight o' me; but he sure has caused me a lot o' trouble."

"Me, too," a negro that was with the worried one agreed. "An' another thing: Ah've 'bout enough o' them sub-scares, comin' over; when my contrac' done run out, Ah ain't goin' home by no ocean, Ah ain't; Ah'm goin' to ast fer transportation b'way o' New Orleans."

Among them all, the happiest are the worthless.

At the Base-port, there was one of these that was a proficient beggar: he would have done credit to pre-war Algiers. No white man could pass through the stockade while Jerry was there without surrendering something to Jerry. If the visitor had no money, he would soon find himself parting with a portion of his clothing. Indeed, there were times when Jerry preferred clothes: one could toss them over the stockade to a second-hand clothes shop's runner waiting there; the runner would pay at least a third of what he would himself get for them, and that was often more than the visitor would feel inclined to donate in the way of hard cash.

On one winter's morning, Jerry approached two visiting strangers, one of whom was an Army officer, magnificently muffled to the chin in an overcoat that was as new as overcoats ever are in a wartime army. The other man, a civilian, wore a very ordinary overcoat indeed, but it was at its sleeve that Jerry covertly plucked.

"Ah don't wan' that man fo' to hear me," whispered Jerry, "'cause he's one o' them officer-fellows, an' they're mighty hard-hearted, them officers. 'Sides, he's from the Souf, he is, an' them southe'n men, they always is 'spicious."

The officer was a southerner, but the civilian wondered how Jerry could know that.

"'Cause Ah'm from the Souf myself," said Jerry. "An' now, Mister, Ah jes' gotta tell you' how awful near frozen to def' Ah am."

Jerry did look cold. Undoubtedly he *was* cold. Whether he would have worn it had he had one is questionable, but what he proceeded to beg for was the civilian's overcoat.

"It's too shabby fo' a man o' yo' position, anyhow," said Jerry.

At that moment the officer, who had been momentarily otherwise engaged, heard the beggar and wheeled upon him.

"Why, you blank-blank, good-for-nothing, low-down nigger!" he shouted. "What do you mean by asking this gentleman for his overcoat? We wouldn't think of giving you anything. If you don't clear out this instant, I'll tan the hide off you!"

Not even for the twinkling of an eye did Jerry show the terror that he must have felt. He turned to the officer with his face broken by the best imaginable imitation of a glad grin. He doffed his hat; it nearly brushed the ground beside his broken boots.

"Mawnin', suh," he cried. "Mawnin'! An', oh, bress de Lawd, Ah sure am glad to see you! Ah thought yo' was a southe'n gen'man the minute Ah sot eyes on yo', an' hearin' yo' talk lake that to me makes me sure of it. It makes me plum homesick, suh. Now Ah *knows* Ah'll git a' overcoat!"

And he was right. In three minutes, he had, not the northern civilian's, but the southern officer's overcoat across his arm and was sidling toward the stockade behind which the second-hand clothes shop's runner was waiting.

"I needed a new one, anyhow," the officer explained.

Jerry, however, is an exception. Being a genius, he is of course an exception. Most of his comrades have anything but an easy time of it. Many of them that are enlisted say that they enlisted under the delusion that they were to be used as soldiers and fighting men. It is hard to make them realize their present work's great importance. They hear the true stories of the splendid battles that the colored troops are waging on the western front, and their loudest plaint is contained in the words that I heard over and over again:

"Ah want to fight!"

Sailin' in a yellin' yawl,
Duckin' through the sea,
Mostly Phippsburg dorymen
 makin' up the gang;
Channel-this and channel-that,
Sweep the roadway free;
Set the drag,
An' sing a rag,
 An' keep your eye peeled—
 BANG!

There's a sub-egg busted;
Don't you put about!
What? She's drinkin' for'ard?
Bale her out—bale her out!

Draggin' through the nigger night
An' the dirty day,
Eyes a-ache an'
 Hearts a-breakin'
 Wet an' frozen stiff,
Long as any ship's afloat
We must clear the way
Into France
An' take a chance
 Till they get us—
 BIFF!

Watch your helm there! Steady!
Smell the sauerkraut?
Never mind
To look behind!
Bale her out—bale her out!

Here's our simple orders:

"Go an' git the mines"—

Nothin' 'bout supplies an' such

(winch, or sail, or pump);

Only doctrine's "Hunt 'em out

Where we see the signs;

Go, you mut,

An' hurry, but

Be ready for a—"

JUMP! . . .

Right her!—All together!

She's a tidy tout:

We kin git to harbour—

Bale her out!

—MINE-SWEEPERS.

CHAPTER XII

THE BLOW-UP MEN AND A MEND-UP MOTHER

A FEW years ago, I passed a summer at as lonely a place on the Maine coast as it was then possible for me to discover. Heavily wooded hills that were very nearly mountains came down to the wild sea; American eagles nested in the forest across the inlet's mouth; mild-eyed deer ambled down the track that I had been told was a road; within a radius of twelve miles there were not enough inhabitants to maintain more than two churches and three speakeasies; and both churches and all the speakeasies were impartially patronized by my friend Habakkuk Rodgers.

Habakkuk Rodgers was not his real name, but his real name was so like that that "Habakkuk Rodgers" is no exaggeration. When he couldn't help it, he would go to Phippsburg and build dories; the rest of the time he lived in a tumbledown cabin on a cliff beside the sea and went fishing. I suspect that he also robbed lobster-pots, and I know that he regarded but lightly the federal regulations prescribing what size lobsters it is proper to consume. Any language save that which he called "American"

he considered as an infernal survival of the affair at Babel, and he sometimes expressed grave doubts as to whether such survivals were a reality. He disbelieved in women and in travel.

"Women," he would say, "are a invention of the devil. That's what I hold. Satan, he got Eve in his power by eatin' the apple, an' then she had to pass into the serpent, an' the devil he passed into the bein' of Eve. You look at the Book, an' you'll see f'r yourself. It says there how Satan said, 'Ye shall not surely *die*,'—just transfer. So they transferred, and seems t' me the change was hard on the serpent an' an improvement to Eve.

"Travel? No, sir. Sometimes I go to Bath an' sometimes I gotta go to Phippsburg. But I don't hold by travel. Where the Lord puts you, He means for you to stay put, else He wouldn't never have put you there. You look in the Book. It says: 'All these people shall also go to their place.' Nothin' 'bout comin' away. 'Go' — an' stick. That's what the Book says."

Thus Habakkuk Rodgers a few years since. Yet, one April afternoon of the present year, I entered the bar-room of a port-side café along the coast of France and saw there this same Habakkuk in familiar converse with the proprietress. What is more, by means of something that he patently considered the Gallic tongue, he was making himself understood.

He wasn't a bit discomposed when he recognized

me. He explained that a transatlantic journey was made permissible by that clause in the body of our law which declares the suspension of all Constitutional guarantees in time of war; he accounted for his talk and its feminine participant by a reference to the second verse of the sixth chapter of Genesis, and he closed the entire subject of his part in the war with a splendidly bloodthirsty Old Testament quotation about the duty of the elect to annihilate the men, women and children of God's enemies. Habakkuk Rodgers was one of an American crew manning a mine-sweeper under the command of our Naval Forces in French Waters.

Enough has, surely, been elsewhere written about sea-mines and their nature. "Since," says Mr. Kipling, "this most Christian war includes laying mines in the fairways of traffic, and since these mines may be laid at any time by German submarines especially built for the work, or by neutral ships, all fairways must be swept continuously day and night. When a nest of mines is reported, traffic must be hung up or deviated till it is cleared out." For that purpose, we have taken to France hundreds of fisherman from Maine and little boatmen—and especially tugmen—from Long Island Sound, and of these became Habakkuk.

They crossed in their own tiny boats—boats that nobody had ever before supposed could venture safely so far to sea. They were under the guard of flanking destroyers and were cared for by a floating

repair-ship called the mother-ship about which they would cluster, during a submarine-scare, as lately-hatched chickens cluster under the wings of their parent hen. But they were independent individuals for all that, and, once they had reported at the Base, they became not the least important of those powers which kept the sea highroad clear for the transport of our men, munitions and supplies.

At perhaps a score of places along the coast, groups of these boats, and their crews, are stationed. One is tempted to quote Kipling again, for, though he is describing a British group, his picture might almost be the picture of an American: "Now, imagine the acreage of several dock-basins crammed, gunwale to gunwale, with brown and umber and ochre and rust-red steam-trawlers, tugs, harbour-boats . . . once clean and respectable, now dirty and happy. Throw in fish-steamers, surprise-packets, of unknown lines, and indescribable junks." Something like that is what you will see when you see a group of our mine-sweeps in port. You will see many a little craft that used to tow your liner to the New York docks, and you may miss from the harbour of New York many a little craft that now is doing dangerous war-work in France. So soon as a new mine-field is discovered, word of it is sent by radio to the Base; it is marked on the charts and the information transmitted to all Allied and neutral ships known to be near, and then the orders go forth to the closest mine-sweeps, and the tiny mine-sweeps

must imperturbably proceed into the midst of that nest of sea-hornets and, one by one, explode them.

There are various methods of sweeping. One the British prefer; another the Italians; we are working on a plan of our own, but have meanwhile found the French excellent, and what may well prove the best scheme of all is now nearing perfection at the hands of its Parisian inventor, Captain Tossizza, *Ingenieur de la Marine*.

Into details it is inadvisable to go; but, speaking roughly and broadly, the fundamental idea on which all these methods are based is that of two small boats sailing slowly abreast and each carrying an end of a wire or cable that passes under the water at such a depth as to catch some part or other of the mine. There are those who advocate the attachment to this cable of blades, sharp and tough, which will sever the strand connecting the mine with its buoy and so let it sink, of its own weight, to harmless rest upon the bottom of the ocean; there are other sweepers, men of intellects more simple and direct, who use their cables to drag the mine to the surface and then explode the devilish device by making it the target for their heavy rifle practise; and between the extremes of these two schools there are all manner and shades of false doctrine, heresy and schism.

In any case, the work is one in which the raw material is death. It is all very well to say that the cables catch the mines: they catch the mines that happen to be between the boats; for such mines as happen to be directly in the course of the boats those

boats must keep the sharpest lookout, or there is an end of things.

"Suppose you strike a mine?" I asked a former Long Island tugboat-captain.

He had learned enough French to shrug his shoulders; he shrugged them now.

"Oh, well," he drawled, "you'd never know it. The first thing you'd know, you wouldn't know nothin'."

Another commander told me this story:

"Funniest thing happened last trip out. Ugly, o' course, but funny fit to kill. My mate—a man's mate's the fellow that commands the tug that holds the other end of his sweep—my mate was my brother-in-law, so to speak. Henery, his name was; an' Henery bein' older'n me, an' havin' married the older sister o' my wife, he was always kind o' puttin' hisself above me. We was good friends, you understand. We'd worked together, back home, fer some-thin' like twenty year, an' Henery was the best friend I had anywheres. Still, he was always pridin' himself on knowin' a bit more'n me. It was him learned me the tug business, an' he never could think o' me 'cept as a ig'orant beginner. He was especially proud o' his sea-sight an' especially contempt'us o' mine.

"Well, we was sent out to sweep a new field, ten mile' down the coast. It was a place as had always been clear afore, but this time the Germans 'd got in an' laid a dickens of a lot of sub-eggs there.

"Water was kind o' rough, an' we was pitchin'

consid'ble. I was standin' for'ard, keepin' an eye out for mines ahead o' my tug, an' Henery, he was standin' for'ard aboard *his'n* for the same purpose. All the time, he kep' warnin' me to be more careful.

"'You glue your eyes on the water!' he was always yellin'. 'Don't have to look at me when you talk. Keep your fool eyes on the water, or you'll get blowed up, that's what'll happen to you, sonny,' says he.

"It kind o' got on my nerves, that did. I had a good mind to sass him back, times. Sort o' glad I didn't, now.

"Well, bye an' bye, havin' knifed about three—mebbe four—mines with the sweeps, we was goin' along in the thick o' the nest, when all to once Henery, he yells fit to bust a lung:

"'Look out! Look out! You blank-blank fool, where *be* your eyes? Port your helm! There's a mine dead ahead o' you! Didn't I tell you to watch where you was goin'?"

"An'—d'you know?—he hadn't no more'n got done the last word o' cussin' me out when—bang!—his own tug hits a mine an's blowed to smithereens.

"That was five days ago. They ain't found Henery yet. Don't quite know how'll tell my wife's sister: she'll think Henery was keerless. It was ugly, o' course, but funny fit to kill."

I have said that these tugs came over under the wings of a mother-ship: I wish that space would permit an adequate description of the ship that is



Sea-eggs laid by the Germans



The mother-ship nursing one of her children

now their mother in port—and is, at the same time, mother to all the other craft of our Navy operating in French waters. Even the barest possible mention of that wonderful vessel will, I fear, take up a goodly portion of a chapter that began by being a chapter about mine-sweeps.

She is a former collier, this mother-ship—12,800 tons and 467 feet over all. For two months of her long life she was base ship at a target-range; she was three years and four months at the Boston Navy Yard, and now, carrying four five-inch guns, she is just enough of a battle-ship to protect herself. At sea, she has a mighty roll, but she is what they call in the Navy a “good goer,” and her towing apparatus is the best we have thus far produced.

“She could tow the *Leviathan*,” her commander proudly told me, and the *Leviathan’s* clumsy bulk recalled the name of Germany’s greatest liner.

Once the mother of sixteen fighters, she mothered at Bermuda, forty-eight craft—American, British, French—of nearly every known war-type. She set out for France in February last, dragging three disabled armed yachts and a British drifter behind her and surrounded—for she was too valuable to lose—by a little fleet of destroyers. Now she rests well within the Base-harbour, but she can go out if need be, and not a few of her complement dream of a day when she will do so.

