



# SUPPORTING UK MERCHANT NAVY SEAFARERS AND THEIR FAMILIES



## SPRING 2020

Welcome to this edition of the Merchant Navy Fund newsletter and a huge ‘Thank You’ to everyone who contributed to the Fund last year. Thanks to your support, we were able to award £80,556 in funding to eight organisations supporting Merchant Navy seafarers and their families. From emotional support to financial aid, the network you help to fund is there to ensure that no one has to face life’s storms alone.

### OUR IMPACT IN 2019



Grants awarded



Organisations supported



People assisted thanks to our funding

### GRANTS AWARDED

Age UK Wirral	£27,176
Cobhair Bharraigh SCIO	£5,000
Falklands Veterans Foundation	£1,315
Manx Marine Society	£2,000
Plymouth Merchant Navy Monument	£1,565
Restore Support Network	£8,500
Scottish Nautical Welfare Society	£25,000
Veterans Outreach Support	£10,000

### EXAMPLES OF HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE



**£1,565** in funding was awarded for a reception to enable 230 seafarers to celebrate the unveiling of a statue in Plymouth to commemorate the Merchant Navy on Merchant Navy Day 2019.

At the cutting of the ‘first turf’, Lord Mayor of Plymouth Councillor Sam Davey (who is also a Master Mariner) commented on the Merchant Navy’s role in world trade during times of peace, before paying tribute to the sacrifice of merchant seafarers during the World Wars, and more recently, the Falklands Campaign. He stated that the ‘Atlantic Conveyor’, a notable casualty in the Campaign, was converted in Devonport Dockyard. It was an example of the connection between the Merchant Navy and the City of Plymouth. The loss of life of those serving in the Merchant Navy during World War II was large, and proportionately, there were

more fatalities in the Merchant Navy than in any of the armed services.

The dedication ceremony and unveiling of the sculpture, ‘The Watchkeeper’, took place on 3 September 2019, to mark both Merchant Navy Day and the eightieth anniversary of the outbreak of World War II, which saw the sinking of the merchant ship ‘Athenia’ off the coast of Ireland.



## SCOTTISH NAUTICAL WELFARE SOCIETY

**£25,000** in funding was awarded to the Scottish Nautical Welfare Society, a charity dedicated to promoting the welfare of former seafarers and their widows in retirement and difficult times. Our funding will provide regular grants to 68 older Merchant Navy seafarers, and other welfare services, such as home visits, for Merchant Navy seafarers in Scotland.

In addition to the financial support that all beneficiaries are assessed for in terms of need, the Society maintains regular personal contact to provide social interaction and support. Home Visitors visit all beneficiaries regularly on request, with all visits recorded and reviewed so that additional support can be given if needed. Those who are infirm will be visited more frequently, especially if they are housebound.

The Society's Home Visitors also assist with hospital admission and release, and visit people during their stay in hospital. A hamper of fresh produce and store-cupboard food is provided on discharge from hospital, ensuring that there is no gap between care services provided. For the more able, the Society provides a weekly Lunch Club and a range of social events throughout the year, including theatre and summer outings and a Christmas lunch. The social events offer an invaluable opportunity for seafarers and their families to meet and share common memories and experiences.



## Veterans Outreach Support

**£10,000** in funding was awarded to Veterans Outreach Support (VOS), a charity founded in 2008 by Falklands veterans. The charity first began as a peer support group with the aim of creating an informal environment for veterans, where they could access a range of support services.

VOS now provides a monthly Drop-In facility for ex-service personnel from all services and operational backgrounds, including the Merchant

Navy. VOS has been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services, that recognises the significant contribution of the charity's volunteer team to the delivery of their Drop-In, many of whom are veterans who have made their own recovery through VOS and volunteer as a way to support veterans who are in need.

VOS has seen a year-on-year increase in attendance at their Drop-In services and, thanks to kind donors like yourself, our grant will help the charity to continue with their work in mental health and welfare support in the year ahead.



**£27,176** in funding was awarded to Age UK Wirral's 'Joining Forces' project to provide a timetable of activities for older ex-seafarers living at Mariners' Park, Wallasey, their families and external merchant seafarers.

The main aim of the project is for a co-ordinated approach, bringing together Merchant Navy and Armed Forces seafarers to share their seafaring experiences and enjoy a range of activities including creative writing and poetry groups, golf, indoor and outdoor bowls, snooker,

film shows, coffee mornings, art classes and nautical-related visits to museums and ships in local docks.

The project had 2,500 attendees over the past year and Age UK Wirral has extended the invitation to external seafaring agencies, family members and friends.

