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The Brighton Boys with the Submarine Fleet

James R. [pseud.] Driscoll

Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: James R. [pseud.] Driscoll
Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)
ISBN: 978-3-8491-5178-2

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CHAPTER I

GOOD-BY, BRIGHTON

"Wanted: young men to enlist in Uncle Sam's submarine fleet for service in European waters."

The magic words stood out in bold type from the newspaper that Jack Hammond held spread out over his knees. Underneath the caption ran a detailed statement setting forth the desire of the United States Government to recruit at once a great force of young Americans to man the undersea ships that were to be sent abroad for service against Germany.

Stirred by the appeal, Jack snatched the paper closer and read every word of the advertisement, his eyes dancing with interest.

"Your country needs you *now!*" it ran; and further on:

"The only way to win the war is to carry it right home to the foe!"

Below, in more of the bold type, it concluded:

"Don't delay a moment -- while you hesitate your country waits!"

From beginning to end Jack read the appeal again. Before his eyes in fancy flashed the picture of a long, lithe steel vessel skimming the ocean, captain and crew on the lookout for the enemy, the Stars and Stripes flapping from the tailrail. For an instant he imagined himself a member of the crew, gazing through the periscope at a giant German battleship -- yes, firing a torpedo that leaped away to find its mark against the gray steel hull of the foe!

Up in the dormitories some chap was nimbly fingering "Dixie" on the mandolin. The strains came down to the youth on the campus through the giant oak trees that half obscured the facade of "old Brighton." Over on the athletic field a bunch of freshmen "rookies" of the school battalion were being put through the manual of arms by an instructor. Jack could hear the command: "Present arms!"

"I guess that means me," he said to himself. And why not? Hadn't Joe Little and Harry Corwin and Jimmy Hill left school to join the aviation service? Weren't Jed Flarris and Phil Martin and a bunch of Brighton boys in Uncle Sam's navy? And hadn't Herb Whitcomb and Roy Flynn made history in the first-line trenches? Yes, the boys of Brighton were doing their bit.

In another moment Jack had crushed the newspaper into his pocket—his decision made—jumped from the bench under the old oak tree and was speeding across the campus in the direction of the main dormitory entrance. Without waiting for the elevator he leaped the steps, three at a time, running up to the third floor, and thence down the corridor to No. 63—his "home," and that of his chum, Ted Wainwright.

Out of breath, he hurled himself into the room. Ted was crouched over the study table, algebra in front of him, cramming for an examination.

"There you are! Hip, hurrah!" Jack cried excitedly, thrusting the folded newspaper under Ted's eyes and pointing to the bold typed appeal for recruits, all the while keeping up a running fire of chatter.

Ted was in the midst of a tantalizing equation. He was accustomed, however, to such invasions on the part of his chum, the two having lived together now for nearly three school years—ever since they had come to Brighton.

Both boys were completing their junior year in the select little school for which the town of Winchester was famous. They lived at remote corners of the state and had met during the first week of their freshman year. They had found themselves together that first night when the "freshies" were lined up before the gymnasium to withstand the attack of the "sophs" in the annual fall cane rush. Together they had fought in that melee, and after it was all over, anointed each other with liniment and bandaged each other's battle scars.

Jack was a spirited lad, ready always for a fight or a frolic, impetuous and temperamental; Ted had inherited his father's quiet tastes and philosophical views of life, looking always before he leaped,

cautious and conservative. So, when Jack came bouncing in, gasping with excitement, Ted accepted the outburst as "just another one of chum's fits."

"What's all the grand shebang about this time?" he queried, shoving the algebra aside and taking up the newspaper that had been thrust upon him.

"I'm going -- I'm not going to wait another minute -- all the other fellows are going -- my grandfather fought through the Civil War -- it's me for the submarine fleet -- I'm off this very --"

But before he could ramble any farther Ted took a hand in the oratory.

"What's the matter, chum? Flunked in anything, or been out to see a new movie show, have you?"

Jack ran his finger down the newspaper column to the advertisement for recruits.

"There you are!" he shouted. "And what's more, I'm going to sign up this very afternoon. What's the use of waiting any longer? Here's a great chance to get out with the submarines -- think of it! -- and, gee, wouldn't that be bully? Look! Look! What do you say, old boy; are you going with me?"

Jack's enthusiasm "got" Ted. Taking up the newspaper he read every word of the appeal, slowly, deliberately. Then he looked up at his chum.

"Do you mean it, Jack; are you in earnest?" he asked, after a long pause.

"Never meant anything so much in all my life," was Jack's quick rejoinder.

For an instant the two boys faced each other. Then out shot Ted's hand, clasping that of his room-mate in a firm grasp.

