

Bay is rough in winter.

Many persons came to Provincetown, including members of the Press, Secretary of the Navy Curtis D. Wilbur, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral C. F. Hughes and Fiorello LaGuardia, a Congressman from New York. The S-8 took LaGuardia to Boston, where he made a speech; then he went to Washington where he made a speech to Congress which brought hazardous duty pay for the Submarine Service as a whole. Previously enlisted men were allowed a dollar a dive, not to exceed fifteen dives a month for pay, no allowance for officers. The allowance of a flat twenty-five per cent for being attached to a submarine popularized the submarine service in the Navy.

I made the trip to Provincetown in the *Maury* and reported for duty in the S-6 on January 3, 1928. The skipper was Lieutenant William Wakefield. He had been the Engineering Officer of the ship until he took command. I relieved him of the Engineering assignment. Two other officers attached were Lieut. L. F. Connolly, the Executive Officer and Navigator, and Lieut. F. O. Johnson, the Torpedo and Gunnery Officer. Bill Wakefield was one of the first officers in the Navy to have taken a post-graduate course in Diesel Engineering. Life in the S-6 was an uncomfortable existence in the winter weather. The work of the S-6 was to serve as a model ship, on board which the divers were rehearsed for the work to be done below on the S-4. This included chopping up the wooden superstructure decking and generally creating a shambles of the S-6. In addition the officers of the S-6 were to keep cognizant of the work going on and to offer suggestions and assistance to the salvage party.

A routine was set up for the divers. Each morning Jake, the dummy, with weight characteristics of a diver, would be

lowered in a diving suit to the bottom, with a Maximum-Minimum reading thermometer inside his helmet to show icing conditions. If the air hoses iced up, it was not suitable to send down a diver. All bodies, with the exception of those in the Torpedo Room, were removed during January. They looked like men with cramps. They were well preserved. On the twenty-fifth of January, Admiral Brumby turned the Salvage Force command over to King and departed to join his regular force with the Fleet in the Caribbean.

Rey King and Savvy Saunders were excellent practical marine engineers, as was Bill Wakefield. Each day in which the divers would come to the S-6 to rehearse some part of their work below, King and Saunders



The Navy destroyer Paulding damaged its bow in ramming and sinking the submarine S-4 near Provincetown on Dec. 17, 1927. Forty Submariners died.

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would be there and would discuss the problem with Wakefield over cups of coffee.

The weather was very bad off Provincetown. Although rooms were assigned the S-6 in the *Bushnell*, it was impractical to make use of them. The S-6 had a shower in the toilet cubicle, over the toilet bowl. It had not been used in the memory of anyone in the ship. We decided to use it. Much time was given to clearing the water lines, to clearing the air lines to blow the water out of the tank through the shower nozzle, and to getting the heating element in operation. Everything in a submarine smells like a mixture of unwashed feet with a tinge of sulphuric acid gas, something like rotten eggs, when kept closed for any prolonged period without some way of clearing the air. Everyone wanted to have the first bath to insure getting some warm water. How long the heated water would last was unknown. The matter was settled on a seniority basis, with the skipper saying he would have his bath some day on the *Bushnell*. Larry Connolly, being Exec, teed off. He wasn't in the bath long when it became apparent that something was amiss. When he opened the toilet door, he was covered with a brown slime from head to foot. The toilet compartment was covered with the same muck. It was quite an operation to clean off Connolly and

clean up the toilet room. The warm water had softened and liquefied the years of deposits in the piping system and sent them through the nozzle. No other baths were taken in the S-6, and very likely this was the only one ever attempted; things being what they were between cold, crowded conditions, and work, many of us spent the three months without taking off any clothing but shoes, caps and coats, excepting on our monthly trip to Boston. It was hard to tell which caused the odor—ourselves or the ship. After a while outside air seemed to have no body to it. Each person in the Salvage Force was allowed three days a month in Boston, using the shuttle service.

The S-4 was sealed on February 16 and preparations were made for passing the lifting chains between the six eighty-ton lift pontoons. The pontoons were placed and connected, and the final blowing arrangements made on March 16. The S-6 supplied compressed air at 100 pounds pressure to the control manifold on the *Falcon*. On the seventeenth at 11 A.M., the blowing out was commenced. The S-4 came up at 3 P.M. stern first, and was completely surfaced by 3:30. The tow was made up to take her to Boston Navy Yard. The *Sagamore* and *Wandank* towed. The *Falcon*, with air hoses rigged and attached, followed astern of the

S-4. The remainder of the Salvage Force accompanied. The S-4 was moored to Pier 4 in Boston Navy Yard at 9 A.M. on the eighteenth. She was drydocked at 7 A.M. on the nineteenth. The officers of the S-6 went through the S-4. The bodies of the six in the Torpedo Room were removed. The clock in the Conning Tower of the S-4 was stopped at the time the water from the collision reached it, with the waterline of the air bubble across the face of the clock. The clock was removed and mounted on a plaque with a plate identifying it, and giving the dates the S-4 was down, "17 December, 1927—17 March, 1928." The clock was taken to the Submarine Base at New London where it was placed on the wall in the Reception Room of the Submarine Officers Quarters.

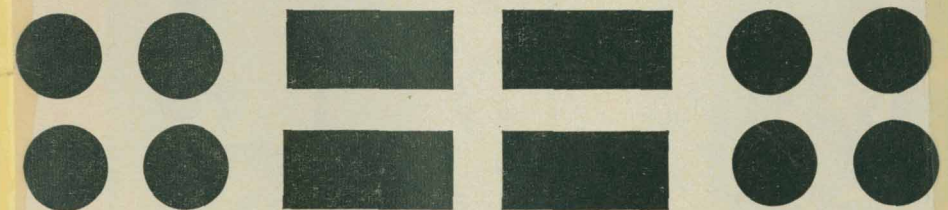
Many visitors passed through the S-6 while she was in Boston Navy Yard. Temporary riggings were made to permit walking where the divers had removed sections of the deck. Among the guests were a group of Shakers, about a dozen, all ladies but one man. They were pious elderly people and

most curious about our lives. After they returned to their settlement, they sent us a Sewing Kit very complete and very appropriate to our needs at the time. Also the commander of the *Paulding* was shown through the ship. A number of safety precautions resulted from studies of the loss of the S-4. The S-6 had plates of cast aluminum made up giving the radio telegraph code dots and dashes for the letters of the alphabet and the numbers, raised and large enough to be identified by touch. These were installed in each compartment, with a hammer for tapping out messages. Later, copies of these plates were made up and installed in the submarines attached to the Submarine School for training.

On March 23, the S-4 Salvage Force was dissolved. King's final order to the force gave the Secretary of the Navy's "Well Done." Further recognition went to individuals in the form of a Congressional Medal of Honor to Eadie, Distinguished Service Medals to King and to Saunders, and Navy Crosses to Hartley and four divers.



THE S-4 BY SEMAPHORE



A young reporter used his Navy background to twice scoop the entire Boston press on one of the most tragic of American sea disasters.

by JOHN MASON

SATURDAY AFTERNOON IS THE Dullest time of the week in a newspaper office; the regular staff knocks off early and only those in charge of Sunday editions stick around the City Room.

On Saturday afternoon, December

17, 1927, it was unusually quiet at the *Boston American*. Two photographers were making prints in the dark rooms and a small group of reporters played penny ante. Col. Burt Ford, on his way to the comp room with corrected proofs.