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NEWS FLASHES.

The American submarine Archerfish went down 300 feet, off Key West, Florida, for Operation Subscope. They planned the deepest under-water escape ever made from a submarine.

Two volunteers made the ascent. At 300 feet below, atmosphere pressure is increased eleven times and Navy medical authorities were anxious to check whether the new buoyant escape procedures had been perfected to safety point. Fortunately, the men were none the worse for the test when they broke surface.

The new apparatus and escape-technique came out with flying colours. Fancy, nobody'd give him any tobacco:

Close to Chamonix the French are making good progress with the Mont Blanc tunnel. Jumbo is the nickname the 350 workmen give to the giant drill-carrying machine specially made for the job. The tunnel, which is scheduled to be operating by 1962, will be seven miles long. Work is proceeding, too, on the Italian side, and the drillings will meet somewhere about the middle. How tunnel-constructors make sure of that is an engineering mystery. Through Mont Blanc, Europe's highest mountain, trains and cars will be running three years from now.

The Santa Claus Congress met at the Waldorf Hotel reminding us that every time the sun sets there are fewer and fewer shopping days to Christmas. Item One on the Agenda was to read and endorse letters from spastic children to the Head Santa Claus, who, as we all know, lives in Greenland, among his reindeer. The letters asked Santa to appeal to everybody sending Christmas gifts to stick a Spastics Seal on the parcel, in the hope of stimulating people to send donations to the National Spastic Society's 100,000-pound fund. By this time, all the letters must have reached Greenland.

Tree-climbing made easy was demonstrated in Holland when foresters started out to examine what damage the big Douglas Firs had suffered in the summer drought. It's quick and safe; in fact it takes longer to fix the apparatus than to put a good hundred feet between himself and the ground. The forester soon satisfied himself that there was very little wrong with this tree. Small branches have to be sawn off on the way. Spectators below soon learn to keep their distance. It looks a simple enough device, but it took foresters a long time to get round it.

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NEWS FLASHES

The reckless flip of a cigarette is thought to have caused a five-thousand acre blaze in the foothills north of Pasadena, not far from Los Angeles. Planes and helicopters dropped borate solution where fire-fighters on the ground couldn't get near the flames.

As the fire advanced, hundreds of people had to abandon their homes. Hundreds more prepared to leave, fearing that a change of wind would endanger their houses. One of the worst forest fires this year.