

UNCLE SAM'S LIFESAVERS



UNCLE Sam saves annually more lives than he destroys. Merchant vessels under all flags are his wards. Whether we are at peace or at war with other nations, the brave men of the United States Life-Saving Service stand ready to risk their own lives to save those of shipwrecked sailors and passengers. Since 1871 the United States has been gratuitously performing this work of rescue and, for the most part, for the benefit of foreigners. British ships have received the largest amount of assistance, chiefly because Great Britain's maritime commerce is larger than that of any other country of the world. Many a seaman from the ports of the United Kingdom owes his preservation from a watery grave to the brave deeds of our lifesaving service.

It is impossible to even approximate the actual number of human lives rescued, or the value of property preserved through the agency of their service. Records of rescues made are kept and reported annually, but the number of marine disasters that may have been averted can never be determined. Vessels are continually being warned off, by signals from the shore, when approaching the coast at night, in thick or heavy weather. The fact is noted in the keeper's log and reported to Washington. The vessel, after changing her course, pursues her way, and the department makes no attempt at learning her name, or finding out how near she came to being wrecked. In 1899, 315 vessels were warned of "danger ahead" at the various coast stations.

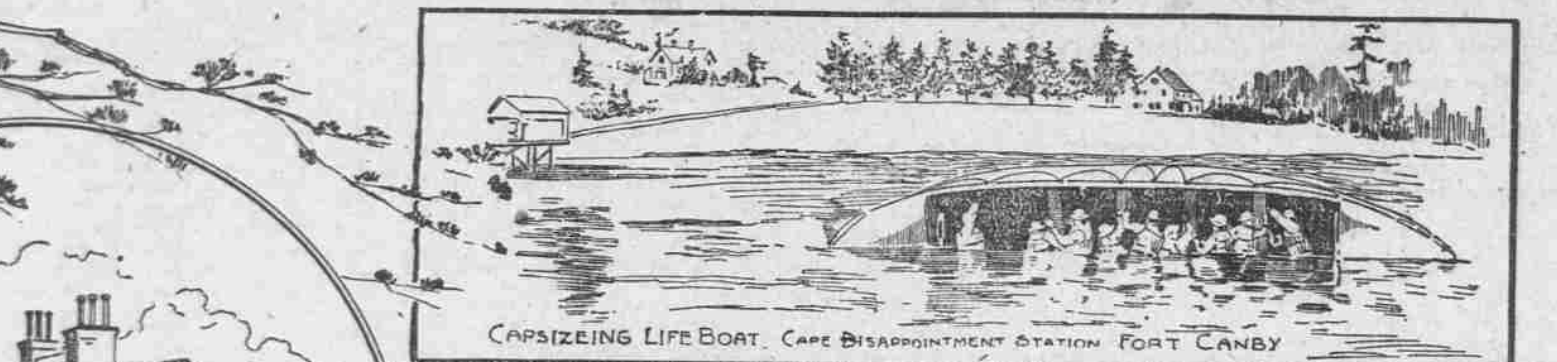
Work Performed. During last year 428 marine disasters occurred within the field of operation of the United States Life-Saving Service. The imperiled vessels had aboard 2603 persons, of whom 55 were lost. Property, valued at \$3,046,650 was in jeopardy, and of this amount \$4,205,500 worth was saved, that lost being valued at \$1,842,750. The total number of vessels lost was 72. This report is made from the list of documented craft and does not include the hundreds of mishaps of a lesser nature than total shipwreck that received the attention of the life-saving crews.

Last year there were 265 lifesaving stations in the United States, embraced in 23 districts, on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. California has six, Oregon five, and Washington four stations. Those on the Oregon Coast are located at Coos Bay, Umpqua River, Coquille River, Yaquina Bay and Point Adams. Those in Washington are the Cape Disappointment, under charge of Captain Stuart; Ilwaco Beach, Captain Jorgensen; North Cove, Captain Brown; and Westport.

Life-saving stations are established along the coast line wherever needed, under the direction of Congress. The department is governed by a general superintendent, assistant general superintendent, district inspectors and board of appliances and keepers. The general superintendent is appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury, with the consent of the Senate, and the assistant general superintendent is appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury, on the recommendation of the general superintendent, as are the inspectors and keepers, etc.

