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0830 B.S.T. (i.e. FOR EVENING PAPERS) ON FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1944  
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RESCUE TUG'S 2000 MILES TOW

Within a few months of commissioning, the rescue tug H.M.S. EMINENT towed a badly damaged destroyer from Gibraltar to the United Kingdom, completing one of longest tows of the war.

The tow, of more than 2,100 miles, was carried out in bad weather and was completed in ten days.

The damaged destroyer was H.M.S. MARNE, which had been torpedoed, was unable to steer and had most of her stern blown away. She was however patched up sufficiently to enable her to be towed home in convoy.

The weather was bad during most of the trip with high seas running, and there were times when the EMINENT lost sight of the MARNE wallowing in the trough of huge waves. After a week the weather became worse, and as the towing wire was chafing badly, the EMINENT's commanding officer, Lieutenant W.A. Phillips, R.N.R., of Liverpool, decided to heave to. They lost touch with the convoy, but a few days later, the EMINENT and the MARNE reached harbour safely. The tug received a signal from the Commanding Officer of the MARNE, Lieutenant Commander H.N.A. Richardson, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N., "Many thanks EMINENT for a very good tow in".

Within a few weeks, the EMINENT took part in another very difficult tow.

Together with the rescue tug H.M.S. SAMSONIA, she was sent to the rescue of the destroyer H.M.S. HARVESTER, which had been torpedoed in the Atlantic. The HARVESTER sank, and later the tugs were diverted to a British merchant ship, which had also been torpedoed. She was found abandoned, the crew having been taken off. She was so badly damaged forward that she had to be towed stern first.

A skeleton crew was put on board the merchant ship, and the tugs began the tow, again in heavy weather. Three times the towing wire broke, but within ten days, the job was successfully completed, and the vessel was brought in to a Scottish port.

In her first twelve months of service the EMINENT steamed nearly 100,000 miles and never lost a ship. Despite persistently bad weather, the ship has kept on the move, a tribute to the engine room staff and particularly to the Chief Engineer, Lieutenant J. Strachan, R.N.R., of Banff, who has been in the EMINENT since she commissioned.

NAVAL AFFAIRS