

Submarine Stories of the North Sea

TOLD by an American writer in praise of the united fleets and of the Canadian-born sea-dog Admiral Sims.

YANKEE?—oh yes—because it's Ralph D. Paine who writes *The Fighting Fleets*, the newest thing just off the press about the war navies. But the British Navy is the lord of the navies, even though Britannia makes no pretense of "ruling the waves." There has been one clean-cut definite job for the American navy to do over there, and one clean-cut Canadian-born sea-dog to do it. The job is destroying submarines. The man on the job is Vice-Admiral Sims, who was born and raised near Port Hope, Ontario.

Sims' adopted Uncle Sam went to war because of submarines. Hence subs were the first job. It was the American destroyer fleet that made America's first dent on the war; the fleet that was ready to put to sea as soon as the Admiralty could release it, and long before a Yankee soldier landed in France.

The Diver's Ruse

AFTER the Admiralty sees fit to slip the screen of secrecy from the records—and that will be when the war is won—there will be a host of thrilling tales to listen to of the stunts that have been pulled off in and over and round about the North Sea by the submarine hunters. Just yet they are nearly all classed as "hush, hush stuff" in the mess rooms and very few have leaked out. A favorite yarn—it is tavern talk now in one or two east-coast ports—is of a diver who flim-flammed an enemy submarine crept into an English harbor and drop a cargo of mines. Halted on the bottom, she had just let slip a mine when a curious "tap-tap" was heard coming from the outer shell of the U-boat. The U-boat skipper understood both English and the Morse code. The tapping was methodical. It was a message in Morse. "Rise and surrender or depth charge will be exploded against your hull." In a few minutes a postscript was hammered out on the hull:—"Depth charge has been wired and lowered."

The sub rose as quickly as the crew could blow out the water ballast. It broke water a hundred yards away from an armed trawler which exhibited the greatest surprise at the sudden appearance of the U-boat, as though it were entirely unexpected. The trawler boiled with activity in an instant, however, and a gun crew dashed for the forward deck. The sub had no time to submerge and escape. Surrender was inevitable and it was done promptly. The trawler's boats took off the crew and hitched a line to the U-boat. While the work of capture was being completed there rose from the depths the dripping helmet of a diver.

Relieved of his diving gear aboard the trawler the diver grinned as he looked over the disconsolate captives. "I knew you was wide awake, Tom," he said to the trawler's skipper, "and I could trust you to nail the beggar when he came to the top. I was busy on the wreck of the drifter, makin' ready to patch the hole so she could be raised and pumped out, when this perishin' Hun come past and settled himself on the bottom. A gray shadow was what I saw and you didn't have to tell me that mine-layin' was his game."

"Aye, but how did you make him pop up along-side of us?"

"It was bright of me, Tom. I'll get a rating for it. The navy re-

cognizes men like me. I was a signal man before they made a diver of me. I walks over to this indecent Hun and talks to him with my hammer."

"Talks to him? And how was that?"

"In Morse, you stupid. It was a highly promisin' bet that one of the lot could understand my little piece. If they didn't I would ha' had to send up word to you. But I was on my own, and it meant bein' recommended by the Admiralty as the bloke that captured the submarine alone."

Shoot and Be Damned!

WHEN the British steamer *Thracia* was sunk a fifteen year old lad was the sole survivor. Six of his mates had struggled, along with him, to hang on to the riddled wreck of a small boat which had been smashed by shell-fire from the submarine. All were washed off and drowned but the boy.

After a while the submarine heaved up to survey the surface. Seeing the lad lashed to the wreckage, the submarine commander hailed and bombarded him with questions—the name of the ship, cargo, destination and so on.

"Are you an Englishman?" bawled the German. "You can bet your last bob I am," the youngster yelled back.

"Then I shall shoot you," threatened the Teuton. "Shoot and be damned to you," piped up the boy.

"This seems to have puzzled the Hun," said the mariner man who told the tale to Mr. Paine in a Gravesend tavern. "By rights, the boy should have flung up his hands and bawled 'Kamerad!'" The officer's dignity was ruffled, and of course he had no sense of humor, so he swelled up and retorted:—"I will not powder waste on a pig of an Englishman. Drown, you leetle swine, drown."

"With this he rang up full speed and sheered off to look for another ship to sink. The boy had lashed himself to his bit of wreckage and he tumbled about in the sea for thirteen hours before a fishing boat found him. He was insensible then, but soon came around again, as lively as a cock sparrow."

The Depth Bomb

PERISCOPE! The warning came in a yell from the coxswain. In the half of a split second later Lieutenant Ford of the American destroyer *Fanning* barked out a volley of crisp commands. The



The man who reformed gunnery and other things in the U. S. Navy.

ship turned on her heel, rushed over the spot where the periscope had been, and dropped a depth charge.