The duties of these officers are very exacting. Inspectors of districts make their rounds every three months. These officials are, by special provision, appointed from the revenue cutter service of the United States, and have the rank of Captain. All officers, as well as members of service crews, hold their berths during good behavior, or their period of competency.

Selection of Crews. Members of crews are chosen solely because of their special fitness. They have to pass rigid civil service examinations, and are rated upon "physical condition," "experience" and "age." "Five," "four" and "three" respectively, showing the relative value of each qualification. Applications for positions as "surfmen" are made on blank forms, which are duly provided for that purpose. The applicant must furnish two vouchers that he has had three years' experience as a boatman, sailor or fisherman, besides giving five references of persons who have knowledge of his fitness as a boatman. Physical condition must be perfect, and the examination must be conducted by a United States Marine Hospital Surgeon, if one is available. If the applicant is successful, he must pass another examination a few days before he qualifies as a surfman.



ILWACO BEACH LIFE CREW GOING THROUGH THE BREAKERS

shore to a vessel wrecked in the breakers. It runs on a traveler-block attached to a hawser made fast to the mast. The buoy is attached to an endless line and is hauled back and forth by the crew on shore. This means is used when the services of a lifeboat are not available.

The thousands of visitors at the North Beach Summer resorts have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the workings of the life-saving service. Both the Cape Disappointment station, at Fort Canby, and the Ilwaco Beach station, located on the beach front, about two miles south of Ocean Park, have done excellent service in the past, and have performed many notable deeds of rescue. The Point Adams station, at the entrance of the Columbia River, on the Oregon side, and the North Cove station, near Willapa Harbor Bar, have also saved many lives of shipwrecked sailors and fishermen and helped stranded vessels out of danger.

Scene of Many Shipwrecks. The narrow peninsula that lies between Columbia River and Willapa Harbor Bars has been the scene of many shipwrecks. Generally foreign vessels are stranded on North Beach. The coast line here runs nearly north and south, and no leeway is afforded a vessel that gets in too far. The beach gradually shelves and there is a constant breaking of surf inshore which, during stormy weather, becomes a formidable danger for all seafaring craft. In 1886 three vessels, bound for Portland, the German bark, Potrimpos, for Portland; the Point Loma, from Gray's Harbor to San Francisco, with a cargo of lumber and salmon, went ashore on North Beach and were a total loss.

Difficulties Encountered. Captain Brown and his men, with beach apparatus, were towed to Oysterville by tug and transported the gear across the portage to the ocean beach with teams. After several attempts, the shot line was fired over the vessel. The crew were so benumbed with cold it took them nearly two hours to get the hawser and whip line made fast to the mast. A strong current carried the lines northward and hindered operations. Finally, all hands were safely brought ashore, one by one, in the breeches buoy. The Cape Disappointment crew came 20 miles by team from Ilwaco, in a little over two hours, and arrived just as the last man, the captain, was taken off.

The Cape Disappointment crew did heroic service in rescuing members of the crew of the British ship Strathblane, wrecked near Long Beach, November 2, 1891. The Strathblane had lost her bearings; heavy weather had prevailed, and it had been impossible to take the sun for several days. She was nearer to the coast than had been calculated. At 5:55 o'clock A. M., November 5, she struck nearly head on, close to the break. By shifting sails she was swung about into five fathoms of water, but again drifted in and struck 35 minutes later.

That sealed her fate. Thirty minutes later on board, including two passengers. At 7:30 o'clock one of the boats was launched and eight men got ashore safely. The surf then became heavier, with the setting in of the flood tide, and it was impossible to launch another boat. The Cape Disappointment crew was first on the scene, its surfboat and beach apparatus having been transported from Ilwaco to the beach by the Ilwaco Railway & Navigation Company's train. The wind was blowing from the south at the rate of nearly 20 miles an hour. The ship lay rolling fearfully, and it is said her yard arms dipped in the water three to five times a minute. The crew had taken to the rigging. Broken spars were swinging around the deck, and several men were hurt. The ship was over 500 yards out. Six shots were fired by the life-saving

crew from their gun, but each time the line either broke or the projectile fell clear of the ship. The breeches buoy method was then given up, and an attempt was made to put out the surfboat. Captain Al Harris and crew made a gallant attempt, but the terrific gale and heavy surf made it impossible to reach the vessel.

