

## HEROIC DEEDS OF THE S-4 SALVAGE DIVERS

FOR SAVING A COMRADE'S LIFE, down in the mud-obscured and freezing depths where the smashed submarine lay with her crew of dead men, Thomas Eadie, chief gunner's mate, may win the Congressional Medal of Honor. He has been recommended for it by Captain Hartley, of the submarine tender *Falcon*. Courting "extreme personal peril," he left his bunk, where he was resting after an arduous dive of his own, and descended again into the water—now lasht with storm and swathed in the darkness of night—to rescue his

The vessel, at anchor, had picked up a line attached to a yellow buoy. The buoy was anchored to a grapnel which had been dragged by the coast guard, and which had hooked something. We all hoped it was the submarine.

While the *Falcon* was maneuvering into better position I put on three suits of heavy woolen underwear and three pairs of woolen socks. A thermometer, sent overside to the bottom, showed the temperature there was 34—pretty cold. I wore woolen gloves which fitted inside waterproof mittens of canvas, lined with rubber, and in turn were cemented at the wrists to the diving-suit. This combination was a special device developed through our experience in the *S-51* disaster.

It was a little after one o'clock in the afternoon when they finished dressing me. The diving-suit, with shoes and helmet, weighed 200 pounds. Under water the buoyancy makes it seem light, but it is clumsy above the surface.

Aided by two men, I got on the diving stage. I was lowered over the *Falcon's* side until my helmet was just under the surface of the water. The lowering then stopt, while I tested out the telephone inside the helmet, and the air-line.

My equipment consisted of the usual heavy knife, which divers always carry, a hammer and a small piece of line. As it was daylight, I did not take a lamp along. I regretted this later, because the visibility around the submarine was very poor, and at best I could see only about four feet ahead.

When I had completed my tests I called into the telephone transmitter: "Everything is all right. Carry me to the descending line."

This, he explains, was the line leading down into the ocean from

the yellow buoy. And he goes on to relate that the men on the *Falcon* moved the diving stage over to the line, whereupon Eadie threw one arm and one leg around it to guide his descent and slid down as rapidly as possible. Reading on:

The whole drop of seventeen fathoms, 102 feet, took less than a minute. I landed on the extreme top of the conning-tower between both periscopes. At least we had found the submarine.

I climbed down off the conning-tower to the forward deck. On landing there I heard a faint signal. I hadn't sent any signals, but they must have heard the thump of my shoes, weighted with lead, when I started forward and stepped down on a projection of the conning-tower.

The signal was a tapping sound. I started along the deck in the direction I thought it was coming from. I heard it again, and then sent a signal by hitting with my hammer on a metal part of the deck.

I hit once. The answer came immediately. This gave me a better idea where the signals were coming from. Hoping to locate them exactly, I knelt on the next hatch I came to and pounded with the hammer. I held my other hand, palm down, on the hatch, which, of course, was of steel and led into the torpedo-room.

Answering, they hit the hatch just beneath my hand. I felt it distinctly. The vibration was transmitted through my diving-suit to the telephone inside the helmet so distinctly that the torpedo-man on the *Falcon*, who was wearing the telephone receiving set, knew there were persons alive in the submarine even before I shouted, "There's life aboard."

I gave the imprisoned men another signal, three or four taps with my hammer. Their answers were all made by six raps.

They were trying to tell me there were six of them in there.

I tried to learn what damage had been done. I walked aft. The amount of wreckage there was more terrific than in the case of the *S-51*, altho the actual damage to the submarine is probably less.

She was cut half-way through and seemed to have been struck a little aft of the torpedo-room. A hole had been torn in her hull from there to a point about eight feet forward of the gun, which is on the deck forward of the conning-tower.

I walked forward again and got on the bow, because the people on the *Falcon* wanted to know the direction in which she was lying. I telephoned the *Falcon* that I was on the bow and was going to walk aft. As I walked the bubbles caused by escaping air from the air-control valve in my helmet rose to the surface. They formed a line, showing the direction the submarine was headed. Her bow pointed southwest.

When I got aft, I tried the conning-tower with my hammer to see if there was life inside. I received no answer. I tried to look inside through the four-inch glass portholes, but I couldn't see anything. I next walked farther aft along the port side. I then found myself checked by my air-line, and found it had fouled on both the radio antenna and the yardarm of the signal mast of the submarine.

I knelt and, reaching as far as I could, tapped again with the hammer. But I got no answer. I convinced myself the only life aboard was in the forward part. I started forward again.

