

# AUGUST

- 4 PAISH DEDMEN ALLEN - Coastguard found man at Skipsea on beach missing overnight. Taken by helo to Hull RI.
- 7 PIERCE DEDMEN ALLEN - Area west of Pickering searched for reported aircraft crash. Nothing found. Later Police established a Water Board worker set off Time Ex Flares.
- 13 PAISH RULE AINSIE - Medevac patient suffering with bends Hull RI to Yarmouth.
- 17 LONGDEN RULE AINSIE - Search for missing 4 year old girl at Skegness. Found safe by Police.
- 21 PAISH HEWITT WILLIAMSON - Search for emergency transmission on 243. Beacon found at manufacturers factory at Louth.
- 21 LONGDEN DEDMEN BARNES - Search off Humber shores for occupants of drifting empty sailing dinghy. Not found.
- 22 PAISH PRENTICE WILLIAMSON - Jaguar crash off Cromer. Coltishall helo winched pilot. Helo returned.
- 22 LONGDEN BARNES DEDMEN - Swimmer missing at Mablethorpe. Not found.
- 23 PIERCE DEDMEN BARNES - Dutch fisherman on 'JAN MARIA' 15 miles off Whitby suspect appendicitus. Fog at sea made RV difficult and also fog at Scarborough caused Helo to go to Hull RI.
- 26 PAISH PRENTICE WILLIAMSON - Search for swimmer off Saltburn. Not found.
- 28 PIERCE HEWITT AINSIE - Hoax Mayday call at Flamborough.
- 31 SUTHERLAND PRENTICE WILLIAMSON - Three people in water at Skipsea. One picked up by cobbler, one by helicopter, one missing.

LUCKILY, 4 →  
RARE EVENT.

## Hull diver with bends airlifted

A HULL DIVER was recovering from an attack of the bends today after being airlifted to a special medical centre at Great Yarmouth.

The man, whose name has not been released, complained of feeling unwell after diving with friends in the sea at the weekend.

He was taken to Hull Royal Infirmary this morning but was later airlifted to the North Sea Medical Centre at Yarmouth by an RAF Leconfield helicopter.

He is not thought to be seriously affected by the condition, which affects divers who have been operating in deep water.

## Hoaxer sparks sea alert

A BRIDLINGTON coastguard has condemned a hoaxer for causing a three-hour intensive search by air-and-sea rescue services off Skipsea yesterday.

An RAF helicopter, the Bridlington Lifeboat, the Royal Navy ship, HMS Crichton, and several small fishing vessels were looking in the area after a message that a fishing boat was in distress 10 miles offshore.

The operation was called off when nothing was found.

"We can only assume it was a hoax," said coastguard-in-charge at Bridlington, Mr Keith Cattermole.

"It is difficult to understand the mentality of people who would do such a silly thing, especially in view of events at Flamborough this week.

"It is no joke to put people's lives at risk and that is exactly what happens every time the lifeboat and rescue services are called upon.

"Not only are the services forced into potentially dangerous situations, but they are being taken away from their stations when a real emergency could be happening elsewhere."

The air-sea rescue helicopters of RAF Leconfield form an important link in the emergency services dedicated to saving life both at sea and on land. In the last of a series on lifeboatmen and related rescue services as part of the Local Newspaper Week Lifeboat Appeal, Friday Focus reporter ALISON MORRIS on how help can come from the air.

# 1,525 reasons for calling them heroes

**DRAMATIC** rescues carried out by the men of the RAF's search and rescue unit at Leconfield have hit the headlines many times, but to the men themselves, saving lives is often all in a day's work.

The two Wessex helicopters based at Leconfield and the men who fly in them provide a vital link in the rescue service network, covering a large area extending 100 miles out into the Norths Sea and inland as far west as the Lake District and south to Birmingham.

Search and rescue helicopters have been based at Leconfield since 1957, since when the men of the 22 Squadron's "D" flight and their predecessors in 202 Squadron have scrambled 2,306 times and lifted 1,525 people to safety.

To the public, the life of the crews manning the helicopters is a dangerous and perhaps a glamorous one, but the men themselves would argue that this is not the case.

"People outside tend to think of us as heroes, but we are not," said Flt. Lt. Hugh Pierce, a helicopter pilot. "People think of heroes as people who put themselves in danger to rescue someone, and I don't personally think I have put myself in extreme danger yet."

In any rescue attempt the three man crew, pilot, navigator and winchman, rely for their own safety on their training, their helicopter, co-operation with other rescue services and on each other.

## friday focus



Inevitably, things can go wrong and when that happens, it is often the winchman who bears the brunt. One of the most dramatic rescue bids of recent years was made in May this year when seven men died in the fishing boat tragedy off Flamborough Head. Winchman Master Air Loadmaster Dave Allen was repeatedly lowered into the raging sea in a desperate attempt to save the drowning men.

He was himself seriously injured in the attempt. As he clutched an exhausted survivor from one of the fishing boats, MALM Allen was dashed against the side of the Filey lifeboat by a freak wave.

But last week, as he received a top bravery award for his courage shown on that day, MALM Allen was modest about his role in the incident.

"At the time I did not have time to think about it. It happened very quickly and we were on the scene almost immediately," he said. "We were in among it almost before we realised

what was going on. It was there and we just got on with it. It is our job."

### Satisfaction

That is an attitude typical of the men who make up "D" flight at Leconfield. Flt. Lt. Paul Longden, one of the helicopter pilots, echoed MALM Allen's words. "There is a lot of

satisfaction in having saved a life but we are not looking for any reward," he said.

Not all the incidents involving the helicopter crews are as dramatic as the Flamborough tragedy. They may be called out to airlift sick or injured men from ships and transport them to a hospital, to join in a search for missing hill walkers or to rescue someone who has fallen down a cliff.

A crew can be called out by Humber Coastguards, by a rescue co-ordinating centre near Edinburgh or by the police. "We are generally used in situations where other people either could not reach or where it would take them so long that someone could be dead," said Flt. Lt. Pierce.

ground crew, mainly engineers. The base is manned 24 hours a day by a minimum of three aircrew and five ground crew. A second crew will always be on call.

### Average time

During the day, the average time between receiving a call-out and leaving the ground is only about five minutes. At night it can take about 30 minutes, well inside the maximum standby times allowed. Some of the calls may turn out to be false alarms, but the crewmen often have no idea what they will find

when they arrive at the scene.

All the men have some first aid training, but if someone has been injured it will usually be the winchman who administers first aid, either at the scene or on board the helicopter.

They work very closely with the other rescue services, often training with the lifeboat crews. Each play a vital role. The helicopter can reach areas which may be inaccessible by boat, but there are occasions when the helicopter crew cannot respond, regardless of the urgency because of the weather.



SAC Kevin Donnelly, air traffic controller at Leconfield, in the operations room.

"We can get called out to all sorts of things. We were called out the other day to someone who was stuck halfway up a cooling tower at Retford. Fortunately someone else got there first."

There are 12 aircrew based at Leconfield and about 35



One of the two Wessex helicopters stationed at Leconfield. Pilot at the controls is Flt.-Lt. Hugh Pierce.



Flt.-Lt. Hugh Pierce at the controls of a Wessex helicopter.

"NOW WHAT COMES AFTER  
BATTERY MASTER ON ??"

"OH YES, GLASSES ON"