



IRISH SEAMEN'S RELATIVES ASSOCIATION [1939-1946]



Seirbis onorac sa Muir-tractala na hÉireann 1939-46
[Service with honour in the Irish Mercantile Marine 1939-46]

Via Email attachment to [REDACTED]
Mr Mervyn Egan.

Friday 26th August 2016:

Dear Mr Egan,

The statement "Contrary to Lt O' Mahoney's self serving version of events!" in your email of the 23rd August 2016 is a matter of concern and perhaps further clarification of ones input might assist.

As I indicated to your Father in 2015, I thought the issue surrounding LE Cliona had been resolved years ago and was surprised to discover the matter was still outstanding in May/June 2015. I subsequently made a short submission to the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence who advised they would examine the issue. However, in the interim I also came across an ex Naval Officer doing his Phd in Limerick who had made a submission in 2013, but was rejected. In June/July 2015 it was hoped that the Irish Naval Association would take up the lead but they were not interested. Consequently, as I did not know who was still alive one sought the assistance of an ex Irish Navy chap to place a copy of the submission on his facebook page in the hope that some members of Cliona's crew were alive and would make contact.

That is exactly what occurred. John Treacy advised that Bill Mynes and Pat O'Mahony were still alive. Bill and Pat were totally unaware of any submission until the Newspapers etc contacted them. At the time, the Project needed more publicity and evidence from surviving crewmembers was an essential requirement going forward. Thankfully Bill Mynes made contact. From the outset, Pat O'Mahony was very reluctant to get involved. In the meantime, one began to seek contemporary documentary evidence which was crucially important to progress the effort. Bill Mynes kindly provided contemporary documentary evidence as to the events surrounding the fire on board Cliona. Bill subsequently convinced Pat to get involved in support.

By August 2015 I had received several refusals from Government to appeals, and with Bill's assistance he actively sought out the press again, and again, to put pressure on all concerned to achieve an honourable resolution. Later, I ended up placing a picket on the Department of Defence in Newbridge, Co Kildare. Following a threat to Picket the Minister for Defence, Simon Coveney's constituency office in Cork, published in the Irish Examiner on Wednesday, September 30, 2015, a phone call was received on Friday evening 2nd October 2015 from the Ministers office, which led to an agreement to have a review of the Cliona incident, however, this was subject to me removing the threat to Picket his office on Saturday 3rd October 2015, and the Naval Base at Haulbowline the following Tuesday. Per agreement, one cancelled the Picket, and in reciprocation, an announcement of a review was subsequently made in the Dail the following week by the Minister for Defence.

Interestingly throughout the Project no Irish Veteran's Organisation communicated official support, although many individuals did so. Thankfully, British connections came on board when requested, and without hesitation. The only Cliona crewmembers to offer their support PUBLICLY were Bill and Pat, and to progress the Project it was important to have them involved, as they were specifically mentioned in dispatches by Tom McKenna to the then Chief of Staff in 1962. It is also significant that the names of Maurice Egan and O'Callahan are not mentioned, but may have been mentioned in

the transcripts of the enquiry which had been kept confidential at the time. I cannot and have never got involved with a Project/Campaign without firstly obtaining documentary evidence which one can rely upon. It would have been a folly to engage a Project without having documentary evidence to backup our efforts, and to do otherwise would have exposed flaws in historical analysis and jeopardized a potential successful outcome. In my opinion, an alternative version of events submitted by Maurice Egan would have been viewed as subjective narrative unsupported by contemporary documentary evidence, and would have undermined our efforts from the outset. Irrespective, the TEAM EFFORT has achieved a successful outcome despite the lack of formal support from Irish Veterans Organisation's.

I now wish to address your remark 'Contrary to Lt O' Mahoney's self serving version of events!'. In light of all the available documentary evidence, and the efforts made by Bill, Pat and friends, those remarks are uncalled for, unbecoming of a fellow officer, and with respect, an apology should be communicated privately to Pat for that unwarranted comment. Contrary to your assertion, the very first thing that Pat and Bill communicated was satisfaction that ALL the crew were being honoured. It was always about ALL the crew of Cliona who served admirably together in very trying circumstances.

Next Thursday 1st September 2016 marks the 70th Anniversary of the Irish Naval Service, and on LE Niamh, the Corvette men will at last have their day. You are a young man, and we of the older variety are nearer the grim reaper. Nobody needs to be subjected to hurtful comment at this stage of our lives. I suggest that you bin whatever issues you might have and leave them at the Quayside on Sir John Rogerson's Quay before you embark LE Niamh, and for the sake of ALL the families, the Naval Service, and in particular out of respect for the current Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mark Mellett DSM, who despite difficulties went the extra mile to achieve a resolution, that whatever extant disagreements you might have, be left in the past. Do yourself a favour, enjoy the outcome on Niamh next Thursday without any expressions of rancour and let that past, stay in the past!

As an aside, Pat is aware of your comment, perhaps as you are a LT in the RDF you might man up and respecting the established Espirit de Corps associated with the Irish defence forces, consider a quiet apology to a retired Irish Naval Officer?

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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