"When the Next "Sub" Sinks"

"Is There Any Hope?" Tapped the Men in the Destroyed S-4—Here Is the Answer to Their Question—The Story of Everything That Has Been Done to Make Sure There Is Hope for Future Submarine Crises That Are Trapped on the Bottom of the Sea.

By Comdr. Edward Ellisberg

(Author of "On the Bottom": Salvage Officer of the S-4 and the S-51)

"Submarines wrecked by enemy shellfire must look to salvage ships for aid."

T he work before Christmas, 1928. A little vessel pitched wildly to the untenanted side of Cape Cod, while a few cork buoys tied to a diving hose marked the spot, 100 feet below, where the S-4 lay.

All the world during that and weeks thereafter listened to the Patriot's microphones as then the depths the fleshy raps of a hammer beat out in data and details the tragic tale of S-4. Down amidships, 300 feet beneath the surface, lay the decommissioned submarine. "Air good for very last. Please hurry," and finally, "Is there any hope?"
The story blew on those on the Palms. Insolent hopefully; the men inside died. The silence at sea seemed final.

But another storm arose—a storm of public opinion, which is the pro and in Congress bent on the demand that never again should such a tragedy be possible. And it is one of the features of our age that, regardless of apparent insurmountable difficulty, what public opinion truly demands speedily becomes feasible.

The idea was not new; little was done toward making it practical till the pressure of public opinion after the S-4 disaster forced the development of this idea along with other rescue experiments. Under Undersecretary, Monson's direction, the newest breathing mask was developed in a novel and much simplified form, consisting principally of a rubber bag of the approximate capacity of the human lungs, together with a mask fitting for breathing the air from the sea. A small, sleek tube carried for the pressurized resuscitation and an automatic intake valve.

With this apparatus, under proper conditions, an average swimmer can easily remain breathing for a short period required to reach the surface and can then use the inflating bag or "lung" as a life preserver. For cases where outside resuce apparatus cannot be applied in time, and where the crew must escape by their own effort, the value of this apparatus is incalculable. If a submarine is properly fitted with escape hatches, it is likely that if the crew could be filled instantly the crew, breathing the "lungs" could escape.

As the submarine went down, the crewman who had experimented with breathing apparatus of this type. On one of the German submarines, this man was found dead, the breathing being such a novel, with an illustration showing the crew of a sunken submarine seated in a flooded room, each man wearing the breathing device and waiting his turn to escape on the hatch.

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