Her mission is to keep in condition everything that the forces at the French Base need in their day’s

work. There is an average of eight vessels always nestling under her wings, undergoing repairs. Beside her is her subsidiary corps of assistants: a squadron of tugs that will tow in injured vessels, or carry mechanics and tools to mend such vessels at sea.

I remember going out to her in the Admiral's launch and noting how tremendous she seemed amid the clustering destroyers and armed yachts. Her sides were flung open to make more easy the entrance of battered machinery, yet her decks—the topmost crowded with huge cranes—were as clean as if she were not a floating machine-shop, but a model cannery somewhere ashore. A number of French naval officers were aboard, making drawings of the things they saw in order to reproduce them for their own navy; an English naval lieutenant was with them:

“France has one dismantled warship to do this sort of work,” said he, nodding at the mother-ship's bridge by way of including all her activities. “As for us, we've got a few rather marvelous boats built to pull up a sunken sub, and we keep a few repair-craft working. But, by jove, we've got nothing that compares with this girl—absolutely nothing.”

So far, indeed, this mother-ship is incomparable. “She can make anything but steel castings,” said one of her officers, “and she can weld one of those when it's brought in broken.” She has her own carpenter shop, metalographic-shop, electric plant, a refriger-

ating outfit and a still that manages 4,100 gallons of water every day.

Primarily, of course, she is just something that floats built around an iron-works, the walls of a ship surrounding two great iron decks, the top one only a huge balcony that circles the lower. Below, a furnace is in blast; men are carrying out a big tub of molten metal wherefrom fly sparks as from a dozen Roman-candles. All about are the forge and smithy, drills and drill-presses, metal saws that bite through iron bars as if they were so much wood, repair-shops for the curing of every sort of sick tool. Between binoculars with a broken lens and a splintered piece of eighteen-inch steam-pipe, there is nothing that can't be here again made usable. Injured radio outfits are put into shape, pumps and valves are made and remade, wheels milled, engines "lined up."

I saw a one-ton casting of brass made here and a similar casting of iron; I saw the very nature of guns changed in a few hours, and once, going out with one of the mother-ship's tugs, I saw a gang of her men place the torpedo-tubes in a destroyer at sea and install a set of depth-charge chutes—all in one day.

Every transport that limps into that harbour carries its troubles to this lady-doctor. When somebody needed sirens and was told that there was none left in France, the mother-ship undertook to make them—and filled the contract. A complicated

job that was brought to her by some French officers, who politely hoped that they might see the thing accomplished within five days, was promised completion within as many hours—and the promise was kept to the minute. Tucked upon her main deck are offices that carry accounts of the entire Naval Force under Admiral Wilson; tucked close by are the butcher-shops and kitchen, and the bakery that produces four hundred loaves a day for the mechanics and crew. But these are only minor matters: the big task in the life of the mother-ship is to keep the fleet shipshape.

“There may be some things we can’t do,” said her commander, “but there’s nothing we won’t try.”

*"We're first to fight," we always said;
Said the Army: "Never fear:
This job's an Army-job, and so
You'll do no fighting here!
You're very well
For a little spell
At a port in time of peace;
But here in France
We lead the dance—
You're First Men to Police!*

CHORUS

*"Cop—
Cop—
Cop—
Cop!*

*(Say, Bill, when do we eat?)
You've fought around the big round world,
But here you walk a beat!"
Armed with a night-stick, bless your soul,
Doing a city street-patrol;
(Gee, will it never stop?)
Tramping from Beersheba to Dan
To get a whack at an Army-man,
(Chop!—
Chop!)
I may have fought in a dozen wars,
But here I'm doing the M. P.'s chores.—
Cop!!*

*"We're first to fight," we kept it up;
Said the Army: "Cut it out!
We're real A-1's,
We tote the guns
And put the Huns
To rout.*

*From black Bordeaux
To Neufchateau
Police until you drop;
The best Marine
Is green—
Sea-green—
He's nothing but a cop!"*

CHORUS

"Cop—", etc.

*And then Friend Fritz took off his coat,
And we heard some one say:
"There's a hurry-call and an S. O. S.
From up Cantigny way!"
And—oh, my hat!—
Right off the bat:
"We're smashed to smithereens;
For God's sake, friend,
Hump up and send
American Marines!"*

CHORUS

*First—
First—
First—
First!
(Say, Bill, now was I right?)
We were the first to volunteer,
And we are the first to fight!
Toting the good old gun again,
Who are the nail-biting fighting-men,
Boiling-point, Fahrenheit?*

*Now that there's more than parades to do,
Who do they yell for, sonny,—who—*

Day—

And Night?

*Pocket your club in your Doughboy-jeans
(I guess you know what that order means!):*

We are the true

Sea-blue

Marines—

We are the First to Fight!

CHAPTER XIII

MARINES ASHORE

HIGH noon of a calm spring day, 1918—but the sun is invisible.

There is not a cloud in the heavens—but you can see scarcely twenty yards ahead of you.

The billows of smoke burn your eyes; they choke you; they strangle.

The noise strikes like a bludgeon. It hammers, blow on blow, against the ear-drums.

It is as if this were a pit in a foundry.

Really, it is all that is left of what was once a village street, and over there, behind those few blackened stones that used to be a cottage, are three men—one dead, one dying and one ready to die.

American troops had held that village. Momentarily, all had fallen back. All but those three. They had driven off an entire company of Germans—at the price of the life of one of the Americans. Then the Germans had returned to the attack—over the bodies of their comrades left there after the first assault. They were driven back again this time—at the price of a fatal wound to one of the two remaining Americans. Now, of a sudden, they charged again around the corner.

The dying man lifted his head:

"Beat it, Tom," he said. "Get away while the going's good."

Tom slowly poured a trickle of water from his canteen through the lips of the dying man.

"I've forgot how to run," said Tom—and he smiled as he said it.

"There's no use your staying here: I'm all in."

"I'm not."

"But you can't whip that whole company."

"No," said Tom; "I guess I can't. But I can keep 'em busy for a while."

He picked up his rifle. He crouched behind the pile of stones. He fired.

As he fired, the wounded man died.

The Germans charged.

Tom fired again and again. Until the onrushing Germans were within ten feet of him, he aimed carefully. Then he fired point-blank.

A moment later, they were upon him, and he was using his rifle as a club.

The returning Americans found him so engaged. He had "kept the enemy busy" until the relief arrived.

As they carried him to a first-aid station near Cantigny, his litter passed the commanding officer, who had already heard Tom's story. The C. O. was an infantry officer, a West Pointer.

"That was brave work," said he to Tom.

"Thank you, sir," said Tom.

"But it was useless," said the officer. "Why did you do it?"

"Oh, I don't know," Tom answered; "just to keep up to the reputation of my corps. You see, I'm a Marine."

Thomas understood his duty. The days when our fathers sang *Captain Jinks* are passed, and passed the days when our grandfathers branded the Marine as a stupid oaf by replying to any unbelievable story with the smiling assertion that it had better be addressed to the Marines. Torcy has made us forget such slurs, and Veully Wood and Cantigny; we know now that the motto of the Marine Corps is: Obey orders and then some.

In 1740, England organized three regiments of American Marines in New York and, while their field officers were created by royal appointment, their company commanders were nominated by the colonies. Thirty-five years later, the Continental Congress declared "that the compact between the crown and Massachusetts Bay" was "dissolved," and within six months of that declaration—that is to say, on November 10th, 1775, or about eight months before the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence—the Marine Corps was organized. In the Revolution, they landed at New Providence, in the Bahamas, capturing the British forts as their part in the first battle of our Navy; they seized the *General Monk* in Delaware Bay; they fought with John Paul Jones. In the Mexican War, they stormed

Chapultepec under Twiggs and Reynolds. They were with Perry in Japan; they reenforced Sumter and Pickens; they occupied Guantanamo and held it against Spanish odds, fought at Santiago and landed at Cavite. In the battle of Tientsin they did their bit, and they marched to Peking for the relief of the American Legation; their march across hostile Samar in 1901 wrote one of the heroic pages in our history, and it was they that were the only American troops engaged in the disarmament of the insurgent Cubans in 1906. "The work recently accomplished by them in Vera Cruz and Hayti," wrote Admiral Dewey in 1915, "has fully justified my belief that no finer military organization exists in the world to-day."

Now, it has been my fortune to see something of their life and to gather some examples of a little of the Marines' fighting in France. The best way to begin any mention of them is by echoing Admiral Dewey's words. I remember well the first conversation that I heard after going among them:

"Sir, I thank you for permission to go ashore."

"Aren't you the cook?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long do you want?"

"Just till six bells, sir."

"Who're you leaving in charge of the galley?"

"Mott, sir."

"Mott? Where's Schultz?"

"On the binnacle-list, sir. Hit the deck yesterday

an' sprained his ankle. But there's only slumgullion to get, sir, an' Mott's all right at that."

"Better go before the mast. If the skipper hasn't any objection, I'll give you shore-leave."

It sounded like the opening of a sea-romance by Joseph Conrad, yet I was on dry land. The only canvas was that of a tent or two among rows of Adrian huts; the sole funnel was the gaunt chimney of an open-air oven; the nearest thing to a mast was a flag-pole.

An enlisted man was asking an officer if he might walk from this cantonment to town, returning at eleven o'clock, and was explaining that, his chief assistant having hurt himself in a fall, the beef-stew for mess would be prepared in the kitchen by a competent substitute. Where to the officer was replying that it would be necessary for the applicant to go to the Captain's office and obtain there an assurance that the petition had the Captain's O. K. In brief, I was in a camp, ashore, of the U. S. Marines.

Kipling was right. That poem of his about the British "Jollies" jumps into your mind the moment you become a guest of their American counterpart and continues to justify itself so long as you remain. Both because he carries his sea-lingo ashore and his shore-rifle afloat, and because he is as much an amphibian in duties as in mind, I can think of the Marine, not as a "special chrysanthemum," but only as "soldier an' sailor, too."

He has done police duty across half the world—

from Porto Rica to the Philippines—when I first saw him, he was policing in France. He has fought in Cuba and the islands of the Pacific, in Mexico and Hayti—everywhere, he has justifiably boasted, he was “The First to Fight”—and now, although a little hurt at not being allowed to be the earliest to pull a trigger among our men in Europe—his had at least the distinction of being the earliest and readiest unit of them that arrived for such a purpose on the eastern shore of the Atlantic.

The first Marine that I saw when I came aboard was one of a squad unloading stone from a railway car for the construction of a pier; around about were similarly employed squads of Engineers and negro contract-labourers from Louisiana. The last Marine I saw on that same day was, with business-like calm, subduing five tall men by means of one short club.

Of him, when he had refused my proffered help with quiet scorn and secured his prisoners by his own unaided efforts, I asked a question.

“Why don’t the infantry care for us?” he snapped back. He nodded at his five charges. “*That’s* why! O’ course they say we go out of our way to beat ’em up, but o’ course it ain’t true. Our job’s to keep things quiet, Rainbow Division er no Rainbow Division, an’ we can do it best by not seein’ fellows unless they want to be seen.”

“Still,” I urged, “you don’t dislike it—this sort of thing?”

He grinned broadly.

“‘First to fight!’” he chuckled.

To the other Marine just mentioned—to the member of the stone-hauling squad—I put, I recall, another query:

“What do you think of Pershing?”

“Well,” he answered, “Pershing don’t seem to think much of *us*.”

That man was disappointed because his corps had to cart stone when it wanted to fight. He might have argued that General Pershing thought a good deal of the Marines because he trusted so much to their performance.

For the Marines were everywhere. They were the first Americans you saw when you landed: they were maintaining order at our ports of entry. All the way across the country and through the American Camp, it is a Marine that you note at every station—a Marine that comes up to you with blank-book and poised pencil with the demand, firm but polite: “Let me make a note of your movement-orders, sir.” In Paris, as in every French town and village where there are United States troops, there are also the Marines, on patrol-duty by night and traffic-control by day, their blue sea-service uniforms changed for land uniforms of khaki and around their left arms the red brassard bearing the black initials “M. P.”

“What are those fellows, sir?” a Gordon Highlander once asked me on the Rue de Rivoli.

"Marines," I told him. "The letters stand for 'Military Police.'"

"Oh," he said, "I heard you had some of your Congressmen over here, an' I was awonderin' were these them, an' if the letters meant 'Member o' Parlymint.'"

Finally, at the seaside cities, the Marines were both "shore-cops" and stevedores.—"But only for a little while," they one and all assured the questioner, even the officers: "The Brass Hats are sure to let us fight soon."

"Now 'is work begins by Gawd knows when,
and 'is work is never through;
'E isn't one o' the reg'lar Line,
nor 'e isn't one of the crew.
'E's a kind of a giddy horumfrodite—
soldier an' sailor too!"

So many of our camps in France, save in the district of the big American Camp proper, are on the grounds of old châteaux that, when I first went there, I found nothing that was any longer strange in the presence of a full-blown Marines' cantonment among what had once been the vast formal gardens of an old Girondist family. The ancient house still stands untouched, though the Stars and Stripes fly from a turret beside the Tricolore; in the grounds nearest it, I noted, among the inevitable tokens of disuse, only one sign of decay—the box-seat of a summer-house had burst open and displayed a cro-

quet-set, stored there, most likely, since the fatal August of '14—yet down the hill swarm the rows of Adrian huts that have grown into a city between last spring and now. The Girondist owners have left their estate, and along the paths where they and their fathers strolled now hurry two types of a new order: German prisoners, conducted by French guards, often only half their size, to their work of ditch-digging; and American Marines swinging along to the multitudinous duties that make their service unique.

