

ESCAPE SUITS WILL AVERT "TRUCULENT" TRAGEDIES

With the "Truculent" disaster still fresh in the nation's mind, the submarine "Acheron" reveals, for the first time, a new under-water life saver. It's an immersion suit - now being issued to all operational units of the submarine branch. The suit, six pounds of double-skinned, water-proofed nylon - is pulled over ordinary clothes. Vital auxiliary is an automatic shoulder light. It switches on and generates its own electricity when sea water activates an electric cell under the armpit. Strapped on top of the suit is a Davis escape apparatus - the artificial lung carried in all submarines. Dressed for action, the escaping man is now ready to make his ascent. As he climbs up the escape hatch, the compartment is flooded, the hatch cover opened, and he's on his way up.

By using a special apron, he slows his rate of ascent so as to lessen the shock and conserve his strength for the surface. A suit like this might have saved some of the "Truculent" men who escaped from the sub. but were swept away in the dark. First job on surfacing is to shut off the air control valve. This enables him to keep afloat - while he inflates his suit. Giving extra buoyancy, the air also acts as an insulator - thereby protecting him from exposure.

Additional protection is given by a special hood, self-sealing neck-and-wrist bands and (saving the hands from frostbite) an outside pair of gloves.

By keeping a man afloat, protected from the cold, for several hours, the immersion suit cuts off almost the last element of chance in under-water escape. A welcome and timely safeguard for the volunteers who man the submarines.