

The Disaster of the S-4 Submarine, sunk off Wood End on December 17, 1927; the Cross in the Yard of St. Mary's commemorates the event.



- 1935 -

**Yarmouth Register
- August 1913 -**

A tank car of naphtha was received in Provincetown and delivered to the submarine S-4, which is being tested in the harbor, this type of boat needing a more refined fuel than gasoline.

September 14, 1957

THE BEAUTIFUL NEW CROSS to the memory of the men who lost their lives when they were entombed in the U.S. Submarine S-4, sunk off Wood End in the 20's, and which stands on the grounds of the Church of St. Mary of the Harbor, is the work of Frederick L. Maichle, Jr., of North Truro and Plymouth. Mr. Maichle, an expert craftsman in wood and other materials and who teaches at Scituate High School, volunteered his services to St. Mary's Guild when the old cross memorializing the S-4, rotted from the years, had to be replaced. From the California Redwood, he had shipped to Plymouth and which he brought to Truro, Mr. Maichle fashioned the 9-foot cross which commemorates the tragedy of the sea. The Redwood was paid for by the church; Mr. Maichle donated his time and skill. The cross is one of the many examples of artistic skill and talent which artists and craftsmen of the church have bestowed over the years on the unusually lovely Episcopal church. Mr. Maichle is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Maichle of North Truro.

JUNE 1964 YANKEE

**90 DAYS
OVER
the S-4**

by Rear Admiral C. A.
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A personal recollection, by a man who was there, of the salvage operation which followed the terrible tragedy of the submarine S-4.

• **THE ORDEAL BEGAN** on December 17, 1927. On that date the USCGS *Paulding*, on a routine mission, collided with the USS S-4 engaged in underwater trials on the measured mile off Provincetown, Massachusetts. The S-4 had completed a run over the measured mile and broached to facilitate a turn to go over the mile on the opposite course, or to make herself more visible to shipping, just in time to meet the *Paulding* as she was coming out of Provincetown. The S-4 was sunk and the *Paulding* lost a section of her bow

and a piece of her bottom. At this time, graduation exercises were being held in New London, Connecticut for a class of officers at the Submarine School. I was a member of this class, and had orders to the S-6.

Admiral Brumby attempted a rescue operation at the S-4. Captain E. J. King, who had been in command of the S-51 salvage operation, was Chief of Staff. Commander H. E. Saunders, a naval constructor from Portsmouth Navy Yard, was Salvage Officer. The *Lark*, a mine sweeper, was one of the first ships to reach the area to assist. The *Falcon*, under Lieut. Henry Hartley, with the available divers from the S-51 operation, arrived a little later. Chief Gunner C. L. Tibbals was the Diving Supervisor. There were some thirty divers, including Crilley, Eadie, Carr, Kelley, Wilson, Michels, and Wickwire. The S-4 was found to be in 102' of water with six of the forty persons aboard alive, trapped in the Torpedo Room. The weather was too bad for divers to work effectively, and by the 21st the six in the Torpedo Room were dead.

Rescue operations were discontinued on December 24 and the S-4 Salvage Force was formed. Provincetown harbor was a beehive of activity. The submarine rescue vessel *Mallard* tended a 100-ton derrick lighter, the *United States*. The *Falcon* was the work ship with the *Sagamore* and *Wandank* as tenders. The repair ship for Submarine Division 12, the *Bushnell*, was the supply, repair and personnel ship. The S-4 had been a ship of Submarine Division 12 which included the S-3, S-6, S-7, S-8 and S-9. The S-5 had previously been lost off the Delaware Capes. The S-6 and S-8 were in Provincetown to give any model type information needed. A dispatch service was set up between Boston Navy Yard and Provincetown. The *Mahan* and the *Maury* rendered this service. The departure from Boston Navy Yard was at 7 A.M., arrival in Provincetown in the late forenoon. Departure from Provincetown was at 3 P.M. The trip across Massachusetts