

ORGANIZED SERVICE IN DISASTERS

The Dover explosion.—On the occasion of two great disasters in 1926 that paralyzed the resources of the community, Boy Scouts were organized for relief work and gave a practical demonstration of the scout motto "Be prepared."

New Jersey scouts promptly answered the call for help following the terrible explosion during the summer at Lake Denmark when lightning struck the United States Navy munitions depot at that place.

Troops from several of the neighboring towns mobilized for service. At 6 o'clock on the morning following the disaster, scouts of Morristown and Morris Plains were summoned by 'phone to report for duty as soon as possible. Despite the fact that large numbers of the boys were at camp, 15 scouts reported in uniform at headquarters in less than an hour, and more came in later on. During the night refugees had been arriving from the towns within the stricken area. By morning about 250 men, women, and children were housed in the Morristown Armory. The scouts helped serve breakfast to the homeless ones, and afterwards cleared away. Later the number of refugees reached 450.

The scouts were then divided into groups and assigned where they could help to the best advantage. A number went out on trucks to help gather clothing, cots, and blankets. Others acted as messengers and orderlies to Red Cross doctors and nurses. Some of the older scouts secured the names of the refugees and helped to unite panic-stricken, divided families. No easy task did this prove, as most of these people were foreigners who could neither read, write, nor speak English. To one senior patrol leader was delegated the responsibility of keeping complete record of the names of homeless persons sheltered in one building and the names and addresses of the people who had lent emergency equipment. Upon the departure of the refugees, the scouts helped return the beds, bedding, and furniture which the townspeople had sent.

The Florida hurricane.—A remarkable service was rendered by scouts in the storm swept section of Florida after the hurricane.

At Moore Haven, which was completely submerged by the waters of Lake Okeechobee when the dikes gave way, two scouts were the first outside aid to reach the stricken town. The boys used outboard motors with their canoes to make the journey.

A scout of Fort Myers, with his brother, released two women in an auto that had come in contact with a broken charged high-tension electric wire. The rescue, witnesses say, was really thrilling. This was while the storm was at its height.

At Miami, where the damage was greater than at any other place, scouts were on duty almost from the beginning helping in organized relief. One scout gave first-aid treatment to more than a hundred cases.

At Hollywood the record of one scout shows him as having worked 19½ hours during the first day after the storm, and as having averaged 12 hours during each of the next nine days.