

Alfred Noyes Tells How British Fishing Boats Trap and Sink Submarines

German U-Boats Flee From Mystery Ships

Continued from page 1

where is your skipper?" asked the naval officer of the returned seaman.

"E's in the dingy, sir, blockading the Bulgars," was the reply.

They take very simple views of Armageddon, some of these trawler skippers, and some excuse for this epic simplicity and largeness has been given to them by the Germans.

For when a trawler is sunk to-day it is usually reported from Berlin as a guardship, or "an English warship."

Why, then, may not a Scotch skipper regard his dingy as a worthy successor at least to the old Victory.

He knows, at any rate, that "frightfulness" has been frightened out of existence in home waters by a herding boat with a Hotchkiss.

Sank Unarmed Boats. Nothing is more baffling, indeed, to the philosophy of "frightfulness" than the fact that, in the long run, desperate remedies are always found for its most desperate manifestations.

The sinking of unarmed fishing boats was one of the favorite amusements of Fritz in the earlier stages of the war.

A typical yarn was told me as we entered the waters where it happened, a true yarn that is recorded in the official log books of the auxiliary fleet.

It was on a fine summer morning that the fishing trawler Victoria left a certain port beloved of Nelson, to fish on the Labadie Bank.

She carried a crew of nine men, together with a little boy named Jones—a friend of the skipper.

He held under his arm a well thumbed copy of "Treasure Island." Perhaps it was this book that had inspired him to the adventure, for, though nobody quite believed at that time in the existence of the twentieth century pirate, there was adventure in the air, and it was only after much pleading that he was allowed to come.

This vessel, of course, was unarmed, and used only for fishing.

For a week all went well. There was a good catch of fish, splashing the rusty-old craft with shining scales from bow and stern and piling up below like mounded silver.

The crew were beginning to think of their women at home and their accustomed nooks in the Lord Nelson and Blue Dolphin taverns.

Stops, But is Shot At. They were about a hundred and thirty miles from land, when the sound of a gun was heard by all hands.

The boy Jones shut his book on his thumb and ran up to the bridge, where he stood by the skipper.

In the distance, against the sunset, they saw the silhouette of a strange looking ship. At first it looked like a drifter, painted gray, with mizzen set.

But the flash of another gun revealed it as a submarine.

The skipper hesitated. Should he stop the ship and trust to the laws of war and the good faith of the enemy? The lives of the crew and the little boy who had been left in his charge were his first thought.

Yes, he would do so, and the order was given. The engines ceased to throb. Then, as the ship rolled idly, he was disillusioned.

The gun flashed again, and he knew that he was facing an implacable determination to sink and destroy.

Boy Meets His Pirates. It was only a forlorn hope, but he would risk it, and not a man demurred at his decision.

The engines rang "Full speed ahead," and the Victoria began to tear through the green water for home.

The submarine opened a rapid fire from two powerful guns, and the first to fall was the little lad Jones, with his thumb still keeping the place in his "Treasure Island."

The skipper kept steadily on his course, with the boy dead at his feet. But the submarine gained rapidly and continued to pour a devastating fire on the helpless craft.

marine and oil upon many troubled waters.

Many queer transformations have been brought about by this war, for there are not only longshore fishermen in naval uniform, but there are also—many mysteries, of which I will say no more.

Suffice it that a thing which looks like a battleship may be comparatively harmless by the side of a thing which looks like Noah's Ark.

There are more ways of producing moral effect than were dreamed of in German philosophy, and it is enough to say that certain mysteries have made German warships run like hares from a boat that was harmless as a mouse.

Even the little knowledge that they possess perplexes them, for they are confronting the most terrible bluff in the gamble of war, the bluff that is backed by realities.

Passengers on American and neutral liners with their flags flying, but—oh, wise precaution—their rafts ready and their boats well stocked with food and water, I have seen them heaving a sigh of content at the sight of a British man-of-war that was not really a man-of-war at all, foaming ahead of them; while all around from skyline to skyline the sea was dotted with insignificant and hardly noted brown-sailed craft—the ships of Drake and Hawkins, loaded with unimagined thunderbolts, the world patrolling battle fleets of England.

Keep Sea in All Weathers. And the crews of the "auxiliaries" must indeed be seamen, for they must keep the seas in all weathers, in craft despite their sturdiness more in rough weather like buck-jumping ponies.

Let the great ships that go sailing by on Christmas Day remember the Christmas of the Van Sturum.

This yarn also, was told to me, in the waters where it happened, while the trawlers were shooting their deadly nets.

On Christmas Day, 1915, the Van Sturum, a steamer of 1,990 tons net, on a voyage from Rouen to Liverpool, was nearing home.

She was in ballast and unarmed and carried a crew of forty-six officers and men.

A heavy southwest swell was running, but the weather was fine and it was possible to see for a distance of at least eight miles.

