

LIFE-BOAT WAR BULLETIN No. 9

SEPTEMBER 1942.

THREE YEARS OF WAR.

In three years of war our life-boats have rescued 4775 lives. They have rescued more lives in these three years of war than in the last thirteen years of peace. In the four years of the last war they rescued 19 lives every week. In the twenty years of peace between the two wars they rescued 7 lives a week. In these three years they have rescued 30 lives a week.

In these three years life-boatmen have won from the Institution 157 medals for gallantry. They have also won four British Empire Medals, two Distinguished Service Medals and one George Medal.

Six life-boatmen have lost their lives on service.

H. R. H. THE DUKE OF KENT, K.G.

The death of the Duke of Kent in an air accident on August 25th. is a very great loss to the life-boat service. Of all the members of the Royal Family who have been associated with it since its foundation none has taken a more generous and personal interest in it. He became its president in 1937, but he had done much to help it during the previous eight years and he first became acquainted with it in 1928 when he travelled to the Orkneys to name two motor life-boats. Altogether he named ten life-boats; he presided at four annual meetings; and he presented medals at those meetings to 84 life-boatmen. His last public act for the service was in July of this year when, at Plymouth, he presented the bronze medal for gallantry awarded to Coxswain Walter Crowther for rescuing a flying boat.

HIS LAST MESSAGE.

To each of the three annual meetings of the Institution since the outbreak of war The Duke of Kent sent a message of congratulation. The last of these messages was read by Sir Godfrey Baring, Bt., chairman of the Institution, when he presided at the annual meeting on 9th. July. In this message the Duke said:

"I want to congratulate the life-boatmen on their magnificent achievement. We owe them a debt which cannot adequately be repaid. They brave innumerable hardships willingly, and with a spirit of determination of the highest order. . . . To our many generous friends I should like to say, 'Thank you. . . . Your generosity makes it possible to continue this work at the high standard which we are determined to maintain.'"

TWO B.E.M'S.

Coxswain William Swankie, of Arbroath, who won the bronze medal of the Institution in February, 1940, for going to the help of a barge which was being bombed by a German aeroplane, and Coxswain Patrick Murphy, of Newcastle, Co. Down, who won the gold medal last January for superb seamanship and courage in rescuing the crew of a steamer which had struck on a reef, have both been awarded the British Empire Medal.

DESTROYED BY ENEMY ACTION.

The Institution has decided to lay down two new motor life-boats, of the 46-feet Watson cabin type, costing £10,000 each, to replace two life-boats of this type which have been destroyed by enemy action.

FINANCE IN 1941.: EXPENDITURE.

Expenditure in 1941 was £279,225. That was £11,505 less than in 1940. It was £105,150 less than in the last year of peace. The reason is that the building of new life-boats has now almost ceased. Only one new boat could be sent to the coast last year.

£5,000 A MONTH.

On the other hand, in rewards and other payments to its crews and launchers, the Institution spent in 1941 more than ever before. It spent nearly £70,000. In the war it has been spending, in payments to those on the coast engaged in the actual work of rescue, at the rate of £5,000 every month.

FINANCE IN 1941: INCOME.

The total receipts last year were £386,836. That is the highest they have ever been. The British public in spite of the increasing burden of taxation, in spite of all the public and private claims on its purse, has never before given so generously to its life-boat service.

AFTER THE WAR.

It must not be thought that because receipts exceeded expenditure by over £100,000 the Institution is getting more money than it needs. That £100,000 would in a normal year have all been spent in building new boats, and, if the experience of the last war is any guide, the Institution must put by as much as £500,000 to spend in building after the war.

FROM THE FIGHTING SERVICES.

The fighting services have again been most generous with their help. Between them last year they gave over £12,000. The Navy gave seven times as much as in the last year of peace; the Air Force eight times as much; the Army fifteen times as much.

A LIFE-BOAT CAFE.

In May the Harrogate Ladies' Life-boat Guild ran a life-boat cafe for a week. An empty shop was got for nothing. A decorator decorated it free of cost. The electric and gas companies lent cookers. The corporation lent tables and chairs. The members of the Guild supplied china, cutlery and linen, and for weeks before they put aside tea and other things from their own rations. After the cafe was opened, many people came with gifts of food. Mrs. J. Fisher, honorary secretary of the guild, was the organiser. She had three cooks, three waitresses and a cashier, all members of the guild. They worked so hard that one of the waitresses had worn out a pair of shoes before the week was finished. The result of it all was a net profit of £330 and many new subscribers to the branch.

LIFE-BOAT CALENDAR FOR 1943.

The life-boat calendar for 1943 will shortly be ready. It will have on it a reproduction in colours of a painting of Coxswain Edward Drake Parker, of Margate, who won the D.S.M. for helping to bring off over 600 men of the B.E.F. from the beaches of Dunkirk. In order to save paper, the calendar will be 6 inches by 9 inches, half the usual size. It will cost a shilling, including the envelope, or 12 for 10/-, and it can be sent through the post open for 1d.