

**RUN SILENT,
RUN DEEP**

Commander Edward L. Beach, USN

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RUN SILENT, RUN DEEP

By the Same Author:

Submarine!

Illustrated with line drawings





To the men of our submarine forces
in the Atlantic and the Pacific who are today
driving their boats down under the sea

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author makes the following grateful acknowledgments to:
Ingrid, my wife, for her encouragement and thoughtful criticism;

Katie Finley, for giving so generously of her own free time to assist in the preparation of the manuscript;

Charley Langelo, for his help on week ends and late at night;

Theresa Leone, who also put in late hours and in addition gave her name to one of the characters; and

Vernie M. Locke, for keeping me from forgetting the proper use of the English language.



This is a work of fiction. There is no conscious attempt to portray any actual person or character, living or dead, and any conclusions or opinions which may appear to have been reached herein are strictly original and bear no relation to Navy Department policy, past, present, or future. The submarine tactics and actions, while technically plausible, exist only in the mind of the author. Yet it would be accurate to state that Rich, Jim, Joe Blunt, and the *Walrus* existed many times over in the submarine forces during the war; that Laura Bledsoe and Hurry Kane have also had their counterparts; and that I have personally experienced the depth charges of Bungo Pete.

With the proviso that there have been some intentional gaps in descriptive information, the motivation, events, and action herein set forth are representative of that brave period between

1941 and 1945 when many of us unwittingly realized our highest purpose in life. To that extent, and with these qualifications, this book, though fiction, is true.

Edward L. Beach

Falls Church, Virginia
January 26, 1955

Deep in the sea there is no motion, no sound, save that put there by the insane humors of man. The slow, smooth stirring of the deep ocean currents, the high-frequency snapping or popping of ocean life, even the occasional snort or burble of a porpoise are all in low key, subdued, responsive to the primordial quietness of the deep. Of life there is, of course, plenty, and of death too, for neither is strange to the ocean. But even life and death, though violent, make little or no noise in the deep sea.

RUN SILENT, RUN DEEP

U. S. NAVY DEPARTMENT
Washington, D. C.

In reply refer
to number
N/Pl6/2117

August 31, 1945

From: The Director, Broadcast and Recording
Division

To: The Officer-in-Charge, Security and
Public Information

Subject: Commander E. J. RICHARDSON, U. S. Navy;
tape recording by

Reference: (a) Article 1074(b) BuPers Manual
(b) SecNav Memo of 11 Aug. 1945

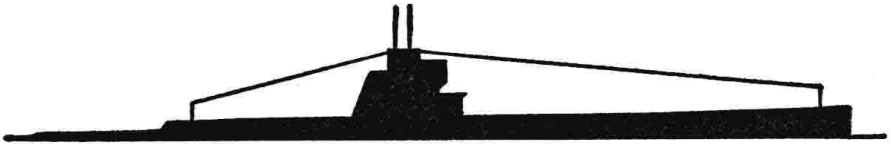
Enclosure: (A) Transcript of subject recording

1. A transcript of a tape recording made by Commander E. J. Richardson, U. S. Navy, who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on August 30, is forwarded herewith as enclosure (A).

2. It is not believed that subject recording can be of use during the forthcoming Victory War Bond Drive mentioned in reference (b) without severe condensation of the material. Subject failed to confine himself to pertinent elements of the broad strategy of the war, and devoted entirely too much time to personal trivia.

3. Subject to the foregoing comments, a verbatim transcript is forwarded for review. In accordance with provisions of reference (a), subject tape will be retained for such future disposition as may be directed.

S. V. MATTHEWS



CHAPTER 1

MY NAME IS EDWARD G. RICHARDSON and I am a Commander in the Navy, skipper of the submarine *Eel*. They said to tell the whole story from the beginning—about the Medal of Honor and what led up to it, I mean—and that's a big order. The story is as much about Jim Bledsoe and the *Walrus* as it is about me—but it starts long before the *Walrus* left New London. It properly begins on the old *S-16*, one frigid day right after Christmas, 1941, and it includes Laura Elwood, Jim's fiancée, and Bungo Pete, a Jap destroyer skipper.

We were out in Long Island Sound making practice approaches in the freezing weather for Jim's qualification for com-

mand of submarines. The war had begun nearly three weeks before. When Jim's qualification came up, the *S-16* had just started her first refit since going back in commission the previous summer.

