

# Navy heroes' actions honored after 54 years

An Post pensioner and navy veteran has been honored after more than 50 years for his bravery in saving 80 lives on the *LÉ Cliona*. Leading Stoker William (Bill) Mynes, 73, fought a blaze in a boiler room on the ship on May 29, 1962, after a depth charge exploded prematurely during a training exercise off Cork.

The force of the blast lifted the corvette ship several feet out of the water in seas off Cork and ruptured oil lines sparking a lethal fire below deck. The incident happened south of Daunt Rock, near Kinsale. With virtually no protection, William (Bill), aged just 19 at the



L-R Chief ERA Maurice Egan, Leading Stoker William Mynes, Lieutenant Pat Ó Mathúna, and Kieran O'Callaghan, on behalf of his late father Chief Stoker, Gerry O'Callaghan, after they were honoured for their bravery on the *LÉ Cliona*.

time, ordered two younger stokers to evacuate while he bravely went into the confined room to cut off oil supplies, suffering burns on his arms, hands and face. The ship's second-in-command, Mr Ó Mathuna, left the bridge and joined Bill below deck and fought the fire for 40 minutes.

The fire was described in an investigation as 'intense in the extreme' and was so severe that SOS alerts sent out were picked

up in Britain.

The men were not eligible for Distinguished Service Medals because they were not recommended for an honour by their senior officers within four years of the incident. A plaque will be unveiled at the Naval Service headquarters in Haulbowline, Co. Cork to remember the crewmen's endeavours later this month.

"The most important thing is that plaque," Bill said. "It was never going to be a medal but I'm happy with the scrolls. We are delighted."

Bill worked as a Postman in Harmonstown, Dublin after leaving the Navy and retired from the Philatelic Bureau in Dublin's GPO.



*LÉ Cliona*