

Healy

An Eastern Canadian Port – “My lungs were nearly bursting...I closed my eyes and thought I was lost...when I opened them my head was above water...it was the greatest relief I’ve ever known.”

Thus Ordinary Seaman Amie St. Laurent, R.C.N.V.R., of Quebec City, told today how he survived the recent sinking of the corvette H.M.C.S. “LOUISBURG” in the Mediterranean with the loss of 39 lives. He has arrived back in Canada on survivor’s leave.

“I was in the mess deck when action station sounded,’ he said, “and dashed up to the Oerlikon gun on the port side. The explosion knocked me down. I got up and ran to the wheelhouse but nobody was there. When I reached the lower deck everyone was jumping into the water. So I jumped in too.”

Expecting the ship to go down any second, St. Laurent swam quickly away from the ship but not quite fast enough. As the ship sank the suction caught him and pulled him under.

“It felt as though someone were pulling me,” he said, “and I fought with all my strength. But I just went down, down, down. I thought my lungs would burst. I closed my eyes and thought I was lost.

“My mind was getting foggy by then but I think there was an explosion –probably the boiler – which must have relieved the suction and sent me to the top. When I opened my eyes my head was above the water.”

St. Laurent used his final strength to reach a Carley float with 10 men clinging to it and was picked up with the rest of the survivors by a destroyer about an hour and a half later.