

46 MORE MERCY SHIP SURVIVORS

Six children in lifeboat picked up after warship's plane spotted them

FORTY-SIX more survivors, six of them children of the evacuee liner *City of Benares*, torpedoed on September 17, arrived in a British port last night.

They had spent eight days in a lifeboat before they were rescued by a British warship. In addition to the children, there

were two escorts, a passenger, five of the white crew of the evacuee ship, and thirty-two Lascars.

Despite the ordeal the survivors were cheerful.

The only evacuee to go to hospital—he had frost-bitten feet—was twelve-year-old Paul Shearing, of King Edward-avenue, Moordown, Bourne-mouth.

The others are:—

William Cunningham Short (nine), of Fordwell-cottages, Sunderland.

Harry Frederick Steels (eleven), of Blenheim-road, Eastleigh, Southampton.

Howard Francis Clayton (eleven),

of Rowland-avenue, Kenton, Middlesex.

Derek Alfred Capel (twelve), of Camrose-avenue, Hanworth, Middlesex.

Kenneth John Sharkes (thirteen), of Lancelot-crescent, Wembley.

The two escorts saved are Miss Cornish and Father O'Sullivan, a Roman Catholic priest. Father O'Sullivan, who was ill when the *City of Benares* was torpedoed, was taken to hospital when the survivors landed last night.

The passenger is Mr. Nagorski, a Pole, managing director of the Gdynia-America shipping line before Poland was occupied.

Authorities hold out no hope of any more survivors. This was emphasised by Mr. Alec Beechman, M.P. for St. Ives (Cornwall) and Parliamentary Secretary to Mr. Geoffrey Shakespeare, after he had superintended the landing of the survivors.

"Spot in the sky"

He said that these children had been picked up by a warship after they had spent eight days in the lifeboat, and added:—

"The lifeboat had been proceeding partly under sail and partly by a paddle affair at the stern. It was first seen by an airplane escort of the warship, and the boys in the lifeboat saw the plane.

"Their food was just giving out when they saw the plane as a spot in the sky. They had just got the end of their water.

"The commander of the warship specially commended the marvellous discipline shown by the boys when he first came across the boat. They seemed cheerful and lively, too."

Mr. Beechman stressed the bravery and endurance shown by Miss Cornish, and said: "It is plain that she acted with magnificent heroism."

The *City of Benares*, with 102 evacuated children on board, was torpedoed in the Atlantic without warning by a U-boat during the night of September 17 while huge seas ran.

Two hundred and forty-eight lives were lost—eighty-three of them children.

Colonel J. Baldwin-Webb, M.P. for the Wrekin, went down with the ship after helping children to escape.

Short snappy one line interviews from parents of these children on theme of general joy of hearing that their child was saved.

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