"Well, chum, I guess we've been pretty good pals now for nearly three years. You and I have always stuck together. That means that if you are going in, I'm going too!"

"Great!" bellowed Jack with a whack on the back that made Ted wince.

"Let's beat it quick for the recruiting station. Are you on?"

Hat in hand he bolted for the door, but stopped short as Ted interrupted:

"Don't you think we'd better tell the home folks first?"

The impetuous Jack turned. "I hadn't thought of that."

"Of course we will," answered his chum. "We'll send them a telegram right away, telling them we are going to enlist tomorrow."

It was agreed, and no sooner said than done.

There was not much sleep in 63 that night. Long after lights were out the two boys were huddled together in their den, gazing out at the stars and speculating on the new adventure for which they were heading.

The morning train into Winchester brought among its passengers two very much perturbed mothers and two rather anxious fathers. The Hammonds and Wainwrights had met in the spring during commencement week festivities and had much in common this morning as they came together in the Winchester terminal. Ted and Jack were at breakfast when word was brought to them of the presence of their parents in the president's reception room.

It was a joyful little reunion. Only a few minutes' conversation was necessary, however, to prove to the parents that each of the boys was dead in earnest in his announced intention to enlist in the navy.

"I don't suppose there is much to be said here," concluded Ted's father after listening to the son's impassioned appeal for parental sanction. "You seem to have decided that you owe allegiance to your country above all other interests. I shall not interfere. As a matter of fact, my boy, I'm proud of you, and so — -here's God bless you!"

Jack's father felt the same and so expressed himself. Only the two little "maters," their eyes dimmed with mist, held back; but they, too, eventually were won over by the arguments of the eager lads.

It was decided that the party should have dinner together in town and that in the afternoon the boys would present themselves for examination at the recruiting station. The remainder of the morning was spent in packing up belongings in 63 and preparing to vacate the "dorms." The boys decided to wait until after they had been accepted before breaking the news to their school chums. Each felt confident of passing the necessary requirements. They had made the football team together in their freshman year. Jack had played, too, on the varsity basket-ball team for two seasons, while Ted excelled on the track in the sprints.

Dinner over, the entire party repaired to the recruiting station. It did not take long to get through the formalities there and, needless to say, each lad passed with flying colors.

"All I want to make sure of," ventured Jack, "is that we get into the submarine service. I'm strong for that, and so is chum."

There was a twinkle in the eye of Chief Boatswain's Mate Dunn, in charge of the recruiting station.

"I reckon Uncle Sam might be able to fix it for you," chuckled the bronzed veteran. "He's fitting out a great submarine fleet to get right in after the Prussians, and, since you fellows seem so dead set on getting there, I guess maybe it'll be arranged."

Jack and Ted were in high spirits, and eager to be off for the naval base at once. Officer Dunn had informed them they might be forwarded to the nearest navy yard that night with a batch of recruits signed up during the week. He told them to report back to the recruiting station at seven o'clock "ready to go."

The boys were anxious, too, to get back to Brighton and break the news. It was arranged they should spend the dinner hour at the school bidding farewell and later meet their mothers and fathers at the recruiting station.

There was a great buzz of excitement in the mess hall at dinner when the news spread that Jack Hammond and Ted Wainwright had enlisted in the navy and were soon to leave. As the bell sounded dismissing the student body from dinner, Cheer Leader Jimmy Deakyné jumped up on a chair and proposed three cheers for the

new recruits. And the cheers were given amid a wild demonstration.

Out on the campus the boys had to mount the dormitory steps and make impromptu speeches, and then submit to a general handshaking and leave-taking all around. "Fair Brighton" was sung, and the familiar old Brighton yell chorused over and over, with three long 'rahs for Jack Hammond and three for Ted Wainwright.

"Makes a fellow feel kinda chokey, don't it, chum?" stammered Ted as he and Jack finally grabbed their bags and edged out through the campus gate.

They turned for another look at old Brighton. The boys were still assembled on the dormitory steps singing "Fair Brighton." Up in the dormitory windows lights were twinkling and the hour hand on the chapel clock was nearing seven.

"Come on, chum, let's hurry," suggested Jack. They walked in silence for a moment.

"Pretty nice send-off, Jack," sniffed Ted, finally. "We'll not forget old Brighton in a hurry."

"And you bet we'll do our best for Uncle Sam and make old Brighton proud of us," added Jack.

At the recruiting station all was lively. The boys were told they must be at the depot ready to leave on the seven-thirty express. A score or more lads were waiting for the word to move, some of them taking leave of their loved ones, others writing postcards home. Ted's folks were waiting; Jack's came along in a few minutes.

