

No. 219
JULY 21
1965

London Shell

Published on alternate Wednesdays by Personnel (London) Division of Shell International Petroleum Company Limited



Cmdre. Waters retires after 31 years at sea



Captain Milligan

NEW COMMODORE FOR SHELL TANKERS (U.K.)



Cmdr. Waters

Captain C. A. Milligan, M.B.E., 'takes the helm'

Undersea pipeline survey from U.K.

A SURVEY of undersea conditions in three areas of the North Sea and English Channel, to assess submarine routes for a possible natural-gas pipeline from Holland to Britain, has been authorized as the result of a recommendation by the joint group set up by the Gas

ON THE SCREEN—

IT'S S-H-E-L-L-A-R-A-M-A



CAPTAIN C. A. Milligan, M.B.E., has become Commodore of the Shell Tankers (U.K.) Fleet on the retirement of Commodore C. Waters, O.B.E., who has completed over 31 years' service in the Merchant Navy.

Captain Milligan began his sea-going career, in 1925, as a midshipman with Head Line of Belfast, and later served with the Saorstát and Continental Steam Ship Co. Ltd., of Dublin.

He joined the Shell fleet in June 1939 and was appointed Second Officer of m.s. *Aurora*. He was promoted to Chief Officer in November 1939 and was still serving in the same vessel when she was torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic in June 1941.

In October 1942 he was Chief Officer of m.s. *Donax* when she

T:buc
Changing for the better, together



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne
and Down
District Council

