

Horrors of Life in A German Submarine

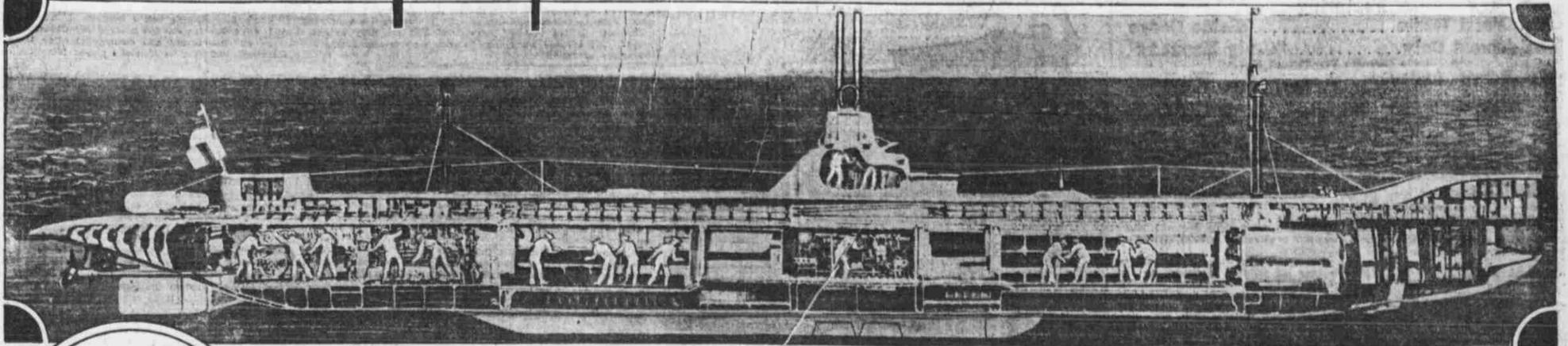


Diagram Showing the Interior Construction of One of the Newest German Submarines.



Otto Weddigen, the Daring German Submarine Commander, Who Sank the British Cruisers Cressy, Hogue and Aboukir in One Attack.

Daring Commander Describes How It Feels to Grope Under Water Blind and Suffocated in an Atmosphere of Oil, Cabbages and Little Oxygen

THE German heroes of the present war have undoubtedly been the submarine crews.

The little submarines, manned by twenty-five men apiece, and costing but a small fraction of the warship, have sunk nine British battleships and fighting ships and over one hundred of the merchant ships of the anti-German allies.

In order to achieve this remarkable result, however, an extraordinary amount of suffering, self-sacrifice and skill on the part of the submarine crews was required.

Life on a submarine must be like that of the infernal regions. When the boat is submerged the oxygen in the air soon becomes insufficient, and it is also so fouled

by the oil and the smell of the machinery that it is nauseating in the extreme. When the boat is on the surface the slightest wave breaks over it and the vessel rolls about as you may have seen a log do on the surface of the sea.

In addition to these physical miseries there is the mental strain of not being able to see danger approaching and of not knowing whether you will ever see the light again.

The captain of the German submarine boat U-47, which has greatly distinguished itself in these naval exploits, has written a most interesting account of life on the boat and their methods of action. Although the article is written primarily to excite enthusiasm for the submarine war, it does not conceal the great hardships of the life. The article has been published widely in the German newspapers, and here is a translation of it:

The seas are heavier now, and U-47 rolls unpleasantly as she makes the lightship and answers the last salute from a friendly hand. The two officers on the bridge turn once to look at the lightship already astern, then their eyes look seaward.

It is rough, stormy weather. If the egg-shell goes ahead two or three days without a stop, the officers in charge will get no sleep for just that long. If it gets any rougher they will be tied to the bridge-rails to avoid being swept overboard. If they are hungry, plates of soup will be brought to them on the bridge, and the North Sea will attend to its salting for them.

Just as the commander is trying to balance a plate with one hand and use a spoon with the other, the watch calls, "Smoke on the horizon off the port bow." The commander drops his plate, shouts a short, crisp command, and an electric alarm whirrs inside the egg-shell. The ship bumps like a hive. Then water begins to gurgle into the ballast-tanks, and U-47 sinks until only her periscope shows.

"The steamship is a Dutchman, sir," calls the watch officer. The commander inspects her with the aid of a periscope. She has no wireless and is bound for the Continent. So he can come up and is glad, because moving under the water consumes electricity, and the usefulness of a submarine is measured by her electric power.