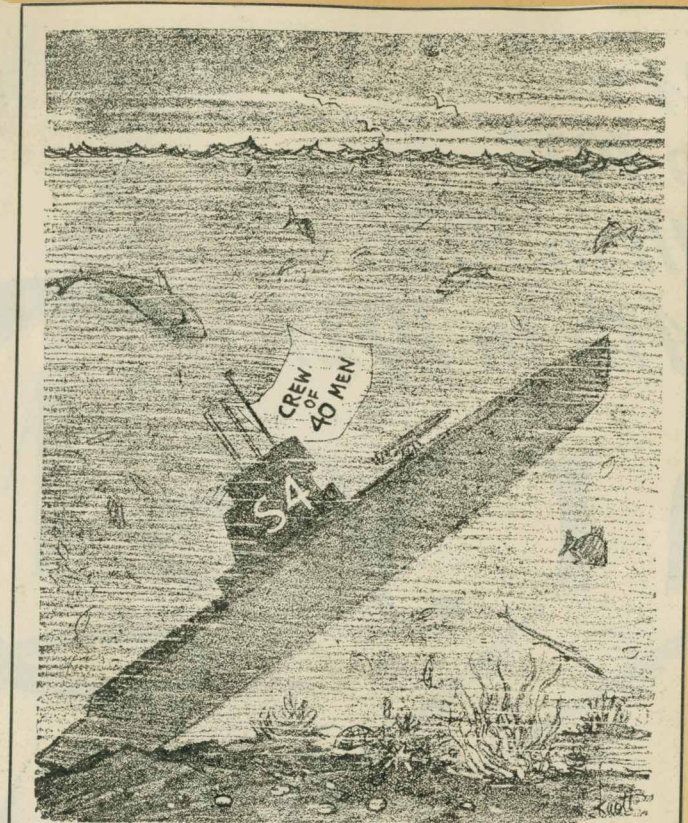
On my way I stopt at the conning-tower and opened the hatch leading to the connection for the salvage line. The officers on the *Falcon* asked me if I was satisfied with my inspection, and I replied that I was. They said that they had another man ready to come down and asked me to stand by to go up.

The men above pulled me up by the life-line until I was forty feet beneath the surface. They held me there five minutes to

accustom me to the change in pressure and then pulled me up ten feet more. I remained at that depth fifteen minutes and then was hauled rapidly to the top. Within two minutes after my diving-suit had been removed, I was in the recompression chamber.

This is a sort of tank in which a diver is confined after coming to the surface. The air is pumped into it under pressure, and this pressure is gradually lowered. I remained in the chamber twenty-seven minutes.

Bill Carr, chief bo'-sun's mate, then went down to the submarine and secured a line of



AS MAGRUDER SAID: "TOO MUCH WASTE IN THE NAVY"  
—Knott in *The Dallas News*.



International Newsreel photograph  
ALL ABOARD FOR DAVY JONES'S LOCKER!  
One of the navy divers has here been helped overside from the submarine tender *Falcon*, and is about to descend to the *S-4*, 102 feet below.

successor at the task, L. S. Michaels, chief torpedo-man, whose lines were fouled. In undertaking that desperate struggle, Eadie was risking his own life in more ways than one, especially as he had only just left the recompression chamber in which a diver remains for some time after returning to the surface, as a precaution against the dreaded "bends." Other gallant exploits of the Navy divers have marked the salvage operations over the *S-4*, just as they did those over the *S-51*. In fact, we learn from the *New York World* that Eadie, who is over forty, "holds the Navy Cross for heroism in the *S-51* disaster," also that "Admiral Brumby says he will recommend him for the highest honors the Navy can offer."

It was at the end of a crowded day for the veteran chief gunner's mate that he got into his clumsy diving dress and helmet for the second time to respond to an S. O. S. from the bottom of the sea. He himself unfolds the whole story in his own language, under copyright of the North American Newspaper Alliance, and *The World* prints it under his name. Thus:

When word was flashed that the submarine *S-4* had sunk, I was at my home in Newport on week-end leave. The officer of the deck at the station telephoned me the news, and said all divers were to report at once.

After we were assembled, eleven of us, we started in three fast automobiles. The Rhode Island State police cleared traffic to Fall River. From there the Massachusetts State troopers gave us clear roads to Fair Haven. We arrived in Provincetown at 12:30 o'clock Sunday morning. I boarded the *Falcon*.

salvage air-hose to the ballast tanks. After Carr came up, chief torpedo-man L. S. Michaels went down to attach a second salvage air-hose.

He started down at eight o'clock Sunday night. The *Falcon* was yawing badly because of

the heavy seas. Under normal conditions no diving would have been attempted.

"Mike" carried a diver's lamp of 1,000 watts, a device perfected during operations on the *S-51*. With that light he could see through the water ten feet.

A northwest wind was blowing thirty miles and getting

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