If, however, you must have soldiers of any sort on your front lawn or in your back yard, I commend the "Jollies." They have two salient characteristics: their ability to make something out of nothing and to do it quickly, results in their establishing themselves at once and with a minimum of damage to surroundings; and, since they bring ashore with them the sea tradition of cleanliness and order, they are, when not the first to fight, the First to Clean.

I recall a French seaport at which none of our men had ever landed before a certain ship began to disgorge an equal number of soldiers and Marines: the latter were under canvas before the former had left the dock; the Marines had even collected kindling from ash-heaps and had their cookstoves going. One night, I saw a newly-arrived company of them march into camp; when I visited their quarters at 6 A. M., you would have supposed that they had been born and bred there.

"All our own work but the stone-foundations for the ovens," a sergeant assured me, "an' we'd have done that, only these French Johnnies insisted that it was a job for the Boche prisoners."

He was a company-clerk, that sergeant, and in the tiny space allowed him there was not room for a bed and an opened army-desk at one and the same time. All the first night he stayed awake constructing a bunk that folds upward on the principle of the upper-berth in a Pullman car.

Sanitation the Marines have learned through hard necessity, through duty in tropic lands where, until their arrival, the natives casually threw their slops out of the windows. Now every member of the corps has its rules at his fingers' ends; their practise speedily becomes the second nature of the rawest recruit, is a matter of corps pride. The clothes-lines are full each morning; whenever there is sunlight, the Marines "break out the bunks," which is to say that they drag their beds and bedclothes into the open for an airing.

"They think for 'emselves an' they steal for 'emselves, an' they never ask what's to do,
But they're camped an' fed an' they're up an' fed
before our bugles blew.
No! they ain't no limpin' procrastitutes—soldier an'
sailor too."

What sort of men are they? They will answer that interrogation with a ready brevity: "The

best," they will say—and, after living among them, I am not sure that they are altogether wrong. But they are also all sorts. Edwin Denby, formerly American Minister to China, is a Marine. So are Ernest Glendenning, the actor; Warren Straton, an Oxford Rhodes scholar; "Dots" Miller, once captain and second baseman of the St. Louis National League Baseball-team; William J. McCoy, nephew of that Major-General Barnett who is Commandant of the Marines at Washington; Frederick W. Maurer, the arctic explorer; Eddie Mahan, once a Harvard football star, and Peter Garlow, perhaps the best athlete ever graduated from the Carlisle Indian School.

By one of the odd freaks of their anomalous law of organization, their surgeons and chaplains are sailors, whereas all the rest of the corps is, in each individual case, one-half land and one-half sea. Perhaps because distance makes for romance, the majority of our Marines come, it appears, from the plains; there is the band of a state agricultural college in the Mississippi Valley that enlisted as a unit, and across the way is housed a company seventy members of which joined in a body from the university of one of our central northwestern commonwealths. Most of them never saw the ocean before they volunteered for service.

"You know," one of these told me, "when we raw fellows got on the transport, we found they'd remembered only the sailor side of us and given us hammocks to sleep in—just hammocks, only half



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Marines at the front responding to gas alarm—France

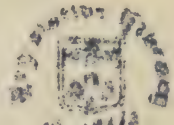


U. S. marines washing up—somewhere in France

too short for a grown man and two-thirds too narrow. We'd never been to sea before; it was all we could do to climb into the things, and more than we could do to stay there when the ship began to act up. So we just rolled 'em up for pillows an' slept on the floor."

Don't, however, suppose that the majority of Marines are green men. Though by far the larger part volunteered, by far the larger part volunteered long ago. Some day somebody will write a romance of the Marines, and when he does, he need not draw on his imagination: he need only collect the data—when their stolid modesty will vouchsafe it—from such veterans as we have here, who began as those boys from Kansas and Minnesota are beginning now. He need but tell the story of that sergeant of thirty, who looks twenty-five and enlisted at sixteen; of how he ran away to sea; of that cloudless day when he rowed under fire across the unprotected strip of water to patrol the streets of Vera Cruz, and of the succeeding night, when he, and three other men, held a freight car loaded with explosives, against an armed Mexican mob. He need only gain the confidence of this lad from Pittsburgh to learn of hand-to-hand fights that began against outnumbering Mexican regulars, drawn from their cover on roofs and from behind chimneys, and ended in repelling the rear-attacks of the Mexican police.

"You see that grizzled old fellow over there?" a Captain asked me.



He himself was young enough to have been the "old fellow's" son, but the old fellow was still tough enough to have been the Captain's twin brother.

"Well, he's had a lot of it—Philippines, Boxer Rebellion, Vera Cruz and Hayti. You know, in the Marines, when we can't think of the generic name for anything, we call it a 'gadget' or a 'gilguy.' Now, this man has won a Congressional Medal and has another coming. When we sighted the French coast, I was standing, where he couldn't see me, just behind him; and I heard him say, while he looked over things in general:

"'I got one o' them gadgets now an' one on its way. I wonder if I'll get another over here.'"

But it is hard to make the Marine talk. Whether he retains the credulity with which sea tradition credits him, I don't know, but I do know that his past sea-equipment does not include the love of improbable yarn-spinning that land-legends credit to the sailor. Once I rode to town in the side-car of a motorcycle; the man that drove me—in the Marines' language he was thus the "coxswain of a steam-cycle"—had not a word to say for himself, and yet he was the man of the medals.

Do you remember a certain untoward incident of the Spanish-American War—the occasion when the U. S. Ship *Dolphin* mistakenly shelled the American trenches? There were Marines in those trenches. They were defenseless under that fire; they had not even semaphore-flags with which to

communicate to their comrades afloat. One young Marine took a pair of bayonets and two handkerchiefs, constructed signal-flags of them, jumped out of the trenches and, standing there with death raining about him, snapped out "C. F.—C. F.—C. F.," that is, "Cease Firing," over and over again, until the *Dolphin's* gunners realized their mistake.

That was how he got his first Congressional Medal of Honor. When our Marines went into action in France, this man volunteered to take a heavily-laden convoy of ammunition-wagons along a road that was being scoured by German shells and machine-guns. Somebody had to do it in order to relieve a desperate situation; Sergeant-Major Quick did it—and received his other gadget, our new Distinguished Service Cross.

"How do you get along with the negro companies?" I asked my Captain.

As I spoke, a negro was passing. Like some of his fellows, he wore, not the service khaki, but the older sort of uniform—blue with yellow facings.

"All right now," said the Captain, "but there was some feeling at first between the drafted negroes and those who had preceded them in service. The drafted ones were ordered to wear the 'blue-and-yellow, and felt it was an invidious distinction. The commanding officer locked 'em all up together. Then he would mysteriously remove, under guard, a squad at a time. He'd take the removed squad aside, man by man, and 'reason' with them; when one of 'em

weakened, he'd get him into blue-and-yellow quick and march him past the guard-house windows. The negroes inside would see that this fellow had done what was required of him and was free, whereas their imaginations invented all sorts of terrors as to the fate of the rest of the squad. Inside of three days, the whole lot had overcome their prejudices against the yellow-and-blue. They're all useful men now—and, besides, our dogs like 'em."

That is another important branch of the Marine Corps—its dogs. Every regiment has one or two. This regiment has three, and a couple of them lay beside me one afternoon: Poilu and Cognac, little Gallic beasts acquired on this side of the water. Oniwaminthe, I regret to say, wasn't there.

"Oniwaminthe?" I remember repeating, when first an old private named him to me.

"Yes, sir, that's it. We called him after the place in Hayti where we picked him up. Spell it? We don't spell it—don't ever have to. If *you* want to spell it, you'll have to look it up on a map."

There was no map of the Carribbean in that camp of France, so I shall stick to the phonetic spelling—phonetic, that is, in accord with the Marine's pronunciation.

"He came into our lines in Hayti," began my informant, "on the day—"

"What kind of dog is he?" I interrupted.

"What kind? No kind. Just dog."

"A mongrel?"

"Not much!"

"Then what kind?"

"The white kind. A Haytian dog. Well, he came into our lines the day America went into this European war. The United States had a battle that day in Hayti. Didn't know that, did you, sir? It was all buried, back home, in the big news from Washington. Still, it's a fact all right. We had a battle that would have been all over the front pages of newspapers five years ago; an', in the middle of it, this white dog came trotting into our lines, with bullets dropping all around him, as calm as if he was just paying a New Year's call. So we liked him right off. You see, he as much as said: 'White hair—white flag—honorable capitulation.' We adopted him an' named him Oniwaminthe.

"He was a sea-dog from the very first. Why, comin' across the Bay o' Biscay, I was in the crow's nest one day about twilight, an' there was a heavy groundswell on. The old deck was goin' up on one side an' down on the other. I watched a company of Marines drillin' just below me. They were in company-front an' were all veterans, but every time the boat'd roll, the whole line o' men'd slide forward or backward. All but Oniwaminthe. He'd took up his position as a sort o' file-closer, in the rear, an' that dog never gave an inch."

"Where is he now?" I asked.

"Well, sir, I don't like to say anything against him, an' I know he'll turn up again, now, in a day

or two; but the fact is, France has been too much for Oniwaminthe. It's gone to his head. Since we've been ashore, he's formed the habit of breaking camp."

"You mean he runs away?"

"Well, not exactly that; but he goes to town without leave, an' that ain't regular. Our men don't find so much temptation that way, because the language is still strange to them, though they're beginning to pick it up; but, you see, Oniwaminthe is a born what-do-you-call-it—Lothario—an', bein' Haytian, of course he speaks the same dog-French these French dogs do. He comes back lookin' like an Australian after his first night in London—but he does come back."

A banjo tinkled from a near-by hut; in the hut in which we were talking there still hung decorations that had been put up for Easter.

"We played baseball on Easter—two games," said my friend, "an' the whole city came out to them. The sport was a new one, an' it staggered 'em, but not so much as the cheer-leaders. We had real cheer-leaders; they'd stand out in front and beat time with their whole bodies, an' pretty soon the French was so busy watchin' them that they couldn't look at the diamond. What d'you think? They'd never seen a cheer-leader before! It's wilder than anything the scuttle-butt gossips could make up."

There it was again—this time the "scuttle-butt"! Ships are full of rumor, and rumors, at sea, orig-

inate in talk exchanged around the scuttle-butt, or drinking-barrel, so that all wild stories are branded as "scuttle-butt yarns." Nothing, however, that ever sprang from the scuttle-butt could be stranger than the terms in which it is conveyed. The Marine, as I've said, carries all his sea terms ashore, and his vocabulary is almost entirely nautical.

When he stops what he has been doing, he "be-lays" it; when you tell him to prepare to do something else, you order him to "stand by" for it, and when he is called before his commanding officer, he is brought "up before the mast." Though he falls on a country road out of sight of the sea, he "hits the deck;" when he is slightly ill, he goes "on the binnacle-list," and when he must at last enter hospital, even if a motor-ambulance carries him to a building at a street-corner, it carries him to the "sick bay." If he knocks a companion down through exuberance of good spirits, he goes to "the brig" for a day or two. He gets a stripe for every enlistment, and the stripes are "hashmarks;" he keeps himself "shipshape" as much ashore as afloat; the kitchen is the "galley" wherever it may be, and a captain is always a "skipper."

On ship, at leisure hours in the evening, the Marines light a lamp in their quarters and smoke; they call it "lighting the smoking-lamp," and in camp their dismissal to leisure remains "lighting the smoking-lamp," even when there is no lamp about and the tobacco is exhausted. Their Central and South

American service has contributed "pronto" for "quickly," has twisted *mañana* into "slowly," and they now use "hombre" for "prisoner." What new terms they will learn from their work in France, Heaven only knows.

It is all sorts of work, in all sorts of weather, at every hour of the clock. Here Marines were hauling stone with Engineers and contract-labourers. Throughout the American Zone in France, they were the policemen that never sleep. Now the day has come when they are holding their bit of the line against the Boche. Boys from western farms and men from Manila and Vera Cruz, they are pure grain that is being poured into every one of a dozen of the horrible hoppers of war.

"An' after I met 'im all over the world, a-doin' all kinds of things,
Like landin' 'isself with a Gatlin' gun to talk to them 'eathen kings
There isn't a job on the top o' the earth the beggar don't know, nor do—
'E's a sort of a bloomin' cosmopolouse—soldier an' sailor too."

What the American Marine made of his work when that work at last brought him into the fighting-line in France, the world already knows. His medical-corps set up a first-aid station under the very noses of the enemy machine-guns at Château-Thierry; one of his corporals, single-handed, fought

his way through a wood full of Germans, while bearing on his back his wounded lieutenant. In one capacity or another, it was the American Marine that first made the Teutons realize America as a considerable factor in the land-fighting of the world war. And the Teutons straightway named our Marines *Teufel-Hunden*.

"We sure did give those Heinies something to worry about," was the way that a wounded, but grinning, member of the corps expressed it from his cot in a Paris hospital.

Such men are the efficiently spectacular expression of the work of our Naval Forces in France.

*Nurse, I'm feelin' dreadful sick—
(Hold my hand?)*

*Take my pulse; it's awful quick—
(Understand?)*

*Don't know what I'd ever do,
Lyin' here, if 'tweren't for you:
This here sick bay's comfy to
Beat the band!*

*Nurse, I need some buckin' up:
Pat my head!*

*That's not slum? Then tilt the cup—
Time I fed.*

*I don't like to loaf here, Miss,
But—home never was like this!
(Kind o' need a mother's kiss,
Goin' to bed!)*

*Every time you start away,
I get worse;*

*Wisht your duties let you stay—
Fetch the hearse!*

*If you "can't remain and shirk"
I'll (I'm what, you say? A Turk?)
Die—or else go back to work,
Nurse!*

CHAPTER XIV

BASE HOSPITAL

ON the fifth of October, 1917, there landed in France a volunteer medical unit largely recruited by the Pennsylvania Hospital, of Philadelphia. They were held in an Army cantonment at the place of landing until the sixteenth. On that day they had packed their entire impedimenta. Within twenty-four hours they had arrived at the Base-port and there set up and had in working order a full-fledged Navy Hospital.

