

# The Diary of a U-Boat Commander

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(Translated from the Original German by Irving R. Bacon)

1915—20 July

A big steamship from America passed within less than a thousand yards of us at half-past five o'clock this morning, sixty miles south of the Irish coast. Evidently our periscope was not seen by her, as she kept on the even tenor of her way without any apparent excitement aboard. She presented a fine appearance. I wondered whether she carried anything which would have galvanized the sinking of her.

The torpedoes lay ready in the tubes. A slight pressure upon an electric button and this grand, majestic looking steamship would have been junk at the bottom of the sea. My fingers glided playfully over the fateful button. A whim, a caprice, a passing, fitful twinge of sympathetic pain, almost any trifling inward accident might have impelled me to press the button; and I have taken the world and sent excommunications against us Prussians—a shouting down the corridors of time to the generations.

I thought of that Greek youth who on an evening name—albeit an infamous one—by firing the Temple of Diana. A slightly heavier pressure upon this button than I am exerting now, I thought, "and your name, Hans von Tuedinger, will endure through all the ages. Half the continent of Europe will treasure your name as a precious heirloom to be handed down with gratitude from generation to generation; but the other half of Europe and the rest of the world will be filled with loathing whenever your name is mentioned."

I thought also of the women and children aboard that beautiful steamship, and away went every vestige of that awful instinct of ambition which is so prone, selfishly to sacrifice half a world for no other purpose than to see one's own name blazoned in the temple of fame which for the most part, as far as warriors are concerned, should be filled with the names of the dead.

Less than an hour after the vessel had passed out of our sight an English patrol boat came along. She was beyond the range of our torpedoes and was taking a course which would carry her still further away unless we sheered off in her direction. To do this would have been too dangerous, as the part of the Channel toward which the patrol boat was headed literally swarmed with war ships, and besides was within mine.

I have learned to respect Fritz's advice to such an extent that I never take any decisive step of importance to the U-boat without consulting him. I sent for him and the situation before him.

"By all means let us rise to the surface and give the Britisher a taste of our 5-inch gun," said Fritz. "We can submerge within less than a minute and, after changing our position, rise again, and if we've not done sufficient execution by the first shot, we can give them another."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well," he replied with a strange grin, "they are enemies."

"You mean that we should fire into the lifeboats?"

"Quite so. They surely would not hesitate to treat us in that way if our roles were exchanged."

"Halbert I shall report you to the Admiralty. Many ignoble acts have been imputed to us Germans, but never yet has it entered the mind of any U-boat commander to think of shooting down helpless men merely because they wear a different uniform than ours. Your suggestion is as unpatriotic as it is inhuman. You may remain in your cabin during the rest of our trip unless it becomes necessary for me to employ your services again."

The man saluted, clicked his heels together and went to his cabin.

I went about to set the air apparatus a-going to expel the water ballast, in order to rise to the surface, when there appeared on the disk a streak of black smoke low on the horizon northeast. A wait of several minutes was rewarded by the sight of two destroyers and a cruiser hurrying in our direction. The wireless calls from the sinking patrol were being answered. It would have been worse than foolhardy to try conclusions with so many ships at one time. So we remained below, removing to a distance where we could see without danger of being seen. But it seems that the guns of the sun must have betrayed us to the oncoming vessels, for they all began firing simultaneously, and some of the shells struck the water so uncomfortably near that I lost every bit of curiosity to continue the observation. Satisfied that we had done a good day's work and with practically the whole day still before us, we left this too precarious vicinity and traveled under water toward Heligoland. I was desirous of reaching our base again.

In regard to the gunner, Fritz has shaken my resolution. He gave me all before me, and within a few minutes of his characteristic talks, the result of which is to have left me in doubt just where my duty lies.

"Have you forgotten what I told you about Edehn, the time Tiemann was called into your conclave?" said Fritz. "This young gunner is ultra-patriotic, not naturally mendacious. The chances are that in all personal matters he is as kind and good natured as Tiemann, but when the Fatherland is concerned both of them lose judgment altogether and believe they are serving their country, their Kaiser and their God by reducing the number of their country's enemies. Another thing—don't forget that Halbert never misses the object he aims at. If you lose him you lose one of your chief assets. Even if he were murderously inclined by nature he would be too precious for U-boat purposes to make the removal of him desirable."

