

LIFE-BOAT WAR BULLETIN No. 8.

JUNE 1942.

THIRTY-THREE MONTHS OF WAR.

In the first thirty-three months of war life-boats have rescued 4754 lives. They have rescued more lives in these thirty-three months of war than in the last thirteen years of peace.

THREE MEDALS IN TWELVE MONTHS.

Coxswain Patrick Murphy, of Newcastle, Co. Down, in Northern Ireland, has won the Institution's gold medal for superb seamanship and daring in rescuing a steamer's crew in January. Just a year before he twice won the bronze medal in twelve days. By winning three medals in twelve months he has done what no other life-boatman has ever done. The Institution has also awarded silver medals to the second coxswain and motor mechanic and bronze medals to the other four men of the crew. The steamer was lying with her stern on a reef. Other rocks lay close to her bow. Seas were breaking right over her. Coxswain Murphy took the life-boat through the passage, between the steamer's bow and the rocks, which was little wider than the boat herself. He rescued all on board, and the life-boat was so loaded that her deck was awash. He had no room to turn her; he could not go out stern first through the narrow passage by which he had come; so he took her right across the reef on which the steamer's stern lay. It was a surge of broken water, which at any moment might swirl away and leave the life-boat to crash on the rocks, but he chose his moment well and brought her safely across. Then for ten miles he had to feel his way - for visibility was very poor - through breaking seas and among rocks and reefs, with the life-boat always awash and sometimes rolling her rail right under.

B.E.M. FOR SCOTTISH COXSWAIN.

Coxswain James Thomson, of Campbeltown, Argyllshire, has won both the Institution's silver medal and the British Empire Medal for rescuing the crew of a steamer in the blizzard which swept the west coast of Scotland in the middle of January. His rudder was damaged as soon as he left harbour, but in spite of that he took the life-boat 25 miles against heavy and increasing seas, and got her alongside the steamer which was bumping heavily in the rising wind and tide. On his way back his engine failed, but he brought the life-boat safely in under sail. The Institution has awarded its bronze medal to each of the seven members of the crew.

SNOW BOUND.

Towards the end of January, after the heaviest fall of snow for many years, the town of Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, was cut off by land from the rest of the world. Roads and railways were blocked; the telephone wires were down; but the sea was still open. In the course of ten days the life-boat twice took food to a village ten miles away, the inhabitants of which were starving; fetched an electrician to repair the Fraserburgh electric light which had failed; took an air-raid message; and took a doctor to an urgent case.

THE CALLING UP OF LIFE-BOATMEN.

Letters received by the Institution, and articles in the press, have shown that many people think the Ministry of Labour is taking from the Life-boat Service for the fighting forces men whom the Institution wishes to keep. That is not so. The Ministry allows the Institution to keep its coxswains, second-coxswains and motor-mechanics, and any member of a crew without whom it would not be possible to man the life-boat. Some of the stations are having to work with smaller crews, but both the Institution and its stations accept this as inevitable in time of war. The Institution is very careful not to ask for any men whom it can spare, and no requests which it has made to keep men have been refused by the Ministry.

THANKS FOR WOOLLEN COMFORTS.

The Institution is very grateful to the Merchant Navy Comforts Service, the Friends of the Fighting Forces and the Red Cross Comforts Depot for their many gifts of sea-boot stockings, woollen helmets, jerseys, socks, gloves and scarves. Enough have been received to satisfy the needs of all stations and give the Institution a good reserve. The Life-boat Service warmly thanks the ladies, in Great Britain and America, who knitted these comforts.

LIFE-BOAT DAYS IN 1941.

Eight hundred branches held flag days in 1941, and 508 of these days collected more than ever before. 9,288,000 people contributed. That is 1,561,000 more than in 1940, and the biggest number who have ever given. The sum raised was £90,253. That is the biggest sum ever raised. It is £20,759 more than in 1940. It is more than twice as much as in 1939, the last year of peace.

AUSTIN MOTOR COMPANY'S GIFT.

The Austin Motor Company has generously offered to give the Institution one shilling for each horse power of every engine which it makes for a ship's life-boat. The first cheque for £240, for all engines which it had delivered up to the 31st. March, 1942, was presented in April to Coxswain Henry Blogg, G.C., B.E.M., of Cromer, representing the Institution. Each quarter the company will send a cheque.

COXSWAIN BLOGG'S BROADCAST.

Coxswain Henry Blogg broadcast a life-boat appeal as the "Week's Good Cause", in the Home Service of the B.B.C., on 15th. March. There were 6759 replies amounting to £4,457: 2: 1.

"HELPING GOD".

One of the gifts in answer to Coxswain Blogg's appeal came with this letter:

I am sending my pocket money to you this week, so that you can help God to keep Bobby and John safe and all the other children's Daddies safe. Love. Allen."