Of course such a feat was admirable; so was much of the work with which the same unit followed it; but it is not because of this that I mention these things. They are no more remarkable than many others performed by similar units; they are merely typical. It is the fact that they are typical which makes them worthy of at least a hasty record.

This Pennsylvania unit was among the first ten thousand men of the American Naval Forces to reach France, and its surgeons and physicians were all practitioners of standing in their professions. To those professions they had devoted their entire lives; they had given up, generally, lucrative practises to offer their services to their country—those who had not done so had suffered even more, because they

were beginners that, returned, would have painfully to rebegin building-up their civilian clientele—and not the least laudable quality that I observed among them was that which both kept them silent regarding what they had put aside and lent them enthusiasm in their duties abroad. Less than a month after their arrival, they were even thoroughly navalized; their patients, of course, were only naval men, and the very language of those doctors had become the language of the sea; the attendants were the “crew,” a bed set up was a bed “broken out,” and a ward, if you please, was a “deck.”

I may not say that they had an easy time of it. The building in which they were finally housed had of old been a Carmelite Nunnery, but had since seen a very different sort of service. Of ancient construction, it was surrounded, when the Americans came there, by a dry moat in which odd cows and casual pigs were feeding, and this was but a symbol of the conditions obtaining within the house itself. It is true that certain tokens of its ancient religious character still endured there, yet even these were not always advantageous to its new intent: in some of the cubbyholes that had to be converted into wards there still hung boards emblazoned with pious admonitions, doubtless edifying to the nuns that used to sleep beneath them, but scarcely calculated to cheer the patients now ensconced—one read:

“Be warned; you do not know what moment may be your last.”

Many of the rooms had been cells, nearly all were what the incoming doctors described as "chopped up"; yet the present owners not only refused permission for the felling of a single tree in the yard to make space for some necessary addition—they would not allow the knocking down of a single partition or hear of the breaking of a hole in the roof to permit the passage of a stove-pipe.

Nevertheless, ingenuity and persuasion combined toward accomplishment. By making the best of what existed and by effecting no change that was not mandatory for the well-being of their sick, the physicians and surgeons achieved a genuine hospital. This week, the sailor that lay beneath the niche in the wall holding a figure of the Blessed Virgin might be a Roman Catholic; his week-hence successor might be an atheist. The chapel, its altar reverently covered and a phonograph established beside the font, was full of cots on which lay men of every one of that variety of creeds in which America rejoices; outside, a group of tents held thirty sick men each.

In the same manner, the staff overcame difficulties of home birth. When, for instance, it was found that the imported supplies did not include a centrifuge, a special messenger was dispatched, across France, to buy one; it took two days to discover a centrifuge in Paris, but the job was done. While a requisition sent in on December 31st was waiting until April 15th to be filled by the responsible department in America, the American Red Cross

headquarters in Paris were applied to and, without charge, filled the bill. Some remaining vestiges of red tape in the Navy require that supplies be bought only from firms nominated by the Navy Department, and it is useless to argue that, when a firm so nominated may be located in Chicago, time could be saved and articles of equal worth procured by placing the order with a reputable Brooklyn concern; but the inventiveness of these doctors at our French Base-port managed somehow to find a way around such delays and inconveniences.

I have just referred to the Red Cross. Here, as elsewhere in the foreign operations of both our Navy and Army, the Red Cross has been invaluable. In the American Camp, a Major-General told me that he, for his part, did not know what he would have done without that organization.

“When we had to move our division at a moment’s notice,” he said, “we didn’t have trucks sufficient for the work; we applied to the Red Cross, and it supplied the necessary trucks within a few hours. At our new quarters, it was the Red Cross that lent us the carts needed for hauling stone in the repair of the roads. Once, reviewing my men, I found that the home bureau responsible had fallen down so badly in the matter of socks that, in midwinter, none of my men had two pairs of socks, and that the pair the average man possessed wasn’t fit to be worn. Again I appealed to the Red Cross. It didn’t even wait for the war-delayed railroad trains; it sent

down a lot of socks from Paris by a caravan of motor-cars, and, before a day and a half had passed, my men were fully supplied."

It was an Army surgeon that first told me there was not a splint and not a bandage in his vast Base-hospital that had been supplied by the Army people in Washington, all his splints and bandages having come from the Red Cross. What he said, however, was later paralleled by what was told me at the Naval institution of which I am now writing.

"Oh, we had all sorts of troubles," one of its doctors cheerfully informed me. "We had an awful time enlarging the galley"—he meant the kitchen—"but now, you see, we have one that cooks 1,500 meals a day, including those for the officers and crew—and the officers eat just what the crew does. On the deck above we have an eighteen by twelve hall bedroom that we've turned into a diet-kitchen, and there, over three little gas stoves, with a total of eight burners, two nurses cook a hundred and eighty trays daily, and there are not any more than a group of ten of those trays that duplicates another group."

Cases? This hospital treats all sorts. Close by it is a cemetery in which are buried fighters—French, Algerian, Cochin-Chinese, Portuguese, English and Russian, but there are few graves of Americans among them; from that beginning of October 17th up to the first of last May, that hospital had lost almost no patients at all.

Perhaps there is no better way to tell the story

than to give it in the words of one of the doctors. What I quote is from a personal diary.

"Oct. 5—Landed. C. O. (i. e., Commanding Officer) at once received orders to the effect that our unit should be disembarked and moved to a cantonment about three miles from the town. . . .

"Oct. 8—We broke out our cargo all day Sunday and until noon yesterday. It was loaded on Army trucks almost as soon as it reached the docks and carried to a storehouse assigned us, excepting that our mess-gear, mattresses, blankets, tools, lanterns, etc.—enough to make us self-supporting—were trucked out to camp, in accord with plans devised by the C. O.; and also in accord with those plans, working parties went ahead to have the kitchen ready by noon to-day. Thanks to such provision, our troubles, apart from the mud, rain and bitter cold, consisted solely in meeting the overbearing attitude of the Army, for this is an Army camp and full of infantry, engineers and Army hospital units and ambulance men.

"Our quarters are in a long, low building made of shingled boards of sycamore. It is about 150 feet long and 30 wide, with a board floor and a peaked roof, from twelve to fifteen feet high, reinforced by tar-paper. Down each side of a center aisle eighteen inches wide run two rows of cots that stand about a foot apart. The men's quarters are the same as ours, except that they have only a dirt floor, which is both dusty and damp. We broke out our own

cots and blankets and got as comfortable as we could, but as, by a flickering lamp I write this in bed, with my mattress slipped inside my rubber poncho above one blanket, with two blankets over me, my breath hangs in a cloud above the paper, my fingers are numb and I am thankful for my woollen pajamas.

"*Oct. 9*—We are under Army rations, and the chow is not nearly so good as Navy chow. We get the same that our men do; it figures about forty cents a day, paid by the government. We won't start officers' mess until we are more permanently located.

"Our wash-house is about thirty yards from our quarters, and the water is certainly cold. As for the latrines, they are a hundred yards distant, very sanitary with galvanized containers about as big as a barrel, emptied each day by German prisoners under French Army direction.

"A great many women hang about the outskirts of the camp, and there are more of the same sort in town. Numbers arrived from Paris, have already worked havoc. Forty per cent. of the patients in the Army hospital are some of the toll paid for this, and that figure includes only bed-cases, taking no account of the ambulatory types. We have cautioned our own men and not minced words.

"*Oct. 11*—Progress in short time: there must be 1,000 ambulances here, 5,000 motor-trucks, 10,000 touring-cars and many motorcycles, field

motor-kitchens, etc. I can now appreciate a remark by a Navy officer, who has been all around the world in an executive capacity :

“ ‘You may knock the old U. S. A. as much as you please, but, take it from me, she is the only country that bores with a big augur from the start : all the others start with gimlets.’

“C. O. received definite orders that we are to go to the American Naval Base on this coast and establish a hospital there. The C. O. has gone ahead, and we expect to set out in five or six days. This certainly meets our approval, for we are out of luck here. For one thing, this weather is bad for our clothes. Amongst all this khaki our ‘blues’ make us look like an opera troupe, and it seems a shame to ruin \$45 suits in a week of this mud and rain. In two days we hope to have the Marine Q. M. break out some petty-officers’ uniforms, which we are going to have altered to pass as those of officers. . . .

“*Oct. 15*—I was sent in to the Bureau of Transportation to get our cars registered and given license numbers—we have a 1913 rebuilt Locomobile in fair shape and a new white Stanley Steamer ambulance. All cars over here must be painted a uniform color, a sort of cream-gray, and carry a U. S. number. Our ambulance now has U. S., and a number painted in red letters on both sides of the hood and at the top of the rear, and our touring-car has U. S. and another number painted on both rear door-panels and on back.

"They tried to insist on our laying the cars up for three days to paint them the O. D. Army color, but I explained that we were, and expected to remain, a strictly Navy organization; that we would have the Navy color put on when we arrived at our final destination, but that we couldn't tie up our cars now for three days.

"This desire of certain Army officers to absorb and assume control over all forces is a constant source of annoyance. I find that going direct to the C. O. and using a little tact, and not dealing with lower grade officers, is the only way to accomplish anything, so I try to see no one less than a major. Also, when you solicit a favor, it is a great help if you can *offer* a quid pro quo, even if you *can not* carry it out.

"I went to Q. M. B.— when we found we needed Marine service-uniforms to save our blues. He said he couldn't issue them. But I found he was very envious of our oil stoves. Result: yesterday he sent for me and said he could break out enough for our six officers and six chief petty officers (c. p. o. s.). He got the stoves, and we will be outfitted to-day. Captain S——, officer in charge of transportation, having said that he hasn't tasted a sweet potato for a year, I hope that the mess of sweet potatoes I'm sending him may materially facilitate our transportation arrangements.

"Oct. 16—Got a permit to break out a pair of hip-boots, which I got for \$2.10. Every one hot-footed into town to get similar boots for themselves. We

broke out three oil stoves yesterday and are much more comfortable, using kerosene salvaged from the dock several days ago. In the afternoon, for two hours, we painted up all the trunks with names of officers using stencil of the U. S. Naval Base.

"At the Base-Port, Oct. 18—Here we are, our officers quartered temporarily at the Hotel M——. We had reveille yesterday at 4:45, chow at five, broke camp at five-thirty and began loading our trucks in the midst of a cold driving rain that had soaked us through in a couple of hours. We had seven truck-loads of camp equipment, which had to be repacked in two baggage cars—about ten tons in all—180 seabags, 110 mattresses and bed rolls, 110 cots, fifteen trunks, twenty bags, twenty boxes, our three galley-ranges, the paymaster's safe (which alone weighs 1,200 pounds) and ourselves, nine officers and ninety-four men. We got loaded with about twenty minutes to spare.

"We occupied three third-class coaches for the men and one first-class for the officers, two baggage cars and twelve freight cars. Our trip was tiresomely slow: twelve hours for 180 miles. We had chow under difficulties from our own rations, which had to be passed from car window to car window, as the cars were old-fashioned and had no corridors. At Q——, we telegraphed ahead for some hot coffee for all hands, and we in our compartment got some *potage* and an omelet. We reached here at 10:15, or rather were plunged out at a siding about three-

quarters of a mile away. Having unloaded the sleeping and mess gear, and having set up a working substitute for a hospital, our men went to Doctor G——'s American Hospital and we officers to the Hotel M——. It is reputed one of the two best hotels in the city, but does not live up to our ideas of modernity: the rooms have running water (no baths) and good beds and clean sheets, but there were inconveniences not to be overlooked. I got to bed at twelve in my underclothes and slept like a log. It seemed queer to be between sheets again.

*"Oct. 19—*Went early to see the buildings that we are thinking of turning into a part of our permanent hospital. The prospect not encouraging.

*"Oct. 25—*We have been here just a week, but have made little progress, because we can not make the dear old Mother Superior of the Convent agree to vacate, and as yet we lack the authority to put her out. We have told her that it is très dèplorable that our government should send us to take care of French blessés as well as our own, and yet that the French should refuse to give us suitable quarters. She says:

"If you put us out, I and my children will have no home.'

"But we must get her out or we shall have no hospital!

*"Oct. 28—*Hospital situation in statu quo, and we are fearful lest the delay in completely acquiring the convent means checkmate. Yet we go along and

plan just the same, and have a working institution at the place where we settled on arrival. We yesterday went through the Villa Maria, a fifteen-room house which we thought might do for nurses' quarters—owned by a countess. Yesterday the price was 250 francs a month: to-day, 400! No gas, electricity or baths, to install which will cost four or five hundred dollars.

"During the last three days, I have been looking for apartments for myself and roommates—a difficult job—scarce and on the whole poor, dirty, unsanitary, and practically none has bath.

"Oct. 29—A full and harrowing day. I got up at 6 A. M., because we had a message last night that our nurses would arrive at nine, and they had to break out beds, chairs, linen, etc., and install them in the Villa Maria. By 8:30, we had forty beds broken out, as well as mattresses, pillows, sheets and china, the house swept down and hot coffee and sandwiches ready.

"I, however, never got there, although I had pushed up my 'sick-call' to 7 A. M., and was just finished at 8:15 when a 'phone-call ordered me to send an ambulance to the dock to bring in one dead man, five badly wounded and three mental cases. I was detailed down with R—— to meet them.

