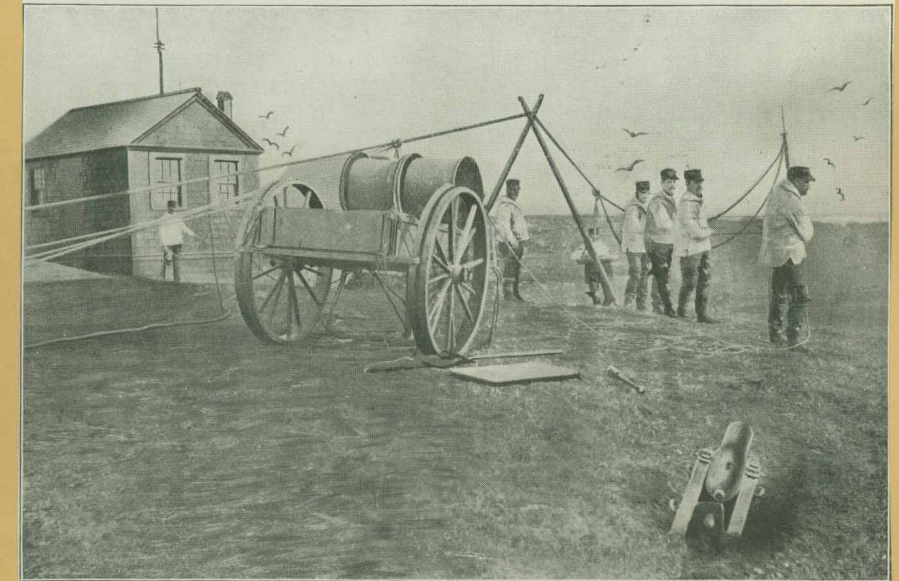


the station, in opposite directions, keeping well down on the beach as near the surf as possible until they reach the half-way house. Here they get warmed, and the surfmen from the adjoining station are met and checks exchanged. If a patrolman fails to meet the patrolman from the adjoining station at the half-way house, he, after waiting for a reasonable time, continues his journey until he either meets the patrolman or reaches the other station and ascertains the cause of failure. He thus patrols the neglected shore and is at hand to assist in case of disaster detaining the other patrolman. At the stations where the patrolmen carry watchmen's time-clocks the key is

Practice drills in the use of the breeches-buoy and surf-boats are carried on constantly at each station, until so proficient are the crews that practice rescues are often made in less than three minutes. The practice is carried on under conditions as near active work in a disaster as are possible, and a description of a drill will give the best idea of actual work at a wreck.

For the practice with the beach apparatus, the breeches-buoy, each station has a drill ground prepared by erecting a spar, called a wreck pole, to represent the mast of a stranded vessel seventy-five yards distant. This is over the water, if possible, from the place where the men operate, which represents the shore.

Each man knows in detail every act he is to perform in the exercise from constant practice, and as prescribed in the Service Manual. At



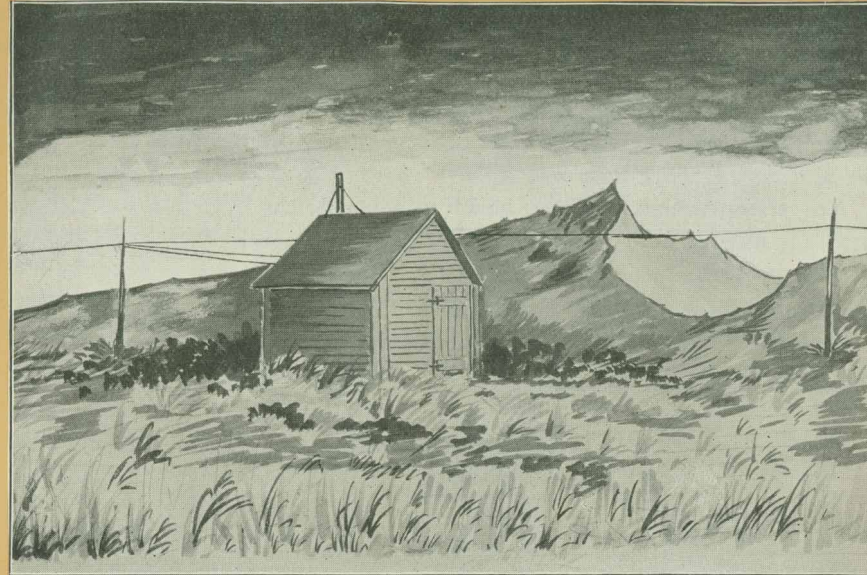
TAKING A MAN ASHORE WITH THE BREECHES-BUOY. LYLE GUN IN FOREGROUND.

the word of command they drag the apparatus to the drill ground, where they effect a mimic rescue by rigging the gear and taking a man ashore from the wreck pole in the breeches-buoy. If one month after the opening of the active season a crew cannot accomplish the rescue within five minutes, it is considered that they have been remiss in drilling.

No such celerity, however, is expected of the life savers in effecting rescues from shipwrecks, when storm, surf, currents, and motion of the stranded crafts conspire to obstruct. The hastening of the work of mimic rescue, however, gives the life-savers the utmost familiarity with the apparatus and prepares them for working speedily and successfully in utter darkness and under the most trying weather conditions.

The boat practice consists in launching and landing through the surf, capsizing and righting the boat, and practice in handling the oars. Drill signaling is interrogating each surfman as to the meaning of the various flags, the use of the code book, and actual conversation carried on by means of sets of miniature signals provided for each station.

The beach apparatus, the breeches-buoy, is used to effect the rescue of shipwrecked seafarers when vessels have stranded near the shore and the conditions make it inexpedient to use the surf-boats. At such



HALF-WAY HOUSE, WHERE SURFMEN FROM ADJOINING STATIONS MEET AND EXCHANGE CHECKS.

These houses are connected with the stations by telephone, and often from here the keepers are notified of disaster, and the crew summoned to a wreck.

secured to a post at the end of the beat, and the patrolman is required to reach it, wind the clock, and must bring back the dial in his clock properly recorded.

The means employed at the life-saving stations for rescuing persons from wrecked vessels is everywhere essentially the same, either a life-boat is sent out through the surf or the breeches-buoy, or life-car used. The rescues by boat are the most thrilling and hazardous. The method of establishing communication with stranded vessels is over a century old, successful experiments with this method having been made as early as 1791 by Lieutenant Bell of the Royal Artillery. He demonstrated the practicability of the method by means of a mortar, which carried a heavy shot four hundred yards from a vessel to the shore. Lieutenant Bell also observed that a line might be carried from the shore over a stranded vessel by the means of his mortar, but the credit for the actual execution of this method of establishing communication is given to Capt. G. W. Manby, according to a report of a committee of the House of Commons, dated March 10, 1810. A London coach-maker first conceived the idea of a life-boat. The present type is the product of a century's devoted study and experiment.



A SURFMAN'S CHECK.