"But, Fritz you don't mean to justify the encouragement of murder on the ground that it may be beneficial to the one who employs the murderer?"

"Not the way you put it," replied

were already headed in the direction of land.

"Is it your pleasure to do away with them?" asked Halbert, poking his head in at the door of the conning tower. He had watched proceedings through the second periscope and his gunner's instinct craved for play.

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Fritz. "No honest, justice loving person would ever think of hiring a murderer to deal with an enemy. But what I mean in regard to Halbert is that he is as useful to you as is the electricity which runs your boat. If you give full, unbridled scope to the electric current it will scatter ruin all about; so if you give reins to Halbert. But both are fortunately susceptible of being checked. He as well as electricity is an extremely dangerous master, but as servants whom you find anything more obedient or useful?" (To be continued.)

## Knights of Columbus Deny Report of Controversy

An ugly report has been given nation-wide circulation particularly through newspapers which are served by the International News Service in which it is said that a controversy exists between the Knights of Columbus and the Masonic fraternity, regarding work at the Army camps. This has been emphatically denied by Col. F. H. Callahan, chairman of the Knights of Columbus Committee on War Activities.

"It is a mistake that there is any fight or controversy of any kind between the Masons and the Knights of Columbus," said Col. Callahan. "The Knights of Columbus are working in the Army camps not as a lodge, but as the representatives of the Catholic people of this country. This was made necessary by reason of the fact that Catholics are not permitted to have any control or representation or to hold any office in the Y. M. C. A. Our work is purely social, recreational and religious in character; it is for the benefit of the soldiers regardless of their church or lodge affiliations, and no meetings are held within our buildings to which all men in uniform will not be welcome. We do not oppose the entrance of the Masons or any other fraternal society into the camps and we shall be glad to extend to them any courtesies or assistance within our power."

## The American Camp in England

By GERTRUDE LYNCH of The Vigilantes  
Special Correspondence of The Telegraph

London, Sept. 15.—In one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful upland in England, several miles from London, is situated the American Camp. There I found the vanguard of our tremendous army, soon to be sent overseas.

Our party of journalists, carefully shepherded by an official from the Foreign Office, was motored to the edge of a plateau dotted with white and brown specks. The white specks had both a handle and a cover. The former is handy when eggs and bacon are cooked in the morning, and the latter holds a "side" of vegetables. We saw served a substantial dinner—soup, coffee, mutton and two vegetables—squash and potatoes. After eating the men tied to kettles of boiling water, washed the dishes and rinsed them at pumps.

If a man wants a second slice of bread they let him have it—but gradually the American soldier is being trained out of the idea that "he hasn't enough to eat unless there is something to throw away."

Did you ever smell camp cooking on an English upland in September, cooking done in small, narrow trenches dug in the ground, sized with metal strips on which the kettles are placed, a woodfire underneath? Believe me, it is good! The roasting is done in what our men call "Mexican Ovens"—ovens that have been used for a long time by British campers. They are shell-shaped, sections of metal covered with clay in which a hot fire is made, and the articles to be cooked are placed therein, and the entrance closed up.—It really is a fireless cooker on a large scale. Every one of our regiments has brought the full complement of army cooks. Besides these, there is a kitchen police

for which men are drafted to clear away and do odd jobs.

Of course the British Tommy comments on the American accent, and in the off hours when the men fraternize our men admit that it is hard to "get onto the Atkins line of talk," outside of this they are chary of criticism.

Husky, healthy, firm-muscled chaps are our regulars. They say they have grown soft on board ship, but are remedying this with daily drills and long hikes. There is no doubt but that Mr. Atkins is a trifle smarter in his getup. Our men have splendid teeth and are not quite so blasé as Tommy, not so "fed up" with everything, particularly the war. One of the British soldiers who was guiding us about pointed to a man on the drill ground and said "See that chap, he had lots of bits chipped off him at Mons." It's the casual way in which Mr. Atkins says this that makes the impression.

Our men are in splendid condition

the allied feeling grows stronger and stronger every day and, judging from the tightening of jaws, from the firm look in the eyes, from the something indefinable about the set of the shoulders when the word War is mentioned, we know they intend to do their part to bring about a glorious peace—a peace which will include the civilization and freedom for which their forefathers fought.

"Why, this war is the biggest stunt pulled off in two thousand years," one of the boys said to me. "I wouldn't have been a stay-at-home for two thousand dollars."

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