"When they arrived, we learned that they were survivors—some of them having been on the *Antilles* when she was torpedoed a week ago and having then been sent homeward by the *Finland*, which

had just met a similar fate. There was one compound fracture of the leg, some broken arms and ribs, an amputation of fingers, and one poor chap, a Spaniard, who had been injured when lowered by a rope, the knot in the noose of which had so pressed his left side as to rupture him in a frightful manner. He died a few hours after we got him to bed.

"This first ambulance load was only one of three that poured in during the next two hours—our bed capacity was already overtaxed. Never have I had a greater respect for a well-balanced nervous-system than in comparing the terror-stricken, almost gibbering, group with those who could be brave in their suffering and even laugh at their misfortune. . . .

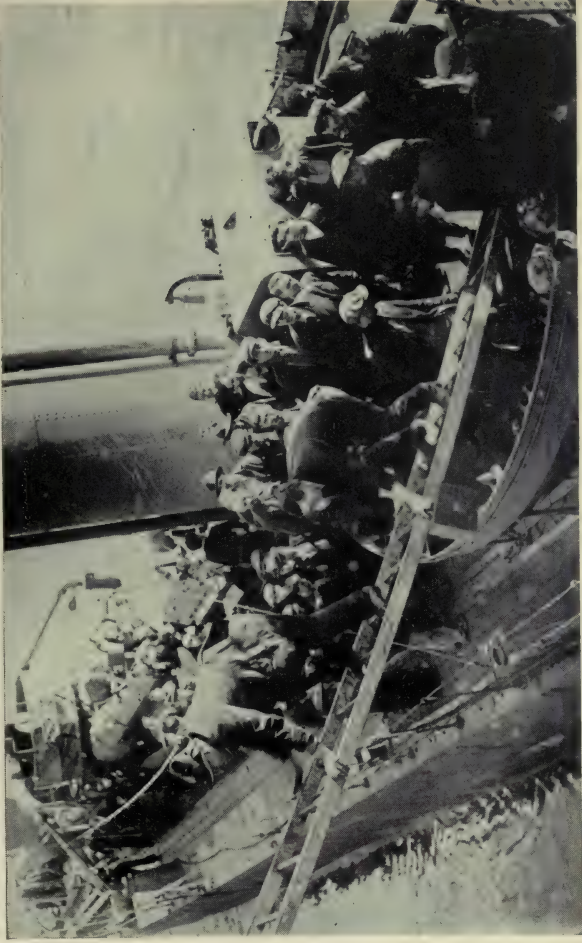
"*Nov. 1*—There are all extremes in the Navy. Yesterday, we operated on a former lieutenant who began as a common seaman in the merchant-service. This morning, R—— took out the appendix of a common seaman whose people are multi-millionaires back home. . . .

"*Nov. 3*—I have been O. D. (officer of the day) and slept at the hospital; had a wretched night with my bronchitis. About midnight, three of our venereal patients, who had stolen liberty, came in and woke the whole ward with their rowing, until I interfered with hypos of a fifth of a grain of morphine for each, which soon had them so sick they couldn't move. We threw them in the 'head' until, two hours later, I had them carried to bed as limp as dead men. . . .

"Nov. 7—Call came in to have our three ambulances stand by and be at the dock at 9 P. M. to meet survivors from the *Alcedo*, which was torpedoed at 1:45 A. M. November 5th—that they were bringing in forty-two out of a crew of ninety-two. The *Alcedo* was once owned by Childs Drexel of Philadelphia, and is now commanded by Lieutenant-Commander C—. We got out ambulances at the wharf, and, taking our emergency kits, three of us went aboard the S. P. 20 and started out to meet the French destroyer that was to bring the survivors. Very exciting going out the darkened harbour as far as the submarine-net, where we lay-to for a half-hour. Then we were signalled to return, and almost immediately the tiny destroyer came in and docked.

"We took off the nine men in the worst shape and sent to an armed yacht about thirty-one who were able to walk and for whom we had no room. We gave them all a swig of whiskey before we left. I helped off one man with a terrible gash starting from just above and to the left of his left eye and extending down to his cheek. His face was caked with blood, and he was in bad shape. I put my overcoat on him and got him up to my ambulance. He turned out to be Frazier Harrison, whom I knew in Philadelphia.

"At the hospital, we had everything in readiness, twelve nurses as an extra detail. Every one got morphine and atropine to ease the shock, a hot alcohol



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Rescuing survivors of a torpedoed ship



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Secretary Daniels at his desk

rub, hot blankets and bottles. I sewed up Harrison's wound and sprayed it with dichlorainet, and thus far he has escaped an infection. He will always bear a scar. Among the lot was Drexel Paul, who wasn't even hurt, but suffered from exposure. A few broken bones, sprained joints, contusions, etc., made up the rest of the cases.

"It seems that at 11:45, they were bringing up the rear of a convoy on a moonlight night when they saw the wake of a torpedo about two hundred yards away coming directly toward them, and Paul, who was on duty, sounded General Quarters and swung the boat hard around so that she was struck on the port side just abaft the bridge, which probably influenced the casualty list, for had she been struck twenty feet farther after, it would have exploded her ammunition and there would have been only splinters left.

"Harrison was in his bunk and was blown up on deck—at least, he doesn't remember getting out of his bunk!—and was found unconscious and thrown on to a raft by a seaman named Quinn to whom he owes his life. They got some boats cut free, not launched, and after being in the water two hours, they had the boats sufficiently baled out to start 'home,'—home being they knew not where.

"This crowd of forty-two came in one whale-boat and two dories. Captain C—— set a course by the stars and the flash of a lighthouse below the horizon, and they rowed about forty miles in the open sea,

through fortunately smooth water. About 3 P. M. the next day, two French aeroplanes sighted them and went back and notified the destroyer, which picked them up at 5 P. M. some fifty miles from here.

"We received word that some additional survivors were coming in by the 9:40 train, and we had our ambulances waiting, but only two of them received hospital attention. They were an odd-looking lot of men in their peasants' frocks, caps and wooden shoes, loaned to them by French peasants at the spot where they landed. This leaves the casualty-list at 25, which is remarkably low in the circumstances.

"*Nov. 11*—We have finally landed our real hospital—not the convent we've been using, but another—or, rather, a former one. It is about a mile and a half from the harbour and two miles from my quarters. It is a big, rambling, much cut-up building, in which we can get four hundred, perhaps five hundred, beds for patients. Years ago it was a Carmelite nunnery; during the early part of the war, it was a French hospital; since then it has served strange purposes.

"We made the transfer yesterday. To clean the three years' accumulation of dirt, fifty men and thirty nurses went to work with mops and pails of water. During the night, forty tons of equipment, including 300 beds and the 200 field-cots for our enlisted men, were put in. Early in the morning, our galley ranges served breakfast-chow at the old stand, were then broken down, carted and set up in this

new place a mile away and were at work by 5 P. M. The whole job was accomplished in twelve hours by our own force alone, using two ambulances, a motor-truck, two horse trucks and a touring-car. We have now to build a few temporary and one or two permanent buildings, run in gas and electricity, do some painting, arrange for heat, adjust sanitation (which, at present, is indescribable) and remodel certain rooms.

*“Nov. 14—*To our intense disgust, we were to-day ordered to transfer half our patients to our new hospital, although we are by no means ready for them. But it went through, and the reason became apparent—to make room for approximately one hundred sick to be taken off the transports that have just safely arrived here.

“ . . . I assisted R— in three operations, an appendix and two hernias, and to-day I had sick-call and rounds at the old hospital, which took all A. M. This afternoon, I was ordered to the dock with our three ambulances to take off and sort out patients from the transports—thirty-seven cases of measles and one meningitis I took to the French hospital—which this morning had 1,269 patients; five pneumonia and a dozen mumps to our own place, and the surgical and social cases to G—’s. I must go to the French hospital twice a day to look after the well-being of our thirty-eight cases there, in addition to my daily sick-call at our place and O. D. duty once a week at G—’s.

Nov. 22—Been sick abed for four days. Lay it not to novelty or degree of the work here, but to this beastly climate, whereof the damp vapors creep stealthily beneath one's skin. Then, too, by some miscalculation, our C. O. gets his orders to one man a little confused, so that, instead of twenty-four hours straight duty every third day, which isn't so bad, you may get elected for seventy-two hours straight duty, and no liberty—and that was me!

“The day after getting those first thirty-eight cases into the French hospital, I picked up four additional cases of measles at one of the French barracks, which had broken out during the night among the two hundred American darky stevedores there. I got them into their beds safely. Made the rounds of the rest and found them so homesick and down at the mouth! And I don't wonder: twenty-four hours after reaching the French coast, they find themselves in a French contagious-hospital, unable to speak or understand a word of the language, their clothes, equipment, mess-gear, and toilet-articles taken from them. These are to be disinfected and returned on their discharge, but they do not know that, and these and numerous other details have to be explained to them. Some are doubtful cases, but all have to suffer in a threatened epidemic like this.

“I encouraged them to put the best face they could on the matter, that I would see they got a square deal, would make note of any legitimate complaints, etc. I was besieged to send cables, buy them neces-

sary toilet-articles, all of which I did in my liberty time; and at lunch that day, I got Chaplain Stephenson and the Red Cross interested and on the job, so that in the afternoon we took the poor lads some smokes and eats and arranged for these to be duplicated every so often.

"Friday morning, I had made two trips to the French hospital before ten o'clock, when I went on twenty-four hours' duty as O. D. at our own place, and then my troubles began in earnest. The usual day of vexing details: after 8:30 P. M. rounds, I shut down the ward and gave definite orders to my corpsman not to disturb me except in a real necessity; but he was green and over-anxious and got me out four times between 11 and 4 o'clock. At the last call, I just stayed up, determined to get my full quota of sleep the following night. Saturday, I made three trips to the French hospital, was ordered a couple of additional duties and was already in the big sleep at 10 P. M., when I was roused by a messenger from G——, ordering me to take a S. P. boat at 7 A. M., and make a tour of the fleet, getting off all the contagious and the ordinary hospital cases.

"The bonne overzealously got me up at 5:15. I wandered up to G——'s, made quick rounds and then beat it down to the dock. It was still quite entirely dark, a very dense fog and damp and cold. We picked up the transport V——, with her bow crushed in from having rammed the A——, then the Q—— and finally the A——. In all I collected

thirty-three cases, twenty-six of which were measles. On the way in, I stopped a few moments at the P——, the mother-ship. I got thoroughly chilled and came in to dock with my teeth chattering. I had been furnished with only one ambulance and one touring-car, which meant three trips with each before I had all the cases under cover. I then reported to C——, who ordered me down to relieve as O. D., which I did, and the following morning I had a temperature of 103.

“One thing consoles me: Our hospital has progressed with pretty good success, and we are able to do and are doing good work of a routine kind, as in a civil hospital at home. There is very much to be done and will be for many weeks to come, yet the essentials are completed. Our operating-room is in good order and quite busy. The X-Ray outfit is not here, except some apparatus, which we got from the Red Cross in Paris. The laboratory is in fair running order, but much of the necessary equipment failed to materialize. I am getting a pretty fair gastro-intestinal service, especially with the destroyer men. We are useful—and that’s what we came over here to be.”

The unconscious hero of this log, I ought to add, recovered and is still continuing his excellent work. What he has done is what is being done by hundreds of our naval surgeons in France, and the story of the hospital that he helped to bring into being and to conduct is the story of a score of others.

*On a night I know, in a bay I know
(But don't you dare inquire!)
Hell blew up from the ocean's floor
And set the roof afire;*

*And I'd tell you where and I'd tell you when,
But Washington says: "No"—
You must not learn how sailormen
Go when it's time to go.*

*Yet some were drowned in the liquid flame
And burned in the flaming sea,
And rescues done ere rise of sun
That no one thought could be;*

*For braver men than we had then
No history can show;
And their names I'd say if I had my way—
But Mr. Creel says: "No."
—THE GREAT FORGETTERS.*

PART FIVE
ADMIRALS ALL
CHAPTER XV

FIRE!

IT was only shortly before the end of my nine months' stay in France that the horribly burned survivors of the American cargo-steamer, the *Florence H*, which was blown up near the coast of that country, were pronounced by their physicians to be in a condition permitting them to tell their stories of an event that cost so many lives and that proved a test, splendidly met, of the American Navy's best traditions. A formal French, and an informal American, naval inquiry was straightway made, and I was fortunate enough to have that inquiry thrown open to me. Because of the hitherto mostly concealed stories of heroism there elicited by the examinations, I want to tell something of the catastrophe involving them. That heroism has, so far, been unsurpassed, even in the records of this war in which physical bravery is so common, and my only regret is that, though the names of the rescuing ships and of their boats' crews were mentioned by Admiral Wilson in his public commendation of their actions, and though my mention of the same names was per-

mitted by the naval censor at our Base in France, Mr. George Creel's Committee on Public Information has asked me to suppress most of them here.

Although only just now to be published in detail, the story of the *Florence H*, which formerly flew the French flag, is soon told. A merchant ship, officered and manned by civilians, she carried an armed guard of twenty-two. In her four holds she had a cargo of several million dollars—many tons of steel plate and explosives, the latter packed in metal cases supported by wooden frames. She took on coal at Carney's Point, in the Delaware River, and then set sail for France. Off the French coast, she joined a convoy, which anchored close to shore, about a day's sail from our Naval Base, at close upon 9:30 of a spring evening. Witnesses agree that there was no powder on her hatches and that these were kept securely closed after leaving Philadelphia.

