



Sepoy Sources

This pack contains a collection of sources including service reports made by the lifeboat crew and contemporary newspaper cuttings. Use the sources to piece together the rescue and to compare the lifeboat men's response with the media's.

Includes:

- *Sepoy* service report
- Eastern Daily Press, December 14th 1933
- Daily Sketch, December 14th 1933
- Daily Mirror, December 14th 1933
- Eastern Daily Press, December 15th 1933
- Eastern Daily Press, December 15th 1933
- Norfolk Chronicle, December 22nd 1933



Sepoy Service Report

13th DECEMBER 1933
LIFEBOAT, "THE ALEXANDRA" (From the Gangway.)
(Temporary Lifeboat)

Barge With Auxiliary Motor "SEP0Y" of Dover.

The Lifeboat was launched at 8.30 a.m., to the Barge "Sepoy" flying distress and dragging her anchors about 1 1/2 miles East of Cromer Pier. Directly she was launched she was blown and washed round broadside on to the Beach. After one hour's hard work she was got on to the Carriage again and re-launched.

The Crew managed to keep her afloat for about 20 minutes, but could make no headway, And she was again driven on to the Beach. The Crew and Helpers, with the assistance of a large number of voluntary helpers then got the Boat on to the Carriage again and dragged her about half a mile along the beach South East of Cromer to get well windward of the Vessel, which was now near the beach, and launched again about 1.30p.m. The sale and heavy seas prevented the Crew from getting the Lifeboat far enough out to get alongside the Vessel, and she drifted past her and was driven ashore again. By this time Coxswain Blogg, with the H.F. Bailey, arrived from Yarmouth, and with very great difficulty and wonderful seamanship to take off the crew of two.

Type, name and port of Vessel:	Barge with auxiliary motor "Sepoy" of Dover
Names of Master and Owners:	J Hempstead of Grays Essex
Number of Persons Aboard:	Two
Tonnage, & Where From & To:	65 tons. Loaded with tiles. Grimsby to London
Location of Casualty:	1/2 mile East of Cromer Pier
Cause of Casualty:	Stranding. Total wreck
Wind:	E S E. A whole gale
Sea:	Very heavy
Weather:	Fine and very cold
Time Signal was Received:	7.55 am
Time Lifeboat was Launched:	8.30 am (1st launch, launched 3 times)
Time Returned to Station:	About 2 pm after 3rd attempt
Number of Lives Saved:	None by this boat
Oars or Sails:	Oars only
Authority:	Hon Sec and Coastguard
Damage to Lifeboat:	Rudder Chain bolt sheared off. Repair complete

R Davies (Coxswain) on 3 launches: also, R Blogg, A. Balls, R. Barker, G.Mayes, G Stimpson, L. Harrison, G. Rook, G. Allen.

On First and Second Launch also:— S. Allen, H. Davies Jnr., C. Cox, C. Harrison, C. Balls, C. Kirby, A. Middleton, R. Amis. Plus two in the last launch, only the names are not readable.

Paid to:	19 Crew:-	2 @ 19/-	1	18	0d.
		9 @ 38/-	17	2	0d.
		8 @ 28/6d.	11	8	0d.
Paid to:	30 Helpers	@ 15/-	22	10	0d.
		Total	52	18	0d.

Signed; H. Davies, Coxswain.

F. H. Barclay, Hon. Secretary.

13th December 1933
LIFEBOAT, THE H. F. BAILEY” (From the Slipway.)

Sailing Barge, “GLENWAY” and “SEPOY” of Dover.

The Life-boat was launched about 4.30 a.m., an receipt of a message from Haisborough Coastguard to a Vessel burning flares 2 miles South of Haisborough. Life-boat reached the Vessel at 6.30 a.m., and made one or two attempts to approach her, but found the water too shallow, and after the Lifeboat had grounded, the Coxswain hauled off and stood by until he could see there was no further danger to the crew, the Vessel having dried out. About 8 a.m., the Coxswain made for Yarmouth, and at 8.30 tried to signal Palling Coastguard to find out if the Lifeboat’s services were required at Cromer. Owing to the bad background the Signalman was unable to pick up a message clearly. The Coxswain then proceeded towards Gorleston, and when in Yarmouth Roads was met by the Gorleston Lifeboat, Coxswain informed him (at 11.15 a.m.) that the Barge off Cromer was in distress. Coxswain Blogg then returned with all speed and found the Barge “Sepoy” (about 3 p.m.) stranded about a 1/4 of a mile from Cromer Pier. The Barge was about 200 yards from the Shore heading E.S.E. in very heavy broken water. “The Coxswain rounded her stern and came between the Barge and the Shore and made several attempts to get alongside the Barge rigging, her decks being under the water. As it was impossible to hold the Lifeboat in position owing to-the heavy sweep of wind and tide, the Coxswain then ran the Lifeboat’s bows on top of the bulwarks abreast of the starboard rigging, and 3 or 4 of the Lifeboat’s Crew then one of the men and hauled him on board. They were then washed astern.