At about 1:35 p. m., without any warning, the Van Sturum was attacked by two German submarines.

They were not observed until they had approached to within half a mile of the vessel. This may be due to the fact that they were painted a curious color—black and white horizontal stripes.

One submarine then opened fire. Three shots were fired in quick succession, but they all fell short.

The Van Sturum immediately altered course and at the same time sent out a distress call—"Van Sturum chased by two submarines; position critical; firing shots and gaining on us."

Overhauled by U-Boats. After the first attack the engine room telegraphs were rung up to "full speed." The vessel increased from thirteen to fifteen knots and very slowly drew ahead of her adversaries, who had stopped.

The race, a very uneven one, was kept up for three-quarters of an hour, when the submarines, which later developed a speed on the surface of about eighteen knots, again opened fire.

One shell struck the ship on the starboard quarter and another brought down the wireless aerials.

The latter, a lucky shot, cut the vessel entirely off from the outside world.

Realizing his helplessness, unable to observe any friendly patrol vessel and knowing quite well that a few more shots would effectually stop his vessel, the master decided to abandon his ship, and at 2:30 p. m. preparations were made to leave.

At 2:35 p. m. the vessel was stopped. At this time one submarine was lying right under the port quarter.

Killed in Leaving Boat. The crew left in the port and starboard lifeboats, two of the men remaining on board to lower away. While they were endeavoring to get the two men off the submarine fired a torpedo, which passed under the partly lowered boat and struck the ship abreast the engine room.

One man was blown to pieces by the force of the explosion (W. A. Belanger, a boatswain, who hailed from Michigan, U. S. A.), and another man was also killed and fell into the water.

There was no excuse for this cowardly act. There was not a ship in sight, and the enemy could have, with perfect safety, allowed the crew a few more minutes' grace to abandon their vessel.

The submarine was only 200 yards away when the torpedo was fired, and the impact was tremendous.

There was no doubt as to the nature of the weapon which caused this explosion, as the wake of a torpedo was seen by the crew.

During this unprovoked attack on an unarmed ship, in which one of the two men killed was a neutral citizen, the second submarine was keeping a good lookout for the British patrols.

It must be realized that the Van Sturum was at the time of the attack in large, open waters, and, although no patrol vessel was in sight yet, it was not long after the wireless message that a patrol vessel,

also fitted with wireless, hove in sight, steaming at her utmost speed and followed by her consorts.

Although the Van Sturum never received the answering call to her SOS (her aerials having been shot away), yet a reply, "Coming full speed to your assistance" was sent to her by the patrols cruising in the vicinity.

Observing the approach of the British patrols, and the torpedo having failed to sink the Van Sturum, one submarine hastily returned and fired five shells into her.

The noise of the explosions and the rapid interchange of wireless communication between the patrols of trawlers and other craft also brought three British destroyers on the scene, and they were observed coming down at high speed, but by this time both submarines had submerged and bolted.

Risks Ship in Rescue. A Belgian fishing trawler picked up the survivors shortly after they had been set adrift. She had heard the firing, and, although fishing at the time with her trawl down, she immediately hauled it in and, hoisting the Belgian colors, proceeded with the utmost dispatch toward the sound of the firing.

The Belgian skipper did not heed the possibility that he, too, in turn might be destroyed (for he was entirely unarmed), but was prompted by the desire to save life. The crew were all transferred to his vessel and brought into port.

Meanwhile the patrols continued to search the neighborhood for the enemy, and, although unsuccessful in discovering and destroying them, they nevertheless effectually stopped further depredations, and thereby rendered invaluable service to the crowd of shipping which continually passes up and down these main routes.

Heavy Losses in Storm. The approach of the patrols had undoubtedly prevented the enemy from finishing off their prey; for eighteen hours afterward the Van Sturum, still afloat, was observed by a patrol vessel with a heavy list to starboard.

Her boats' falls were banging outboard, all boats had been washed away and the vessel was waterlogged. It seemed impossible that she could have lived in the weather then prevailing, which had grown suddenly worse and developed into a gale during the night.

This bad weather continued for days afterward, and reached its height on December 27, when the vessels on patrol suffered very severe damage. The force of this gale can be imagined when it is stated that over sixty patrol vessels suffered damage and two were lost with all hands.

Forever on ceaseless watch, ready at all times to render protection to peaceful merchantmen sailing the high seas and to attack the enemy at sight, these small craft have kept the sea in calm and storm and shown their supreme value as a fighting unit of the British navy.

During this gale an incredible number of ships were lost, and the loss of life was appalling. Vessels were cast high and dry on the shore a considerable distance inland. Others were hurled and smashed on the rocks.

Christmas Dinner on Derelict. The story of the attempt to save the Van Sturum and bring her into port is characteristic of the pluck, pertinacity and endurance of the auxiliary crew.

