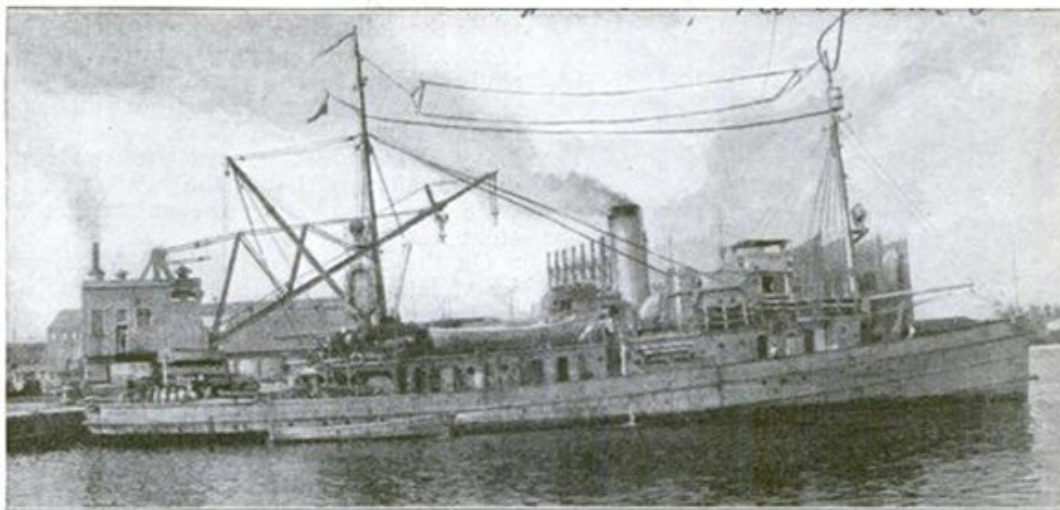


SALVAGING A U-BOAT TO SINK IT

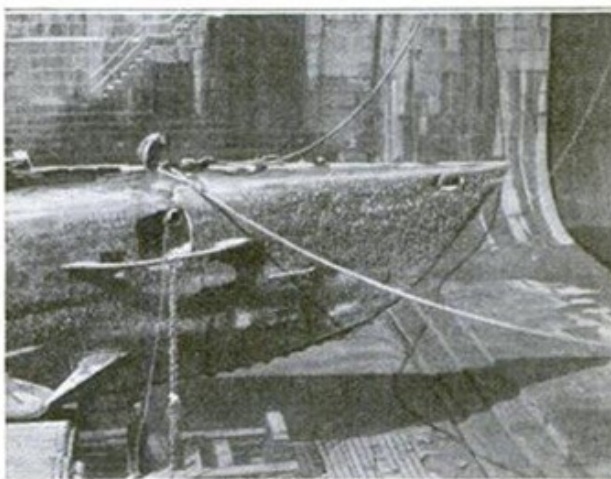
By EDWARD G. MAXWELL



The United States Ship "Falcon," the Navy's Salvage Ship, Which is Equipped with the Most Modern Devices and is Manned by a Crew of Experts, Selected from the Whole Personnel of the Navy

THOUGH equipped with the most modern devices for raising sunken vessels and manned by a crew in which are specialists drafted from the whole navy, the U. S. S. "Falcon," the navy's salvage ship, was two months in floating the ex-German submarine "U-111" which once attempted to cheat the executioner. The teredo, aquatic auger of southern waters, was to blame.

The "U-111" was brought to the United States, following the



Above: Barnacle-Covered Prow of the Ex-German Submarine "U-111," as It Lay in Drydock. Left: The Submarine in Drydock at the Norfolk Navy Yard, Where It was Completely Dismantled to Discover Its Secrets



armistice, with a number of other war vessels which had flown the kaiser's flag until turned over to the allies at Scapa Flow. It was taken to the Norfolk Navy Yard, where the men who design American fighting craft pried around inside it to find out what made the German undersea fleet the terror of the world. In their quest for structural secrets they removed all

pipe and with wooden plugs stopped up the holes where the pipe went through



Commander of the United States Ship "Falcon,"
Standing on the Deck beside the Conning Tower
of the Ex-German Submarine "U-111"

the hull. There were 80 outlets, altogether.

Nearly two years ago the "U-111," which was a commerce raider during the war, was towed out from Norfolk in company with the other ex-German vessels, to be sunk in deep water in accordance with the treaty terms. Its companions were destroyed, as scheduled, by bombs dropped from naval airplanes, but the "U-111," a stubborn craft, sank in 40 feet of water while being towed to sea.

The navy knew that the grave into which the submarine had cast itself was not deep enough to satisfy the treaty provisions, but the "Falcon" was busy on other assignments, and it was nearly 18 months before the salvage ship, a converted minesweeper, was ordered to raise the last of the ex-Germans. The sinking of the submarine in shallow water, it was thought, was due to the slipping of one of the wooden plugs, and the "Falcon" was expected to meet no difficulty in again plugging the hole and pumping the craft out so that it would rise. The existence of the teredo was ignored in these calculations.

But during the time the "U-111" had lain on the bottom, the teredo, which is a sort of shellfish with an unappeasable

appetite for wood, had cut into sawdust, to the last plug, the 80 stoppers put in while the submarine was in drydock. The "Falcon's" crew, among whom are 18 skilled divers, had to patch up something which was far from being a boat and not so far from being a sieve. When the Navy Department learned the true conditions, all agreed that the "Falcon" had done well in floating the submarine in eight weeks.

On the surface again, the "U-111" enjoyed but a short life. As soon as the patches put in under water by the divers were strengthened to prevent a recurrence of the first accident, the "Falcon" towed it offshore and sank it, with a mine, out beyond the 200-fathom line.

