

THE IRISH TIMES (Letters)

Honouring Irish seamen

Tue, Nov 30, 2004, 00:00

Madam, - Desmond Branigan of the Maritime Institute of Ireland (November 24th) referring to Irish shipping losses during the second World War, implies inter alia that there is no fitting memorial to commemorate those who lost their lives. We beg to disagree.

The Irish Merchant Seamen's National Memorial Committee, ably chaired by a former highly decorated wartime merchant seaman, Paddy Launder (RIP), along with representatives from other organisations, families and friends, succeeded in having a superb memorial erected and located at City Quay in Dublin. This was subsequently unveiled by President Patrick Hillery in 1990.

Mr Brannigan applauds the Department of Marine for its efforts, but disparagingly notes that medal presentations to the families were of a private nature. In 1998 I made my research available to the Department of the Marine so they could initiate a process of presentations of marine valour medals to enhance the dignity of our families. This they did publicly in Dublin Castle and elsewhere with admirable effort.

The continual use of our deceased merchant seamen as an excuse to push through a so-called fitting memorial is objectionable to us. The National Seamen's Memorial at City Quay is a tribute to the dedication of the committee who struggled against all the odds to have it erected and a fitting and dignified reminder of our loved ones lost while serving on Irish vessels during the Emergency. Leave our families out of your debate. - Is mise,

**PETER MULVANY,
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Clontarf, Dublin 3.**