Seeing that the crew had abandoned the life-line and boat, the ship's crew and passengers commenced jumping overboard in an attempt to swim ashore. Six were drowned, the Captain, cook, carpenter, two seamen and one passenger. The others were dragged out of the sea by the hawser and whip line. The Strathblane, an iron vessel, soon went to pieces. November 19, 1898, the British ship Glenmorag, during foggy and heavy weather, ran onto the beach, a few miles north of Ocean Park. At 4 o'clock P. M., most of the men landed in the ship's boats; two were killed and four injured. One of the boats was launched from the windward side, and while rounding the stern, a huge breaker flung the frail craft up against the iron sides. Those not killed or injured managed to get the boat, which had been badly stove, ashore. The Ilwaco beach life-saving crew reached the scene too late to render assistance to the men.

Wreck of the Potrimpos. December 19, 1896, the German bark Potrimpos stranded at 7 o'clock A. M., about four miles north of Long Beach, having lost her reckoning. The mate and four men landed safely in one of the boats. The Ilwaco Beach crew, with the assistance of the Ilwaco Railway & Navigation Company arrived soon and took the remainder of the crew, 14 in number off in the surfboat, making two trips for that purpose.

The Cape Disappointment life crew rescued the Captain and crew of the steam schooner, Point Loma, wrecked near Long Beach, February 25, 1896. The Point Loma was a coaster, bound from Gray's Harbor to San Francisco, laden with lumber and salmon, in cases. In heavy westerly winds, with seas running high, she sprung a leak while off Columbia River bar during the night. Water gained such headway that the fires were extinguished and the boat became waterlogged and helpless. She drifted northward and narrowly escaped going in at North Head, against the rocks. The lookout at Fort Canby, Hill saw her signals of distress and efforts were at once taken to locate the spot where the ill-fated vessel would strike the beach. She was located early next morning, and the life-saving crew and a detachment of soldiers from the fort went to her

on each watch. One patrol the beach north three miles and returns; the other takes the south beat. The four-hour watches continue till sunrise. During the daytime but one man takes each watch, and he does not patrol the beach, except in foggy or stormy weather. An observation tower in the station yard is used by the day men. Each member of the crew carries a clock, which is punched at stated intervals while on duty. These clocks are inspected by the keepers to see that the men have been doing their duty. Heading is not allowed while on duty.

At Mercy of the Sea. The schooner lay with her bow to the shore and offered no lee to the rescuers. Breakers were sweeping past on either side of her and had already knocked off the stern of the vessel, which had drifted ashore; the imperiled men were huddled together on the bow. Two sailors managed to leap into the surfboat, when the steering oar broke and the craft was turned bottom side up. All hands climbed into the boat when it righted, and reached the shore.

Captain Stuart was severely injured, and the other members of the crew were completely exhausted and benumbed. The rest of the wrecked steam schooner's men were taken off on her life raft, which was worked by the whip line, which had been previously attached from shore to the vessel. Captain Conway, of Portland, now superintendent of the water lines of the O. R. & N. Co., was in command of the Point Loma, and was the last to leave his post.

When the United States Lightship broke from her moorings off Columbia River Bar and stranded on the beach at McKensie Head, her complement of men were taken off in the darkness by the Cape Disappointment life crew. The lightship, after standing off till morning, had attempted to go in over the bar with

assistance. The surfboat and breeches buoy were taken out by team. The breeches buoy was connected and sent out, but no one would get into it. The surfboat was then manned and started out. Pieces of lumber were coming out of the ship's hold and were pitching about in the breakers, making it extremely dangerous for the life-savers; the wreck was reached with great difficulty.

Soon afterward the tug Escort came out and succeeded in getting a hawser aboard. When nearly inside the harbor parted a third time. The vessel then drifted out again. The Disappointment lookout saw her lights; the beach was patrolled, and she was located ashore, in a narrow cove, near McKensie Head, where the heavy wind had forced her. The apparatus was taken over. The second shotline fell over the vessel, landing on the springstay, and the breeches-buoy gear was soon connected.