After fifty-four hours of waking nerve tension, sleep becomes a necessity. So the ballast-tanks are filled and the nut-shell sinks to the sandy bottom. This is the time for sleep aboard a submarine, because a sleeping man consumes less of the precious oxygen than one awake and busy.

So a submarine man has three principal lessons to learn—to keep every faculty at tension when he is awake, to keep stern silence when he is ashore (there is a warning against talkativeness in all the German railway-carriages now) and to sleep instantly when he gets legitimate opportunity. His sleep and the economy of oxygen may save the ship. However, the commander allows half an hour's grace for music. There is a gramophone, of course, and the "ship's band" performs on all manner of instruments. At worst, a comb with a bit of tissue paper is pressed into service.

If a ship is sunk, three men only on the submarine will watch her go. The submarine man might hitherto serve all his time like a blind man as far as the outside world was concerned. Just before the war one of a submarine's crew about to be sent ashore to join the reserve, was asked by his commander if there was anything he would specially like to celebrate his last trip.

"Yes, sir," he said. "I should like just once to have a glimpse with the periscope." The story went the round and now, during the war, the crew are occasionally summoned, one by one, to the periscope. When opportunity offers they are also given a chance to see a merchant ship sunk. It is considered encouraging!

By the Commander of Submarine U-47.

WILL take in provisions and clear for sea. Extreme economical radius," is the brief order brought to us by the admiral's staff officer.

A first lieutenant, with the acting rank of commander, takes the order in the gray dawn of a February day. The hull of an old corvette with the Iron Cross of 1870 on her stubby foremast is his quarters in port, and on the corvette's deck he is presently saluted by his first engineer and the officer of the watch. On the pier the crew of U-47 await him. At their feet the narrow gray submarine lies alongside, straining a little at her cables.

"Well, we've our orders at last," begins the commander, addressing his crew of thirty, and the crew grin. For this is U-47's first experience of active service. She has done nothing save trial trips hitherto, and has just been overhauled for her first fighting cruise. Her commander snaps out a number of orders. Provisions are to be taken in "up to the neck," fresh water is to be put aboard, and engine-room supplies to be supplemented.

A mere plank is the gangway to the little vessel. As the commander, followed by his officers, comes aboard, a sailor hands to each a ball of cotton waste, the sign and symbol of a submarine officer, which never leaves his hand. For the steel walls of his craft, the doors, and the companion-ladder all sweat oil, and at every touch the hands must be wiped dry. The doorways are narrow round holes. Through one of the holes at the commander descends by a breakneck iron ladder into the black hole lit by electric glowlamps. The air is heavy with the smell of oil, and to the unaccustomed "longshoreman" it is almost choking, though the hatches are off.

Here in the engine-room aft men must live and strain every nerve even if for days at a time every crack whereby the fresh air could get in is hermetically sealed. On their tense watchfulness thirty lives depend.

Here, too, are slung some hammocks, and in them one watch tries, and, what is more, succeeds in sleeping though the men moving about bump them with head and elbow at every turn, and the low and narrow vault is full of the hum and purr of machinery. In length the vault is about ten feet, but if a man of normal stature stands in the middle and raises his arms to about half shoulder height his hands will touch the cold, moist steel walls on either side. A network of wires runs overhead, and there is a juggler's outfit of handles, levers and instruments.

The commander inspects everything minutely, then creeps through a hole into the central control station, where the chief engineer is at his post. With just about enough assistance to run a fairly simple machine ashore the chief engineer of a submarine is expected to control, correct, and, if necessary, repair at sea an infinitely

complex machinery which must not break down for an instant if thirty men are to return alive to the hulk.

The commander pays a visit of inspection to the torpedo-chamber and strokes the smooth steel of the deadly "silver fish." His second-in-command, who is in charge of the armament, joins him here and receives final instructions regarding the torpedoes and the stowing of explosives. For the torpedo is not only an extremely complicated weapon, but also a fine work of art, and it demands a very thorough apprenticeship.

Forward is another narrow steel vault serving at once as engine-room and crew's quarters. Next to it is a place like a cupboard, where the cook has just room to stand in front of his doll's house galley-stove. It is electrically heated that the already oppressive air may not be further vitiated by smoke or fumes. A German submarine in any case smells perpetually of coffee and cabbage. Two little cabins of the size of a decent clothes-chest take the deck and engine-room officers, four of them. Another box-cabin is reserved for the commander—when he has time to occupy it.

