

## THE LIFE - LINE

The posthumous award of the Albert Medal to Mr. Charles William Greenwood, and the award of Queen's Commendations for brave conduct to Lieutenant-Commander (E) W. F. Galletly, R.N. and Messrs Walter Green and John McComiskey, were recently announced.

The awards are in connection with an attempt to save the life of a naval rating who had been overcome by fumes in an empty ballast tank in H.M.S. *Mull of Galloway*, while she was undergoing a refit at the yard of Messrs Harland & Wolff, Belfast.

Mr. Greenwood found the naval rating lying unconscious at the bottom of the tank. Without thought for his personal safety he immediately went to the rescue, at the same time calling for help from another workmate. A rope was lowered for Mr. Greenwood to secure the rating, but before this could be done Mr. Greenwood himself was overcome by fumes and collapsed.

Mr. McComiskey then entered the tank to assist the two unconscious men. He was thrown a rope which he passed round the legs of Mr. Greenwood, but he had to leave the tank before he could knot the rope, as he felt himself being overcome by fumes. Mr. Green then attempted to reach the two men, but he was unable to tighten the rope before he became dizzy and had to be hauled out by a life-line.

A further attempt to rescue the rating and Mr. Greenwood was made by Lieutenant-Commander Galletly, but without result, and finally the two men were brought out by an ambulance squad with oxygen masks, and were found to be dead.

### **The Moral**

This story of courage and tragedy brings into sharp focus the need for strict observance of the precautions laid down in B.R.16—Articles 515-19 ; particularly to the need for the preliminary use of a life-line, and for a breathing apparatus Patt. 230 and life-line to be available for instant use at any time when confined spaces are being opened or cleaned.

A simple device widely used for life-saving during the Second World War consists merely of a length of heaving line with a spring hook spliced to the end. The line can be passed round the body of an inanimate man and the hook snapped on to the standing part with the minimum of trouble. The hook should be as light as possible consistent with it having the strength to support the dead weight of a man, plus possibly waterlogged clothing, since the device is equally useful in rescuing men overboard.