Maritime Tribute

Commodore C. A. Milligan M.B.E

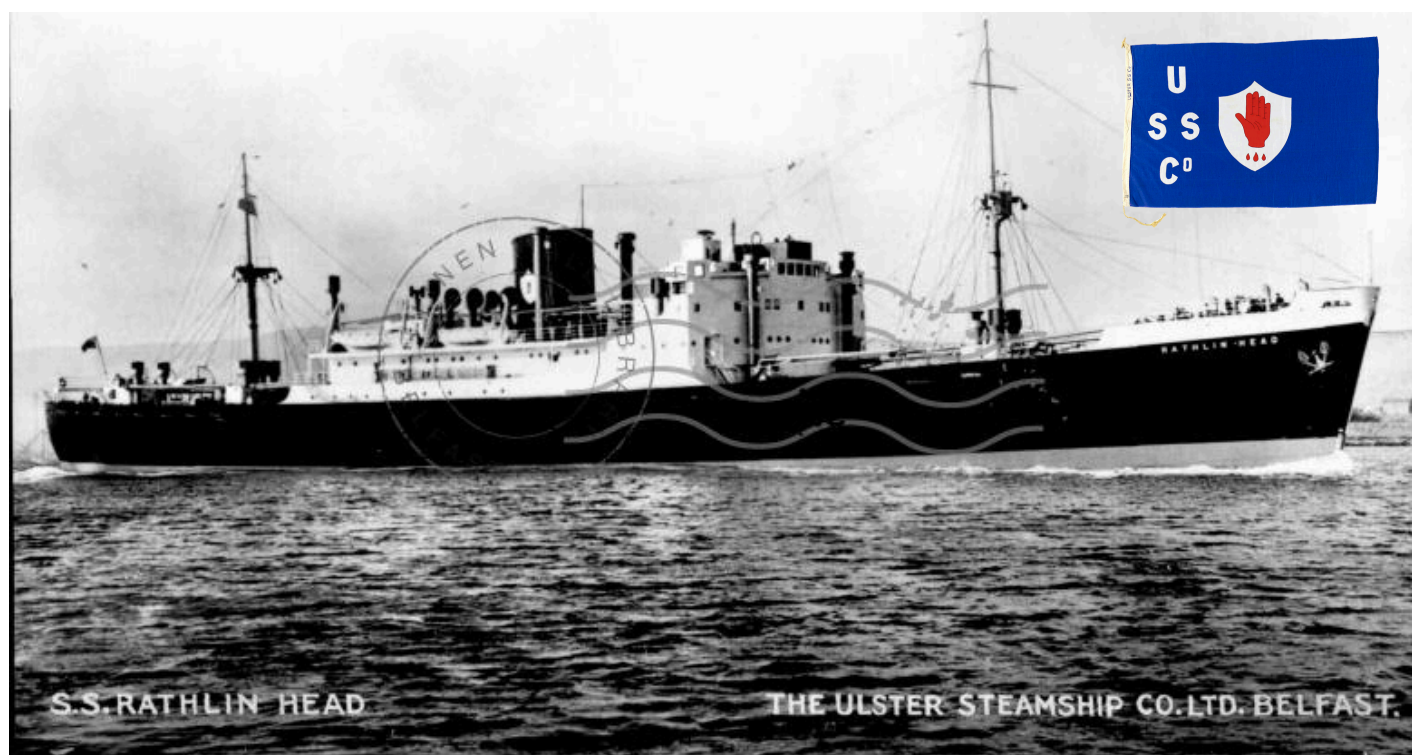


Kilkeel Harbour,
26th September 2026.



Compiled by James Mc Arevey.

Early Days.



Charles Aloysius Milligan was born on 21st January 1909, one of four children born to proud parents, John and Annie (nee McAuley). The family home was at Stanhope Street in Belfast, and with a Merchant Navy Captain as a Father and a Grandfather also a Merchant Navy Captain, heavily influenced the career path of Charles.

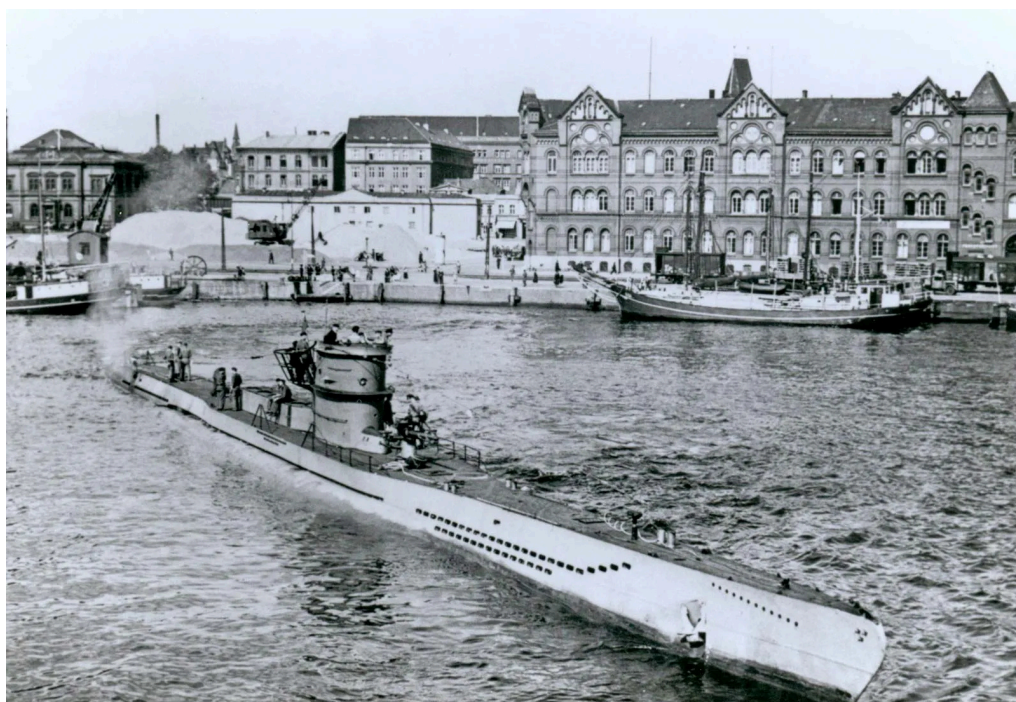
On completion of his education at the prestigious St. Malachy's College, he began his seafaring career with the Ulster Steamship Company. Established in 1877 by G Heyn and Sons, the firm was one of Belfast's premier shipping lines and universally known as the "Head Line" as it named its vessels after prominent Irish headlands "Torr Head, Fair Head, (etc)

The "Head Line" was engaged in trips to the Baltic, Scandinavia, and trans-Atlantic voyages. Charles joined "SS Lord Antrim" as a Midshipman at Donegal Quay, Belfast in April 1925. His seafaring career had begun. His Father, Captain John Milligan, was a highly respected Master with the Headline, and whilst on a trip to Riga, he took suddenly ill and died in hospital there on 12th January 1932. Captain John Milligan's body was repatriated to Belfast, and there was a large attendance at his funeral in Milltown Cemetery.

