

LIFE-BOAT BULLETIN No. 22.

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SIX MONTHS OF PEACE

In the last six months of war the Life-boat Service rescued 527 lives. In the first six months of peace it has rescued 295 lives.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

The first full annual meeting for five years was held in London on October 25th., and H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent, President of the Institution, presented the eight gold medals won during the war for conspicuous gallantry. Sir Godfrey Baring, Bt., chairman of the Institution, presided and the other speakers were Lord Winster, Minister for Civil Aviation, Commander H. T. de Booy, secretary and chief inspector of the North and South Holland Life-boat Institution, Admiral of the Fleet the Earl of Cork and Orrery, Mr. L. P. Stevens, honorary secretary of the Jersey life-boat station, Commodore the Earl Howe, and Rear-Admiral T. P. H. Beamish. Commander de Booy and Mr. Stevens gave their personal experiences of carrying on the work of life-saving under the Germans.

THE SEVEN GOLD MEDALLISTS

The eight gold medals were presented to seven coxswains. They were Robert Cross, of The Humber, who won the gold medal twice, and also the silver medal, the thanks on vellum and the George Medal, and helped to rescue 244 lives; Henry Blogg, G.C., B.E.M., of Cromer, who also won the silver medal twice, and the British Empire Medal, and helped to rescue 428 lives; Lieutenant William H. Bennison, C.G.M., R.N.V.R., of Hartlepool; John B. McLean, of Peterhead, who helped to rescue 414 lives; William Gammon, of The Mumbles, who also won the bronze medal; Patrick Murphy, of Newcastle, Co. Down, who also won the bronze medal twice; and John Boyle, of Arranmore, who also won the Dutch gold medal for gallantry in saving life.

The Duchess of Kent also presented vellums to three of the four honorary life-governors appointed during the war, Lady Florence Pery, of London, Councillor Mrs. F. M. H. Coleman, M.B.E., of Clacton-on-Sea, and Captain A. Stephen, of Fraserburgh.

WELSH COXSWAIN'S THIRD MEDAL

Coxswain James Watkins, of Angle, Pembrokeshire, who won the silver medal in 1929 and the bronze medal in 1943, has now won the bronze medal for the second time for rescuing the crew of nine men, of South Shields, from the ex-German steamer "Walter L. M. Russ", which went ashore on Grassholm Island on July 16th. She was under water, with two men on the funnel-ladder, one in the main top and the rest clinging to the rocks. Coxswain Watkins is 67.

FROM FOREIGN LIFE-BOAT SERVICES

Since the war ended the Institution has been in touch with several of the foreign life-boat services. In September 1944, as soon as France was liberated, it heard from the French service which reported that it had suffered great losses. In May 1945 it heard from the North and South Holland Life-boat Institution whose boats during the war rescued 850 lives, including some British and Canadian airmen. It has also heard from the Swedish service, which expressed its "great

admiration" of the work of British life-boats in the war, the Norwegian service, which asked what new developments had been made in life-boats during its "five years of isolation", the Belgian service which wanted to have some boats built for it in Great Britain, and the Portuguese service which made inquiries about the latest types of life-boat and engine. The Institution has sent plans to the Belgian and Portuguese services, and has lent the Dutch service two life-boats.

A COXSWAIN'S B.E.M.

Second-Coxswain Prideaux Lough, who has been a member of the Berwick-on-Tweed crew since 1919, and the second-coxswain since 1930, has now been appointed coxswain on returning to the crew from war-service. He brought with him the British Empire Medal, awarded "for rendering mines safe during 1941-1945 on the Scottish, Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire coasts".

SANDBANK MISTAKEN FOR A CLOUD

The Institution has made rewards of £15:15:- to three fishermen of Boston, Lincolnshire, for rescuing three airmen whose aeroplane had crashed on a sandbank. They had come down through a cloud over The Wash and had mistaken the sandbank for another cloud.

A GREAT LIFE-BOAT WORKER

By the death on September 17th. of Mrs. Edith Astley Roberts, President of the Eastbourne Ladies' Life-boat Guild, the Institution has lost one of the most devoted and successful honorary workers whom it has ever had. The Life-boat Service was only one of the causes for which she worked, but she gave herself to each as if it were her sole interest in life. She began her life-boat work in Eastbourne in 1910, and became the president of the Ladies' Committee in 1912. From then onwards for 34 years she was the inspirer and organiser of its work. In 1912 it collected £89, in 1945 it collected £1006, and the total for those 34 years was £22,332. Mrs. Astley Roberts was appointed an honorary life-governor of the Institution in 1924, and in 1943 she was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire for her many public services.

GRATEFULLY REMEMBERED

On 24th, September, 1939, just three weeks after war was declared, the Aldeburgh life-boat rescued the crew of 24 of a French steamer which had been torpedoed. The honorary secretary at Aldeburgh had a letter at the beginning of this year from the steamer's wireless-officer: "I am writing to-day from a Liberated France to send you an expression of my gratitude for the aid which you then brought us".

NEW APPOINTMENTS

The Institution has appointed Commander T. G. Michelmore, R.D., R.N.R., who was its inspector of life-boats on the east coast, and before that inspector in Scotland, to be deputy chief inspector of life-boats. Commander Michelmore's place on the east coast has been taken by Commander H. L. Wheeler, R.N., formerly inspector on the south coast. Commander Wheeler returned to the Navy at the beginning of the war. He was in command first of an armed yacht and then of an armed cross-channel packet, and he took part in the landings in Normandy on D-day as naval officer in control of four merchant ships carrying assault infantry.