

FLY THE RED ENSIGN

FOR MERCHANT NAVY DAY
3rd SEPTEMBER 2015



Message

from HRH The Earl of Wessex KG, GCVO



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BAGSHOT PARK

On this Merchant Navy Day, I very much hope you will support this campaign by Seafarers UK to remember the sacrifices, salute the courage and support the future of the often unsung personnel of our Merchant Navy. Too often they are the forgotten or invisible service, by raising the Red Ensign you will ensure that at least on this day they are remembered. Your act will mean so much to their families and to the retired, but most especially to those at sea.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward', written in a cursive style.

HRH The Earl of Wessex KG, GCVO

Foreword

from Admiral The Right Honourable The Lord West of Spithead GCB, DSC, PC



While many people know that the 3rd of September 1939 marked the outbreak of the Second World War, few are aware that it also marks the first major British maritime casualty, the merchant vessel SS Athenia, torpedoed just a few hours after hostilities were declared with the loss of 128 passengers and crew. Although many hundreds of merchant ships and thousands of seafarers would meet the same fate in the years to come, the 3rd September is now enshrined as 'Merchant Navy Day' to honour the brave men and women who kept our island nation afloat during both World Wars, and even during peacetime faced - and continue to face - the more routine perils of violent storms and mountainous seas.

The Red Ensign, or 'Red Duster' as it is affectionately known, has been the recognised flag of the British Merchant Navy since 1854. It has become inextricably linked with the world-wide trade links that made the United Kingdom's fortune in the intervening years and, while there are now fewer ships on the home register, many thousands of British seafarers still work on the oceans of the world, underpinning the vast majority of the international commerce that keeps our economy buoyant. By volume, 95% of our trade comes by sea; without it, we would surely become an insignificant island off the coast of Europe.

But the majority of today's large ports are high security operations, often miles from population centres. Many young people know little of ships and seafarers, and fail to appreciate their absolutely vital contribution to our way of life. In recent years, campaigns such as 'Seafarers Awareness Week' have tried to highlight this huge impact, and I strongly believe that a visual demonstration of the debt we all owe to merchant seafarers past and present should become an annual feature of our national calendar.

I am asking every Local Authority in the nation to fly the Red Ensign on the 3rd of September. Many of our great ports such as Liverpool already do, but we want to carry this message into the heartlands of the nation, just as surely as that essential food, fuel and clothing are carried to our shops. I hope the raising of this flag will be an occasion of pride in every community; I want to see local veterans and Sea Cadets involved, and I would implore civic leaders to be present, adding their own messages of support.

So, celebrate both a glorious seafaring past and a vital part of our economic future as you 'Fly the Red Duster' on Merchant Navy Day!

West of Spithead

Introduction

from Bruno Peek LVO, OBE, OPR, Pageantmaster

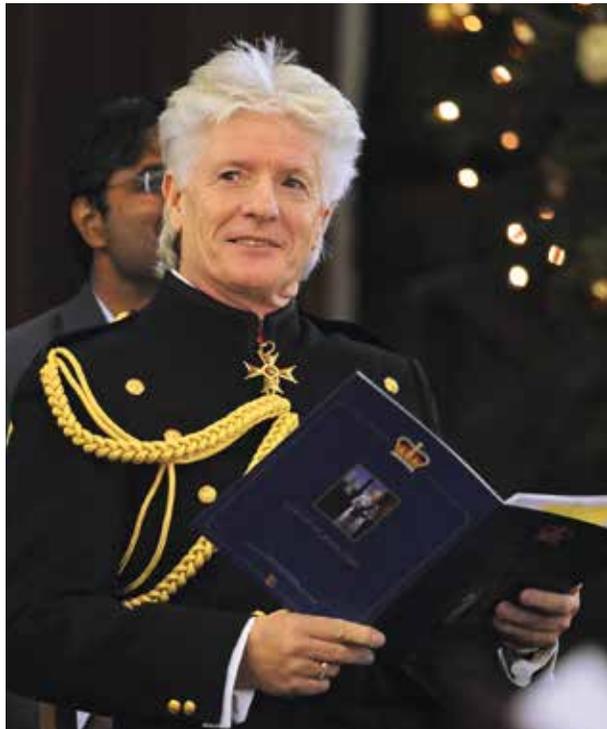


Photo: Archant Norfolk.