A special car awaited the recruits at the railway terminal. The girls of the Winchester Home Guard had decked it in flags and bunting and stored it with sandwiches and fruit. In another ten minutes the express came hustling in from the west. A shifting engine tugged the special car over onto the main line, where it was coupled to the express. All was ready for the train-master's signal to go.

"Good-by, mother; good-by, dad," the boys shouted in unison as the wheels began to turn and the train drew out of the train shed. A throng filled the station, and everyone in the crowd seemed to be

waving farewell to some one on the train. The Winchester Harmonic Band had turned out for the send-off to the town's boys and it was bravely tooting "Stars and Stripes Forever."

Soon the train was creeping out into the darkness, threading its way over the maze of switches and leaping out into the cool country air. All the boys were in high spirits, mingling boisterously in jolly companionship, the car ringing with their songs and chatter.

Jack and Ted lounged together in their seat, chatting for a while; and finally, when the tumult had abated and the boys were getting tired, dozing away into slumber to dream about the new world into which they were being carried.

Behind them, Winchester and Brighton! Before them, the stirring life of "jackies" aboard one of Uncle Sam's warships -- bound for the war zone!

CHAPTER II

DOWN IN A SUBMARINE

Daylight found them rolling through the suburbs of a great city. The long night ride was nearing an end.

All around them as their train wended its way through the railway yard were evidences of the unusual activities of war times. Long freight trains were puffing and chugging on the sidings; the air was black with smoke, and the tracks filled everywhere with locomotives and moving rolling stock.

In a few minutes the train slowed down into the railway terminal and the score or more of "rookies" were soon stretching their legs on the platform. A detail of blue jackets, spick and span in their natty uniforms, awaited the party. Jack and Ted stared at the fine looking escort, thinking what a wonderful thing it would be when they, too, were decked out ready for service in such fine-looking attire.

They had not long to wait. Breakfast over, the entire party boarded trolley cars bound for the navy yard. Soon, across the meadows, loomed the fighting tops of battleships, and in the background the giant antennae of the navy yard's wireless station.

"Here we are at last, chum!" chortled Ted with a broad grin, as he and

Jack piled out of the car.

Passing the armed sentries at the gate, the party of recruits were marched first to the commandant's office, where their arrival was officially reported. After roll call and checking up of the list of names, the boys were all marched over to the quartermaster's depot to be fitted for uniforms. Probably the most impressive moment of the morning to the boys was the ceremony of swearing them into service--when they took the oath of allegiance to their country.

Jack and Ted were anxious to get into their uniforms and were afforded an opportunity very shortly when they were directed aboard the training ship *Exeter*, where they were to be quartered for a few days until detailed into service on one of the fighting units in the yard.

The first few days aboard the *Exeter* passed rapidly, the time being so filled with drills that the boys had few idle moments. Their letters home and to their chums at Brighton contained glowing accounts of the new service into which they had entered.

After a week of it they were standing one afternoon on the fore-castle of the *Exeter* watching the coaling of a giant dreadnought from an electric collier when a naval officer, immaculate in white linen and surrounded by his staff, came aboard. After an exchange of salutes between the deck officer of the *Exeter* and the visiting officer, and a brief chat, the recruits were ordered to fall in. The naval officer in white stepped forward.

"You boys will be distributed at once among the vessels now in the yard to make up the necessary complement of crews. The department is very anxious to put some of you aboard the submarine fleet now fitting out here, and if there are any in the crowd who would prefer service in the submarines to any other service you may state your preference."

Jack and Ted stepped forward immediately. Other boys followed suit. And so it came about that Jack Hammond and Ted Wainwright found themselves detailed to the U.S. submarine *Dewey*.

A young officer approached and introduced himself. "I am Executive Officer Binns, of the *Dewey*. If you boys are ready we will go right aboard. We expect to go down the bay on some maneuvers this afternoon and want to get you fellows to your places as quickly as possible."

The whole thing was a surprise to Ted and Jack. They had expected to be kept in the yard a long time, quartered on the training ship. To get into active service so soon was more than they anticipated.

Marched across the navy yard they soon came in sight of the *Dewey*—a long cigar-shaped castle of steel, sitting low in the water,

riding easy at the end of a tow line near the drydock. Up on the conning tower a member of the crew was making some adjustment to the periscope case, while from astern came the hum of motors and the clatter of machinery that bespoke action within the engine room below.

"Looks like a long narrow turtle with a hump on its back, doesn't it?" whispered Jack as he and Ted came alongside.

They were passed aboard by the sentry and there on the deck welcomed by the officers and members of the *Dewey's* crew. Turned over to big Bill Witt, one of the crew, they were directed to go below and be assigned to their quarters.

