

Submarines Have Little Chance To Sink American Troopships; Navy Protects Transports Like Mother Guarding Her Children

A DETAILED STORY, FULL OF THRILLS AND FASCINATION, DESCRIBING THE SAFE PASSAGE OF A VESSEL LADEN WITH THOUSANDS OF KHAKI-CLAD MEN THROUGH THE "ALLEGED BARRED ZONE."

There is not a man in the thirty-two cantonnments who has not speculated at some time or other on what the trip through Germany's alleged "barred zone" on the Atlantic would be like while going "Over There" on a troop transport.

And it is quite natural that the American soldiers, thousands of whom have never crossed the ocean, even in times of peace, should draw upon their imagination to figure out the experiences and sensations possible while on the ocean with submarines lurking about to send the transport to Davy Jones' Locker if possible.

One of the most interesting, thrilling and informative articles thus far written on the voyage of an American troopship through the "barred zone" was penned by Raymond G. Carroll, whose fascinating detailed narrative has been copyrighted by the Philadelphia Public Ledger and is published in Trench and Camp by special permission. It follows:

Entering the "barred zone" upon a troopship loaded with Yankee fighters, the emotions are kindred to those experienced in an initial crossing of the equator; one almost expecting to see a visible line of demarcation rise out of the water. I was on the bridge when we went in. In fact, for several nights back I had slept in a hammock loaned me by the ship's master—God bless him—slung up on the boat deck just rear of the bridge. My pillow was a life preserver. Not even a pouring North Atlantic rain succeeded in driving me from that hammock.

Courage, "red badge" or any other brand of that much sought after headline article did not tug very hard toward the occupancy of the warm, soft bed in the stateroom to the excitement of an opportunity to be where the panorama of events on a major scale was bound to unfold. Some of the young army officers, doubtless in a spirit of bravado during the concluding night of the voyage sought the stateroom beds, but I observed that the veteran commanders took no such chances. The older men bunked within a stone's throw of their sleeping men, picking the spot where they would be able to grapple with any situation that might arise and keep it in hand.

"I am sleeping in my berth every night," boasted a young lieutenant.

"How lucky a double sense of responsibility has not reached you yet," replied one of the majors. With the compactness of sardines in a tin where we were passing through the submarine zone both officers and men were strewn about those decks of the ship located well above the water line. Orders had been issued for everybody to sleep in his clothing. The purpose of the commanding officers was to avoid the possibility of any surprise. The result was that to pick one's way, after dark, from the bow to the stern required masterly footwork. Now and then, as you crept along, you landed lightly upon an extending leg or elbow, but the boys were good-natured and quickly dropped back into slumber.

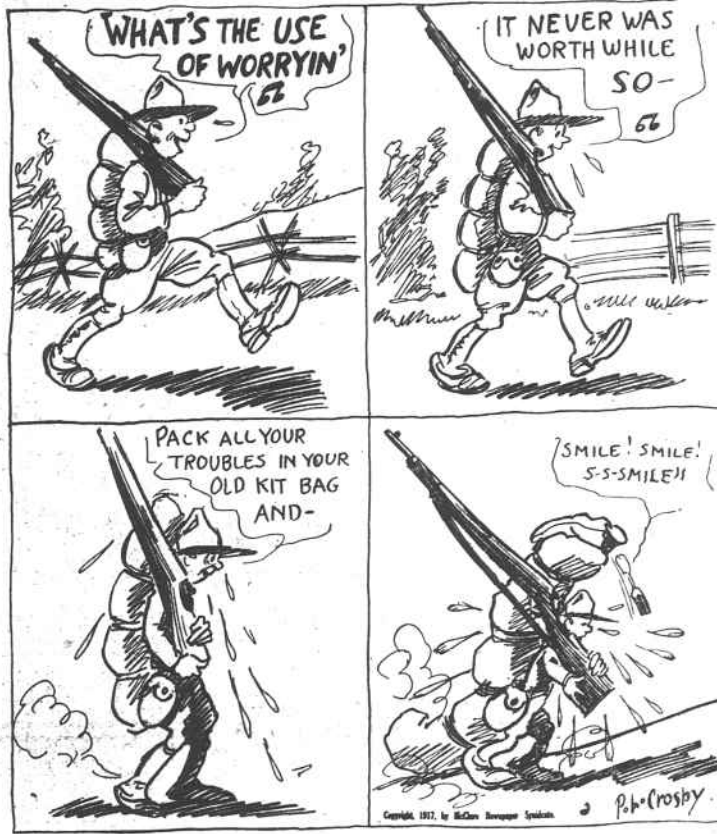
Destroyers Sighted

I was seated in the skipper's office shortly after 2 o'clock of the day we began to traverse the much-advertised danger zone when the senior naval commander opened the door leading from the bridge. He said: "Come quickly now, and you will see a pretty sight."

