

# LIFE-BOAT WAR BULLETIN. No. 1.

SEPTEMBER, 1940.

## **SUSPENSION OF THE LIFE-BOAT JOURNAL.**

Owing to the need for the strictest economy in the use of paper the Institution's journal "The Life-boat", stopped publication after the number for April, 1940. In its place single sheet bulletins will be issued from time to time to keep branches informed of the Institution's work.

It is hoped to resume publication of the journal later on and to print in it full accounts of all services which have taken place in the meantime, so that there will be no gap in the published records.

## **A YEAR OF WAR.**

In the first year of war life-boats were launched to the rescue 1108 times and rescued 2302 lives. They rescued more lives in this one year of war than in the last five years of peace. They rescued on the average 44 lives a week. In the last war the weekly average was 21.

## **64 MEDALS**

Sixty four gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded for gallantry. As many medals have been won in this one year of war as in the last six years of peace.

## **THE HUMBER'S GREAT RECORD.**

The Humber station has the outstanding record for the year. Its life-boat "City of Bradford 11" has been launched on service 32 times and has rescued 189 lives. Its coxswain and crew have won one gold, two silver and three bronze medals and seven vellums for gallantry.

## **ON THE SOUTH EAST COAST.**

It is on the South East coast that the calls for the life-boats have been most frequent. Walmer has been launched 50 times and rescued 85 lives; Ramsgate 52 times and rescued 168 lives; Margate 60 times and rescued 150 lives. That is a total of 162 launches and 403 lives for the three stations.

## **DUNKIRK**

Nineteen life-boats of the Institution formed part of the "fantastic armada" of little boats which evacuated the B.E.F. from Dunkirk. These life-boats brought off from the beaches thousands of men. All the life-boats were damaged. One was lost. The cost to the Institution in rewards, repairs and the replacement of the lost boat is over £8000.

## **GRATITUDE OF AIRMEN.**

Many of the launches of life-boats have been to the help of airmen. When the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston life-boat had been out to the rescue of a Hurricane fighter which had come down in the sea, the pilot's squadron leader wrote: "The speed with which your ship was launched and reached the spot was most gratifying to us and most reassuring to the pilots, who do such a lot of their work over the sea." A squadron leader who had been rescued by the Selsey life-boat wrote to the coxswain: "When you arrived I had given up hope of being picked up alive, and I doubt whether I could have lasted more than a few minutes. Your skill in

finding me in that rough sea seems a miracle to me, and goes to prove that you and all your fellows in the Life-boat Service are doing a magnificent job of work."

### **TO THE HELP OF FOREIGNERS.**

Of 1108 launches during the year 251 were to foreign vessels belonging to eighteen different countries and 608 lives were rescued from them. Never has the Life-boat Service more faithfully carried out the promise which it made when it was founded, "that the subjects of all nations be equally objects of the Institution as well in war as in peace."

### **TO GERMAN AIRMEN.**

Twenty eight of these 608 launches were to German aircraft. Four German airmen were rescued and four more were landed after being rescued by two fishing boats.

### **FOURTEEN NEW MOTOR LIFE-BOATS.**

During this year of war fourteen new motor life-boats have been completed and sent to the coast. All of them but one went to their stations by sea.

### **CLOSED STATIONS.**

The stations at Southwold (Suffolk) and Walmer and Hythe (Kent) have been temporarily closed on account of the war. Of the life-boats at St. Peter Port, Guernsey and St. Helier, Jersey the Institution has had no news since the Germans occupied the Channel Islands at the end of June, but the son of the St. Peter Port coxswain is believed to have been killed by enemy action on board the life-boat when she was out on the night of 28th. June.

### **THE ANNUAL MEETING.**

The annual meeting of the Institution was held in London on April 30th., and the principal speaker was Sir Arthur Salter, K.C.B., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Shipping. For the first time since 1914, when the custom was started of presenting medals for gallantry at the annual meeting, no life-boatmen were present. It was felt to be impossible to take them away from their duties on the coast. The Duke of Kent, the Institution's President was not able to be present but he sent a message saying how sorry he was "not to be able to thank the life-boat crews personally for their many deeds of outstanding valour,"

### **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN 1939.**

Expenditure in 1939 was £384,375. Income was £284,152. That is to say that there was a deficit for the year of over £100,000. Moreover income had fallen by over £65,000. That is a serious decline, but in presenting the report to the annual meeting the committee of management were confident that it was only temporary. That confidence has been justified by the responses to the Institution's appeals in 1940.

### **MONTHLY FIGURES.**

At the end of each month the Institution brings out a leaflet with the figures of launches and lives rescued up to date, Copies of this leaflet will be sent to any honorary secretaries who would like to have them for distribution.

### **FOUR GIFTS.**

A woman in Leeds has given to the Life-boat Service her first week's old age pension. A London mother has sent it a pound in gratitude for the safe journey of her children across the sea. A boy in Ilford has sent it half-a-crown which he had collected in ship's halfpennies. A woman in Grays, Essex has sent in two pounds from the sale of the plums in her garden.