

into a floating mine even if she tries (the bow-wave tending to throw it off, as many experiments have proved); and although, theoretically, a ship fitted with paravanes cannot bring her hull into contact with a moored mine; yet the fact remained that ships were being lost right along from both kinds. It seemed high time, then, in the case of the *Hercules* and her escorting destroyers, that the German Navy, which had undertaken to see them safely through the mine barrier, and which knew more about the pattern of its death-traps than any one else, should begin to shoulder some of its responsibilities. It was good news that the *Regensburg* was about to make a tardy appearance and hand over a hostage in the form of a German pilot.

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The blank grey fog-curtain which trailed its misty folds across the ward-room scuttles discouraged all of the grate-side loungers whom I tried to bestir to go up at two o'clock to watch for the appearance of the *Regensburg*, and, meeting, with no better success in the snugly comfortable "commission-room" into which the former gun-room had been converted for the voyage, I mounted alone the iron ladders which led to the lofty vantage of the signal bridge. There was only a few hundred yards of visibility, but the