### SEAFARER SUPPORT



Seafarers UK has teamed up with the charity The Silver Line to organise regular group telephone calls for former seafarers, including those with a Merchant Navy background. If you were in the Merchant Navy and are interested in connecting with others to talk about shared experiences, please phone **020 7224 2072** to find out more.

The telephone calls are completely free and a great way to build connections with fellow Merchant Navy seafarers across the country from the comfort of your own home. Please call today!

## CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE MERCHANT NAVY

### Red Ensigns flown at 1,000+ locations around the UK on Merchant Navy Day

Thanks to effective campaigning by Seafarers UK and the active participation of Merchant Navy Association members, on 3 September Red Ensigns were flown in more than one thousand public places across the UK, raising awareness of our island nation's ongoing dependence on Merchant Navy seafarers.

Even the Prime Minister got involved! Boris Johnson wrote: '2019 marks the centenary of King George V's grant of the title 'Merchant Navy'. I am delighted that, in honour of this milestone, the Red Ensign flag will fly above 10 Downing Street on this Merchant Navy Day.'

All registered participants were listed on a prestigious 'Roll of Honour' at [www.merchantnavyfund.org/merchant-navy-day](http://www.merchantnavyfund.org/merchant-navy-day)

In 2020 Seafarers UK is inviting all UK local authorities and councils to get involved, plus owners and custodians of historic buildings including lighthouses that are open to the public.

Ports and other maritime business premises with flagpoles are being approached by their trade associations. And individual home owners with flagpoles are also encouraged to support the campaign by flying a Red Ensign on 3 September.



### APPLY FOR THE UK MERCHANT SEAFARERS VETERANS BADGE

The Merchant Navy seafarers' bravery and sacrifice in assisting HM Armed Forces in military operations has been formally commemorated with the launch of the UK Merchant Seafarers Veterans Badge.

You can apply for the Veterans Badge if at any time you were a Merchant Navy seafarer or fisherman who served in a vessel used to support the UK Armed Forces.

Find out more at [www.mna.org.uk/index.php/veterans](http://www.mna.org.uk/index.php/veterans)

## IN MEMORIAM

**We'd like to thank the families and friends of those recently deceased, who have chosen to support the Merchant Navy Fund in their memory.**

We would also like to thank those people who have chosen to make a quiet, personal remembrance of a friend or relative anonymously. We may not have their names, but we acknowledge them all with honour and respect.

Mr Frederick Ackerman	Mr John Finnigan	Captain Arthur A Parker
Mr Ian Frederick George Beard	Mr Maurice Arthur Frank Fry	Mr Kenneth W Philip
Mr Thomas (Tom) Brannighan	Mr Dennis Alfred Gibson	Mr Haydn Smith
Captain Colin Bunyan	Mr Kenneth Hall	Mr Jerry Stubbs
Mr James Burke	Mrs Evelyn Hastings-Prosser	Mr John William Tyler
Mr David Cantrill	Mr Duncan Macrae	Mr Alexander Henry Watson
Mr James Hedley Joseph Davis	Mr Victor Myers	Mr Charlie John Weller
Mr Terence Anthony Joseph Dring	Mr Arnold Nunns	Mrs Margaret Lillian Westley

For more information on In Memoriam Giving, or to request envelopes for a donation collection at an event or service, please phone Carole Hunt on **020 7932 5986** or email **carole.hunt@seafarers.uk**

## RAISING FUNDS

Huge thanks for your donations to the Merchant Navy Fund, which exists to support UK Merchant Navy seafarers in need. The administrating charity, Seafarers UK, receives no government funding and relies on fundraising to be able to provide long-term aid.

Donations of any amount are always appreciated, including those given In Memory and gifts in Wills. Donations can be made online at **www.merchantnavyfund.org**

Collecting tins are available for organisations and businesses that wish to assist by collecting cash from individual donors. To request a tin, please contact Carole Hunt using the contact details provided above.



The Merchant Navy Fund (MNF), established by Seafarers UK and the Merchant Navy Welfare Board, is a unique fund to specifically benefit UK Merchant Navy seafarers and their families. The aim of the MNF is to help finance those charities supporting our own Merchant Navy seafarers. Thanks to your donations, we continue to make a difference and improve lives. For more information, please visit **www.merchantnavyfund.org**, email **mnfund@seafarers.uk** or phone **020 7932 0000**.

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**DATA PROTECTION:** If you would prefer in future not to receive information about the Merchant Navy Fund please email [mnfund@seafarers.uk](mailto:mnfund@seafarers.uk), phone 020 7932 0000, or write to Seafarers UK, 8 Hatherley Street, LONDON, SW1P 2QT.

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