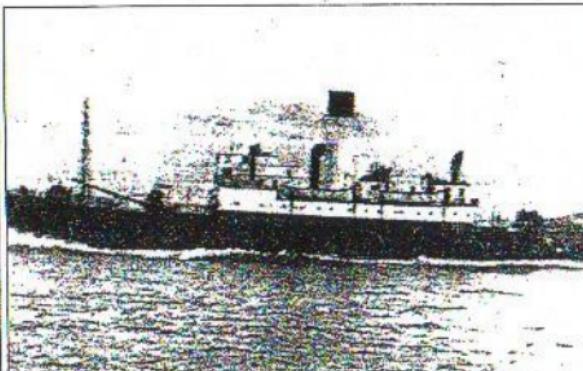


The crew of Irish cattle boat SS Ardmore may have been lost when Mystery ship off the coast



The loss of the SS Ardmore which sailed from Cork in 1940 is one of the unsolved mysteries of the sea.

LONG CAMPAIGN FOR SPECIAL MEDAL

PETER MULVANY (right) has led a campaign for 15 years to get compensation for relatives of Irish ships registered as refugees from a special medal struck in their honour.

This research into the loss of the steam trawler *Lovells* off Tory Island in March of 1940 was ultimately successful in November 1998 when it led to the creation of a legal procedure enabling any of the next of kin to register the death of their relative.

For their value these seafarers were posthumously awarded a Service medal with three bars attached and a citation, which is the highest award given for service to Ireland during the war.

Mr Mulvany, Can Gavin of Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, the grandson of Mr Edward Brídane, lost on the *Ardmore*, made contact with me last year at application form now open to register the death of their relative.



The men

Fran Barry, and Edward Ó Catháin (all Farnoge); John Crofts, Spring Lane; Bartholomew Ó Cinnéide, Dún Laoghaire; St. John Ó Feartaigh, St. Mary's Ave; Gurnanehane; Patrick Óigín, Assumption Rd; M. Ferg. Ó Briain St; John Lao, Pauline Hill; St. John Ó Sé, St. Timothy Ó Geoghegan; Fr. John Ó Séaghdha, Port St; Fraoch Ó Siadhail, Portlaoise.

the ship struck a mine in 1940
found

Unsolved mystery

EXCLUSIVE
By BRIAN WINDERS



THE Joss of the SS Ardmore in November 1940 remains one of the great unsolved mysteries of Irish maritime history.

Now a divers group from the Westford area are trying to find the sunken vessel, which sank three miles from the Saltee Islands off Waterford.

The SS *Ardmore* was built in 1918 at the Caledon shipyard in Northern Ireland.

She was purchased in 1919 by the British and Irish Steamship Com-

pany from Yusufali and Moinerkuli as the *SS Kilkenny* and subsequently transferred to the City of Cork Steamship Company.

The vessel could seat up to 24 guests, weighed 1,692 tons gross, 617 tons net and had a crew of 18.

It sank on November 11, 1940 when it was hit by a mine laid by German U-boats sailing in calm water.

Details of the loss of 12 crew members remain obscure.

The *Ardmore* was en route to the port of Liverpool when she struck a mine laid by the British cruiser *Brennan* off the Pembrokeshire coast which was identified as coming from U-boat U-123.

Mr Mulvany has revealed exclusively to the Echo that divers from the Westford area have finally located the vessel and are currently recovering her from the shallow waters off Waterford.

"The objective for me is to encourage any next of kin of someone lost on the *Ardmore* to come forward and register the vessel first as this links to our campaign and now register these deaths and claim their awards to which they are entitled," said Mr Mulvany.

One of the last sightings of the

Ardmore was made late at night on November 11, 1940 when it was hit by a mine laid by German U-boats sailing in calm water.

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Mr Mulvany reveals one of the greatest secrets of the *Ardmore* is that a local postman found a helmet with a nose inside stored in his house on Newgate Street on December 1, 1940.

The message reads: "Goodbye Mum. Dad and all at home. Pray for me. Love JP. SS Ardmore."

Mr Mulvany reckons this could have come from the late John Ó Sé, a young crew member aged 17 years from Cork.

John Ó Sé, a young John Ó Sé may have decided to prepare messages in a bottle just in case the *Ardmore* did not return.

"At least he would have meant well to his parents," says Mr Mulvany.

Following the sinking of the *Ardmore*, the body of Captain Fox was washed up on a beach in Wales. Two days later on December 1, 1940, the body of Mr McNamee, a crew member of the *Ardmore*, was recovered from another beach and returned to Cor-