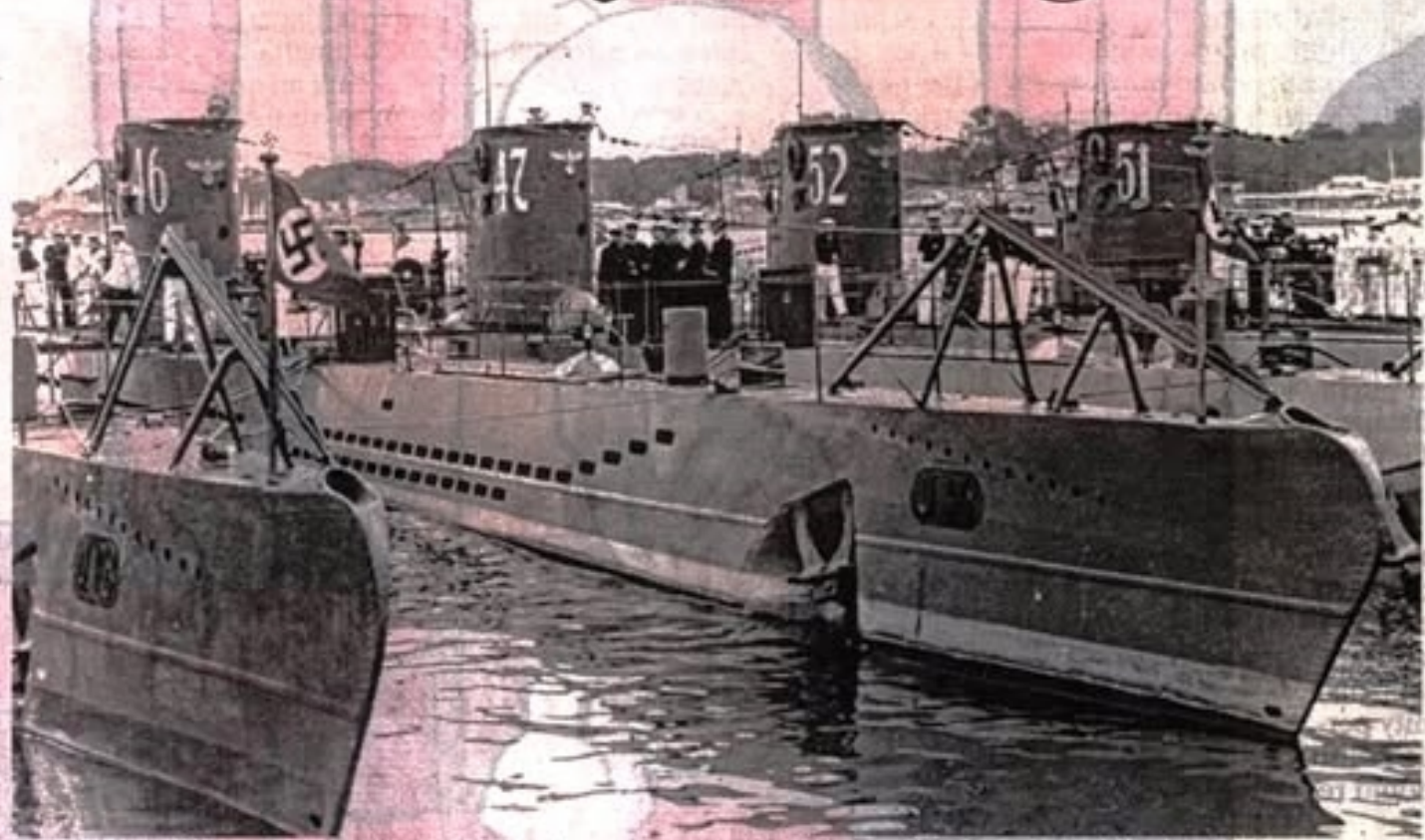


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Germans still owe us for Irish boats destroyed during war



● German U-boats were behind the loss of several Irish seagoing vessels. *Photo: Getty*

● **Madam** — In his story about German attacks on Irish ships during the 1939-45 war ('Family's five-decade fight over ship attack', December 28), Ralph Riegel states "compensation terms were agreed for all but the MV Loch Ryan". This is incorrect.

The U-boat war diaries in my archive show German submarines were the cause of several of these losses. In the case of the SS Ardmore, its loss can now be attributed to a mine laid by German aircraft in November, 1940.

The only claims for compensation agreed by the Germans for the actions of their forces against Irish ships was an attack on the SS Kerry Head on August 1, 1940.

However, as a consequence of post-war Germany's diminished finances, a reduced compensation package was agreed with Ireland in relation to the German bombings at Campile, to the Kerry Head and the bombing incidents on the North Strand and at Arklow.

Annexe B of the agreement, dated July 25, 1953, indicates the Irish government was reserving its right to pursue in the future other claims for bomb damage.

The agreement was never intended by the Irish government to be a full and final settlement of all outstanding debts to Ireland in relation to the war, and the German delegation understood

and accepted this position.

The doctrine of "military necessity" cited by the Germans as a response to past Irish claims for compensation cannot be upheld. In effect, attacks on neutral Irish vessels by German forces during the Emergency violated the Hague Conventions, the Procos-Verbal, the laws of war and Irish neutrality. They were aware that Ireland was a neutral country.

These attacks cannot be construed as materially and immediately contributing to a military success and cannot in any way be regarded as legitimate and identifiable military objectives.

Peter Mulvany,
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