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LONDONERS SERVICE U-BOAT "KILLER"

Three Londoners, now tradesmen in the R.A.F. on a Coastal Command flying-boat station in the north of Scotland, helped to service the Catalina which recently sank a U-boat in the Atlantic.

The U-boat, hoping to use a snow storm as cover, was lying in wait for an important convoy, when it was sighted by Squadron Leader F.J. French, D.F.C., the captain of the aircraft.

The Catalina dived to the attack and 30 seconds later the enemy was sliding down to the bottom and survivors were struggling in the water.

"It was due to the good maintenance of the 'kite' that we were able to carry out our job," said Squadron Leader French, who lives at Felixstowe. "These chaps put in long hours and never seem to tire. We know that we can depend upon them and it gives us the confidence that is so necessary."

Flying-boat crews have to work while their aircraft is riding at anchor, often sitting on the wings working on an engine with the flying-boat pitching and rolling in a rough sea.

"We feel that we have certainly played a part in 'killing' this U-boat," said Aircraftman A.E. Rogers, of Ealing, who was an electrician before the war.

"Servicing flying-boats, even in the best weather, is not a pleasant business and we often have to work in the open sea with sleet or icy-cold wind beating in from the Atlantic."

A sheet metal worker from Romford, Essex, Aircraftman P. McNulty, is a fitter (airframe), which means that he is responsible for any maintenance of the Catalina not connected with the engines, radio or instruments.

"I found my pre-war job has helped me," said McNulty. "I have been here some time now but although it is so far from home I would not like to come off boats."

Another Londoner, Leading Aircraftman J. Modlin, a draughtsman, whose home is at Hammersmith, volunteered for duty with Air Sea Rescue, after hearing an appeal on the radio for motorboat crews.

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Note: (Main story is A.M.B. No. 13525)