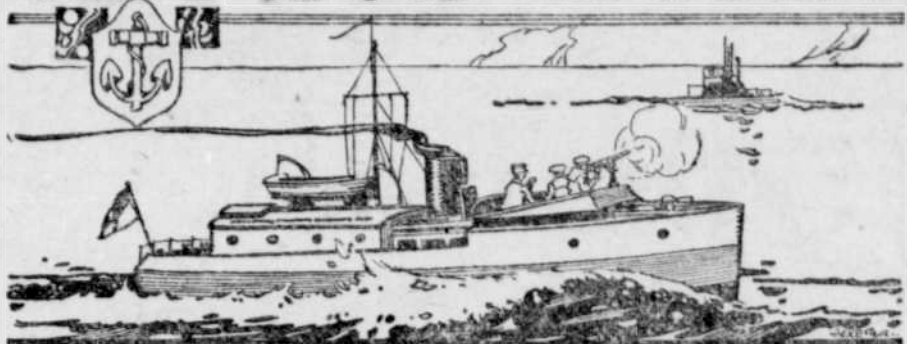


## SEA SLUG STORIES



Thrilling Tales of U Boat Hunting, Told by an American Boy Who Served For Months With the British Patrol and Who Did the Thrilling and Perilous Work That is Now Being Done by Hundreds of Other American Boys.

### No. 3 A Motor Launch Raid on the Belgian Coast

By  
A SEA SLUG,  
British Service Name For Crews  
of Submarine Chasers.  
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#### PROLOGUE.

The author of this series of four articles is a young American, who has spent most of his time since the war started with the British patrol fleet, taking an important part in helping to organize that branch of the service known as the Sea Slugs.

He has accumulated a remarkable collection of anecdotes incident to this exciting branch of the service, and many of these were personal adventures in which he took part and which make one of the stirring narratives to come out of the war. He recently returned to the United States to assist the American navy in organizing the same branch of the service and should be of great value because of his experience abroad. So far as known, he is the only American to serve with the British patrol prior to the advent of the United States destroyer flotilla in British waters. Of course some of his experiences, of military value to the enemy, cannot be related. At the request of the service publication of his name is withheld.

It is better that I do not mention the name of the Sea Slug who conceived the idea of a motor launch raid on the coast of Belgium—that part of the coast held by Germany, bordered by a maze of mines, girt by a moving belt of gunboats and patrol craft and trockled with a series of land batteries which make the experts

### Teach Your Boy the Value of a Bank Account.



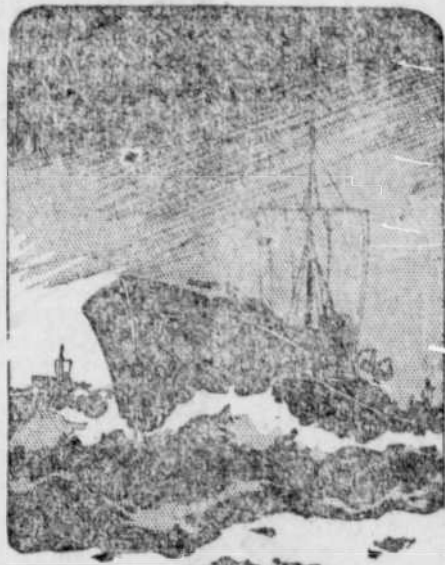
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set so that they rise and fall with the tide and remain always a certain distance below the surface of the water, and if we didn't hit one of these it would be merely a matter of luck. There were thousands of mines all around us, and there was no earthly way of telling where any of them were.

As for the mines which are anchored always the same distance above the bottom of the sea, we were counting on the extra high tide to take us over these. At least Jones had figured that it would.

There is no moon. We dash along full speed ahead, for we must run in, accomplish our task and run out again before that tide ebbs enough to make it next to impossible for even our



There is No Moon. We Dash Along Full Speed Ahead.

light draft craft to escape because of the anchored mines coming to the surface.

The men in each crew have been carefully selected. They are all in the best physical condition, good swimmers, and the Brass Hats (officers) have even made certain that none of them has a cold. A sneeze or a cough might betray us. Despite this, the damp, chilly night air makes one of the men in our boat sneeze suddenly. It sounds to us like the crash of a mine. I don't see why it didn't take the top of the fellow's head off. Our finely made motors, of course, were muffled until you could not distinguish their purr ten feet away.