There were several ships in that convoy, and a guard of American destroyers, American patrol-boats and two French craft. The sea was smooth, but the night dark. The *Florence H* was the third boat in the column. Four men, including the captain, none of whom was saved, were on watch or lookout. At 10:45 P. M., without any preliminary smoke being noticed, No. 2 hatch exploded. The deck rose in air, the starboard side was blown out. In about twenty minutes, the *Florence H*, settling by the head with a list to the ripped quarter, sank in a mass of flames. The water receiving her was so

shallow that her stack and two masts are visible at low tide. Only thirty-two of the seventy-seven men aboard were saved.

From the eyes of none that saw it will the intense picture of the disaster ever be blotted, but perhaps the best description is that of a U. S. Naval officer, Captain P. L. Wilson, of the near-by W——, commanding the guardian ships, a man familiar with the horrors of war at sea. According to this, with no warning save a low rumble, the night suddenly became lurid day. Then:

“There was ejected upward for almost three hundred feet from that burning ship,” Captain Wilson says, “a mass of flaming powder-cases and wreckage, which spread out to leeward like several enormous rafts, so thick were they packed. In the midst of these jammed masses of wreckage, and for a considerable area all over the vicinity, numerous cases were exploding every second and shooting their flame and gasses twenty feet in the air. These explosions resembled enormous blow-torches and made a whistling noise. Next, the fixed ammunition on deck began to explode, showing up like fireworks, and shortly afterwards the guns went off. I could not believe that any living being had escaped from this burning furnace.”

Some, however, had—God knows how. Between the detonations came, out of the liquid fire, their shrill shrieks of agony. Here sailors already mutilated had to swim under water, and when they

rose for breath, it was to thrust their heads into a molten surface; there, in that mass of wreckage, they clung to heaving boxes—boxes of flame that now banged against one another, crushing their human freight, and again exploded, blowing the desperate men to atoms.

A badly burned seaman named Collins told me: "I had been asleep in a cabin on the upper deck. I got my underclothes on, ran out and dove into the water. Whenever I'd stick my head up, I'd stick it into flames. I got a bit away and grabbed some pieces of wood, but they caught fire. Kegs were exploding all around. The yells of the men were horrible. I found a boat and climbed in, and then it got afire, too. The S—— rescued me."

Percy D. West, of Edgartown, Massachusetts, had been serving as quartermaster and was awakened from his sleep in a cabin under the bridge, not by any explosion, but by the flames. "I got into my trousers, and I had two sweaters on," he said to me. "I woke my cabin-mate. I jerked open the door, and a blast of fire shot in. Then a back-draft blew that way, and I tried to drag my mate through the door; but he was kind of dazed and wouldn't come. I jumped through the flames and overboard. The next thing I knew, I was floating in the water with a powder-cask under each arm."

The feet of many were burned because the deck was aflame, and the speed of the fire was fatal. "By the time I got on deck," Seaman L. C. Johnson

testified at the inquiry, "the whole aft of the ship was afire—gun-platforms and all." The Finnish boatswain, Carl Linder, was thrown from his bunk in darkness and staggered on deck; as he swam away, the stern blew up. Water-tender Peter Drulle, bunking with three other men, found the four ports and four doors of their quarters jammed; he smashed one of the doors, plunged through flames to the deck and reached the water as the ship sank. John B. Watson, the chief engineer, told the story with unconscious dramatic power:

"She just burned up and melted in about twenty minutes."

It is almost impossible to describe the scene. The night's walls of blackness were pushed far aside by a blistering glare that was blindingly intense. Against that the convoy was silhouetted, afloat on a sea that was little more than a lake of liquid fire, cluttered by burning wreckage. The victims, blown overboard from the *Florence H*, would come to the surface and try to float by clinging to one of the hundreds of powder-cases bobbing all about; the wooden frame of the case would flash into light—the contents would explode and tear its victims into shreds. The reverberations were as loud and as constant as a bombardment. Swimmers had to take refuge by swimming far under water; when forced to rise for air, they would draw into their lungs great draughts of fire.

"An' I had to swim slow," one of the crew later



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The Missouri



© Committee on Public Information

Firing signal cannon—U. S. cruiser

told me in hospital, "because I was tryin' to carry my buddy with me, an' he don't know how to swim at all."

The guarding yachts were wooden—they dared not venture near. The destroyers, laden with deadly depth-charges, were in almost equal danger, and therefore Captain Wilson, believing all the crew of the *Florence H* beyond hope, signalled the destroyer S—— to be careful—she was on the edge of the spreading liquid fire. At that moment, her skipper, Captain H. S. Haislip, "heard some cries in the water," and there followed an action that should have place in every history of the American Navy.

He ran his ship—its deck is not five feet above the water and was covered with high explosives—directly into the flames, in order to cleave, among the bursting powder-casks, a path for boats of rescue. He led, and the other destroyers, the Wh—— and the T—— followed.

The S——came close up under the stern of the *Florence H*. Her paint peeled. Once she was so compressed amid the exploding wreckage that she could not maneuver. She threw out lines; her sailors dove overboard to hold up and rescue blinded survivors. Her crew lowered one of their men by the ankles, and he snatched a burning victim from the burning sea. She sent out a life-boat—Fleet Chaplain Father M—— was in it—which, since rowing became immediately impossible, had to pole its way by shoving with the oars against those smolder-

ing powder-cases. The motor-dory of the Wh—— with its inflammable fuel in constant danger, worked close by.

One may quickly summarize the results of the four days' examination of survivors. I quote from the testimony of nine:

"She's never had any bunker-fires."

"There was no preceding smell of smoke."

"There'd been no coal on fire, and there was no coal-gas explosion. The noise was a rumbling sound—felt as if it was internal."

"The noise was a continuous roar. It made me think of sky-rockets, only much louder—a sort of trembling sound. I'd been on the radio from four to eight, but hadn't heard any subs talking."

"I do not think it was a torpedo."

"It seemed to me like inside work."

"I've been torpedoed before. This wasn't similar. I think it was an inside job."

"The Luckenback people coaled her."

"It don't seem possible when we were under way that a man could open those hatches."

The commander of the convoying C—— said that three of his officers "familiar with torpedo-effects" did not consider this the work of a torpedo. The captain of the courageous S—— thinks the disaster due to either an "internal explosion or spontaneous combustion." The skipper of the W—— reports:

"A few moments before 10:50 P. M., it was noted that some one on the bridge of the *Florence H* was signalling with a signal searchlight. Our attention

was directed toward this signalling. Suddenly, without previous warning, the *Florence H* burst into brilliant flame."

Commander Franck T. Evans, U. S. N., represented the United States at the inquiry. He reports to Rear-Admiral Wilson:

"I am of the opinion that the ship was not torpedoed. It will be noted that there is no evidence of any geyser of water, that there was no shock felt on board neighbouring vessels, and that of the two witnesses who were in the engine-room at the time of the explosion, one, who was torpedoed twice before, states positively that the ship was not torpedoed, while the testimony of the other seems to indicate that the ship was not torpedoed. The evidence shows that there were no steam-leads in the cargo-spaces, but that electric leads in iron conduit passed through the 'tween decks. The evidence also shows that there was coal stowed under the powder in No. 2 hold. A short-circuit of electric outlet, or a spontaneous combustion may have caused sufficient fire to cause the cargo to explode. *From the investigation, I am inclined to the opinion that the vessel was destroyed by an infernal machine placed either in the coal in No. 2 hold or in the cargo there.*"

Whether that opinion be right or wrong may possibly never be known, but, no matter what the cause of the explosion, the heroism of the rescuers will be long remembered. They proved themselves the legitimate inheritors of our Navy's reputation for bravery, the defenders of its best traditions.

*'So you're goin' to France, hey, to "save" her?
Then listen, my hearty, an' hark;
Take advice from a gob
That has been on the job:
No lip to our ally, Jen Dark!
She's a sort of a kind of a sister
Who's gettin' a rather rough deal,
So she's sensitive, and
You had best understand
The way that the sensitives feel.*

CHORUS:

*The second-story men have been
A-lootin' of her shop;
They've eaten half the stock-in-hand
An' killed the village cop;
She's stood 'em off, an' stands 'em still;
She's shown 'em she can give
As good as she is gettin', but
It makes her sensitive.*

*Don't think 'cause she does a thing diff'rent
That her ways is wrong and yourn right;
She gets there unblown,
Though she goes it alone—
An' Lord, but that woman can fight!
Keep in mind: when we needed a helper
(As history makes the remark),
Why, we knelt down to pray
For the new U. S. A.,
And were made and were saved by Jen Dark.*

CHORUS:

The second-story men, etc.

*Of course, she's a language that's phony,
And of course she's hard up for the cash;
But her folks have all bled
(Why, they're most of 'em dead!)
And they saved you, young Jackie, from smash.*

*So remember: a phrase that is pleasant,
Goes further than one that shows bile—
If you haven't quite heard,
Or don't know the French word,
Just bow to Miss Jennie an' smile.*

CHORUS:

The second-story men, etc.

*Do you think she's a sort of a Tomboy
Just now? Well, is that a disgrace?
It's a matter of pride!
She will scrap by your side:
Don't slap a good pal in the face!
Then here's to our sister, the fighter;
We'll save her, who saved us. But hark:
Since we're in the same boat,
We must not get her goat—
Here's luck to Miss Genevieve Dark!*

CHORUS:

*So, when you go to rout the thieves,
Just turn to her an' say:
"We'd like to lend a hand, Miss, if
You please" (that's "civil play")
An' when she grins and answers "Oui"
(That's "Yes"), why, you remark:
"Oh, mercy!" (which is "Thank You") and
"Here's to you, Jennie Dark!"*

CHAPTER XVI

THE PLUCKIEST MAN ALIVE

ONE day last spring an American Admiral shakes hands with a mere warrant-officer, a simple non-com., of the French Navy.

"I'm glad to meet you," said the Admiral; "you're the kind of man that makes me proud to be a sailor."

The speaker was Rear-Admiral Wilson. The person addressed was Alexis Pulu Hen, Quartermaster, second-class. But Pulu Hen had just performed one of the most wonderful feats of seamanship ever recorded.

A few lines of cabled matter told that this quartermaster of a tiny submarine-chaser won the *médaille militaire* by bringing his craft across the Atlantic in the face of enormous difficulties—and that was about all. Really, he has astonished the entire seafaring world; he has performed the impossible.

His boat is a cockleshell; she is a sixty-tonner. She was never meant to go far to sea, in the first place. When the need of tonnage grew acute, she was impressed for use as one of the several guards for a convoy, but she was regarded as rather risky, and nobody would have dreamed of her sailing alone. She burned oil, and could store but little of

that, had no other means of locomotion and, in a long journey, always had to be restocked by a companion-boat. She was scantily provisioned; she boasted just one compass and no sextant; she was beneath the dignity of being commanded by a commissioned officer trained in navigation.

Then, one day, she found herself alone near the United States side of the Atlantic—and started, not back, but toward France. Six weeks overdue, she was reported lost.

The oil gave out, and Pulu Hen, commanding, burned the salad-oil. That gave out, and he built masts and rigged them with blankets and coverlets for sails. He steered by dead reckoning. He nightly corrected his crazy compass by the stars—when any were visible. He passed two or three ships, but, though they saw his distress-signals, they fled, fearing some submarine-trick. The food ran desperately low, but he made the crew husband the remainder. Storms thrashed the tiny craft: she weathered them. Pulu Hen—

But here is my rough translation of his log, in which the facts are set down with serene unconcern of their revelation of heroism and skill:

“7th January: Got underweigh from Bermuda at 8 o’clock. Taken in tow by the P——, course east by compass. Stationed lookouts and set the watch in threes.

“9th January: Upon pitching to a very heavy sea, the towline broke. The passing of a new towline is

very delicate because of the bad state of the sea and the weight of the line, which is a heavy Manila hawser.

"10th January: The breeze freshened during the night, and the sea became very rough. We were pooped by many heavy seas, which carried away a box containing four hundred kilograms of coal and eight cases of gasolene.

"13th January: The weather became very bad, with a heavy sea. The tugboat fell into the trough of the sea from time to time, then resumed her course at an irregular speed, thus towing us by jerks. When the tug fell off, the chaser was usually in the trough, rolling perilously from side to side, which caused a heavy chafe of the towline. At six o'clock, the towing-strap and painter parted and went with the towboat. It was very difficult to start the motors, because of the water that had leaked into the engine-room. At eight A. M., the motor amidships was started. I headed toward the P—— (the towboat), which was on the horizon. At 11:30 A. M., I lost it from view, and the convoy had completely disappeared.

"13th January, later: The weather is better. At two P. M., I perceived a tug and a chaser dead ahead. I increased speed in order to overtake them, and I recognized the H—— abreast of the chaser No. ——. I asked her my bearings. She replied: 'We have not had them since we left Bermuda.' I took a position astern of the tug and abreast of the

chaser, but our motor stopped frequently, making it difficult for me to keep my position.

"14th January: At four o'clock the motors stopped as the result of an accident. The engineers immediately set to work to repair them. I lost sight of the tug and the chaser. The sea became very unruly, and we shipped a great many seas. I hastily had a makeshift sail put up with cover of the dory and the bridge-screens, and thus we maneuvered in order to be less maltreated by the heavy seas. At noon the engine was started, headed due east. At three o'clock, we again sighted the tug and chaser that we had hailed yesterday. We headed for them and fell into line beside the former.

"15th January: I asked the tug to tow us and give us some lubricating-oil. She had no towline left, and she could not give us any oil. At four P. M., our motor stopped as a result of being overheated. I hoisted the signal 'Ship not under control.' The chaser and the tug did not answer. At five P. M., I lost them from sight, and did not see them again after that.

