An Eastern Canadian Port – Stoker James Hawes, R.C.N.V.R., of Selkirk, Man., one of H.M.C.S. "LOUISBURG" survivors to arrive back in Canada, told today how he swam in the Mediterranean for half an hour before grabbing hold of a float tossed to him by a passing merchantman and being finally picked up by a British destroyer.

The Louisburg was sunk recently on convoy duty in the Mediterranean Sea by an aerial torpedo.

"I was standing on the deck watching the planes when the torpedo came," he said. "Suddenly there was a loud explosion and I was thrown to the deck. The ship listed to port. I ran up to the top deck to get my life belt but couldn't find it so went back down to the quarter deck.

"I hesitated, wondering if she'd go down," he said, "I was a bit confused. When I saw the water coming over the gunwale I dived off and swam like hell. I swam for at least half an hour before finding a life belt floating by itself.

"It was a dark night and I wondered if a passing ship would be able to see me. I soon got my answer. A freighter came heading right for me and I thought it was going to cut me down. I threw my life belt away and swam as fast as I could. The ship passed within 15 feet of me.

"But as they passed," Hawes continued, "someone spotted me and threw down a float. Somebody yelled that a destroyer would be along shortly. I felt much better. There was a paddle on the float so I paddled over to another float and waited to be picked up by the destroyer."

The loss of the Louisburg was a very personal one, for he had joined her when she was commissioned, and had been with her to the very end.

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