

LIFE-BOAT WAR BULLETIN No. 10

DECEMBER 1942.

39 MONTHS OF WAR.

In these 39 months of war our life-boats have rescued 4886 lives. That is more lives rescued in three years and three months of war than in the last 14 years of peace.

£53,000 DAMAGE.

In three years of war the life-boat service has not gone undamaged by enemy action. Of nineteen of its life-boats which took part in the evacuation of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk in May and June, 1940, one, the Hythe boat, never returned, and the other eighteen were all damaged. A reserve life-boat on temporary duty at Guernsey and the Jersey life-boat both fell into enemy hands when the Channel Islands were occupied by German troops in June and July, 1940.

The Tynemouth life-boat and boat-house were completely destroyed in an air-raid in 1941. The Institution's head office was damaged in an air-raid in 1940, and again in 1941. Its depot was damaged in an air-raid in 1940, and several boat-houses and other buildings have also suffered damage from air-raids. Considerable additional damage was done to the Institution's property by an air-raid in 1942.

The total value of the property destroyed or damaged is over £53,000. The Institution's boats cannot be covered by any government insurance scheme, so that the loss and damage of the boats at Dunkirk, in the Channel Islands and at Tynemouth, fall upon the Institution, but the other property damaged - just half the total - was insured.

BRONZE MEDAL FOR WICK COXSUAIN.

Coxswain Neil Stewart, of Wick, Caithness-shire, has been awarded the Institution's bronze medal for rescuing 31 men from a motor barge and a tug which had gone on the rocks in a gale. In the first glimmer of daylight the coxswain took the life-boat right alongside through heavy seas, although he did not know what depth of water there was among the rocks.

VELLUM FOR BUCKIE COXSUAIN.

Coxswain Francis Mair, of Buckie, Banffshire, has been awarded the Institution's thanks inscribed on vellum for rescuing the crew of an R.A.F. launch. He took the life-boat right over the rocks on which the launch lay, and as each wave receded she crashed on them. Her bottom was smashed in, and the whole boat was flooded, except the engine-room and the petrol compartments, but her air-cases kept her afloat and the coxswain brought her safely home.

B.E.M.S FOR TWO KIRKCUDBRIGHT LIFE-BOATMEN.

Two life-boatmen of the Kirkcudbright crew, serving with the navy, have been awarded the British Empire Medal. George Parkhill, son of the coxswain, serving as officer steward on one of H.M. trawlers, won it for rescuing wounded men from a blazing oil tanker in the North Sea. George Davidson, who was nineteen years of age at the time, and serving as a telegraphist, won it for climbing four flights of stairs in a bombed and blazing building in Plymouth, to rescue a man who was trapped by the fire. He took part in the St. Nazaire raid and is

A SOUTHERN AFRICAN BRANCH.

At a meeting in Capetown on February 22nd., 1942, with the Mayor presiding, a Southern African Branch of the Institution was formed. The Governor-General of the Union is its patron, Field-Marshal Smuts, Prime Minister of the Union, is its president, and Sir Herbert Stanley, late Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Southern Rhodesia, is its chairman. The branch is aiming to raise £10,000 to provide a motor life-boat to be named "Field-Marshal and Mrs. Smuts". Already it has sent the Institution £2,000. In addition South Africans have given £7798 since the outbreak of war. Such is the result of the appeal which Miss Pattie Price launched in South Africa two and a half years ago.

COLLECTING IN GAS MASKS.

The flag day at Wigan was held on a day when there was a gas exercise, and at Bristol when there was a mock invasion. Collectors and contributors were all wearing their gas masks. It made no difference. Wigan collected £324, a record sum. Bristol, where the collection had to finish at two o'clock instead of eight, collected £1772, only £14 less than the record collection of 1941.

£436 FROM SHIPS' LIFE-BOAT ENGINES.

The Austin Motor Company, which is generously giving the Institution one shilling for each horse-power of every engine which it makes for a ship's life-boat, has now given £436: 8:-. The first gift of £240, presented to the Cromer Branch in March last, has been followed by £60, presented to the Birmingham Branch in August, and £136: 8:-, presented in October to the Plymouth Branch.

COXSWAIN BLOGG'S BROADCAST.

Gifts still come in answer to the broadcast by Coxswain Henry Blogg, of Cromer, in the "Week's Good Cause" in the Home Service of the B.B.C., last March. There have now been 6800 replies amounting to £5,260.10.7. Among these gifts were four anonymous ones, all in £100 or £50 bank notes and all from the same person, totalling £700.

GRACE DARLING.

October 20th was the centenary of Grace Darling's death, and a memorial service was held in the church at Bamburgh. Among the wreaths laid on the grave was one from the Institution. The B.B.C. made a record of the service to be broadcast overseas.

"I HAVE COME THROUGH SAFELY."

A soldier's wife has sent £5. Her husband came through Dunkirk and is now serving in Libya with the Eighth Army. He wrote to her: "I have come through safely. Will you please send a cheque to the Royal National Life-boat Institution. It might help to save the life of someone else whose wife is waiting for him to come home".

A FISHING FLEET CALENDAR.

Mr. H. Jenkins, of Lowestoft, whose life-boat photographs will be familiar to readers of the Institution's journal, has published a "fishing fleet" calendar for 1943, with 14 beautiful photographs of the sea. Price 4s. 6d., including postage, from H. Jenkins Ltd., 2 Pier Terrace, Lowestoft.