"16th January: At midnight, the engines were started, headed eastward. At 3 A. M., another accident. At 3:30, I caught sight of the lights of two vessels on the port side. I turned on two red lights on the masthead and signalled to them with the blinker. They did not answer, and I lost them from view a few moments later.

"I had the holds emptied, as the water had reached

a depth of fifty centimeters in them, and the vessel was leaking badly at the seams.

“At 11:50 A. M., I perceived the mast of a small craft to the northeast. Considering my vessel in a critical condition on account of the accident to the motor and the immediate lack of lubricating-oil, I fired six shots with my gun and hoisted distress signals. I received no response, and a few minutes later nothing was to be seen.

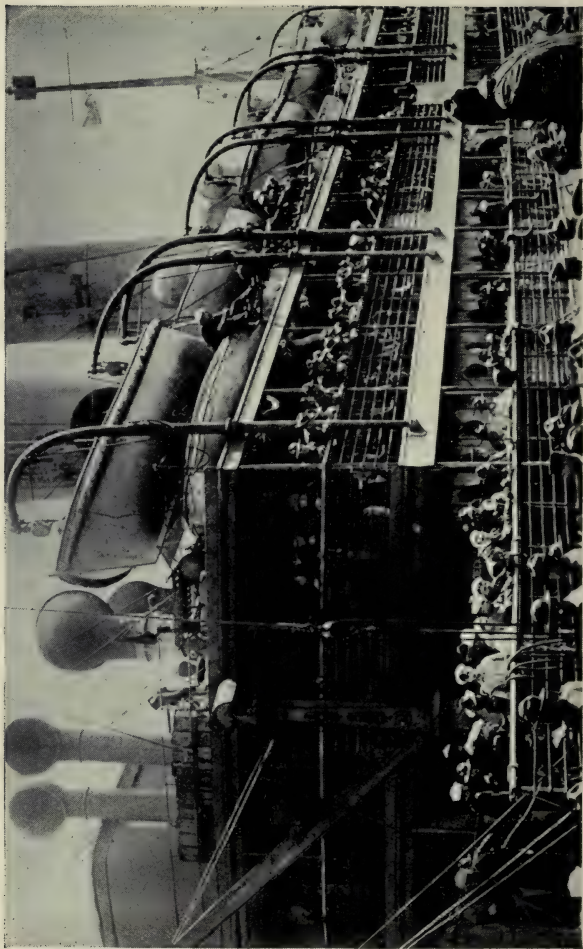
“At noon the motor was started, and we headed eastward. Soon after, another accident occurred. The engineer, Petty Officer Faignou, told me that the lubricating-oil had given out. He used soapy water and some greasy substance to replace the oil, but that gave bad results. I then gave him all the table-oil, which was used with better result, but it was not sufficient in quantity: I had only about twenty quarts. At 5:40 P. M., the motor was started. At 11:50 P. M., another and final accident to the motor and damages to the dynamo. Faignou told me that he could not make the engines run. The wireless did not work. It was impossible for me to ask for help. There was only left a few centimeters of table-oil on board, which served for the lubricating of the auxiliary motor, which I made use of to empty the hold when the condition of the sea did not permit us to use the arm-pump.

“I was completely helpless; headlong toward the southeast; driven by the wind and the sea without



Torpedo fleet

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Deck, U. S. transport—France

any exact bearings. I estimated that I was at this moment N. 36 degrees 30 minutes, W. 39 degrees.

"7th February: I have remained in the above-described condition until to-day without being helped in any way; making temporary sails; emptying the hold every day; anchoring and hauling in the floating anchor when I judged it necessary to use it; sparing the drinking water as much as possible, rationing the crew with what was strictly indispensable with a view to a long voyage; putting up and hauling down the sails according to the condition of the weather and the direction of the wind, and heading east by the compass in order to try to reach Archipel, Azores.

"I met four ships, three of which were very distant and were following a route about parallel to mine, so that they did not come near me. I made distress signals to them, however, but they did not respond, and evidently did not see me.

"8th February: At 9:30 A. M., I perceived a steamer four points on the port bow and heading in such a way as to cross our route near us. Immediately I had the distress signals hoisted and put two volunteers into the dory to try to intercept the route of the steamer and speak to her, but, when we arrived at a distance of about five miles, the steamer suddenly changed route and withdrew at full speed. I fired a volley of seven shots at intervals of one minute, but she did not answer and continued dis-

appearing. At 11:20, I hoisted the dory and continued to sail toward the east, with a spanker, a main jib and a sort of jigger on the foremast. These sails permitted us to handle the ship in a sort of manner, and we made about three knots when the sea was smooth and there was a fresh breeze.

"The sails were made of tablecloths, sheets and bedspreads. The weather often prevented their use, for they were not perfectly joined together.

"The coal for cooking had given out on the 26th of January, and the fire in the galley was made of wood which kept the aft-compartment dry.

"The crew continued their marvelous conduct, keeping habitually calm and not complaining of the restrictions on food that I was forced to impose on them, and thus showing a spirit of sacrifice and abnegation.

"*18th February*: At 6:30, I sighted land at N. 55 degrees. Headed for it, and took soundings from time to time. At 11 A. M., I manned the dory with three volunteers, whose mission was to signal to land and have a tug brought out. At one P. M., I recognized clearly Fayal on the port side and Pico on the starboard. The dingy went into Port La Horta alongside the tug *Sin Mac*. The tug took the dory on board and came out to tow us. At 3:25 P. M., she took us into tow and brought us into Port La Horta.

"At 4:35 P. M., my little vessel was alongside the

French four-master V——, the crew intact and in good health. . . .”

So it ends. Alone in winter seas, Pulu Hen's tiny, fragile boat had wandered for more than a month under desperate conditions. A little failing in foresight or seamanship, a little failing in courage, and she and her crew would all have been lost. Every one thought she *was* lost. Then, quite as if she did not think her conduct extraordinary, there she appeared, with her crazy sails of tablecloths and sheets and colored bedspreads, at Horta in the Azores, her personnel intact.

Is it any wonder that her master should be given the *médaille militaire*? Is it any wonder that, describing that master's feat as one of the most wonderful in all the brave history of the sea, an American Admiral should say what Admiral Wilson said?—

“You are the kind of man that makes me proud to be a sailor!”

*There's a girl back ashore at the "Y,"
An' she's not a Society Slob,
An' I'm all for the look in her eye—
She's the same for a Four-Stripe or gob:
She is straight, she's a straight that's ace-high;
That girlie is on to her job.*

*There's a skirt that can run a canteen!
If ever a fellow gets rough,
She'll give him one look—he goes green,
An' he knows that he's gone far enough:
She's a peach, she's a peach of a queen—
An' she's wise to that sentiment-stuff.*

*I can't get her out of my head;
She's as much on this ship as that scrup.
I licked Bill Visniski, who said
That she looked like the Wadsworths' pet pup.
(She looks like my sister that's dead).
What? I'm stuck on her, am I? Shut up!
—CANTEEN-MEMORIES.*

CHAPTER XVII

THE SOUL OF THE SAILOR

WITHOUT question, the first wonder to impress the civilian that visits the base of our naval effort in French waters is the good feeling that obtains there between the French and the Americans. In a war where distinctive nationalities are allied against a common foe, there is nothing more important than a liaison, a common understanding, between the allies. It is all very well to tie two cats together, but if you throw the rope over a clothesline, the cats will not get on amicably. The perfect understanding our Navy has achieved: the French naval officers and men respect and admire the men and officers of our Navy, and the population have as great an affection for our sailors as they have for their own.

That this state of things should exist in a city through which, during a few years, have passed armies French, British, Russian, Portuguese, Italian, negro and Cochin-Chinese, is due in part to the fact that, next to being a sailor and a patriot, the naval officer is by trade a traveler and a cosmopolitan. It is no less due, however, to the tact and courtesy of Admiral Wilson and his staff. In any

military organization, the attitude toward a given subject on the part of his commander becomes, within twenty-four hours, the attitude toward that subject to the last man in the command.

On my arrival at the Naval Base, Admiral Wilson sent his aide to present me to the French Admiral: "It is the right thing to do," he said. A few days later he added: "This is a French city; Admiral Moreau is the French admiral here; besides, his rank is higher than mine: I would not think of issuing an important order without first consulting him."

When the men of the American flagship gave a vaudeville performance in the local municipal theater, they sent invitations to their French comrades and reserved for Admiral Moreau the same sort of box that they reserved for their own Admiral. During the performance, the two commanders exchanged visits, and as we went out after the final curtain had fallen, Admiral Wilson turned to his aide:

"Sellards," said he—that aide, by the way, used to be a professor of French in a Pacific Coast university and had been found enlisted as a common seaman—"Sellards, say to Admiral Moreau that we all think it was mighty fine of him to have come here."

Ask any American sailor in our forces in France what he thinks of the French sailors; he will answer that they are the "real stuff." What he thinks of

most of the French children you do not have to ask him: nearly every man that gets shore-leave gives a regular portion of his time to playing with them. In the various ports, respectable bourgeois housewives have formed associations for the entertainment of our men and have thrown their houses open to them: if you know what French family-life used to be, you will understand what a social revolution this indicates. Where there is a country club, officers, in their scant leisure, play tennis or golf with the French members: "And," confessed one officer to me, "the girls play better tennis, on the average, than our girls at home."

On the anniversary of America's entrance into the world-war, the French naval officers gave a reception to the American. Admiral Wilson was called on to speak; he said that, since his arrival in France, Admiral Moreau had been a father to him—and he meant it. What the hosts said on their side reflected the same sort of family feeling—a sort that I heard echoed among them when I went into their submarines or aboard their brave little submarine-chasers: the French Navy, at the outbreak of the conflict, was in poor condition, so far as material was concerned, in which three pacifistic administrations had left it; since then, with the means at hand, it has performed prodigies; yet it has, for our officers and men and for their infinitely superior equipment, no word of envy, no word of any kind but praise.

* * * * *



Although he was a mere lad—he didn't look a day over seventeen—he wore the uniform of a sailor in the United States Navy. He had come into this little room, opening off the main street of the dreary French port, with just a bit of a swagger.

"*Des cigarettes,*" he said, and flung upon the counter a fifty-franc bill.

"What brand do you prefer?" asked the girl behind the counter.

Instantly that faint hint of bravado passed from the boyish face, leaving it clean and manly; glad, too, and yet wistful.

"Gee!" he cried. "You're an American, aren't you? Great guns, but it's good to hear American talked in this town."

He drew out, as long as he dared, the details of his purchase. He went away slowly, and presently returned and bought some more cigarettes. He hung about the room, and then bought still more. He ostentatiously pulled out a shining cigarette-case from a pocket and filled it.

The clerk couldn't help a smile. "You must smoke a great deal," she said.

The sailor blushed. "It's not that," he confessed; "but—well, just to hear you talk is like home!" He fumbled with the cigarette-case. "See that?" he said. "I got it to-day from my folks in Boston. That monogram—they're my initials. I guessed maybe they'd send me cigarettes, but I didn't expect the case. As it was, the case came alone."

"It's very pretty," said the clerk.

"It's the first word I've had from home for three months," said the boy.

"They don't write?"

He turned away. "I guess the mails are all balled up."

"Still, you did get the case."

"Sure; but I'd rather had a letter than a hundred cigarette-cases. Of course I'm glad I enlisted; but, gee, if the people at home knew how bad our fellows wanted letters they'd write every day, even if they didn't have nothin' to say except 'Yours truly.' If they only knew!"

That sailor was a fair example of our young seamen in France; unfaltering in his determination to do his duty, but unremittingly homesick. The room in which he revealed his heart was one of many such rooms where daily many of our enlisted men are moved to similar confessions, their one healthy substitute for home the Y. M. C. A. headquarters at a French port.

In previous chapters I have tried to indicate something of the life that these boys lead afloat. They are the keepers-up of commerce, the food-bringers, the sleepless guides and guardians of our troops that cross the sea.

These results are achieved only by labor that is hard, dangerous—and without recorded praise. There are days when men have to stand on watch for fourteen hours without relief; whole voyages

when the gun-crews have never moved more than five feet from their guns, snatching sleep on the rain-washed decks; cruises when the men in the fire-room and before the engines have never once been able to come up for a breath of fresh air.

Yet, all that is borne without a whimper. The sailors read, now and then, a stray home paper and see the accounts of cheering crowds bidding god-speed to this or that departing regiment; they feel that all the public's heart is going out to the Army. They don't at all realize their own devotion, and their attitude is almost that of apology for not serving their country more spectacularly. They will tell you they are glad they "jumped to the guns," but every mail that arrives brings news of friends that stayed behind and have won commissions at the reserve officers' training camps.

And then the ship comes back to port, and there are liberty parties going ashore. . . .

The British sailor is given his drink-ration; the British Y. M. C. A. serves light beer. It isn't thus with our men. At sea there obtains only the taut rule of fiat virtue, and the man that goes ashore is his own master. Do you begin to see now the problem?

There was a time when that problem was serious. Most of the sailors were hopelessly ignorant of the value of French money: they handed out their biggest bill and took whatever change was vouchsafed them. In the same spirit, some of them used to face

the life of the town: the lodgings, the shops, the games, the wine—and the women. Every morning a few girls—wreckage cast upon that shore—would enter the Y. M. C. A. and calmly present large American bills for the French equivalent. It took some thinking and acting on the part of the Admiral and his staff to remedy this condition. As to their cause, I heard a warrant officer discussing that with a man of many enlistments:

“The seafaring man’s really more religious than any other sort,” he said; “but nobody gives him a fair chance to show it. I’ve been in Turkey and if I lived there regular, I’d be a Mohammedan. I was disgusted with Christians before I struck this Y. M. C. A. joint, and I didn’t call Christianity necessarily the best of religions, either. Drink? No, I don’t drink—*much*—and neither does any other Navy man. It’s only a few of these kids that do, and they don’t keep it up.

