

LIFE-BOAT WAR BULLETIN No. 17.

SEPTEMBER, 1944

FIVE YEARS OF WAR

In the five years since war was declared on 3rd. September, 1939, our life-boats have put out to the help of ships and aeroplanes 3,385 times and have rescued 5,777 lives. That is an average of 22 lives every week. It is more lives rescued in five years of war than in the last 16 years of peace.

TO THE HELP OF AEROPLANES

Of those 3,000 launches 1,000, or a third, have been to the help of aeroplanes which had come down in the sea.

204 MEDALS

In the five years life-boatmen have been awarded by the Institution 7 gold, 41 silver and 153 bronze medals. They have also won two Distinguished Service Medals, four British Empire Medals and one George Medal. In all they have won 204 medals for gallantry. In money payments to crews and launchers the Institution has spent £300,000.

TEN LIVES AND SEVEN BOATS LOST

Ten life-boatmen have lost their lives on service during the five years. Seven life-boats have been destroyed or lost, one at Dunkirk, one at its station, three in a building yard and two in the Channel Islands, where they fell into enemy hands.

STUCK IN THE SANDS

One morning last May an army ambulance stuck in the sands at New Brighton, Cheshire, and two other vehicles which went to drag it out also stuck. The tide was coming in, with a nasty swell, and the need was so urgent that there was no time to launch the life-boat. Instead one of the mechanics and a life-boatman went to the rescue in the motor boarding boat. They had a mile to go. When they reached the vehicles they found three men in them. Two were submerged to their armpits. The third had only his head above water. In five minutes they would have been drowned.

M.B.E. FOR NORFOLK COXSWAIN

Coxswain Theodore Neilsen, of Wells, Norfolk, has been made a member of the Order of the British Empire. The services for which the award has been made have not been published. Coxswain Neilsen, went with the rest of the fishermen of Wells to offer his services at Dover for bringing off the B.E.F. from Dunkirk.

FINANCE IN 1943; EXPENDITURE

Expenditure in 1943 was £299,125. That was more than in 1942 but much less than in a year of peace. Only one new life-boat could be completed and sent to the coast. She had taken three times the normal time to build. But though much less was spent on building, more was spent in payments to crews and launchers than ever before, £77,485. That was some £20,000 more than in the last year of peace.

FINANCE IN 1943: INCOME

The Institution's income was £528,725. For the fourth year running it was bigger than ever before. Income exceeded expenditure by £229,600, but as soon as the war is over the money which the Institution is now able to put by will be spent on new life-boats. During these five years only one boat has been built out of every six which would have been built in normal times.

ANOTHER RECORD

£528,725 was the highest income the Institution has ever had. Here is another record, the lowest. There has never been a post which has not brought contributions, but by the morning post on July 27th there was only one, a postal order for 17 shillings.

SCOTTISH FISHERMEN RETURN REWARDS

Twenty Scottish fishermen from Argyllshire, Wigtownshire and Arran have returned as gifts to the Institution nearly £30 which they had received from it for going out to the help of crashed aeroplanes. Ten of the men had gone to the rescue together on two different occasions and had saved the lives of seven airmen.

33 YEARS -- STILL SAILING

One of the first eight motor life-boats to be built for the Institution's fleet was "General Farrell", stationed at St. David's on the coast of South Wales in 1911. She served there until 1936 when she was sold out of the fleet. She is now in the service of the government, still with the engine put in her in 1911.

45 YEARS -- STILL SINGING

Mr. J. W. Kelly, of Peel, in the Isle of Man, has now sung the solo in the hymn "The Life-boat" at the annual Life-boat Sunday Service at Peel every year for 45 years. Mr. Brian Leadley, who has been H.M. coastguard at Peel for 23 years has collected at the Sunday Service every year for those 23 years.

55 YEARS -- STILL GIVING

A subscriber in Huddersfield in sending his subscription of £2 writes: "In the year 1889 my father bought us children Mr. Ballantyne's Book 'The Life-boat'. Since then I have never been able to get past a life-boat collecting box until I paid."

GIFTS FROM SIX CONTINENTS

The Institution has had in recent months gifts from Switzerland, Bengal, Syria, Abyssinia, the Gold Coast, Northern Rhodesia, Texas, Peru, New South Wales, New Zealand and Ascension Island. That is, from all six continents, and the South Atlantic.

GIFTS FROM FOUR CENTURIES

Among money which has come in collecting boxes during the war have been coins not only of George VI, George V and Edward VII, but of Queen Victoria, William IV, George IV, George III, Queen Anne and Charles II.