On the morning of December 26 one of the patrol vessels which had discovered the Van Sturum lowered a boat with four hands in order to pass a hawser on board and tow her into port.

The undertaking was fraught with the greatest danger. Enormous seas were breaking over the vessel and she was lurching heavily.

Nothing daunted, these four men pulled to the derelict and clambered on board. No sooner had the last man hauled himself up on one of the swinging boats' falls than their little boat was smashed to pieces against the ship's side and immediately sunk.

A wild picture met their gaze when they were able to look round. The vessel had been torpedoed abreast of the engine room. The engines had been blown by the force of the explosion to the starboard side of the vessel. Engine room and stokehold were full of water.

The chart office on the bridge was then explored. Here everything was found intact—a strange contrast with the desolation outside. There was a chart on the table marked off to a position at which the vessel should have arrived at noon on the previous day.

A still stranger sight met them on entering the saloon. The tables had all been laid for the Christmas dinner which was never eaten.

Struggle to Save Vessel. The little party of four then set to work in earnest and successfully passed a 5-inch hawser from the port bow to the attendant trawler; but, as the derelict's steering gear had been jammed she became uncontrollable.

Another trawler then closed on the derelict and successfully managed to take a wire and keep her in position while the first trawler towed. Shortly afterward the wire parted, and another effort—again unsuccessful—was made to take a rope from the port quarter. This

manoeuvre was carried out with great skill, as the trawler had to pass very close to receive her rope. Another trawler closed in and took a second rope from forward, and towing was again recommenced, with one vessel steering.

The day wore on. Wires and ropes frequently parted, but each time the difficulty was overcome by sheer persistency, and each time new lines were passed to and fro.

The afternoon faded and darkness began to shroud the waters. It was an inky night and the wind freshened and continued to blow with ever-increasing violence.

The skies seemed to open. Rainstorms swept the seething waters; and lines of foam, discovered by the flickering lights of the patrol vessels as the waves topped their bulwarks, threatened to engulf both the derelict and those trying to save her.

They made very little headway, but steadily pluggd on toward a haven where they hoped to be able to beach their prize.

Situation Almost Hopeless. The day dawned, revealing the derelict in very serious straits. The situation was practically hopeless. The seas ran mountains high, and it looked as if she would sink at any minute.

At 6:30 a. m. on December 27 the derelict broke adrift from the last wire that held her. It was now impossible to communicate. Seas broke over her from end to end.

She began to lurch very heavily and gave one the impression that her last moments had come. Meanwhile the gallant little four remained at their posts on board.

The trawler Leader warned all vessels to clear and then steamed right up alongside. In doing so she struck her quarter against the counter of the derelict and started rivets and plates.

The lieutenant in charge had decided that whatever happened he would save the four men who were on board. After clearing his vessel he again closed. His remaining boat was then launched and a heaving line thrown on board the sinking ship.

No sooner had the boat been hauled alongside than the Van Sturum suddenly rolled over to starboard and went down by the head, her stern struck the bottom and she remained for fully a minute with her stern in the air before falling over and disappearing.

The four men managed to slide down the ship's side just in time to cut the boat adrift and push clear. In doing so the boat was nearly swamped. The trawler again closed and just managed to rescue them; but the boat was swept away from her side and lost.

Sea Power Rests on Men. Mention has already been made of the memorable gale of December 27, yet the patrol vessels concerned remained on their beat and only returned to port to refuel and repair at the authorized hour on December 29, and were off to sea again two days later.

It is upon such men—not upon modern machinery—that sea power, in the last resort, depends, and the sea power of the Island Empire rests secure in her possession of a vast seagoing brood which to-day, as in the days of the Armada, occupies its business, from childhood to old age, in great waters.

Nor have they forgotten to see the ancient works and wonders in the deep. Many of them drink and curse; but more of them are quiet, God-fearing men, with a Bible in their kit, who have a fist of iron for the face of the wicked.

And not one of them is even remotely like the vivid creatures of modern literature. Battle transfigures them. Occasionally—in any stir that breaks the monotony of their days and nights—one catches a glimpse of what that transfiguration must be.

As our patrol boat stole into port at dusk we passed a "mystery ship" making ready to sail. There were men on her deck who walked and looked like panthers.

There was an indescribable smouldering in their eyes, a deep fire, which may be seen even in the pictures of the boy Jack Cornwell, the young hero of the Jutland battle. In repose it has a touch of sulkenness; but it is the sulkenness of thunder and deep waters, and its secret abides with those who have looked from birth into the eyes of their inscrutable mother, the sea.

Vast Work Done in Secret. But the aspect of the whole matter which it seems most desirable to emphasize is just that aspect which has been overlooked by neutrals on almost every side of this world war.

