

# UNSUNG SOLDIER ROWS ATLANTIC TO EIRE ALONE

**BANGOR.**—A 26-year-old British soldier strode up to a lighthouse on the west coast of Ireland yesterday and announced that he had just rowed across the Atlantic by himself.

Trooper Tom McLean informed the astonished lighthouse-keeper that he had set out from St. Johns, Newfoundland, 72 days ago in a 20ft. boat named Super Silver.

He told newsmen later that he was nearly drowned on Saturday night when the boat ran on the rocks at Blacksod Bay, near Bangor. "But I managed to shove it off again and eventually landed on a small sandy beach. The place was deserted and I just walked up to the lighthouse-keeper's house."

McLean had little previous experience of rowing. He is a member of Britain's crack Special Air Service Unit.

## INSPIRED

He used to be in the same unit as Captain John Ridgeway and Sergeant Chay Blyth, who rowed the Atlantic together three years ago from Cape Cod to Ireland in 91 days. Their feat had inspired him to make the attempt, he said.

His trip took eight days less than he expected. "I had stormy weather all the way but the winds were behind me, blowing me towards Ireland."

His arrival comes nine days after another British lone oarsman, John Fairfax, arrived in Florida six months after setting out from the Canary Islands.

In contrast to McLean's unnoticed arrival yesterday, Fairfax received a gala welcome on the Florida shore.

McLean said he had no sickness except for salt sores. "I had a bad moment on July 17. I awoke at 2 a.m. and found the boat full of water and only kept afloat by the buoyancy tanks.

"I found that the sea anchors had broken away from the bow and pulled one side of the boat under water. It took me hours to bale it out."

McLean was born in Dublin and orphaned at the age of three.—(Sapa-Reuter.)

*Mercury*

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