

LIFE-BOAT WAR BULLETIN No. 14.

DECEMBER 1943.

51 MONTHS OF WAR.

In 51 months of war our life-boats have rescued 5,385 lives, and our life-boatmen have won 191 medals for gallantry.

SILVER MEDAL FOR MOELFRE

Coxswain John Matthews, of Moelfre, Anglesey, has won the Institution's silver medal. On a very dark night, in a very rough sea, he took the life-boat to the rescue of four airmen whose dinghy had been carried close to the rocks. It was a miracle that the life-boat herself was not smashed on them, and the four airmen wrote afterwards of "the extreme courage and skill" of the life-boat's crew. Coxswain Matthews has now won the silver medal twice and the bronze medal. Second-coxswain Richard Evans, who lifted one of the airmen straight out of the water, a great feat of strength, has been awarded the bronze medal, and so too has the motor mechanic, Robert Williams.

SILVER MEDAL FOR BARRA ISLAND.

Coxswain Murdo Sinclair, of Barra Island in the Outer Hebrides, has been awarded the silver medal for taking the life-boat 40 miles in a southerly gale and rescuing fifteen lives from a steamer which had been wrecked under the cliffs of Skye.

LOWESTOFT COXSWAIN'S GALLANTRY.

Coxswain Albert Spurgeon, of Lowestoft, who already holds the silver and bronze medals, has been awarded the bronze medal for the second time. He took the life-boat out at night to a naval vessel, was flung against the binnacle and cut his jaw open for three inches, but he insisted on carrying on, and it was not until nearly nine hours later that he went to hospital. There he had eight stitches put in the wound.

GALLANT MOTOR MECHANICS.

Bronze medals have been awarded to James O. Moore, motor mechanic at Barrow-in-Furness, and his son, Frank Moore, the assistant motor mechanic, for going out at night in a westerly gale, in a 12-foot punt, when there was no time to launch the life-boat, and rescuing two men from a fishing vessel which was driving ashore.

THE R.A.F.'S THANKS.

At the end of September the Institution received another letter from the Air Council thanking it for the help which it had given in air-sea rescue work. That help, the Council said, had been 'of the greatest value to the Royal Air Force'.

THE HON. GEORGE COLVILLE.

The Hon. George Colville, deputy chairman of the committee of management of the Institution, died on September 19th at the age of 76. For 37 years he had been actively associated with the Life-boat Service. He was elected a member of the committee of management in 1907, and was its deputy chairman for twenty years, from 1923 until his death. He was a younger brother of Trinity

House and a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron. He was not only an accomplished yachtsman but a skilled carpenter and boatbuilder, and in his house in London he built a dinghy which was launched through one of the windows.

COXSWAIN CROSS RETIRES.

Coxswain Robert Cross, G.M., who has been in command of the life-boat station at The Humber for 31 years, has retired at the age of 67. These last four years have been the busiest, as well as the most dangerous, in his long career. Since the outbreak of war he has taken part in the rescue of 244 lives, and has won the Institution's gold medal twice, its silver medal, its bronze medal, its thanks on vellum and the George Medal. No other life-boatman has such a war record. In these 31 years he has taken part in the rescue of 403 lives and his total of awards for gallantry is two gold medals, three silver, two bronze, the thanks on vellum and the George Medal.

THE DUCHESS OF KENT IN BIRMINGHAM.

The Duchess of Kent, President of the Institution, attended a life-boat fete in the Botanical Gardens, Birmingham on September 18th. and made a short speech thanking Birmingham for its help. That help in 1943 was over £10,000.

"MANCHESTER AND SALFORD XXIX."

In 1940 the Manchester and Salford Branch launched an appeal for £10,000 to build a motor life-boat to replace the life-boat which had been lost in the evacuation of the B. E. F. from Dunkirk. That fund has now been completed. It has been used to provide the new motor life-boat which went to Pwllheli in November of this year. The boat is named "Manchester and Salford XXIX", this being the 29th life-boat presented by Manchester and Salford. The Branch has now started another special appeal for £10,000 to provide its 30th. life-boat.

EMERGENCY RATIONS.

The Institution has received gifts of chocolate from Messrs. Cadbury, Fry, and Rowntree, and biscuits from Messrs. Huntley and Palmers, McVitie and Price and Peek Frean as emergency rations for its life-boats. By permission of the Ministry of Food, these firms have continued to keep the life-boats supplied with these rations, as they did for many years before the war.

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 1944, with 14 beautiful photographs of ships. Price 5s. 3d., including postage, from H. Jenkins Ltd., 2 Pier Terrace, Lowestoft.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER.

A hospital at Stranmillis, Belfast, the Garrison Church at Larkhill, Wiltshire, and churches in Cornwall, Northamptonshire, Lancashire and Gloucestershire, sent to the Life-boat Service the special collections which they made on September 3rd., the National Day of Prayer.