



During the dark days of the war the need was indeed great and many of our chaplains sat by hospital beds listening to stories of incredible bravery and suffering, or in front parlours comforting those who had learned of the passing of a loved one at sea or in a distant port. Today, the causes may be different but the needs are very similar.

Globally, the nature of shipping and the seafarers' life has changed. Bigger ships with smaller crews. Port turnaround times measured in hours rather than days, isolated berths far away from shops and leisure facilities and, in many ports, severe restrictions on the ability to even walk ashore 'to stretch the legs'. Ships are a 24/7 operation and their tireless routine, bound by the steel confines of the ship and protracted deprivation of family life takes a heavy toll on seafarers' health and morale. Today, it is not unusual to be separated from loved

ones for 6 or 12 months at a stretch, but unable in many ports and aboard many ships to access telephones or the internet to seek the reassurance they so earnestly need.

In war, as in peace, today's Sailors' Society is ever mindful of the words of Hymn 306:

*When in sorrow, when in danger, when in loneliness,
In Thy love, look down and comfort
Their distress*

So, whether you are remembering a lost one today, or thinking of someone working at sea...

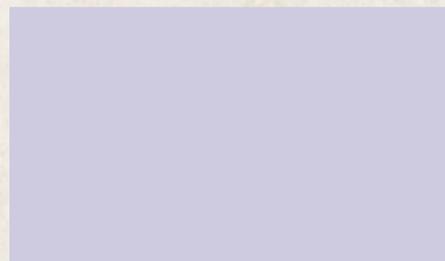
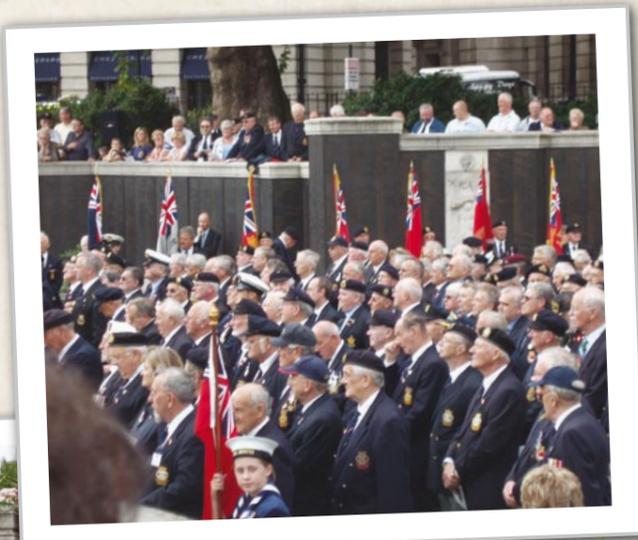
We ask you to remember them.

On behalf of seafarers, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Captain Reg Kelso

Trustee, Sailors' Society



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Supporting Seafarers since 1818

Dear

Send your message for the Merchant Navy Day Service - 7th September 2008



On 2nd September 2007 the Sailors' Society planted 800 red ensign flags at the Merchant Navy Day Service at Trinity Gardens. Each flag bore its own heart-warming message. Some remembered their loved ones lost during the war, others wanted to recognise our seafarers of today. The occasion was incredibly moving with cadets and veterans side by side on their knees together planting the flags. It was a truly remarkable sight.

This year we are encouraging more people to become involved by sending in their messages on our red ensign flags. We wish to give the Merchant Navy seafarers the recognition they deserve.

Please write your message on the attached red ensign flag in memory of your loved one, friend or colleague, or someone who is presently away at sea and return it to the Sailors' Society. Please ensure that your flag and message are returned to us as soon as possible.

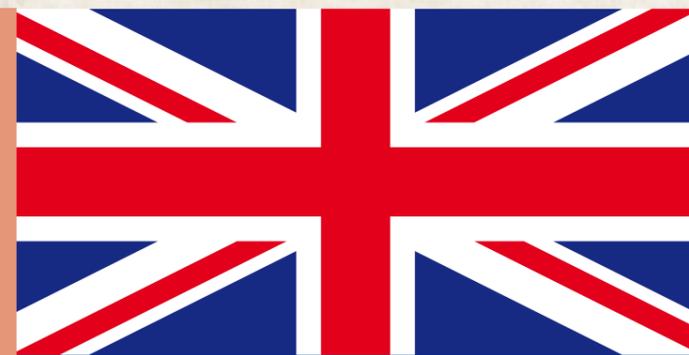
We do hope that you will use this opportunity to make a donation, of whatever size, towards our work, so that present and future generations of seafarers receive the Port Chaplain's hand of friendship wherever and whenever it is needed.

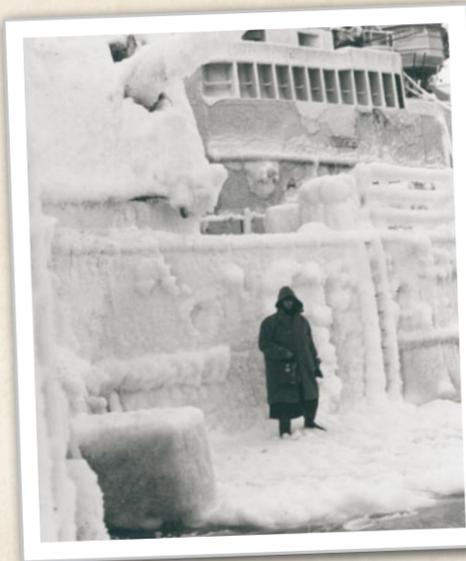
Seafarers deserve to be remembered and with your gift and your message we can do this on your behalf. Port Chaplains worldwide spend most days visiting ships, talking to seafarers and transporting them to phones, internet, shops and churches. They are the seafarers' friend, trusted and loyal.



