

THE FOURTH IRISH V.C.

The Victoria Cross handed by the King at a recent investiture at Buckingham Palace to the mother of Lieut-Commander Eugene Esmonde, who was killed while leading the Swordfish attack on the "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau" in the Channel, is another addition to the great and growing number of distinctions gained by volunteers from Eire in this war.

Lieut-Commander Esmonde is the fourth Irishman to win the V.C. since the beginning of hostilities, the first being Flying Officer Edward Garland, who led the daring and successful low level attack on a vital bridge over the Albert Canal, on the Belgian border. He was the first Victoria Cross winner in the R.A.F.

The second was Major Harold Marcus Irvine-Andrews, of the East Lancashire Regiment, who, with his company held a position in front of Dunkirk for over ten hours in the face of intense fire.

The third was Captain Edward Stephen Fogarty Fegen, R.N., captain of the Jervis Bay, the armed ex-liner whose exploit against a powerful German warship while escorting a large convoy of merchantmen in the North Atlantic won world fame.

Strangely enough, both Captain Fegen and Lieut-Commander Esmonde came from the same county - Tipperary, while Major Irvine-Andrews lived for many years in that county.

Besides the Victoria Cross, volunteers from Eire have received over 100 awards for gallantry in the war. They make a finely comprehensive list, ranging from Monsignor John Coghlan, Vicar General to the Army, who received the C.B.E. for courageous conduct during the battle of Flanders, to Acting Matron Miss Catherine McGovern, of County Cavan, who was awarded the George Medal for her courage in helping to search for and carry to safety the injured patients and staff of a bombed hospital. The George Medal is Miss McGovern's fifth decoration.