

LIFE-BOAT WAR BULLETIN. No. 3.

MARCH, 1941.

1940.

1940 was the busiest year in the history of the Life-boat Service. Life-boats were launched to the rescue 1081 times. Of these launches 640 were to vessels in distress on account of the war. Life-boats rescued 2056 lives. That is 856 more lives than ever before in one year.

18 MONTHS OF WAR.

In the first eighteen months of war life-boats have rescued 3526 lives. They have rescued more lives in these eighteen months of war than in the last ten years of peace. They have rescued a life every four hours.

THEIR BUSIEST DAY.

The busiest day for the life-boats since war began was a day in December, 1940. On that day there were nineteen launches. Seventy-one lives were rescued. Nine medals were won for gallantry, and the Institution made rewards amounting to £259 for that one day's work.

TWENTY MEDALS IN FIVE MONTHS.

In the five winter months the Institution has awarded 20 medals for gallantry to English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish life-boatmen. The stations which have won them are Maryport, Southend-on-Sea, Tynemouth, and Walton and Frinton in England; Troon, in Scotland; Barry Dock and The Mumbles in Wales; Newcastle, County Down, (twice) and Ballycotton in Ireland. In the eighteen months of war 87 medals have been awarded for gallantry.

ROBERT CROSS, G.M.

Coxswain Robert Cross, of the Humber has been awarded the George medal by the King for the rescue of the crew of the Grimsby trawler "Gurth" on 12th. February 1940. The Institution awarded him its gold medal for the same service. In addition to these two medals Coxswain Cross has won since the outbreak of war a bar to his silver medal and the thanks of the Institution on vellum. He has now won the George Medal, the Institution's gold medal, its silver medal three times, its bronze medal and its thanks on vellum.

STATIONS CLOSED.

The Dover station was temporarily closed at the beginning of October, 1940, as the arrangements of the Admiralty made a life-boat station there unnecessary. The life-boat was taken over by the Admiralty a month later to be used in rescuing airmen. Teignmouth was temporarily closed in November 1940, owing to the difficulty of getting a crew, but Walmer which had been closed in June, 1940 was reopened in February 1941. Six of the Institution's stations are now temporarily closed on account of the war.

FRENCH AND BELGIAN LIFE-BOATS IN THE BRITISH FLEET.

A French life-boat, which escaped from France at the end of June 1940 and arrived at an English port, with her coxswain, motor mechanic and French refugees on board, has been taken over by the Institution for the war. She is now serving in its reserve fleet. A Belgian life-boat, which was picked up derelict in the English Channel by one of H.M. ships has been put at the disposal of the Institution by the Belgian government, free of charge, until the end of the war. The Institution is repairing her, and she too will serve in the reserve fleet.

ARMY'S GRATITUDE FOR DUNKIRK.

The appeal to the Army, which the Institution makes each year was sent out in August, 1940. The response up to the end of February 1941, is £5562. That is fourteen times as much as in 1939. The Army is much larger, but the chief reason for this great increase is gratitude for the work of the life-boats at Dunkirk. Letter after letter has referred to it. One commanding officer wrote; "As my regiment was one of the many that evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk, I, my officers and men do fully realise the marvellous work that the men of the life-boat service did there under the most dangerous and hazardous conditions."

HELP OF NAVY AND AIR FORCE.

The Navy and Air Force have been no less generous. During 1940 the Navy contributed £2099, nearly five times as much as in 1939. The appeal to the Air Force was made in September 1940. Up to the end of February 1941 the contributions have been £2440, six times as much the response to the last appeal.

Among those who sent contributions were two Polish Squadrons and a Czechoslovak Depot of the Air Force.

MANCHESTER & SALFORD'S APPEAL.

One of the 19 life-boats which went to Dunkirk at the end of May 1940, never returned. Four months later the Manchester and Salford branch launched a special appeal for £10,000 to replace this boat. It will be the 29th. life-boat presented by the branch. In spite of the severe damage which the people of Manchester and Salford have since suffered from air raids, they have already contributed over £3000 of this sum.

FROM THE EMPIRE OVERSEAS.

Many gifts have shown the generous interests of British people overseas in the life-boat service at home. The Government School at Broken Hill, Rhodesia, which has about a hundred scholars, has sent £50. The Kenya War Welfare Fund has sent five gifts in eight months making a total of £370. 10. The Northern Rhodesian Central War Charities Fund has sent £9. An Englishwoman in Nigeria has sent two gifts, one of £25 in gratitude for her safe voyage from England, and then another of £10 from the sale of home-made cakes. The Gold Coast War Charities Fund has sent £25. The Men's Patriotic Association of Bell Island, Newfoundland has sent £10. Members of the British Air Commission in Canada and Canadian aircraft firms have sent £118. 13. The Sekondi Masonic Lodge, Gold Coast, has sent £1. 13. 3. from a collection at a lodge supper, and the sale by auction of a steak and kidney pie

FROM AMERICA.

America too, is helping the British Life-boat Service. A lady in California, who had been "thrilled indeed to read of the heroic deeds of those saving lives around dear old England" sent £49. 9. A gift of £6. 13 has come through a London Hospital from an American doctor; a gift of £25 through a London firm, from the Jacobs Manufacturing Co., Connecticut; a gift of £100, through the Cunard White Star Line, from a New York firm.

"A FITTING EPILOGUE".

The Institution has received a gift of £25 from the ship's fund of the auxiliary cruiser "H.M.S. Jervis Bay," which was sunk in November, 1940, when very gallantly defending a convoy of British ships from a powerful German raider. The owners of the "Jervis Bay", the Aberdeen Commonwealth Line, have also sent a hundred guineas "in appreciation of the splendid work of the life-boat service and in commemoration of the gallant end of so many of our officers and engineers serving in H.M.S. Jervis Bay". It was the wish of the ship's company that, should they be lost, half their fund should be given to the life-boat service. In announcing their gift the B.B.C. described it as "a fitting epilogue to an heroic story".