Eastern Daily Press, December 14th 1933

BARGE CREW CLING TO RIGGING

DESPERATE EFFORTS TO SAVE THEM AT CROMER

TWO OTHER VESSELS IN DANGER

WILD WEATHER, WITH HAIL AND RAINSTORMS, WHICH SPRANG UP WITH DRAMATIC SUDDENNESS LAST EVENING WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CALLING OUT OF FIVE NORFOLK LIFEBOATS WITHIN THE SPACE OF A FEW HOURS TO-DAY.

The lifeboats concerned are the two Cromer lifeboats and those at Sheringham, Blakeney, and Gorleston. In addition the Aldeburgh (Suffolk) lifeboat has put off to a steamer.

The Norfolk lifeboats were called to three barges. Two of them—one at Haisbro' and one at Cley—showed flares before dawn. A third barge off Cromer was seen to be flying distress signals when daylight came.

Later the barge off Cromer dragged her anchors, and as she drifted to the shore her crew of two clung to the rigging.

Rescue Drama

The barge is the Sepoy, and desperate efforts are being made to rescue the men. After two attempts the Cromer sailing lifeboat has managed to put off, and the rocket crew are also trying to get a line over the vessel.

Once they succeeded, but the lifeboat was blown over the rope and cut it in two. The men are now in a precarious position.

Daily Sketch, December 14th 1933

DAILY SKETCH THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1933
£20,000 OFFER FOR THE MONSTER WIRELESS on PAGE 20

DAILY SKETCH

No. 7,690 Registered as a newspaper.1 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1933 ONE PENNY

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS FROM THE QUEEN

THRILLING RESCUE IN THE GALE

TWO LIFEBOATS IN DRAMATIC DASH TO SAVE TWO MEN



A thrilling shipwreck drama was witnessed by hundreds of people at Cromer yesterday when the two men who formed the crew of the Dover barge Sepoy were rescued by the Cromer motor lifeboat H. F. Bailey after gallant, but unsuccessful, efforts by the reserve lifeboat. In this picture the reserve lifeboat is seen trying to reach the barge, with the two men clinging to the rigging. There had been two unsuccessful attempts to launch the lifeboat, and when she did get off she accidentally cut a rope that had been thrown over the barge. The top picture shows a life-line being fired.

Daily Mirror, December 14th 1933

THE DAILY MIRROR, Thursday, December 14, 1933 F.H.B.
Broadcasting - Page 24

Daily Mirror

THE DAILY PICTURE NEWSPAPER WITH THE LARGEST NET SALE

No. 9,378 Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1933 One Penny

**WORK AGAIN
ON GIANT
CUNARDER**

SOS — SOS — SOS — SOS

Thrilling Picture of Lifeboat Rescue in Gale



A poignant drama of the sea is illustrated here (and on pages 16 and 17) with a vividness probably never before equalled by the camera. The Dover barge *Sepoy* is seen being battered by icy seas off Cromer in yesterday's ferocious gale, when two men were rescued nearly lifeless after clinging to the rigging for six hours. A lifeline is being fired, and the reserve lifeboat is about to be launched. Cromer's motor-lifeboat, with Coxswain Blogg, the lifeboatmen's V.C., finally rescued the men.

