



The Trident Newsletter of The Maritime Institute of Ireland

Autumn 1999

CAMPAIGNER FOR WARTIME RELATIVES HONOURED

Prior to the start of the Institute AGM this year, Mr. Peter Mulvany of Clontarf, Dublin was presented with his certificate of Honorary Life Membership by Institute President, David Sheehy. This was awarded to Peter in recognition of his tireless work over the past decade and a half, on behalf of the relatives of wartime seamen, who served aboard, and were lost on neutral Irish Merchant vessels between 1939 and 1945.

Peter himself, a former seaman was with Irish Shipping Ltd. and is an old VINDI boy, from the training ship VINDCATRIX, moored at Sharpness, became involved with the fate of wartime seafarers, through his grand uncle, lost aboard the steam trawler LUKEOS. This vessel sank near Tory Island off North West Donegal in March 1940 after striking a mine, it was presumed. Following a request from his mother, Peter undertook research in the German U Boat archives, where he discovered that the Dublin trawler had in fact been sunk following a direct hit from a single shell fired from U 38, (Kapt-Lieut. Heinrich Liebe), while she was fishing in company. This year, he discovered while in Fleetwood that these included both British and Belgian ships. Peter found that he could not get a death certificate for his uncle, because under section 255 of the British Merchant Shipping Act 1894, which governed our ships at that time, there was no legal public record of his death. Under that particular clause the Department of Industry & Commerce, "the qualified informant", should have told the Registrar General. The unfortunate relatives could not even claim medals, because they were asked to, produce death Certificates.

However Peter then began his campaign to bring about a change in the law,

His work was successful when in 1988, the Registrar General, agreed that certificates would be issued on application to next of kin of men lost aboard Irish ships, if the vessel was sunk outside territorial waters, then three miles.

His next task was to obtain recognition and service medals for all who served aboard Irish vessels including non-nationals, who were members of their crews. This culminated in 1998, when the relatives of those lost aboard the City of Cork Steam Packet Coy's ARDMORE, which sank on 11 November 1940, were presented with medals and certificates for the first time by an Irish Government Minister. Previously these were sent out by registered post!

Two further ceremonies have since taken place both in Dublin Castle, the first on 22 November 1998 followed the Institute's 47th. National commemorations, and the second this year on the 9th. May last. While Ministers can claim the limelight at such events, it is due to Mr. Peter Mulvany in particular, and thanks to the co-operation of Mr. David Glynn at Department of the Marine HQ and Mr. Padraig O'Cianian Superintendent at the Mercantile Marine, Office Eden Quay, who felt that relatives should receive recognition in a public ceremony, with which the Minister Dr. Michael Woods, TD. agreed. The rest as they say, is history.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR 1998

Before business commenced, the President, who was in the chair, asked all present to stand for a minutes silence, in memory of the four aircrew members killed in the Dauphin helicopter crash on Tramore Strand. They were Captain Mike Baker, Corporal Niall Byrne, Sergeant Paddy Mooney and Captain Dave O'Flaherty.

Mr. D. Sheehy, said that he had already sent a letter to the GOC Air Corps, Brigadier General Patrick Cranfield, conveying the condolences of the Institute.

Apologies. Mon. J. Mc Mahon, Messrs. R. Brennan, J. Moore, J. Higgins, T. McGinty, C. Mc Carthy, (Dundalk), B. Cullen, R. Sinclair, (Belfast), H. Alexander, J. Mc Kevitt, Mrs. B. Rush, Mrs. D. Murphy and M/s. N. Arnould. Also Drs. J. De Courcy Ireland and H. Jack.

Present. Messrs. D. Sheehy, B. Donnelly, J. Love, E. Stedmond, J. Hughes, P. Mulvany, R. Stokes, J. Hannigan, D. Ranaghan, Cpts. K. Donnelly (Limerick) and F. Forde, Dr. P. Smyly, P. Maguire, P. Sweeney, Ms. M. Bean, Ms. D. Tully, Mrs. M. Mc Allister. Messrs. H.