The submarine survived the attack but the great steel shell lurched and trembled as the blasting concussion drove the weight of water against it like a solid wall. She began to coast with horizontal rudders tilted to guide her to safer depths before another bomb should seek her. At two hundred feet down she was still diving. The motors had been jarred and behaved badly—the hydroplanes would not warp back. The depth-bomb had crippled the underwater thing. Fifty feet more of depth meant disaster. The weight of water began to squeeze the hull with an irresistible pressure. There were signs of leakage. The submarine could neither steer nor go ahead. There was only one thing to do, one chance of survival,—to blow out the ballast tanks and rise to the surface like a galled whale.

"A red-hot, very earnest reception awaited this unfortunate submarine's upheaval from the depths. The guns of the *Fanning* and the *Nicholson* were ready to smash him. . . . Torpedo crews stood by the tubes

on deck, ardently prepared to give Fritz a dose of his own medicine.

"Up boiled the submarine and showed a long, wet back, breaking water within easy range of the vengeful destroyers."

"Bang," and a shell from the nearest destroyer scattered the water just beyond the U-boat.

"Crash," and another kicked up spray a trifle short. "The Huns came swarming out of an open hatch.

. . . And as they madly erupted on deck, every one flung his hands above his head and bawled:—

"Kamerad! Kamerad! Kamerad!"

"A gunner's mate on the forward deck of the *Fanning* grinned and exclaimed:—

"Kamerad, hell! What kind of a word is that to use in war?"

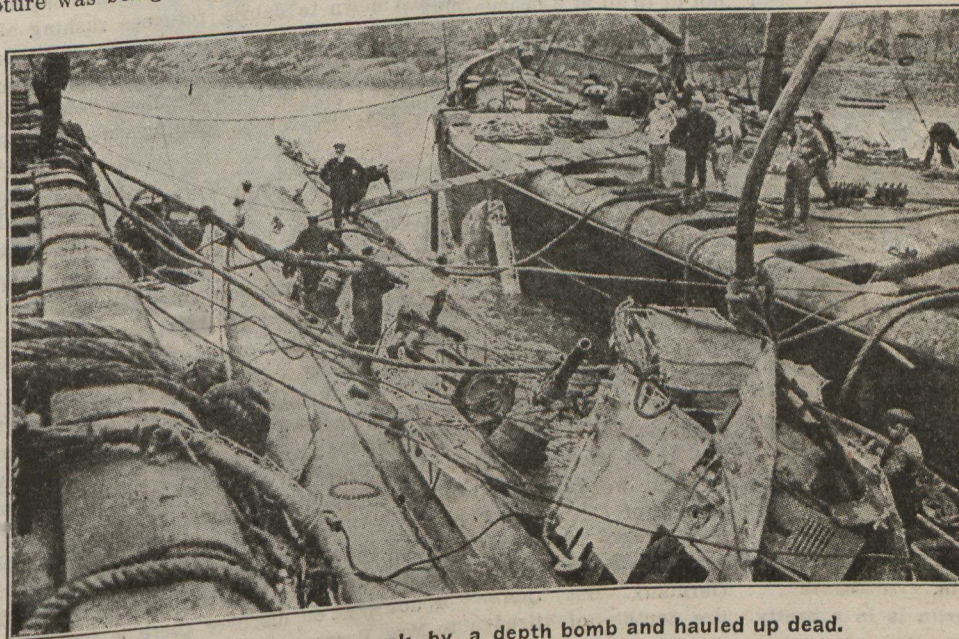
"They behave as if they expected us to shoot 'em in cold blood," growled another petty officer. "What do they think we are? Germans?"

Sims, the Sub-Hunter

VICE-ADMIRAL SIMS is affable and democratic. There is nothing in his manner to suggest the martinet of the old blue-water school. One of the first factors in his summing of efficiency is "the happy ship." His ability as a naval officer is unquestioned at home and abroad, but personality has been also a winning factor. Men have always served him devotedly, because they felt confidence in him, not because they feared him. Tall, spare, and as straight as a lance, he seems so youthful that it would be tactless to mention his years. The small gray beard, very trimly kept, is rather exceptional among the clean-shaven naval officers of to-day. A complexion as fresh as a midshipman's and the eye of a sailor, frank and alert, harmonise with the whole impression of him,—a man at the peak of his vigor.

He has always been aggressive. "Be sure you are right, then go ahead, and damn the torpedoes," is one of the main texts in his doctrine. As a gunnery expert he came to the conclusion that the fire of the American ships in the battle of Santiago was deplorably poor. He proposed a plan to overhaul and modernize the system of target practice. The U. S. Navy Department ignored him so he broke all naval precedents by going direct to President Roosevelt, then in office. As Commander-in-Chief of the navy he approved the plans and Sims went unpunished.

*The Fighting Fleets by Ralph D. Paine.—Thos. Allen.



This U-Boat was sunk by a depth bomb and hauled up dead.