Operations Hindered. The darkness and the failure of the lightship crew hindered operations. The lines were badly fouled aboard ship and had to be cleared. About midnight, the men were all safely landed by the breeches buoy. The tide was, by that time, well up among the drift logs and greatly hindered the work. The captain and several of the sailors had been injured by being thrown about the ship by heavy seas.

The Harvest Home hulk, lying nearly buried in the sand opposite Easterbrook's place, has for years been a familiar sight to pleasure-seekers at Long Beach. The vessel sailed in on top of a full-moon high tide, and at low tide her crew walked ashore, receiving nothing more than a foot wetting. The Harvest Home was bound from San Francisco to Puget Sound with a cargo of general merchandise.

That many Columbia River bar fishermen are alive today is due to the work of the Point Adams and Cape Disappointment crews. It is estimated that the Disappointment crew alone has saved 120 lives within the past seven years. The Point Adams station also does a great deal of this kind of service, and has saved several lives already this season. During rough weather, both crews go out and lay by ready to render immediate aid. The Point Adams crew goes down to Clatsop spit keeping near the Oregon side, while Captain Stuart lies out by the bell buoy and keeps watch over Peacock spit. This extra precaution is not required by the Government, and only goes to show the efficiency of the service.

Four years ago, in July, Captain Stuart made a noteworthy rescue by this means. Two men in a fishing-boat were caught in the breakers. The boat was capsized, and when reached, the occupants were found clinging to its bottom. One of the men was so far gone that when a line was thrown to him he was unable to catch hold of it, and sank before the eyes of his would-be rescuers. One of the crew jumped overboard and rescued the man, in the nick of time.

At Ilwaco Beach. Night watch at the Ilwaco Beach station commences at 8 o'clock P. M., and lasts till 12 midnight. Two men go out

and pull to the rescue. Beach patrolmen do not fire a signal gun, but hurry back to the station to give the alarm. Members of life-saving crews are furnished quarters, bed and bedding, but they have to board themselves. They live well from a common table, and hire their own cook. The captains are furnished separate rooms, but have to board themselves. The Government does not provide clothing. The men are all allowed one day (12 hours) of a week, although they can be absent 24 hours or longer, by providing a substitute. They are also granted furloughs, but are not given transportation.

By a recent act of Congress, the pay of surfmen has been increased from \$60 to \$75 per month; Captains receive \$75 per month. If disabled while in active service, they receive full pay for two years, when, if cured, they will be taken on again. If a Captain is married and dies in service, his widow receives his full pay for two years.

Every part of a life-saving station is kept scrupulously clean. The boats and apparatus are always in the best of condition, and the men are periodically drilled. Following is the weekly routine: Monday—Beach apparatus drill and overhauling gear. Tuesday—Surf and life boats. Wednesday—International and general service code signals. Thursday—Beach apparatus. Friday—Resuscitation. Saturday—Clean house.

CLAUDE SIMPSON. Strens Past and Present. In the days of old Ulysses there were strens, as they say. And the songs they sang were wonderful and sweet; When they saw a sail approaching they would sit and sing away. Till the voyagers were taken off their feet—Till the boats were safely moored. And the voyagers were lured. To the doom the strens wanted them to meet.

They had faces like the angels that are pictured in the books. They had all the little graces men adore. But, instead of slim, white fingers they had ugly, bony hooks. That they hid among the snowy folds they wore. And each like a stren gave. Sent some victim to his grave—Left some women mourning on some other shore.

There are strens that still gather on the salt sea shore today. And the things they say are wonderful to hear. And they swoop down on the fellow who goes wandering that way. And they whisper things that charm him in his ear. O they get him and cajole. Till they have him, heart and soul—Till some other victim chances to appear.

Ah, the flirting of the stren who is sitting by the sea. In the fatal act it ever was of yore. And her kiss is just as potent as that other's used to be. Though she doesn't kill her victim any more.

All she does is pout and smile. For a happy little while. And then leave his poor heart broken, on the shore. —S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Times-Herald.