At daybreak the commander comes on deck in coat and trousers of black leather lined with wool, a protection against oil, cold and sea water. The crew at their stations await the command to cast off. "Machines clear," calls a voice from the control-station, and "Clear ship," snaps the order from the bridge. Then "Cast-off!" The cables slip on the landing-stage, the engines begin to purr, and U-47 slides away into open water.

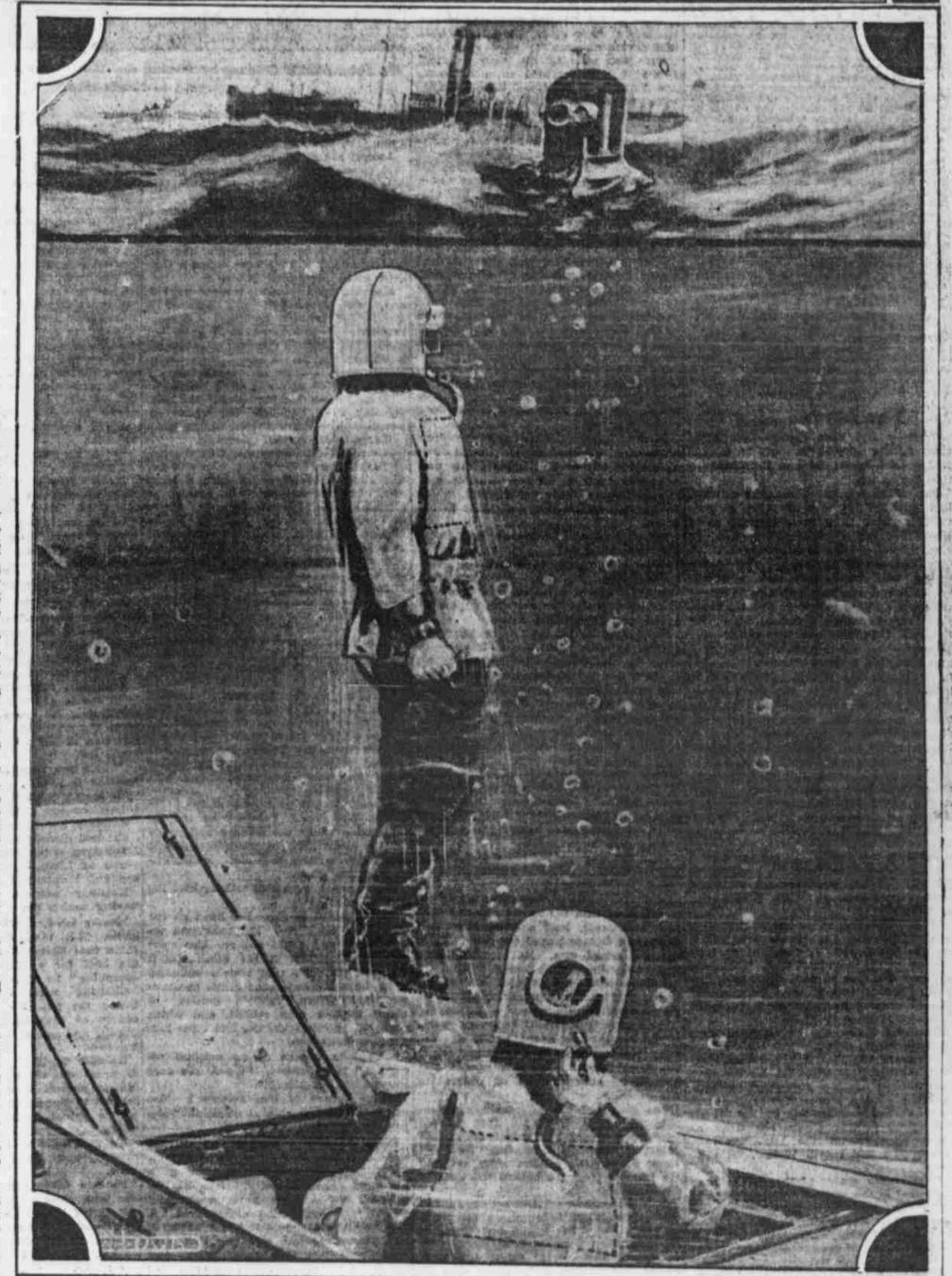
A few cable-lengths away another submarine appears homeward bound. She is the U-20 returning from a long cruise in which she succeeded in sinking a ship bound with a cargo of frozen mutton for England. "Good luck, old sheep-butcher," sings the commander of U-47 as the sister-ship passes within hail.