The men, women and ships of the United Kingdom's Merchant Navy served our country heroically during two World Wars.

The fleet has a long and illustrious history that has seen it play a vital role in our country's commercial interests, proudly flying the Red Ensign across the oceans of the world. In peace-time and throughout dangerous conflicts, the Merchant Navy has worked tirelessly and bravely to help keep our economy buoyant, providing employment on land and sea for officers, deck hands, engineers, cooks, stewards, seamen, dock workers and many more others.

It's time to celebrate the role of a fleet whose men and women braved perilous journeys across the Atlantic and Arctic during the World Wars, and whose ships sail the globe today bearing our colours.

What better way to do it than by flying the flag. Flags were the principal means of communication at sea for centuries, and we propose to celebrate Merchant Navy Day on 3rd September 2015 by encouraging organisations throughout the country to raise the Red Ensign at a local ceremony at 10am. (Merchant Navy Day is also formally observed in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.)

This nationwide event is open to all Local Authorities, who we hope will encourage town and parish councils, community groups, businesses, youth and voluntary organisations to get involved. We are also encouraging the participation of families and individuals with links to the sea.

You could raise the Red Ensign on your city, town or village hall, in a memorial garden, on church and cathedral towers, stately homes, castles, hotels, pubs and offices to name but a few.

Your flag-hoisting ceremony could provide an opportunity to raise funds for the charity Seafarers UK, the driving force behind this campaign.

However you choose to do it, we hope you will honour the work of our Merchant Navy by raising the Red Ensign on Thursday 3rd September 2015. We would very much like you to take part and you can find out how to confirm your involvement on page 7.

In future years we will be encouraging all local and visiting ships in our UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man ports to sound their horns and whistles at 10am on Merchant Navy Day, uniting crews and vessels in common celebration of this global maritime family.

Bruno Peek

Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR

Pageantmaster

Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day



The British Merchant Navy

The Merchant Navy is the maritime register of the United Kingdom, and describes the seagoing commercial interests of UK-registered ships and their crews. Merchant Navy vessels fly the Red Ensign and are regulated by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. King George V bestowed the formal title of 'Merchant Navy' on the British merchant shipping fleets - formerly known as the Mercantile Marine - following their vital service in the First World War.

The Merchant Navy and its forebears have been in existence for a significant period in British history, owing much of their growth to British imperial expansion. As an entity in itself, the merchant fleet can be dated back to the 17th century, when an attempt was made to register all seafarers as a source of labour for the Royal Navy in times of conflict. That registration of merchant seafarers failed, and it was not successfully implemented until 1835. The merchant fleet grew over centuries to become the largest in the world, benefiting considerably from trade with British possessions in India and the Far East. The lucrative trade in sugar, spices and tea (carried by ships such as Cutty Sark) helped to solidify this dominance in the 19th century.

In the First and Second World Wars, the merchant fleets suffered heavy losses from German U-boat attacks. A policy of unrestricted warfare meant that merchant seafarers were at constant risk of attack from enemy ships and submarines. Nearly eight million tons were lost to U-boats in the First World War, and 14,661 merchant seafarers were killed. It was the effect of these casualties and their bereaved families, together with those from the Royal Navy and Fishing Fleets, which led to the formation in 1917 of King George's Fund for Sailors - now known as Seafarers UK.

In 1928 King George V made Edward, Prince of Wales 'Master of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets', a title he retained after his accession in January 1936 and relinquished only at his abdication that December. Since Edward VIII the title has automatically been held by the sovereigns George VI and Elizabeth II.

When the UK entered the Second World War in September 1939 George VI issued this message:

'In these anxious days I would like to express to all Officers and Men in The British Merchant Navy and The British Fishing Fleets my confidence in their unfailing determination to play their vital part in defence. To each one I would say: Yours is a task no less essential to my people's experience than that allotted to the Navy, Army and Air Force. Upon you the Nation depends for much of its foodstuffs and raw materials and for the transport of its troops overseas. You have a long and glorious history, and I am proud to bear the title Master of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets. I know that you will carry out your duties with resolution and with fortitude, and that the high chivalrous traditions of your calling are safe in your hands. God keep you and prosper you in your great task.'