Getting behind a large marine telescope I saw a sight that was thrilling in the highest degree; the gallant approach of the fleet of American destroyers and other units which was to convoy us to the European mainland. They spanned the eastern horizon and swept down upon us in a "search curve." The newcomers were from that portion of the navy that has been for some time in European waters. They were hunting for us along a certain degree of latitude. I would like to

'That Rookie from the 13th Squad:

P. L. Crosby.



Courtesy of THE McCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE, New York

tell the details of their formation, but it is not in wisdom to do so. It is enough to say that they were sufficient in number to cover in a chain of easy visibility an advancing front of considerable width.

Not to have seen what next happened—it is the crowning incident awaiting the vision of every American soldier who goes to France—is not to have lived in those stirring times.

Like a loving mother throwing her arms around her children: the destroyers on the north and south wings of the curve closed about the transports and the navy units of the transatlantic convoy. It was our navy in a supreme moment of its trained intelligence standing by our army. It was the warm embrace we had been waiting for. People at home hugging their secluded firesides can hardly appreciate it. That portion of the army on my troopship cheered and the band stationed in the forward part of the ship started to play "The Stars and Stripes Forever." I wish every slinking, faint-hearted American citizen could have been aboard to witness this event, for in the presence of brave men cowards are put to shame.

The flagship of the torpedo flotilla, a low, rakish destroyer, swung alongside the chief unit of the navy convoys, in whose care we had left the American mainland. They were observed speaking confidentially to each other. Never mind how. In the navy conversation flags in many automatic tongues; flag signals, semaphore signals, radio wireless, blinkers are seen aboard flashes. Hardly had the naval commander of the transatlantic convoys exchanged conversation with the new arrivals when certain units of the navy which were scheduled to turn back, changed their course and left us, soon dropping out of sight in the westward.

Change of Convoy

We in the transports had been passed over without hitch from one set of floating forts to another. It was the biggest moment I have ever

passed through. Here is a great subject for a marine artist to paint. We had connected with Europe under the folds of "Old Glory." Our navy was right there on the rim of the "barred zone" with teeth set, full of actual experience in fighting submarines and possessing the latest "dope" about the enemy. Cheer for the navy!

Right about where we took up the gauntlet thrown down by the Kaiser the currents of the Gulf Stream spread into a fan and carry their warmth in various directions. Hidden somewhere in these currents were the German submarines. The average speed of a submarine is ten knots under water and double that on the surface. To come to the surface was to come into the range of an American gunnery which they have learned to respect. They can run under water at a depth of sixty feet and can submerge to 200 feet. The high explosive bombs with which the English destroyers have fought them burst at a depth in the water of eighty feet and more. These bombs have an effective exploding radius of 200 square feet.

Inasmuch as overmuch has been written of the menace of the submarine, I want to show that our troopship, aside from the navy guns and their operating jacksies on our decks, aside from the protecting units of the navy itself with us, as well as any other army transport, has a tipoff chance to escape the undersea craft. From the spar of the forward mast in the ship, about eighty-five feet above the upper deck, the human eye commands an area of 280 square miles in which a submarine emerged can be seen. At the same altitude the periscope of a submarine is visible for an area of twelve square miles. Good watchers combined with high speed are in themselves enough to get away with provided there is no haze or fog around the ship.

To enforce order, to protect property and to deny access to certain portions of the ship on each transport there is organized a guard of

soldiers. There are a score of posts to be covered. Men have to be stationed at the hatchways and others at the fire caps. The guard was divided into three shifts and required the activities of sixty men, a sergeant and three corporals. All are under the direct control of the officer of the day, who saw to it that the sentinels remain at their posts, making repeated inspections, at least one of which was made every twenty-

(Continued on page 8)

HOW ABOUT IT?

That Cartoon or Drawing for The Trench and Camp Wrist Watch Contest?

Some soldier is going to get this wrist watch and it might as well be you. Every soldier believes he can do three things—sing, write a book and draw a picture.

Perhaps you may not be the best artist in the world, but your idea and execution may be so unique as to get the verdict at the hands of the judges. Draw a patriotic cartoon which would appeal to the soldiers in the thirty-two cantonnments, or a sketch of army life as it impresses you.

Draw anything you think would be suitable for this contest and mail it to Room 504 Pulitzer Building before noon, November 15.

Be sure and write your name and the name of your company and regiment plainly when you send in the cartoon so that proper credit may be given you.

Each soldier in the cantonnments may send in as many cartoons or sketches as he desires. The watch-winning cartoon or drawing and as many others as possible will be printed in Trench and Camp.