Charles was an experienced and highly respected officer in his own right, and by 1935 he had obtained his Master's Certificate, after which his career took a turn. Head Line had a strategic alliance with the Dublin Shipping firm, Palgrave Murphy, characterised by pooling resources and employee secondment. Head Line sold a ship to the newly formed "Saorstat and Continental SS Dublin in 1935. The ship, "Wicklow Head, "was renamed "City of Ghent" with Charles Milligan as Captain.



NEW BEGINNINGS.



Amidst the gathering storm clouds across Europe and political unrest, Charles Milligan joined the global energy brand, Shell, as a second officer in June 1938.

His temporary drop in rank was standard practice in the Merchant Navy.

Although he held his Master's Certificate, he did not hold the rank of Captain due to company protocols. Major global shipping companies, such as Shell, operated strict internal seniority systems. New employees almost always had to start at a lower rank (usually 2nd or 1st mate) and work their way up the ladder as Charles certainly did. He joined "SS Auris" as 2nd officer in June 1938..

On 3rd September 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany and the role of a sailor became a high-risk occupation. Oil tankers were a prime target for the dreaded German U-boats, and they sailed in convoy for added protection. The U-Boats accounted for 1360 ships, and the Registrar General records that 36,749 men didn't come home, roughly 1 in 4. There were 5707 taken prisoner and 4707 wounded.

Disaster struck on 28th June 1941, and "SS Auris" was in passage from Trinidad to Gibraltar with 11,493 tons of Admiralty Oil when she was attacked by an Italian submarine. The vessel was struck by 4 torpedoes and 32 crew were killed. HMS Farndale picked up the surviving 27, including Charles.

ONWARDS and UPWARDS.



Salvage of SS Fair Head

Following this harrowing incident, Charles Milligan was promoted to Chief Officer and transferred to the Shell tanker, "SS Donax " and carried on in the Atlantic Convoys. Meanwhile, at home, the Germans were stepping up their campaign and extended their Blitz to bomb major industrial targets in Belfast in April and May 1941.

The Nazis launched 4 bombing raids over the city, with the most devastating occurring on Easter Tuesday, 15th April 1941. Over 200 German bombers unleashed a vicious attack on the city, killing over 800 people and injuring a further 1,500. The strikes damaged or destroyed almost 50% of the housing stock, leaving 100,000 people homeless. Key economic targets, such as the shipyard, sustained serious damage, making this the deadliest single-night air raid in the UK outside of London. There were mass evacuations from the city to rural areas and the Milligan family were amongst those who were relocated. The Milligan's were placed in Newry Street, Kilkeel, and the eldest son, Jack, was appointed "Evacuation Officer" for Mourne.

The Blitz had dire outcomes for other families too. A ship belonging to the Head Line was struck by a parachute bomb whilst docked at the Dufferin Dock, Belfast in April 1941. There were 2 crewmen killed, and the ship was raised and later scrapped at Bangor. The vessel was under the command of Captain Robert McConnell from Newry. Barely a month later, A nephew, Robert Charles McConnell, an engineering apprentice, was one of 27 men killed when their ship, "SS Glen Head," was torpedoed off Cape St. Vincent, Portugal. There were 9 survivors.

Further tragedy was visited on David and Ruby McConnell. A second son, David Whiteside McConnell, was an RAF pilot based at Ludford Magna, Lincs.

Aged 23, David left base on the night of 15th February 1944 on a bombing mission over Berlin. He came under heavy fire and he was shot down and killed. Two colleagues died with David, and 5 were taken prisoner. David is buried in the Berlin War Cemetery and was awarded a DFC.



NEW BEGINNINGS

MARRIAGE CERT for CHARLES MILLIGAN & CATHERINE ROGERS
22ND DECEMBER 1942.

19.4.2. Marriage solemnized at the Roman Catholic } Church of Howth { in the Registrar's District of Howth i sCeanntaigh an Ceann Clárachóga } in the County of Dublin { in the County of Dublin								
Uimh No. (1)	Dáta an pósta When Married. (2)	Ainm agus Sloinne Name and Surname. (3)	Áoir Age. (4)	Stádo Condition. (5)	Eagraí Dósta Rank or Profession (6)	Áite dónaíocht Residence at the Time of Marriage. (7)	Ainm agus Sloinne an átha Father's Name and Surname. (8)	Eagraí Dósta an átha Rank or Profession of Father. (9)
38	22 nd Dec. 1942.	Charles Aloysius Milligan	Full	Bachelor	Merchant Navy	Newry St. Kilkeel Co. Down	John Milligan	Sea Captain
		Anne Catherine Rogers	Full	Spinster	At. Home	Kilkeel Down Co. Down	Moses Rogers	Merchant
Do pósta an t-ádh na h-Éireann } Church of Howth. { according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church by me, Married in the Roman Catholic								
Ceisteachán an pósta } Charles Aloysius Milligan } In-ádh } George Henry C.C. ro ceisteacháin } Anne Catherine Rogers } in the } Presence of us, } Florence Rogers								