Eastern Daily Press, December 15th 1933

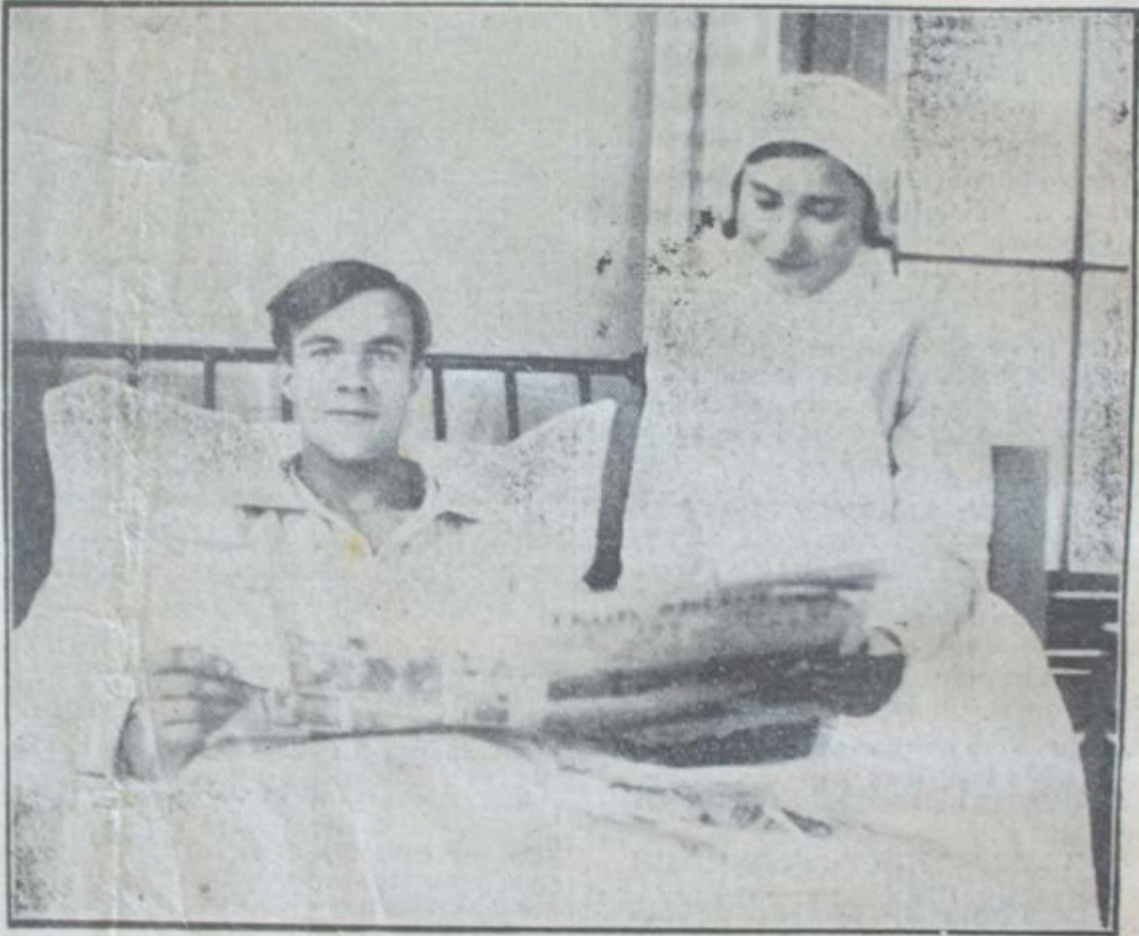
COXSWAIN AND SKIPPER



COXSWAIN BLOGG (LEFT) SHAKING HANDS WITH J. HEMPSTEAD, THE
CAPTAIN OF THE WRECKED BARGE AT CROMER.

Eastern Daily Press, December 15th 1933

NO LONGER IN THE RIGGING



J. STEPHENSON (AGE 20), ONE OF THE WRECKED CREW OF THE BARGE, IN CROMER HOSPITAL.

Norfolk Chronicle, 22nd December 1933

SEPOY SKIPPER'S BROADCAST.

Thanks Cromer Lifeboatmen.

TRIBUTE TO THE BOWMAN.

The Cromer motor lifeboat H. F. Bailey, which was beached on Wednesday afternoon of last week, after the dramatic rescue of the crew of the wrecked barge Sepoy, was refloated again on Saturday afternoon at 4.30. Ever since she was beached continued efforts had been made to refloat her.

After being refloated she proceeded, with Coxswain Henry Blogg in charge in the direction of Lowestoft, where she is to be overhauled and repaired.

The hulk of the Sepoy is all that now remains as a reminder of the ordeal of the crew of the barge and the brilliant work of the lifeboat crew. Her mast came down between Friday night and Saturday morning, and the cargo of tiles was taken out on Saturday. Ever since the barge was wrecked many sightseers have been to the cliff top and down to the beach to gaze on a spectacle which fortunately is rare at Cromer.

In an interview on Friday night Captain Hempstead mentioned that the B.B.C. had persuaded him to give a talk on his experience. He spoke warmly in praise of Coxswain Blogg and the lifeboat crew. He said: "It was a good piece of work undertaken in difficult conditions and it was done very well. Stevenson and I are very grateful to Blogg, his crew, the sailing lifeboat, Coastguard, and Life Saving Company—in fact, to everyone in Cromer, especially Commander Harrison, the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society representative, for his kindness.

