

Bert Duncan Story

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HEALY

Bert Duncan, R.C.N.V.R., of Hamilton, Ont., is at sea again today hoping to repeat the adventures of a now-famous trip, during which his ship captured a German submarine and 39 prisoners off Iceland. Duncan has just been promoted to petty officer.

The destroyer on which he was serving commandeered a crippled enemy submarine in North Atlantic waters, removed the German crew and had the submarine towed back into port.

“We were lying in port,” he said, “when we received word of a German sub surfaced in the vicinity. Half the crew were ashore on shore leave but we couldn’t wait to round them up. We steamed full ahead in the direction of the sub.

“Dawn was just breaking and it seemed like no time at all before we sighted the sub and prepared to open fire before she could crash-dive,” he continued, “but the sub didn’t move. It was apparent then that she was too disabled to do so.

“We pulled up within shouting distance of the sub and the Germans were ordered to be prepared to be taken prisoners. The captain told them to come aboard or be blown to bits. I think that scared them.”

The Canadian crew lowered a life raft to the water with a rope secured to each end. One rope was thrown to the prisoners on the submarine who were ordered to haul the raft to them and board it, four or five at a time. The raft was ferried back and forth several times until all the prisoners were aboard the destroyer.

“They must have realized they didn’t have a chance,” Duncan said, “because every gun on the ship was pointed at them and one false move would have been answered with a stream of fire. The whole 39 came aboard without a mishap.”

A trawler, which had trailed the destroyer out of port, appeared and took the sub in tow. The destroyer then led the way back to port triumphantly and turned the prisoners and sub over to British authorities.