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Les, the seaman in charge of the motors, remarked that since the motors had been throttled back as they entered the fog, they had been running roughly. These motors were new to the craft; the other ones having been removed for a complete rebuild. These were American made; originally designed for aircraft, but had been adapted to the boat by some rather clever shore mechanics

After about an hour of rough running the port motor stopped. Les reported this to the bridge with his caution that he was not as familiar with these motors as the regular Rolls Royce ones. He said he would do everything to try and get it going. Chadwick sent Christopher down to the engine spaces to see if there was anything that he could do, for although he had no experience with large aircraft engines, he had a good mechanical sense and these big brutes did not have all the nasty additions that the modern auto had. Barely had he arrived than the starboard engine started to sputter. Christopher and Les both agreed that it was a fuel problem, since they found a spark at the coils and the plugs. The bridge had sparks report their problem to Portsmouth, the nearest naval station. Portsmouth replied that the American convoy was due in their sector within the hour, and because of the weather, they would ask the Americans to look out for them, and if sighted, take them in tow. The crew were less than thrilled about a Royal Navy vessel having to be towed into the main Channel port by the Yanks. Christopher's comment that it was better than being towed to shore by the Jerries did not sit well, but that was typical Christopher.

The sound of a loud hailer with an American voice, caught the attention of all aboard. When the problem was described by the lieutenant on the bridge of the M.T.B., the American transport said that they had a man

aboard who was familiar with the two American built engines. With the aid of a line and a bosun's chair the Yank was put aboard, while the transport ship stood by.

He immediately went to the engine space where Les explained the problem. The electricians seemed in order. On checking the fuel system, he noticed a small valve that had been added, presumably by whoever adapted the Allison's to the marine use. Assuming that this valve had something to do with slow running which one gets with a marine application, he changed the setting on the valve and tried to fire up the engines. After several such adjustments the engines coughed to life. As he was leaving the boat he met Christopher who asked what cargoes they were carrying. The Yank said that it was aviation stuff to be transhipped to the Russians. Christopher, remembering the stories of the P.T. boats in the South Pacific adding 37mm. cannon to their boats, inquired if they had any spares for the Aircobras that went to Russia. The Yank was very surprised that this seaman would know what sort of aircraft were being sent to Russia. He invited him and the skipper, over to the transport for a drink. Climbing on board the old transport, the two Canadians were welcomed and taken to the saloon for a drink and a snack. The transport's skipper asked about their home town. When he found that they were from the county, he told them that he was from Watertown just across the lake. This led to a few more drinks, good southern Bourbon, a break from the English fair. Chadwick asked if there might be a spare 37mm. cannon and ammunition available from their "generous" hold.

"Well, for you boys who after all are almost my neighbours, I reckon we might find one. Those Ruskies are getting loads of stuff from us for free so I'm sure that one small cannon won't matter." replied the captain who by now was quite mellow. "So what are you going to do with the darn thing?" he said.

"Well, we know some of your guys in the Pacific have upgraded the P.T.s with the same gun, and our craft are gunned too lightly." replied Christopher.

The men returned to the boat while a sling swung three boxes aboard from the transport. Two of the crew lashed the boxes to the deck while the lieutenant got underway. Sparks was able to contact Portsmouth with the news of their engine success. The M.T.B. pulled ahead slowly, leaving their friends to steam north. Within a few hours the boat was out of the fog and nearing Brighton.

To be continued...



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