“The Navy’s been increased from fifty thousand to more’n four hundred thousand men; what can people expect from a lot of boys that have never left their mothers before? Half of them are smoking their first cigarettes; of course they don’t know yet how to use French wine. Any American sailorman will get homesick after a week of it, and it’s just homesickness that’s the matter with these kids; if they can’t be cured of that disease, they’ll *do* something to forget it.”

To be homesick—and, if you remember your first

boarding-school days, after your mother had kissed you good-by and cried a little and told you to send home all your socks for mending, and your father had shaken hands with you and cleared his throat and said you'd be coming back to put him out of business, and you'd held your head high and joked—if you remember that, you will agree with me that to be homesick is to be as miserable as it is possible for the human being to become. But to be homesick and yet to give a home to the homeless is to be something very nearly heroic.

I came across three little children—boys—standing in a doorway on a quiet street, the oldest perhaps twelve, the youngest not a day over five. They would have been remarkable among the other children at large of this port if only for their cleanliness and for the cleanliness of the elderly woman that was manifestly caring for them; they were the more remarkable because each wore a sailor's cap, on the band of which was inscribed the name of a certain American boat, and because they were all dressed in an infantile replica of the uniform of able seaman in the United States Navy.

They were shy little boys, but the woman in charge of them explained their habiliments.

“But yes, monsieur, they are all that is left of a family. The father was killed at Verdun, the mother died in an accident at a factory of munitions; so the good sailors of one of your country's ships have adopted them and are keeping them and

will educate them. They have rented for them rooms, and I attend to those, and whenever their ship is in port, those sailors, they fail not to come here and receive word of their wards, and they give them chocolates until the little ones are ill."

One Y. M. C. A. woman I met late one night on the street with thirty hydro-aviation men in tow. She was just bidding them good-by and pointing the way.

"They were lost," she laughingly explained when I asked how she happened to have such a following. They landed from America day before yesterday and were assigned here. I met them on the train, and, as they were coming here, I volunteered to guide them. They had their destination written down and asked me if I knew anything about their barracks.

"The C——," I said. "Why, the C—— is a ship. You don't go to land barracks at all."

"You should have seen their faces. Of course, it's a stationary ship, but I believe they thought they were destined to run the dangers of the Atlantic all over again!"

There are Y. M. C. A. establishments in every French port that is used by our Navy. Evening entertainments (I remember one given by the British Y. M. C. A. for the American Y. M. C. A.'s patrons in the rooms of the French Foyer du Soldat); a reading-room full of magazines—pretty old ones, it's true—and a growing library; free writing materials;

a piano, around which is grouped a day-long chorus of sailormen; moving-picture shows, a hall for basket ball, a baseball grounds, fifty clean beds at a franc apiece a night—and a clean bed is a luxury as well as a moral force—an apartment house for seventeen or so petty officers permanently employed ashore; a phonograph, over which I've seen a lonely lad sit all afternoon running off songs reminiscent of his childhood; a canteen that sells chewing gum, cigarettes and candy—these may sound like trifles to Americans at home, but to the American sailor abroad, to whom only the Navy Canteen and the Y. M. C. A. provides them, they become large and vital. They become America.

“They're the only two places we can get any tobacco at all.”

“There's good grub on our tub, but not enough that's sweet. Gimme some more of those Huyler's gumdrops.”

“What's this? Lemonade? Yes; but what's it made of? Citron syrup and seltzer! And you call that *lemonade*? Oh, well, give us another glass of it! It probably won't poison us. When are you goin' to get in that soda-fountain?”

If I heard these comments once in the canteen, or the naval Y. M. C. A., I heard them a dozen times. Unbelievable quantities of chocolate are sold in a form that may be easily heated and drunk during night watches at sea, and the millionaire that wants



Y-workers are detailed to the various ships



Refugee and orphan children adopted by U. S. sailors in France

to do effective work against alcoholism should donate soda-fountains and hot chocolate machines and orangeade mixers to the canteens in these ports.

One innovation recently introduced is thus far working well. Parties of young French women of the bourgeois class are formed, under maternal chaperonage, to meet sailors of their own sort that have some knowledge of the French language. It is at these gatherings that the sailor talks most freely, and most lightly, of his work.

"Looking for subs?" I heard one say to his newly met companion, "I'm going blind doing it! There is the sub that makes up to look like a sailing vessel, and the one that hides its periscope behind an imitation shark fin, and now they've got one that spouts water like a whale. The porpoise drive us crazy; something came dashing at our boat the other day; its track was exactly like a torpedo's. Humphreys saw it first. He pointed it out to me.

"We're gone this time!" he yelled.

"Then it jumped, and we saw it was a porpoise. We call porpoises 'Humphreys torpedoes' now."

His nearest shipmate took up the tale:

"The fellows on the —— had a queer experience the other day. They really did sight a sub. One of 'em was handy with his camera and got a picture of her before she submerged. He came ashore and showed it. He was so proud of being quick on the kodak-trigger that he didn't realize the picture was

evidence of his ship's being just that slow with her guns."

The French girl wanted to know about rescues at sea.

"Last trip," she was informed, "we picked up three small boats with fifty-nine men in them. We laid them over the boilers to thaw out. Then we fed them hot soup to stop their teeth from chattering, and lent them some dry clothes. I guess that's about all."

His companion laughed.

"Why don't you tell the rest?"

"Oh, what's the good?"

"Then I will. Our crew's clothes were so much better than the slops the rescued men owned that most of them forgot to change back. If you see any stray uniforms walking around this town, they're ours."

There is a story told in one port, where Vincent Astor has lived, to the effect that he was complaining of the restaurant in his hotel, the most expensive hotel that the town could boast.

"You can't get a really good meal there," said Astor.

His auditor happened to be satisfactorily fresh from beef and onions and apple-pie. "I just now had a good dinner at the Y. M. C. A." he ventured.

"Oh, there," said Astor. "Of course, you did. The Y. M. C. A. is the best eating-place in town."

Mr. Astor ought to know, because that eating-

place is of his own and Mrs. Astor's making. They bought and turned over to the Association the one really good restaurant that they could find. For my part, I heard an endorsement of its cuisine that carried all the weight of its donor's:

"You can get a real meal there," a sailor told me. "No canned Bill or beans, but scrambled eggs and home-made fried potatoes and steak and onions and butter that doesn't always taste as if it came out of a tin."

That is the appeal in the sign, too:

NO NAVY
Beans, Hardtack or Canned Bill
Sold Here!

It is said that Mrs. Astor used to help wait on table when the service was shorthanded, and that one of the first persons upon whom she waited was a newly enlisted man in the United States Navy, who, until a month previous, had been the dining-room steward on Mrs. Astor's own yacht.

"Gee," the steward is reported to have commented, "when I used to wait on her, I had to wear evening clothes!"

I was standing on the bridge of a converted yacht in harbour. The navigation officer was with me.

"That boy," he said, as he nodded to a blackened, barefoot lad emerging from a hatchway, "got honours in French at Yale last spring."

"And he's here as a common seaman?" I wondered.

"As a coal-heaver!" I was corrected.

Here is another example:

To an orderly entertainment at a "Y" hut came one night a brilliantly-illuminated boatswain's mate. He was a splendid specimen of physical manhood, six feet three and as hard as nails; but he was intent on "starting something." He stopped, with one bellying command, the singer on the stage. He knocked down two of his protesting friends, spilled a crowded bench and undulated up to the secretary in charge, with the majesty of a breaker sweeping toward the beach.

"I'm going to break up this show," he said.

It looked very much as if he would, too.

Now, the secretary in charge was a quiet, unassuming man. He had done wonders in his work among our fleet in French waters, but he spoke in a small voice and moved gently.

"If I were you," said the secretary, "I wouldn't interfere."

"The hell you wouldn't!" said the boatswain's mate and shook a mighty fist.

"Please don't," said the secretary.

The big fist shot forward.

It didn't hit anything. It was shunted aside, as a little twist of the slim switch shunts a train of loaded coal-cars. It dragged the boatswain's mate after it into vacant space, and, as the boatswain's

mate went by, something caught him—something uncommonly like an express engine—on the point of the jaw and sent him smashing to the floor.

Then the quiet secretary picked the giant up in his arms and carried him to a back room, of which the two were the only occupants.

"I hope I haven't hurt you," said the secretary. "I tried not to."

The secretary was a Presbyterian minister. He was also a Colorado rancher. And also he had been the best boxer in Princeton during his day there. His name is O. F. Gardner.

He nursed that boatswain's mate back to sobriety and got him on his ship in time to escape reprimand. The next night the sailor turned up again at the "Y" building.

"I've come here to apologize," he said.

"That's all right," said the secretary.

"No, it ain't," the sailor persisted. "I made a damned nuisance of myself before all this crowd, and it's before the whole crowd that I've got to apologize. Here, you swipes!" he bellowed.

Every man in the room fell silent. The boatswain's mate addressed them:

"I want to tell you fellows," he said, "that I was a fool last night and got what was comin' to me; but I'm not such a fool but what I can learn a lesson: I'm cuttin' out the booze. That man there treated me square and saved me from trouble aboard ship, and, after to-night, if any slob tries to get fresh

around this place, why, any such guy's got to tackle the two of us."

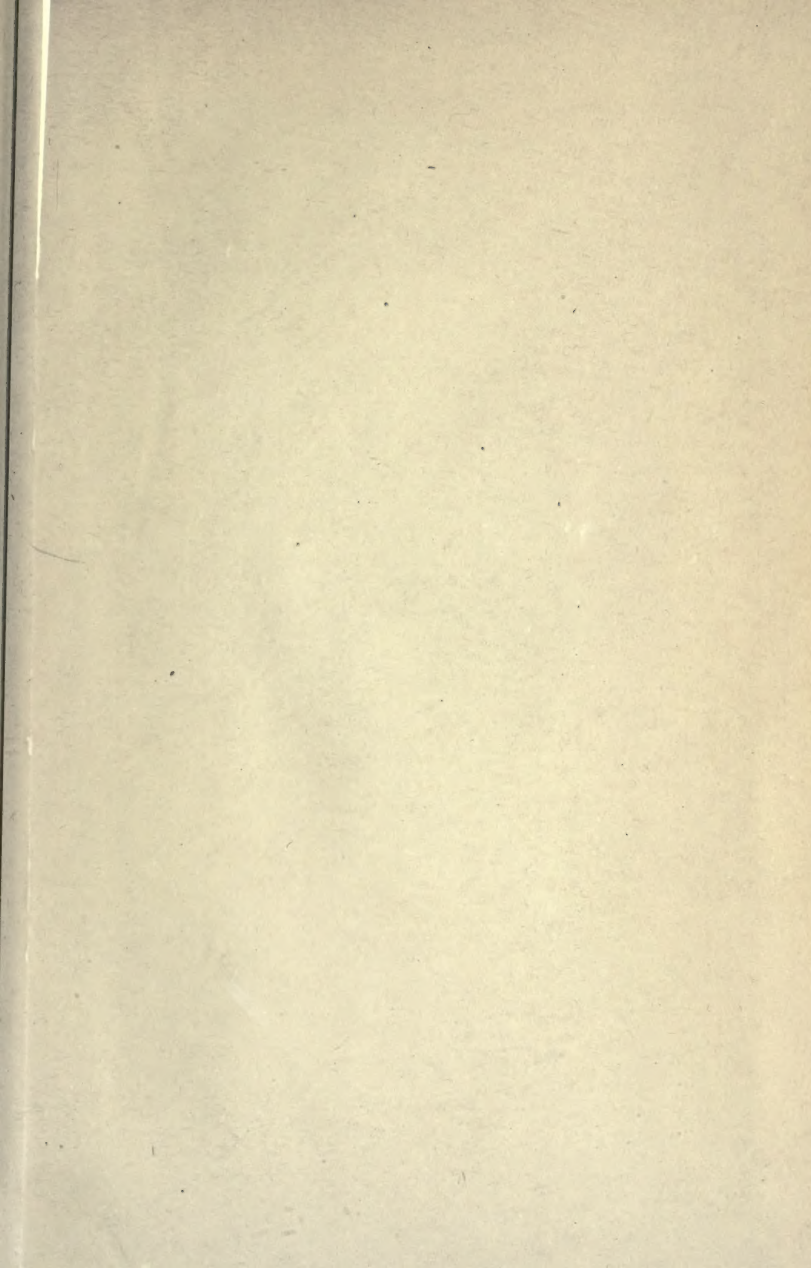
Some college men and some men that have hardly been to school at all, a group of millionaires and a scattering of roughnecks; but every one sound at heart and brave in action—these make up the personnel of the U. S. fleets in French waters. The worst aren't bad; the worst are only lonely. The best are the best America produces. All are courageously and uncomplainingly enduring a dangerous and, what is more, a hideously monotonous life afloat; those are few indeed who succumb to any temptation of emotional reaction ashore.

FINIS

*Wise to what the wash is
And the chance we take,
Knowing that the Boche is
Always in our wake,
Though I'm strong on livin',
I've got one word more:
If my life I'm givin',
Please, no grave ashore!*

*I'm no grubby tailor;
I'm no lawyer-shark;
I am just a sailor:
Let a gob embark!
That's the way I'd sooner
Have you launch me—do;
I will be the schooner,
Captain, mate an' crew.*

*When it comes to dyin',
Drop me overside,
Where the scud is flyin',
Where the dolphins ride;
Let me find the furrow,
Flowing foamy-free—
Done my bit, an' through with it—
Send me Home to Sea!*





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