"During the rescue," added Hempstead, "if there is any man who to my mind stands out just a little above the rest it was the lifeboatman with the grappling iron, the bowman, I believe." (Jack Davies is the bowman of Cromer lifeboat.) "We thank them all for saving our lives."

In addition to the telegram of congratulation which he received from Mr. T. A. Cook, M.P., Coxswain Henry Blogg also received congratulatory telegrams from Lady Noel-Buxton, Mr. Fred Samuels, late of the Paris Hotel, Mr. and Lady Agnes Durham, Nicholas and Victoria Durham, and a letter from Earl Buxton.

The coxswain and crew wish to thank all who sent telegrams and letters, and expressed their congratulations.

Repairs to the lifeboat were quickly carried out, and she returned to her station at Cromer and was hauled up the slipway on Wednesday morning.

The barge Fred Everard, which went aground at Blakeney on the same day, was towed off by tugs on Saturday afternoon and was taken into the harbour at Wells.

THE SKIPPER'S BROADCAST.

Capt. Joseph Hempstead, skipper of the Sepoy, spoke of his perilous experience over the wireless on Saturday night. We publish the following report of his talk by courtesy of the B.B.C.—

"This is 'Old Joe' speaking, skipper of the Sepoy. Our trouble started by us blowing a joint off the Humber on Monday afternoon, which put the engine out of action. There was a thick haze about, and a 'north-west' wind, but no gale then. There were only two of us aboard—myself and mate, a young chap of twenty—and we were carrying 144 tons of tiles. We sailed along and anchored, on Tuesday afternoon, off Cromer when the tide stopped coming with us; four hours later at about nine o'clock, the wind sprang up from the eastward and increased quickly to a gale. We gave her 30 fathoms chain on the bow anchor, let go the second anchor, and paid away on both chains as we were drifting a bit.

"The gale gradually got worse, and I saw it was time to do something, so I flared several times. But there was no response to our appeal. By this time the wind had driven us well in to the shore—it was bitterly cold, and the sea was very rough. When daylight came we hoisted a distress signal. The sea was increasing, and we were now about a quarter of a mile off the shore, and getting low in the water. At about 11 o'clock she was almost sunk, and struck the ground. Up to about daylight we had been up and down on deck, seeing that things were secure, but after this time the seas began to come right over and we had to take to the rigging and stay there. We could see on the shore that they were now trying to launch the lifeboat.

"At about this time they fired the first rocket line over the ship. My mate pluckily got down from the rigging and crawled along the foredeck to the stern and got hold of this. This sounds easier in the telling than the doing. The barge was rolling very badly, and I shouted to him 'Look out, Jack. Hold tight.' He laid flat and held on while the sea went right over him. Then he scrambled up and got aloft, and I nipped down the rigging too, and got the line from him. We went back up the rigging with it, and hauled aboard. By this time the lifeboat was afloat and was drifting down past us. Unfortunately it fouled the rocket line which we'd just secured, and broke it, cutting off all connection. The main hatch cloth had just washed out of the battens and, of course, the barge was soon full of water. She now began to bump, heaving up and down on the ground, which made it much more difficult for us to hang on to the rigging. The lifeboat had been washed up again on to the beach, and our chances didn't look too rosy.

"My mate was getting exhausted by the strain and cold, and when he said 'Here's a lifeboat coming—it's all right,' I said 'Stick it, Jack,' because I couldn't see anything. But he was higher up the rigging than I and could see better. He was right. This was the motor lifeboat of Cromer, returning from Halsbro', where it had been to another wreck, and was now coming to our assistance. We came down the rigging ready to jump into the lifeboat, which made several attempts to get us off. The sea was so heavy that it kept flinging the lifeboat up right on the barge and knocked two holes in her. But at last she came close to the rigging and I said, 'Jump, Jack.' He was just about done up and he seemed inclined to hold on to the backstay, but just as the lifeboat came up on the swell, he reached out and they grabbed his arm and pulled him aboard. Next time the boat came I jumped and grabbed a stanchion with my left hand and someone got hold of my right arm and pulled me aboard.

"Well, that was that. And I'd like to thank all the kind friends who've sent me letters of sympathy, and also Commander Harrison, of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, which does so much good all round our coast, and last, but not least, Coxswain Blogg of the Cromer lifeboat and his gallant crew. And what I'm doing here, I don't know. My pals 'll think me a fool; but I'm not the first who's been shipwrecked, nor the last!"