In the Second World War, German U-boats sank 2,828 Allied ships, amounting to nearly 14.7 million tons. The United Kingdom alone suffered the loss of 11.7 million tons, which was 54% of the total Merchant Navy fleet at the outbreak of the conflict. In that war, 32,000 merchant seafarers were killed - a higher casualty ratio than for any branch of the Armed Forces - but, fighting alongside their Royal Navy escorts, the seafarers of the Atlantic convoys successfully imported enough supplies to allow an Allied victory.

In honour of the sacrifices made in the two World Wars, the Merchant Navy lays wreaths of remembrance alongside the Armed Forces at the annual Remembrance Day service on 11th November each year. Following many years of lobbying to bring about official recognition of the particular losses made by merchant seafarers in the World Wars and since, Merchant Navy Day became an official Day of Remembrance on 3rd September 2000.



The Red Ensign flying for Merchant Navy Day above the old Pilotage building in Liverpool. Photo: Merseyside Maritime Museum.



Seafarers UK is a charity that helps people in the maritime community, by providing vital funding to support seafarers in need and their families. Seafarers UK does this by giving money to organisations and projects that make a real difference to people's lives, across the Merchant Navy, Fishing Fleets, Royal Navy and Royal Marines. Last year Seafarers UK gave grants totalling nearly £2.5 million to more than 70 maritime welfare charities and organisations.

As an 'island nation' we depend on our seafarers to defend our shores, trade with other countries and import essential fuel and food. The job of a seafarer is therefore vital, but also demanding and hazardous with a much greater chance of injury than many other professions. A large number of those serving will be facing problems of very different kinds; long periods of separation from friends and family, extended periods of duty, fatigue, and working heavy machinery whilst being exposed to harsh weather.

Such dangers and difficulties can lead to disability, depression, debt, relationship breakdown, homelessness or even death. Funding from Seafarers UK enables seafarers to access advice and information, adapt to life on shore, re-train and find new employment. It also improves their quality of life by helping to provide the essentials of daily living that a small pension, or none, cannot cover. Often it may be the family of a seafarer who has been injured, held hostage or who has subsequently passed-away that require assistance.

Because Seafarers UK works closely with all of the organisations that support seafarers and their dependants, the charity can target donations where they will make the biggest difference.



Seafarers UK receives no government funding and relies on donations and fundraising to be able to carry on providing long-term aid. Without this, there simply wouldn't be the level of support Seafarers UK is able to provide today and that last year gave hope and help to over 170,000 seafarers and their families when they needed it most.



The Merchant Navy Fund is a much-needed collaborative initiative by Seafarers UK and the Merchant Navy Welfare Board. Both organisations recognise that many people with a Merchant Navy background want to see their donations and legacies used specifically in support of British Merchant Navy seafarers and their families.

The Merchant Navy Fund is administered by Seafarers UK (King George's Fund for Sailors), a Registered Charity in England & Wales, No. 226446, incorporated under Royal Charter. Registered in Scotland SC038191.



The Merchant Navy Association (MNA) came off the slipway in 1989 and has been guided to seek more recognition and respect for our seafaring veterans, life at sea and our maritime history. This was in the minds of many seafarers, at that time, who felt that after nearly 50 years since the end of WWII little or nothing was understood of the Merchant Navy and the suffering and sacrifice of thousands of wartime merchant seafarers.

The forming of the Merchant Navy Association was inspired by the initiative and untiring efforts of two ex-wartime merchant seamen, Fred Harrell and Barry Osborne. The response to their advert in the local press enabled the Midlands Branch to be established in 1989. The Exeter Branch was second off the stocks that year and then a few months after that the Plymouth Branch. Many branches have subsequently been established throughout the UK and abroad alongside others that have been launched but remain independent. The MNA has grown into a formidable and respected organisation designed by seafarers to represent their interests and promote skills and opportunities in the years ahead.



