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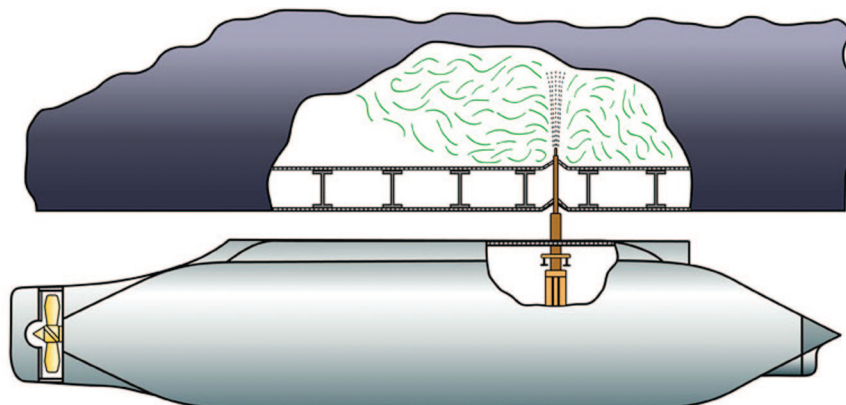
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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

Anesthetizing Enemy Sailors



In May of 1907, a Newton, Massachusetts resident named Carl M. Wheaton finished designing his "Means for Conducting Submarine Warfare." Wheaton's innovation connected "a submarine . . . to . . . a floating ship by driving a pin . . . through the bottom of the ship, and in subsequently injecting an anesthetic gas . . . to overcome and anesthetize the crew of the ship attacked. Preferably . . . the anesthetic [would be] injected into the engine or boiler room [rendering] . . . the ship helpless . . . [and possibly] enabling the ship to be captured practically without loss of life." Unfortunately, Wheaton himself suffered loss of life during the astonishing eight years that the U.S. Patent Office spent in evaluating his filing. Less than seven weeks after the U.S. Patent No. 1,131,761 was granted to Wheaton's administratrix, the transatlantic ocean liner *Lusitania* was sunk on May 7, 1915 by a single torpedo launched by submariners onboard Germany's *U-20*. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image appears in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

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