

MISSING IN MYSTERY:

A mystery rivaling the tales of the Sargasso Sea and the mysterious Bermuda Triangle emerged last month. It was disclosed that the Norse Variant sank in the Atlantic on or about March 19. Even the Coast Guard revealed surprise when it said that the sister to the Norse Variant, the Anita, a Norwegian 12,000-ton freighter also vanished in the same area at the same time. A seaman believed to be the sole survivor of the Norse Variant told of his 72-hour ordeal at sea before he was rescued. Stein Gabrielsen, 23, an engineman aboard the ill-fated cargo ship that went down and apparently claimed the lives of 29 shipmates told a harrowing tale of how his ship sank in five minutes during a violent gale and how he spent three days clinging to a rubber life raft in a storm-tossed sea.

"All I could think of was surviving," said Gabrielsen, who was flown from the aircraft carrier Independence to the Grumman airport at Bethpage, L.I. As Gabrielsen left, Norwegian consular officials remained pessimistic about the fate of the Anita.

The Coast Guard here and a spokesman for the owners in Oslo said it was possible that the Anita's radio mast and antenna might have been destroyed in the storm that sank the Norse Valiant.

Although items from the Anita have been found floating in the Atlantic, a spokesman for the owners, Odd Godagger, said: "Lifecrafts and buoys can easily be carried away by violent waves and the spotting of such debris cannot prove that the Anita has gone down."

The Anita left port just two hours before the Norse Variant. It was bound for Bremen, Germany, with a cargo of coal and a crew of 27.

The sinking of the Norse Variant and the disappearance of the Anita were reminiscent of the tales of ships by the hundreds lost mysteriously in the Atlantic.

The Bermuda Triangle, part of which reaches into the Sargasso Sea, has claimed many lives, without any plausible explanation.

LAST MONTH:

More than half of the New York City Sea Gypsies started Easter weekend off in a hyperbaric chamber at St. Barnabus hospital, in Livingston, New Jersey. Because it is a busy hospital we were there before 9 AM Saturday morning. After we had all met at the "Y" (That's right) at 7:30 in the morning. Arriving at the hospital before 9 we all had a chance to down a gal. or so of coffee. Now wide eyed and bushy tailed (it was Easter), we all headed on to the hyperbaric chambers for a real live demonstration on how they worked. A paramedic by the name of Richard Harris, had given a great explanation of the chambers and how they work. Divided into three groups of ten or less people we entered the chamber, and were put under pressure (air pressure that is) to simulate a depth in water of about 160 feet. As the pressure built up in the chamber we felt the air get very hot, and thick as well. There was a leveling off at around 160 ft. and the air inside the chamber dropped from it's near 100° to a comfortable 70° or 74° while under this pressure. Our voices were very high pitched and we were a bit NARKED to one degree or another (So I won't even bring up the fact that everybody else in the chamber with me was walking on the walls). Assent or when the chamber was being reduced in pressure, it had cleared the heat out of the 10X10 foot room we were in as fast as you can blink your eye, from 74° to 34° or 36° and our breath fogged the chamber room in less than a half min. Later we found out that the temperature could be controlled if the operator of the chamber (R. Harris) wanted to. The "dive" was about 14 min. bottom time and we had to decompress at 10 for 2 min. or so and with the two masks in the chamber we all took about five breaths of pure oxygen, and rose a couple of more feet off the floor. The trip and the chamber was great, sorry if you missed it, as well as members of the SG's their was a lot of other people (new divers) that had made the trip with us out to St. Barnabus Hospital, in Livingston, New Jersey. And thank-you from us all, Pam Peper, for the arrangements and the maps.