

ILLINOIS BROTHER

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"Maybe you remember the stories the eastern papers told about some fellow jumping down on another man. Well, I'm the fellow. I landed on one of my buddies. The lighted spot was the top of his helmet, and that's why we kept on going down. After we were rescued one of the fellows complained of a stiff neck, and we pieced the story together that he got it when I hit him.

"When I shoved off from the keel I had to swim hard for about 50 yards to get away from the suction. Then the officers began gathering their men around them, keeping in groups as much as we could so we'd be together. I got a crowd together, and everything seemed to be okay, lifebelts properly inflated, and we began swimming to get away because we were afraid of explosions from the ship as it sank into the water.

"There were some life rafts, but none of our bunch saw any of them. We don't carry lifeboats, but we did have a motor-driven gig. It was pounded in the attack and was useless.

"We kept looking for other ships, but it seemed hopeless. Down on the water like that we couldn't see much. The waves rolled too high above us, but finally in the distance we spotted a Coast Guard ship, an escort destroyer. They told us over their loud speakers they were going to pick us up, and we swam as hard as we could toward them. For a long time we didn't seem to be getting any nearer. When we were about there, the tide started taking us past the ship, but they put out a cargo net. We were too weak to do much, but coast guardsmen were down in the net and hauled our shoulders up into it, and we were drawn aboard.

"We had been in the water about two hours and were about numb. When we knew we were going to be picked up we had to wiggle our toes and fingers and do everything to loosen up so we could stand it a little longer until we could get to that Coast Guard ship. Temperature of the water was 58 degrees although the air was fairly warm."

Aboard ship the men were taken below, stripped, fed hot coffee and given cigarettes and in a short time were ready for hot showers and a rehash of their experiences.

Ensign Hunter's only injuries were bruises and cuts on his legs, sustained apparently in his plunge to the *Lansdale's* keel.