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THURSDAY, 30TH MARCH, 1944
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HE HELPS TO CLEAR CAPTURED HARBOURS

"Once you become a Naval diver the job proves so interesting that you don't want to do any other job."

That is what Petty Officer Diver W. Bollard, of Leicester, says when anyone asks him how he likes his work. He joined the Navy in 1934 and volunteered for diving eighteen months ago.

Recently returned from the Mediterranean, he is one of the naval divers who helped to clear away wrecked ships and other obstructions in captured harbours. Once while he was underwater the enemy launched an air attack on the harbour. Bollard, however, was warned in time and reached safety.

One of his biggest diving operations was in Tripoli harbour where two block-ships had been sunk on either side of the entrance and barges, laden with cement, had been sunk in the centre.

"I had to go down to a depth of between forty and fifty feet to lay gelegnite charges in the barges," said Petty Officer Bollard. "They were blown up, but the harbour entrance was still not wide enough. So an attempt was made to lift one of the block-ships. I went below and patched up the holes caused by the explosion which sank her. The holds were pumped clear of water and eventually, after much patient and intricate work, the ship was raised.

"What I like about diving is that it is never dull," he said. "There are some remarkable specimens of sea life down at the bottom. While working on the bed of the Mediterranean I saw ray fish between eight and ten feet long. These fellows are pretty harmless, but they have to be watched. They have a dangerous sting and a lash from their tail can injure a man. One swam round me three times before I scared him off by blowing a few air bubbles.

"A ten foot tunny fish once gave me a bit of a surprise, but like most of the fearsome looking specimens I've met on the sea-bed, he was only curious about what I was doing. I saw plenty of octopus with a span of anything from two to five feet, but fortunately they are not as menacing as they look."

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