Jim was Executive Officer of the *S-16* and I was her skipper. She was a World War I "S-boat"—though not completed until 1919—and had seen only five years' service until we came along. She had been laid up in "red-lead row" (for the red preservative paint) ever since 1924. Her main trouble had been her engines, which had been copied from German designs but which could never be made to run properly. The Navy had had enough of her and her mechanical troubles by 1924 and gave her up as a bad job, putting her in mothballs and hoping to do better next time.

At the time I'm talking about, I was a senior Lieutenant. *S-16* was my first command. Jim was also a full Lieutenant and we had served together since the broiling heat of the Philadelphia Navy Yard the previous summer when, at the urgent request of the Navy, we had dragged the rusted hulk of *S-16* from the Navy Yard's back channel and began to put her back together.

Jim Bledsoe was tall, bronzed, and good-looking; two inches taller than my five-feet-eleven. He was a product of Yale's NROTC and had been in the Navy two and a half years—practically all of it in the Submarine Service. I had graduated from the Naval Academy six years before and had nearly three years more than Jim in submarines.

Jim was of inestimable help in turning the old rust bucket we found in the Navy Yard back into the submarine she once had been. With Keith Leone, an Ensign just out of the submarine school, and old Tom Schultz, a one-time Machinist's Mate, USN, now a Lieutenant (jg), the officer complement of the *S-16* was complete—and busy. With the accent on "busy," for the ship, when we took her out of the mud, was a gutted shell. All

spring and summer we worked on her madly, sweating all the time, crawling about in the filthy bilges, racing against we knew not what, for the increasing tension in the world had its effect on us, too. There was an unmistakable urgency in the air—every particle of dirt which ground its way into our sweat pores carried its quota of haste and importance with it. There was also a pointed urgency in my orders as “prospective Commanding Officer,” which said, among other things, “Report earliest when ready for sea.” We did our best.

I didn’t meet Laura until later, on reporting to New London, but I don’t want to explain about her yet, although you will have to understand about her to know about Jim and me.

In the spring of 1941, when the Navy Department decided to shake up *S-16*’s old bones after all, it was with something like despair that I made my first inspection of her innards. She had been labeled “junk” for fifteen years.

Jim and I were the first to arrive at Philadelphia; Keith and Tom came a few weeks later. We were all new at our jobs. Tom, with his sixteen years of enlisted service as a Machinist’s Mate, had just received his commission. We practically lived in the bilges and engines of our old pig of a submarine. Jim took to the job of getting our gradually accumulated crew organized as though he had been an Exec all his life. Keith, fresh from Reserve Midshipman School and submarine school, otherwise a simon-pure product of Northwestern University, became Torpedo Officer. Tom, of course, became Engineer. My last job had been Engineering Officer of the *Octopus*, the boat I had reported to upon graduation from the submarine school, and so I concentrated my spare time on finding out what the basic design trouble with the engines had been—and, with a little good luck and the assistance of the Engineering Design Department of the Navy Yard, arrived at some sort of an answer. As a result, *S-16* ran better after we got her back together than she had ever run before. And she had been on the run ever since, logging

more miles, more dives, and more hours submerged in the ensuing six months than in her whole previous five years' commission. You would have thought she was the only submarine in New London, the way the submarine school, to which we had been assigned, kept us going. We were not even allotted normal upkeep time, on the theory that having just come from the Navy Yard we needed none. So, when the accumulated list of urgently needed repairs began to approach the danger point, I protested to Captain Blunt, our Squadron Commander, with the result that the school at last grudgingly allotted us two weeks of "upkeep"—to our disgust over Christmas and New Year's. Even this had now been interrupted for Jim's qualification.

Jim, eager, alert, and ambitious, had earned a reputation as a "natural" submariner. Normally an officer with only two years of total submarine service would not have been considered for a command billet or even for qualification for command, but the war had already changed a lot of things.

It had taken me a full year to complete my submarine notebook and qualify in submarines, and gruff old Joe Blunt, my skipper in *Octopus* at the time, had pinned his own dolphins on my shirt. Jim had needed no notebook, had put on his dolphins within six months of graduating from the submarine school. Three years I served in *Octopus*, fourteen months as Engineer, before the man who had relieved Blunt, Jerry Watson, judged me worthy of his recommendation for "Qualification for Command of Submarines." That had happened only last spring, and I had received my orders to the *S-16* within two weeks. The *Octopus* had sailed for Manila the same day I had taken off in the Pan-American Clipper, bound in the other direction.

And here was Jim going through the same thing after only half the time in subs. This seemed contrary to the conservative submarine instinct—contrary to my reservations, too; and yet the whole thing, in this instance at least, had been my own doing.

An interview with our Squadron Commander, Joe Blunt