

## First person report from LeRoy:

### The Search for the Cyclops

(It was 1918, aboard the U.S.S. Petrel)

"We were told to look for the Cyclops, which had been lost. It was an ammunition ship. We ran into this hurricane just as we got to Cape Hatteras - that's a wicked place. The waves hit the rocks and then come back again and peak, you know. There were three other ships near us - United Fruit Company ships - and we kept blowing the whistles to keep within a short distance of each other. In the hurricane it gets so dark you can't tell night from day, you know. And the waves started coming over and we lost most the electrical power; we had the engine room full of water and the waves came into the lifeboats and carried one away. Another one was hanging by one davit.



"My receiver went haywire. I checked it and found out the antenna had come loose from the lead-in insulator. I looked around for it and it was so dark I couldn't see anything so I finally climbed up the smoke stack to where the antenna had wrapped itself around the whistle pipe. I just got up there and reached out for it with my arm around the whistle pipe and they blew the whistle. The steam made the pipe so hot it burned my arm. But I finally got the lead-in hooked up but then the other power went out so we didn't have radio or anything.

"The connecting rods were splashing around in the water in the engine room. This went on for two or three days. If I remember right it was April 8, 1918.

The other three ships sunk. We finally guided ourselves into Charleston with a boom sticking out from one side and the mast had come down and was sticking into the side of the ship. The Petrel. We were an awful looking sight when we came in there.

"While we were out there rolling around one of the depth charges got loose and banged from one side of the ship to the other, rolling back and forth. We got out there with a line to try to capture it and finally got it secured. It was loaded with TNT. Half the bridge was carried away, radio shack was full of water, it was a real mess. We had to live on hard tack for three days." *[Note: this part of the story is not supported by the diary entry he made at the time.]*