1. Confirm your involvement please by sending the following information to Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, Pageantmaster at: pageantmaster@mac.com as soon as possible, but by no later than 31st August 2015.

Name of Council, organisation or another.
Name of contact/co-ordinator.
Telephone number/s.
Mobile.
Email address.
Flag location including postcode.

2. Download the Fly the Red Ensign logo and the Guide to Taking Part.

Please go to: www.merchantnavyfund.org/merchant-navy-day/

3. Specify your Red Ensign size.

There are three sizes of Red Ensign to choose from - 108" x 54", 90" x 45" and 72" x 36". They are manufactured from 155gsm woven polyester, dye-printed in Red and Royal Blue.

The flags are of a single thickness and the design shows through the cloth revealing a mirror image of the logo on the reverse.

They are finished with hems all round, heading tape along the left hand edge and a rope and toggle to UK standard BR20 Part B.

4. Press Release.

We will provide you with a Press Release template on the 14th August 2015 for YOU to localise it before YOU send it to all areas of YOUR local media, informing them of your involvement in this event, along with providing them with your contact details.

How to take part

How to purchase your Red Ensign



Our official supplier is:

JW Plant & Co Ltd
39 Ashley Road
Leeds LS9 7AJ

Flags may be purchased in a number of ways:

Online: www.jwplant.co.uk

BUY NOW

Please follow the links provided

CONTACT JW PLANT

Email: Pauline@jwplant.co.uk

Telephone: 0113 248 0454

Fax: 0113 235 0118

Flag costs: 108" x 54" = £36.02 including delivery plus VAT

90" x 45" = £29.99 including delivery plus VAT

72" x 36" = £21.82 including delivery plus VAT

Orders should be placed no later than

Friday 31st July 2015. Flags will be delivered week commencing 24th August 2015.

Orders placed after 31st July 2015 may be accepted, but will have to be viewed on an individual basis to ensure delivery. Please contact JW Plant & Co Ltd if you require different sizes of Red Ensign.

The Event - 10am on Thursday 3rd September - Merchant Navy Day 2015

(a) Fly a Flag protocol. The flag should be flown with the toggle at the top.

(b) Before raising your flag please arrange to have the Message from HRH The Earl of Wessex KG, GCVO below read out to all attending. This could be undertaken by your Lord Lieutenant, Lord Mayor, Lord Provost, Mayor, High Sheriff, High Steward or another Civic Dignitary.

The Message:

On this Merchant Navy Day, I very much hope you will support this campaign by Seafarers UK to remember the sacrifices, salute the courage and support the future of the often unsung personnel of our Merchant Navy.

Too often they are the forgotten or invisible service, by raising the Red Ensign you will ensure at least on this day they are remembered.

Your act will mean so much to their families and to the retired, but most especially to those at sea.

(c) The raising of the Red Ensign at 10am.

The Red Ensign should be raised by a Civic Dignitary similar to the reading out of the Message, or it could be undertaken by the winner of a competition you could consider organising with your local media.

(d) Photographs.

Please arrange to have professional photographs taken during your event, and immediately after, please send no more than THREE high quality, copyright-free photographs to mnfund@seafarers-uk.org, including the name of the photographer and the flag location, including post code.

(e) Social Media

Please use social media channels - Twitter, Facebook, etc - to promote your event. On Twitter use #MerchantNavyDay. On Facebook post a photograph of your ceremony.

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Contact details:

Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR

Pageantmaster

Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day

Pageantmasters House, 110 Lowestoft Road, Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 6NB

Tel: 07737 262 913

Email: pageantmaster@mac.com

Acknowledgements



"As Chairman of the Flags & Heraldry Committee and as the founder Chairman of the Polar Regions (Arctic & Antarctic) All Party Parliamentary Groups, it gives me great pleasure to support Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day - 3rd September 2015, to celebrate the ships, men and women that make up our Merchant Fleet and I would like to encourage all to take part in this important, annual initiative."

Andrew Rosindell M.P.
Chairman, Flags & Heraldry Committee
Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain &
Northern Ireland



The National Association of Civic Officers supports
Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day.

Paul Millward, Chairman, NACO.