Down through the hatchway clambered Witt, followed close by Ted and Jack, and in another moment they found themselves in the engine room. Electric lights glowed behind wired enclosures. Well aft were the motors and oil engines, around them switchboards and other electrical apparatus—a maze of intricate machinery that filled all the stern space. The air was hazy and smelled strong of oils and gases. Huge electric fans swept the foul air along the passageway and up through the hatchways, while other fans placed near the ventilators distributed the fresh air as it poured into the vessel, drawn by the suction.

From the engine room the boys walked forward into the control chamber—the base of the conning tower—the very heart and brain of the undersea ship. Here were the many levers controlling the ballast tanks, Witt explaining to the boys that the submarine was submerged and raised again by filling the tanks with water and expelling it again to rise by blowing it out with compressed air. Here also was the depth dial and the indicator bands that showed when the ship was going down or ascending again, the figures being marked off in feet on the dial just like a clock. Here also was the gyro-compass by which the ship was steered when submerged; here also the torpedo control by means of which the torpedoes were discharged in firing. And, yes, here was the periscope—the great eye of the submarine—a long tube running up through the conning tower twenty feet above the commander's turret of steel.

"Something like the folding telescope we have at home to look at pictures," mumbled Jack aside to Ted.

To the boys' great delight they were allowed to put their eyes to the hood and gaze into the periscope. In turn they "took a peep." What they saw was the forward deck of the *Dewey*, the guns in position, other vessels moored nearby and the blue expanse of water stretching out into the harbor and on to the open sea. It was rather an exciting moment for the two "landlubbers."

Witt next showed them forward through the officers' quarters and the wireless room into the torpedo compartment. This interested them greatly. On either side of the vessel, chained to the sides of the hull on long runners that led up to the firing tubes, were the massive torpedoes, ready to be pushed forward for insertion in the firing chambers. Chief Gunner Mowrey was working over one of the breech caps and turned to meet the new recruits.

"Glad to meet you, mates," was his hearty salutation.

The boys listened attentively while Mowrey was telling Witt of some great "hits" they had made in practice earlier in the morning. Bill Witt showed the boys in turn the bunks that folded out of the sides of the vessel in which the crew slept, the electric stove for cooking food in the ship's tiny galley, the ballast tanks and the storage batteries running along the keel of the vessel underneath the steel flooring.

Climbing up on deck again through the conning tower, the boys found themselves out on top of the projection in what Witt explained was the deck steering station whence the *Dewey* was navigated when cruising on the surface. Down on the deck the boys inspected the smart-looking four-inch guns with which they later were to become better acquainted, and the trim little anti-aircraft guns to be used in case of attack by Zeppelins or aeroplanes.

"Keep your eyes and ears wide open all the time; remember what you are told and you'll soon catch on," Witt told them.

Shortly before noon Lieutenant McClure, commander of the *Dewey*, a youthful-looking chap who, they learned later, had not been long out of Annapolis, came aboard. It was soon evident that there was something doing, for in a few minutes the propeller blades began to churn the water, and the exhaust of the engines fluttered at the port-holes. The tow lines ashore were cast off and then very

gracefully and almost noiselessly the *Dewey* began slipping away from its dock. The head of the vessel swung around and pointed out the harbor.

"We're off, boy!" exclaimed Jack to his chum. They were, indeed. The boys were standing in front of the conning tower and, because it was their first submarine voyage and they had yet to acquire their sea legs, they kept firm hold on the wire railing that ran the length of the deck on either side of the vessel. Commander McClure and Executive Officer Binns were up on the deck steering station behind a sheath of white canvas directing the movement of the ship.

"This is what I call great!" laughed Ted as the *Dewey* began to gather speed and moved out into the bay.

Looking seaward the boys beheld the prow of the submarine splitting the water clean as a knife, the spray dashing in great white sheets over the anchor chains. From aft came the steady chug-chug of the engines' exhaust, to be drowned out at intervals as the swell of water surged over the port-holes. They seemed to be afloat on a narrow raft propelled swiftly through the water by some strong and unseen power.

"I say, old boy, this beats drilling out on the campus at Brighton with the school battalion, eh? what?" exclaimed Jack.

Ted was doing a clog dance on the deck. "I'm just as happy as I can be," was his gleeful comment.

Very shortly the lighthouse that stood on the cape's end marking the harbor entrance had been passed and the *Dewey* was out on the open sea. Before the boys stretched water—endless water as far as the eye carried—to the far thin line where sky and water met. They were lost in contemplation of the wonderful view. But their reveries were suddenly disturbed by a sharp command from Executive Officer Binns:

"All hands below—-we are going to submerge!"

The *Dewey* was going to dive!