PROBABLY no domestic problem so perplexes and often distresses parents as that which confronts them when their growing son is suddenly transformed from a good boy into what seems to be a bad one. The change seems incomprehensible. What is to be done about it? Mothers, especially, are apt to be overcome with anxious dread, picturing the future of the erstwhile pride and joy of their existence in the darkest of colors.

This boy, who heretofore has been so gentle, tractable and considerate, has suddenly developed heart-breaking tendencies. He is rude in his manners, he lies, he seeks reckless companions, he neglects his lessons. When reprimanded he declares that

he is misunderstood and persecuted. When punished he runs away from home, and when he is brought back it is quite possible that his parents receive the culminating shock—not only does he lie, but he steals.

Right here the outraged feelings of the conscientious father may urge him to commit a grievous error—to cause his boy to be publicly treated like a criminal, to be arrested and locked up, to be herded with actual criminals and, perhaps, turned into a criminal in fact, when, on the contrary, he is the unconscious victim of a perfectly natural crisis of his development from boyhood into manhood, through which he only needs to be guided with patient watchfulness and loving care.



A NEWLY INVENTED DEVICE FOR SAVING IMPRISONED SUBMARINE MEN.

This apparatus invented by Captain Hull and Surgeon Rees of the British Navy, is designed to save submarine sailors who are now hopelessly trapped and condemned to a horrible death in case the submarine is held under water. The apparatus consists of a thin copper helmet and a water-proof jacket, the latter containing a pocket which is ingeniously fitted with a chemical device for purifying the man's breath,

so that he can live and breathe freely for a considerable time under water. So successful have been the experiments that these life-saving suits are now fitted to all British boats. Each submarine is fitted with air locks when a certain quantity of air is imprisoned. When the boat is trapped or wrecked the man can breathe for a period long enough to allow them to put on the suit. Then they can lift the hatch, pop out into the water and rise to the surface where they can float until rescued.

Science Explains Your Good Boy's Sudden "Bad Spell"

Fortunately for such boys, and for their natural guardians, science has come to the rescue, diagnosing the case and prescribing the remedy. Such boys are not developing criminal tendencies; they are merely sick—passing through a physical and moral sickness covering a period of a year or two, perhaps three years, that is due to the profound physical and mental phenomena of adolescence.

In the majority of instances this change is gradual and unaccompanied by any distressing symptoms. But if the temperament is nervous and excitable, it is quite likely that the results may be as above pictured.

Such cases are constantly being brought to the notice of experts in juvenile delinquency. Institutes have been organized for their study and treatment, and the results are set forth in medical journals. In one of these—The Psychological Clinic, which specializes on this subject—Augusta F. Bronner, Ph. D., of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute, of Chicago, presents an illuminating discussion of the whole matter, with reports of cases which came under her personal observation. The title of the article, "The Effect of Adolescent Instability on Conduct," although dryly professional, is in itself reassuring. Here are some deductions drawn from her professional experience:

"The adolescent varies greatly in his behavior; he is now extremely

secretive, then most desirous of confession; religious and sacrilegious in turn; going from one extreme to another—a creature utterly unstable, changing from day to day and from mood to mood. This is not surprising; for with new desires and organic cravings there arise new and strong emotions not yet supplied with adequate channels of expression, which nevertheless react in behavior.

"Up to then he has shown no signs of waywardness; he has appeared as a normal child, not difficult to control and exhibiting no unusual tendencies. Perhaps his previous record has been unusually good. Suddenly his behavior changes; it becomes contrary to the tenor of his earlier life; he becomes unstable, un-

reliably performing acts that are unusual, at least for him, foolish and erratic. Sometimes this erraticism is so extreme as to verge on actual psychosis. All this occurs without any marked change in the external conditions under which he lives.

"Often the outburst of irregular and unusual action is brief; a few weeks or months during which one cannot anticipate what will occur after which the boy or girl displays no further tendency to peculiarity or delinquency. In other instances a longer period elapses before the individual reverts to his former stability. But when the unusual conduct is an adolescent phenomenon it terminates during that period unless other new elements enter which prolong and alter it."