

LIFE-BOAT BULLETIN No. 24.

JUNE 1946.

A YEAR OF PEACE

In the twelve months from the end of the war in Europe on May 8th. 1945, life-boats rescued 677 lives. That is an average of 56 lives a month and is only 50 lives less than were rescued during the last twelve months of the war.

PERSONAL GALLANTRY

The Institution has awarded its silver medal to Robert Harland, of its Whitby crew, who dived overboard from the life-boat on 23rd. February, in a heavy, confused sea at the harbour mouth and rescued a fisherman who had been washed out of his boat and was drifting by unconscious. The Carnegie Hero Trust Fund has awarded him an honorary certificate and £15. On that day the Whitby life-boat went out six times to the help of the fishing fleet, driven home by the gale, and escorted eight of the boats across the bar and into harbour. Coxswain Harry Murfield has been awarded the bronze medal, and he and his crew £28.

The motor mechanic at Walmer, C. P. Cavell, who won the thanks on vellum in 1945 for bringing the life-boat ashore single-handed in a rough sea, has been awarded it again for rescuing one of the crew of the life-boat who fell overboard when she was alongside a steamer. In hauling him in Cavell was in danger himself of being crushed between the two.

BRONZE MEDAL FOR CAMPBELTOWN

On the night of March 16th. an American steamer, "Byron Darnton" went ashore on Sanda Island off the Mull of Kintyre. There the Campbeltown life-boat found her next morning among the rocks. The life-boat had two men of the island on board to pilot her. Her rudder had been damaged and her engine had broken down, but both had been temporarily repaired and - against the advice of the islanders - the coxswain took her alongside the steamer. Although she was pounding heavily on the rocks herself, she rescued the 54 men and women on board. Coxswain Duncan Newlands has been awarded a clasp to the bronze medal which he won in 1942, and the assistant motor mechanic, Duncan Black, the thanks on vellum.

TO THE HELP OF A SUBMARINE

The submarine "Universal" broke down in Cardigan Bay on the night of February 3rd. in a gale with a rough sea running and drifted up the bay for 60 miles. Four life-boats went out to her help, the St. David's boat, which helped a destroyer to get her in tow, Fishguard, New Quay and Aberystwyth. After she had drifted 60 hours, with life-boats standing by her, the commander decided to abandon her, and the Fishguard and Aberystwyth boats rescued her crew of 28 men. The Institution gave the crews of the four life-boats awards amounting to £175.

DUTCH THANKS

The Netherlands Ministers for Shipping and Foreign Affairs have sent the thanks of their government to the Life-boat Institution and "the gallant crews of its life-boats for the services during the war by which the lives of a great number of Netherlands seamen have been saved". Life-boats went out 70 times to Dutch vessels, rescued 71 lives from them and landed another 69 men.

THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF LIFE-BOATS

Commander P. E. Vaux, D.S.C., R.N., who was Chief Inspector of Life-boats when war was declared and was called back at once to the Navy, served for four and a half years until in the spring of 1944 he was released at the urgent request of the Institution. He served first in command of six anti-submarine trawlers in the English Channel, and was then appointed an anti-submarine training officer, being promoted commander in January, 1941 and given command of H.M.S. "Seahawk", an anti-submarine training base. In November 1942 he took part in the landing in North Africa, was naval officer in charge at Bougie and Phillipville, and captain of the shore-base at Bizerta. In November 1943 he was given command of H.M.S. "Vindictive", a mobile destroyer repair ship, and was serving in her at Malta when he was called home to the Life-boat Service.

LIFE-BOAT DAYS IN 1945.

Last year life-boat days raised £107,988. The number of branches holding days was 832 and over 10,000,000 people contributed.

IN HER 89TH YEAR

During the six years of the war Mrs. Lotinga Smith, now in her 89th. year, who is so well known and beloved for her life-boat work in the Gedling and Carlton districts of Nottingham, personally collected over £2,000, and these districts, of which she is in charge, contributed altogether over £3,000. In spite of age and ill health she continues her work. In 1937 she was awarded the Institution's gold badge. Two engines, in one of the life-boats in the new building programme, are to have a tablet recording that they are her gift to the Life-boat Service.

FROM THE CANADIAN RED CROSS

For thirty months, from September 1943 to February 1946, the Canadian Red Cross Society made a monthly gift to the Life-boat Service. These gifts totalled £1,790.

£2,136 FROM AUSTIN MOTORS

Starting in March 1942 the Austin Motor Company gave the Institution during the war one shilling for each horse power of every engine which it built for ships' life-boats. These gifts made a total of £1,123. The company also held a life-boat week in its works in Birmingham in 1943 and the collections amounted to £1,013 10s.

FROM A PRISONER OF WAR

A lieutenant of the R.N.V.R. "just returned safely" after nine years overseas, two in Hong Kong, three in Shanghai, and four in a prisoners' of war camp, has sent the Institution £5, and become an annual subscriber.

A GIFT OF GOLD

The Institution has received, carefully packed in cotton wool, 46 sovereigns and 11 half sovereigns. All but two have Queen Victoria's head, and their dates range from 1845 to 1901. They came with the message "for those in peril on the sea." There was no name and the postmark was illegible.