

RODERICK MCILRAITH (1919-22)

He was born on 11 January 1911.

During WW2 he served on SS Empire Mica, which was a British Merchant Oil Tanker. Along with 32 others, he died on the 29 June 1942, when the ship was hit and sunk by two torpedoes from the German submarine, U67, while off the Florida coast in 1942.



They are commemorated on Panel 44 of the Tower Hill Memorial, which includes the following inscription :

McILRAITH, Chief Officer, RODERICK, S.S. Empire Mica (Middlesbrough). Merchant Navy. 29th June 1942. Age 31. Son of John and Sarah McIlraith; husband of Isabella May McIlraith, of Manor Park, Essex.

Exactly three months after his death on 29 September 1942, his son, also named Roderick, was born. His son says that his father would have known of his expected birth.

Additional information on the SS Empire Mica can be found on the following websites :-

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~gordonsteele/story.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/42/a1945442.shtml>

See below additional information on Roderick or go to <http://homepage.eircom.net/~gordonsteele/rod.html>





Roderick McIlraith



King's Commendation for Brave Conduct

McILRAITH, Chief Officer, RODERICK, S.S. Empire Mica (Middlesbrough). Merchant Navy. 29th J 1942. Age 31.

Son of John and Sarah McIlraith; husband of Isabella May McIlraith, of Manor Park, Essex.

Many thanks to the McIlraith family for sending me this photo and Roderick McIlraith's Discharge Book. The book gives details of the ships that Mr. McIlraith sailed with, the dates of service for each of the vessels, his rank, his conduct and the description of the voyage.



CHIEF OFFICER McILRAITH

MET GALLANT END AS SHIP SANK

Commendation of Local Officer

CHIEF Officer Roderick McIlraith, of Cheddar, who, as already reported, has received posthumous commendation by the King for brave conduct, met a gallant end when his ship was attacked by the enemy. He is commended for "brave conduct when his ship encountered enemy ships, submarines, aircraft or mines."

Chief Officer McIlraith was a popular visitor to the children in the care of the British-American Bellows Society whom he visited at Arcadia Bellows, Cheddar, whenever opportunity permitted.

He was familiarly known there as "Uncle Mac," and his wife, also keenly interested in the work of the society, has been a voluntary worker there for the past 18 months. Since the death of her husband on active service Mrs McIlraith has had a son, who has been named after his father.

A member of the lost ship's company has written to Mrs McIlraith telling her of how her husband met his gallant end.

ROPES FOULED

After a torpedo had struck the ship it was found that ropes supporting the after-end of one of the boats had been fouled by the concussion, and the Chief Officer got into it to release them.

He managed to get them partly freed, and the boat was lowered about half-way. Unfortunately, when the boat got this far the ropes burnt through and the boat fell at that end, to hang vertically for an instant, before the other end was lowered.

He was thrown into the sea and was not seen again.