Registered charity no 237778

www.sailors-society.org





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Let me tell you why it is so important to remember merchant seafarers on 7th September ...

Amongst all of the World War II convoy routes, one of the most dangerous and life-threatening were those carrying vital supplies to the Russian ports of Murmansk and Archangel – close to the Arctic Circle. The Allied convoy's course took them close to the coast of German-occupied Norway, where they were constantly under threat of attack from the enemy. Despite the constant risk of collision, crews welcomed those days when snow and sleet obscured the other ships in the convoy and the ships were hidden from the eyes of the enemy but, invariably, as they steamed North, the squalls passed and gave way to cloudless skies and perfect visibility; ideal conditions for an attack from air and sea. In December 1942, Convoy JW 51B assembled in Loch Ewe, a few miles from Gourock in Scotland, and on the 22nd of the month 15 Allied merchant ships and their escort set sail for Murmansk. The weather conditions were atrocious with storm force winds and huge seas, as they steamed north the ships started to 'ice-up'.

Some nine days after departure the convoy came under heavy attack from German surface craft and some of the escorting ships were sunk. One American flag merchantman sustained damage but, almost unbelievably, all 15 ships with their vital and hazardous cargo of war supplies, reached Murmansk in early January. Murmansk in 1943, during the depth of the Arctic winter with little daylight and the constant threat of attack from the air, afforded little comfort or relief to the hard-pressed crews. Worst of all, was the piercing cold. It penetrated every muscle and sinew of the body like a sharp knife and no amount of clothing could repel it. After some months the crews welcomed an instruction to reform a homeward convoy. Convoy RA53 comprised 30 merchant ships with a heavy escort, but shortly after departing Murmansk on 1st March 1943 it was 'scattered' by appalling weather conditions and this gave the lurking submarines the opportunity they were waiting for. No sooner were the submarines driven off than a sustained air attack inflicted more casualties. Some of the ships lost were sailing under the American flag and others were British manned 'Liberty' ships. The US flag *Puerto Rican* had been badly delayed by the huge seas generated by storm force winds and she was straggling far astern of the main convoy when, on 9th March 1943, 100 miles northeast of Iceland the U-586 tracked her down and torpedoed her. The ship had four lifeboats but due to thick ice three were frozen to the davits and could not be freed. The fourth was lowered into the water but the heavy build-up of ice prevented its



American Merchant Marine at War, www.usmm.org

release and the boat capsized throwing her eight-man crew into the freezing water. The air temperature was 30 degrees below zero, the sea temperature was 11 degrees below freezing and it was pitch dark. A young Fireman, August Wallenhaupt, had been torpedoed previously and when he heard the massive explosion he dressed warmly, putting on his rubber exposure suit and his lifejacket. Finally, he donned a knee-length woollen coat with a hood – and that saved his life. Wallenhaupt was one of those flung out of the capsizing lifeboat but, fortunately, he was close to a small liferaft and he clambered into it. He had lost his gloves and his hands were getting numb. Within a few minutes he had pulled seven men aboard the tiny craft and shortly afterwards a larger raft was found, secured alongside and they transferred to it. Almost immediately, two men died from exposure and the others were losing control of

their limbs. Seas were breaking over the tiny craft and the water froze on their clothing and faces. All of them prayed aloud but the screaming wind drowned their prayers and threw more freezing water onto their defenceless bodies. One by one, the others died, silently and terribly slowly, their bodies remaining frozen to the raft and finally after 36 hours without food or water Wallenhaupt, the sole survivor, lapsed into semi-consciousness. Some time later he felt a violent bang on the side of the raft and heard the sound of English voices and before long he was aboard HMS St. Elstan and on his way to hospital in Iceland. Subsequently, as a result of the exposure to the intense cold, Wallenhaupt lost both legs (amputated at the knee), all of the fingers on his right hand and three on his left hand but, throughout, he continued to demonstrate the courage and cheerfulness that, even today, are indicative of the seaman who have been within reaching distance of death. Throughout WW II the British and International Sailors' Society (as our charity was then known) together with our sister charities offered succour and comfort to those crew members who had undergone experiences like those of August Wallenhaupt or had lost friends and shipmates.



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Name of remembered seafarer:.....

Your message:.....

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.....

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From:.....

Registered charity no: 237778



To be fixed by the Society once returned

Peel & Stick Patch

I would like to help seafarers

Here is my gift of:

- £20 could provide four phone cards
- £30 could support a Port Chaplain in a developing country for a week
- Other £.....

I would like to donate by: Cheque/Postal Order/Debit/Credit Card

Card Number

Expiry Date /

Security Code
Will be destroyed once processed

Signature(s).....

Date.....

Merchant Navy Day 2008 Registered charity no: 237778

Gift Aid

Gift Aid means that for every £1 you give, we can get an extra 28 pence (25p from April 2008) from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation go further. This means that your donation of £10 can be turned into £12.80 - and it does not cost you a penny extra.

I would like the Sailors' Society to treat any donations I have made in the six years prior to this and all future donations until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid:

Signature _____ Date _____

To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax on any form of income including salary, investments or pensions must at least equal the amount that we will claim on your behalf in the tax year. If you have any questions on Gift Aid please call us on 023 8051 5950.

Please complete this donation form and Gift Aid Section and send it with your donation in the envelope provided to: Sailors' Society, Freepost RLXE-RZUH-YLKS, 350 Shirley Road, SOUTHAMPTON, SO15 3HY TODAY!