When no immediate sensational food has been provided for the hunger of the daily press, it might be supposed that rational folk would at least consider two possibilities:

(a) That operations on a great scale, together with the creation of trained hosts and elaborate equipment, require a vast amount of quiet work in order to secure success.

Any one, of course, even the Crown Prince, can make a holocaust.

(b) That it is sometimes necessary to conceal, with the greatest care, every single fact that might help to answer so easy a question as, "What is England doing?" or, "When is England going to wake up?"

Yet, if there be any capable of

imagining the mastodon from the one or two dry bones here given it must occur to them that the work of organizing and directing the operations of even the "auxiliary fleet" is a gigantic one, and that this is nevertheless only a very small part, indeed, in relation to the work of the fleet itself.

U-Boats Tracked for Miles. At each auxiliary base there are offices, or "Strafe Houses," manned by officers of the Royal Navy, who control and direct and are in constant touch with all that is happening in all our seas.

They have mapped out all our waters, on which the movements of all reported submarines are recorded and followed up. More than a little disconcerting it would be to our enemies to look at one of these great maps, whereon not only the spots at which submarines have been sighted are neatly marked, but also the exact courses which they have taken, with all their wanderings, for hundreds of miles, traced in thin, red lines, till the moment when the signal is given by telephone and wireless, for the guns and nets to close in.

It is not always mere office work in these strafe houses, for one of them had been ventilated by a well aimed shell from a German battleship in a hurry. The only result, however, was the pleasure taken by the occupants in the fact that the royal standard which covered one of the perforated walls had thus been turned into a shot-rent trophy.

But sensationalism is of little account in the strafe house, and the headline is reduced there to the very smallest type. While I was listening to terse tales of the recent bombardment, there was a dull explosion far out at sea. The telephone immediately began to make inquiries, and a little

later the news came that one of our travelers had been lost with all hands. Faces were grave, but there were only three or four remarks on the subject in the strafe house. The first was: "Traffic must be held up."

The second was: "Her skipper was a good chap." The third was: "She must be replaced by trawler No. So and So; not the Stormy Petrel, she had a long spell last week."

Duty—Not Sport. And those three remarks sum up the sailor's attitude toward this warfare—duty, sober realization of the hard facts and care for the men. From first to last, despite the ironical name of the office, I encountered none of that mere "sporting desire" to kill Germans with which our seamen have been credited. From first to last, through all ranks, they are simply doing their duty.

There is regret, sometimes, when they know that a submarine has been destroyed and they are unable to get "the scalp," in the form of evidence that will be accepted by the Admiralty. But the symbol of the whole work that they are doing was provided by the beautifully polished brass periscope of a German submarine which I saw in the comfortable room of the senior naval officer. It had been turned into a flower stand and carried a crown of English roses. Beauty and civilization sometimes do get forward, even on top of a German periscope.

ARMY FOOTBALL STAR WEDS Lieutenant Weyand Takes Bride in Allentown.

Allentown, Penn., Aug. 26.—Lieutenant Alexander M. Weyand, U. S. A., of Red Bank, N. J., captain of last year's winning Army football team and for three years choice for tackle on the

all-American team, married Miss Marie W. Mulqueen, of this city, today.

The ceremony was performed by Monsignor Peter Masson. Among the guests were Lieutenant Larson G. Atkins, U. S. A., Berkeley, Cal.; Lieutenant J. O'Hare, coast artillery, Boston; and Lieutenant Fred J. Williams, field artillery, New York.

PASSAIC MILLS GET DEUTSCHLAND DYES Woolen Firms Arrange for Big Share of Submarine's Cargo.

A large share of the valuable dye-stuffs brought to this country from Germany on the Deutschland is expected to be delivered within a few days to two woolen mills in Passaic, N. J.

George Roehlig, general superintendent of the Bolony Worsted Mill, said yesterday that part of the submarine's cargo would be used to revive several forms of dyeing which had been discontinued since a war isolated German dye works from the American market.

Otto Schmidt, superintendent of the Forstmann & Huffman Company's plant, said that his firm also expected to receive a shipment from the New York dealers in dye-stuffs who are handling the Deutschland's cargo.

CHILDREN GET 4TH AVE. PLOT AS PLAYGROUND One Hundred Take Possession of Lot Bequeathed to Society.

A hundred youngsters marched triumphantly across the street from the Children's Society Building to the lot on the northeast corner of Twenty-third Street and Fourth Avenue yesterday morning and took possession of the plot as a playground.

There, for the first time in the lives of many of them, they romped, dug trenches and played games, free from the menace of wagons and automobiles. Until yesterday the lot, which was left to the Children's Society by the will of Joseph Milbank, had lain idle.

The request of a small charge of the society to be allowed to play in it set Ernest K. Coulter, the superintendent, thinking. He appealed to George Gordon Battle, president of the society, and through their combined efforts the place was turned over yesterday to the children.

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