"A thousand yards or so and we'll be across the fields," says the Brass Hat in our boat. He has it figured down pretty fine. Now we are skimming over a bar, where a heavier boat could not go.

#### Discover Enemy Destroyers.

We strain our eyes ahead to catch the white gleam of the wake of our leading craft and stare behind to make out the white bow wave of the one following us. It is the only way we can keep ourselves in line.

Presently I pick up out of the blackness of the night a patch of something that is even blacker. A ripple runs down my spine. The great moment has arrived. This is not like chasing a submarine which is trying to hide and which you can almost run circles around. It is more like six mosquitoes tackling a band of giants. If ever they can hit us a slap we will be crushed to jelly.

I point out the black patch to the Brass Hat. He strains through his night glasses, then hands them to me.

"Destroyer!" he says. The term is well applied, and I realize for the first time what destructive power one of these sick sea fighters has. She is running without lights.

We wonder in whispers whether the other craft have sighted her. There is no way for us to signal them. The man standing at the wheel throws her over a little to starboard, following the white wake of the boat ahead of us.

"They see her," says the Brass Hat next. "They're circling in."

A glance astern shows us that our followers have observed the change in our course. I do not know how far we are from that destroyer. In the dark she looms so big that it seems we must be going to graze her.

There is a lurid stab of red in the darkness ahead—a deafening roar—the smell of battle is in our nostrils. The leader's three incher has barked. Ours barks at almost the same time. Ours has bitten, for we can see the flash of the explosion as the shell falls on board the destroyer. That is better luck than we had looked for.

#### The Searchlights Scour the Sea.

The flashes have shown us other craft—destroyers, patrol boats and gunboats. No hope of concealment now. We wait just long enough between shots to make it hard for the

## Money will Take Care of You

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us to run over to her and take account. The monitor was one of a type much in evidence during the first years of the war, mounting heavy guns forward in an armored turret. The guns were made in America, and most of the monitors were named after American generals.

They were used on work that took them constantly into the mine fields, and for that reason they must have special protection against mines and torpedoes. Just how this is accomplished I do not feel at liberty to tell, but because of it an amusing incident occurred. The first motor launch was running at rather low speed in toward the monitor, so as to come alongside. All of a sudden we saw her sort of climb out of the water, bow first, heel over and lie there as though she had run up on a bar.

A couple of "matloes" (sailors) on the deck of the monitor began swearing at the crew, and every man in the M. L. was thrown off his feet by the shock which stopped the boat. The swearing was not confined to the monitor's men. The M. L. had run high and dry on to the shelf which forms a part of the more or less intricate protection against torpedoes and mines that modern monitors carry. They had to use a crane to get her off.

Well, we had roll call and found only one man slightly hurt. A bit of shell had struck him in the shoulder. A piece the size of a man's palm was imbedded in the side of one of the M. L.'s. We had got off mighty lucky.

I might say here that later six other boats made the experiment again, and only one got back to England, so it isn't such a soft assignment. In that single craft were all the men from the five launches who had survived the hell they ran into. And there was plenty of room, for those who had been lost were many.

Under orders the survivors of that raid refrained from telling what actually happened, but in general it is true that the Germans must have realized what occurred on the first expedition, and they were ready. The element of surprise, which saved us all from going to kingdom come, was absent.

The officer in command of the one which was not destroyed cruised around in the glare of the searchlights until he had gathered in every living thing that still struggled in the water—a man's job in that searching glare of light and hail of shells.

The Hero.

"The sky was red over his head," said one of the men he picked up, "because of the vast number of illuminating bombs and rockets the Huns were using, besides the searchlights and the shells that were bursting. There was light enough to take a moving picture of the scene."

"Any human being would have run, but that chap's a devil or a god. He shouted orders to his men as though he were at maneuvers and fished us out of the water with a boat hook as coolly as if he were merely picking up a buoy and couldn't understand what all the racket was about."

"After he got me on board I saw him fall with the blood spurting from his leg. He grabbed a bit of rope, made a tourniquet himself, using the barrel of his revolver to twist it tight, and directed the work until he had all of us on board."

"How we ever penetrated that barrier of fire and lead and steel I don't know, but we came through and limped into port under our own power."

As I say, I was not on this expedition, and what few details other than these I heard I am not at liberty to

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