A further victim of the Blitz has a great relevance to our story. A local man, Moses Furlong Rogers, and a neighbour, John Quinn, emigrated to England in the late 1890s, most likely from Greencastle to Greenore. They arrived in Liverpool, where both got involved in the grocery/retail trade. John Quinn returned home and opened a chain of shops, most notably the Milestone, in Newry in 1910.

Moses Rogers, meanwhile, reared a family of 10, 5 girls and 5 boys, in Liverpool before returning home to Benagh, Cranfield. One of his children, Gerry, had qualified as a surgeon and was working in St. Luke's Hospital in London when it was bombed during "The Blitz". Dr Rogers was killed instantly and brought back to Massforth for burial in May 1941.

Charles Milligan was still engaged in the perilous trans Atlantic convoys aboard "SS Donax". The ship was part of Convoy ON-139 sailing from Belfast to New York. The convoy was just SW of Fastnet (Ireland's Teardrop) when the German U -443 attacked "Donax" on 22nd October 1942. The ship was badly damaged but still afloat. Many of the crew of 63 were transferred to other ships. The Captain and senior officers made 3 return visits to try and salvage their ship, but on 29th October, "SS Donax", finally sank. There were no casualties.



NEW BEGINNINGS

Charles had some home leave then, and he had time to further his relationship with Catherine Rogers, a daughter of Moses, whom he had met on previous leave periods. The couple married on 22nd December 1942 in Howth Chapel, Co. Dublin

The following year, 1943, Charles Milligan went to Buckingham Palace to be awarded an MBE for heroism. He returned to service with Shell and served on various ships across the company fleet. The cessation of hostilities in 1945 coincided with Charles Milligan MBE receiving his first command when he was appointed Captain of "SS Lottia"

Charles Milligan was one of a group of experienced Masters whom the Company looked to for assistance in transitioning the 92-strong tanker fleet from a war footing to a peacetime operation. He had earned the respect of his peers for his steadfast commitment and bravery during those very dark days of WW2. With her husband at sea, Catherine got on with running the family home in Benagh and rearing their 3 children, Bronagh, Rory and Deirdre. The couple set about building a new home in Killowen, which they completed in 1956, and where they still reside.





NEW BEGINNINGS

COMMODORE OF THE FLEET.

Captain Charles A Milligan, MBE, received the supreme accolade when he was appointed Commodore of Shell Tankers (UK) in succession to Commodore CA Waters, who was retiring after 35 years' sea service. Captain Milligan took up his new role on 1st July 1965 and he was in command of the flagship of the fleet, "MV Solen". His was a very popular appointment as he had an excellent working relationship with colleagues across the board.

Charles Milligan retired on 1st January 1967 after 42 years of sea service, 13 years with the Head Line and 29 with Shell Tankers (UK), with whom he aspired to the highest honour. During his retirement, he did occasional trips for Texaco covering leave periods for their Captains.

This adopted son of Mourne died on 23rd October 1975 aged 66, and is interred in Massforth.





We wish to acknowledge financial support received from Newry Mourne & Down District Council Good Relations Fund.

The Chairperson, Cllr. Glyn Hanna,
Newry Mourne & Down District Council.

Shane Mc Givern, Safer Communities and Good Relations Officer,
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.

Kerri Morrow, Community Engagement and Development Manager,
Newry Mourne & Down District Council.

The Milligan Family.
Kilkeel Harbour Master, Mr Norman Bridges.

Kilkeel Development Association.

The Fishermen's Mission, Kilkeel.

RNLI Kilkeel.

HM Coastguard.

Sammy Moffett, Norman McBride & the Sea Cadets.

Kilkeel RBL
Colin Whiteside, Chairperson, Newry RBL.

Allen, Brian and Emily Morrow, Commons Silver Band, Newry.

Maud Hamill.

Chris Cassidy.
