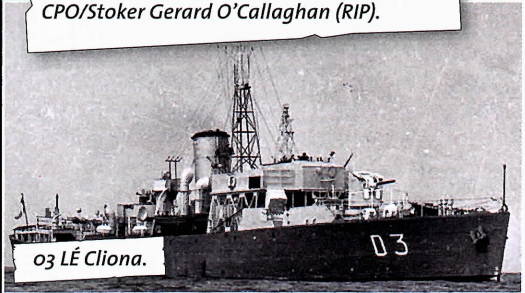


LÉ Cliona Crew Honoured



BY CPL LEE COYLE PHOTOS BY A/SEA DAVID JONES

Those honoured on the day were: Lt Pat O'Mahoney (Cdr ret'd), A/Stoker Bill Mynes, CPO/ERA Morris Egan and, posthumously, CPO/Stoker Gerard O'Callaghan (RIP).



On 1st September 2016 four crew members who served on *LÉ Cliona* over 54 years ago received scrolls of commendation from Minister of State Paul Keogh TD at an event hosted onboard *LÉ Niamh* at Sir John Rodger-son's Quay, Dublin.

On May 29th 1962, at the height of the Cold War, the Naval Service vessel was engaged in an annual exercise when a depth charge from the port rail prematurely detonated, lifting the stern of the ship out of the water and causing a series of ruptures to oil lines in a boiler room, which immediately burst into flames. A/Stoker Bill Mynes was in the boiler room when the explosion occurred and heard a loud crack and felt the ship lifting up. As flames and black smoke erupted, he quickly sent his ordinary seamen to safety and then ran to the valves to cut off the oil going to the engines.

It was then his turn to get out of there. As he scrambled up a ladder to the top of the boiler rooms, which were now filled with smoke and flames, Bill knew he had precious little time as there was a valve on the deck that could fill the boiler room with steam if it detected the fire in the boiler rooms.

Lt Pat O'Mahoney (who retired as Commander) who was stationed on the bridge, and knew the dangers of a fire onboard, especially with a ship fully loaded with ammunition, was sent down to coordinate the fire fighting effort. However, by the time he arrived the flames and smoke were so intense that the damage control fire-fighters could not get near the boiler rooms. He noticed a space between the flames and the walkway and not wanting to ask anyone to risk going in he

went in himself. He crawled in with the hose and sprayed what he could make out as the source of the fire through the smoke and flames. He also sprayed the fuel tanks to prevent them from exploding.

The fire was eventually brought under control with the aid of the entire crew, but if not for the brave actions of the first responders this would not have been possible.

LÉ Cliona was towed back to base and the injured crew members, including Lt O'Mahoney and A/Stoker Mynes, were taken to Cork City Hospital where they were treated for burns.

On September 30th 2016 a plaque was unveiled in Haul-bowline to honour and remember the crew of *LÉ Cliona*.

(*LÉ Cliona* was a Flower-class corvette built as HMS Bellwort by George Brown & Co, Greenock, for the Royal Navy. She was commissioned into the Irish Naval Service on February 3rd 1947, serving until November 4th 1970.) ■