

LIFE-BOAT WAR BULLETIN. No. 4.

JUNE, 1941.

TWENTY-ONE MONTHS OF WAR.

In the first twenty-one months of war life-boats have rescued 3816 lives. They have rescued more lives in the twenty-one months of war than in the last ten years of peace. They have rescued 42 lives every week.

LIFE-BOATS IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN.

The defeat of Germany's air attack on this country in the autumn of 1940, known as the Battle of Britain, lasted, according to the official accounts, from August 8th. to October 31st. During these 85 days life-boats were launched to the rescue 264 times. Of these launches 131, or nearly half were to aircraft down in the sea.

The busiest period of the battle for life-boats was the first 29 days, from August 8th. to September 5th. During those days there were 76 launches to aircraft out of a total of 118 launches.

One hundred of the 131 launches were on the east, south-east and south coasts, from Skegness, Lincolnshire, where there were five, to Weymouth, Dorset, where there were four. The other 31 launches were at widely scattered parts, on the east coast of Scotland, in the north east of England, in Devon in Wales, on the Mersey, in the Isle of Man, and on the east coast of Eire, where there was one launch.

The stations which put out most often to aircraft were Selsey, with 15 launches, and Margate, with 14.

As the result of these launches during the Battle of Britain 10 British and 8 German airmen were rescued.

THE THANKS OF THE AIR MINISTRY.

The Air Council wrote on 18th March, 1941, "To convey their thanks to the Institution for their continued and valuable work in aiding the rescue of airmen who have been forced to land in the sea." The letter went on, "The Council wish to record their appreciation of the fact that the assistance afforded by the Institution is enabling a great number of these men to be picked up."

AN IRISH GOLD MEDAL.

The second gold medal to be awarded for conspicuous gallantry since the outbreak of war, has been won by Coxswain John Boyle, of Arranmore, on the north west of Ireland. For the same service the motor mechanic was awarded the silver medal and each of the other six members of the crew the bronze medal. The life-boat was out for sixteen hours to the help of a Dutch steamer, which had stranded on a reef over twenty miles away. It was in December. The wind was at hurricane force. The seas were mountainous, lifting the life-boat to the height of the steamer's masts, and it took her four hours to rescue 18 men.

COXSWAIN CROSS AGAIN.

Coxswain Robert Cross of the Humber, who has won, since war began, the George Medal, the Institution's gold medal, a clasp to his silver medal and the thanks of the Institution on vellum, has now won also a clasp to his bronze medal. He won it for rescuing the crew of a vessel by night in a very heavy sea and a snowstorm. He has now won the Institution's medals six times. No other man has won more than five in the whole history of the life-boat service.

A STEAMER BLOWS UP.

Coxswain James Campbell, of Boulmer, has won the bronze medal for gallantry. His life-boat was helping in the tow of a burning steamer when the whole

fore-part of the steamer blew up. The life-boat was lifted out of the water; her crew were blown flat; pieces of metal rained down on her. A second explosion might come at any moment, but Coxswain Campbell took the life-boat straight through the smoke and fumes alongside the steamer's stern and rescued two men who were on board.

LIFE-BOAT STATION BOMBED.

Recently the Tynemouth life-boat station was hit by a high explosive bomb. The boat house and motor life-boat were destroyed, and the launching slipway was damaged. The station will shortly be re-opened, with a motor life-boat from the reserve fleet.

AN AMERICAN TRIBUTE.

On March 2nd, 1941, the "New York Times" published a leading article on the work of the British Life-boat Service: "The R.N.L.I." it said, "has been called the noblest of England's charitable societies. Though not among the oldest, it has more than a century of service behind it. It is a purely voluntary organization. Yet it has never lacked for funds gratefully contributed by a seafaring nation. Its equipment is modern, including many motor boats of considerable range, and its morale and efficiency have made it a model for the rest of the world. Even in peace time the long coast of the British Isles is stormy and treacherous. In time of war, with battle-scarred wrecks drifting in from every sea lane, the work of the life-savers is a continuous test of skill and courage."

SIR GODFREY BARING'S BROADCAST.

On 23rd. February, 1941, Sir Godfrey Baring, Bt., Chairman of the Institution, broadcast a life-boat appeal as "The Week's Good Cause". There were 5003 replies amounting to £3220.

£69,494 FROM LIFE-BOAT DAYS IN 1940.

Never has there been such a generous response by the public to the appeal of life-boat flag days as in 1940. The number of branches which held flag days was 771, and 475 of them raised larger sums than ever before. The number of people who gave was 7,727,000. That was 1,881,000 more than ever before. The sum they gave was £69,494. That was £23,815 more than ever before.

BOMBED -- BUT SAFE IN PORT.

A life-boat collecting box has come home after being bombed. It was on board a steamer which was attacked by aeroplanes and set on fire. Her crew abandoned her and 56 of them were landed by the Angle life-boat. Two days later she went aground, a total wreck. Her officers returned to her to bring ashore the safe. They found also the life-boat collecting box, battered, blown open, with all its paint gone, but, as the third officer wrote, "symbolical of its prototype it had safely carried its load and still contained the coins which had been contributed by the crew."

AN OLD AGE PENSIONER REMEMBERS.

An old age pensioner has sent five shillings to the Institution. He wrote that he had been rescued by the Gorleston life-boat in 1884.

A DUTCHMAN'S GIFT.

A Dutchman in London, unable to send his usual subscription of £10 to his own life-boat Service in the Netherlands, has sent it instead to the Institution.

ONIONS -- 10s. EACH.

The Institution has received three gifts, amounting to £3, from the sale of six onions.