



SUPPORTING UK MERCHANT NAVY SEAFARERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

AUTUMN 2021

In your Autumn 2021 edition of the Merchant Navy Fund newsletter, we look at the latest grants your donations have helped to fund so far this year, and the success of our annual Fly the Red Ensign campaign. In addition, you'll see updates on how our delivery partners have used previous grants to support Merchant Navy seafarers and their families over the last year.

Fly the Red Ensign, a huge success

Our Fly the Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day annual campaign continued its success this year, with the British Merchant Navy's official flag (Red Ensign) being flown on Merchant Navy Day on September 3rd in many locations across the UK, highlighting the vital role of merchant seafarers – past, present and future.

Started in 2015 by The Seafarers' Charity to address 'sea blindness' that appeared to afflict a huge proportion of the population, the campaign provides an opportunity to honour the many brave men and women who kept the UK afloat during both World Wars, and celebrate our dependence

on modern-day merchant seafarers who are responsible for more than 90% of the UK's imports.

This year, in recognition of extreme financial challenges that many working and retired UK seafarers and their families have been facing during the pandemic, we also asked for donations, as part of the campaign, towards Merchant Navy Fund, as a way of thanking our merchant seafarers who have worked so hard to keep our country going throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

A huge thanks to those of you who have generously supported our campaign already.

THE DIFFERENCE YOU ARE MAKING

Thanks to your incredible generosity, the Merchant Navy Fund has awarded more than £58,000 to our delivery partners so far this year, which will help fund some of the vital and life-saving interventions you'll see on the following pages.



TEIGNMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Merchant Navy Day recognises the unique contribution our seafarers make to the United Kingdom, and the Fly the Red Ensign appeal campaign is our 'thank you' to the seafarers who have worked so hard to keep this country going.

If you haven't had a chance to support our appeal yet, here's how you can show your support:

Online: [donate.theseafarerscharity.org/
MerchantNavyFund-MND21](https://donate.theseafarerscharity.org/MerchantNavyFund-MND21)

By text: **MERCHANTNAVYDAY 3** to
70470 to donate £3

MERCHANTNAVYDAY 5 to
70470 to donate £5

MERCHANTNAVYDAY 15 to
70470 to donate £15

By post: Please complete the donation form enclosed and return it with your donation in the freepost envelope provided.

All funds raised from this appeal will be awarded to our charity partners supporting UK Merchant Navy seafarers.

HAWKINGE TOWN COUNCIL



ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL EVENT



A £7,000 grant was awarded to The Not Forgotten

The grant will provide support to 300 former Merchant Navy personnel through recreational and entertainment events and activities to help prevent loneliness and isolation.

Since 2017, The Not Forgotten has increased their reach from 51 Merchant Navy beneficiaries to an expected 300 this year. Based on their achievements throughout the last twelve difficult months, they are confident that their initiatives can continue to make a real difference to Merchant Navy beneficiaries who are experiencing loneliness and find themselves isolated from society.

A planned series of activities and events include summer drive-in concerts, cookery courses, fishing trips, weekends away and respite breaks, challenge holidays, activity weeks, dragon boat racing, cycling, Christmas lunches and mini garden parties at care homes and other venues.

In the year ahead, restrictions may mean they will need a plan B or even C in some cases. However, the agility they have showed during the past year demonstrates that they can and will make a difference to the many isolated and lonely beneficiaries who rely on them for support.

“ *This welcome opportunity has helped me enormously with socialising in a safe and comfortable environment without judgement. This has also been a welcome break for my wife who has had to endure over a year of isolation due to my illness.* ”

Royal Marines Veteran from a Not Forgotten respite break



THE NOT FORGOTTEN

THE NOT FORGOTTEN SUMMER GARDEN PARTY
DRIVE-IN, JULY 2021



A £15,000 grant was awarded to Shipwrecked Mariners' Society

This will support emergency grants to Merchant Navy seafarers and their dependants who are in real poverty but who also do not fit within the organisations' set criteria (e.g. 10 years' sea service).

Applications come in daily from across the country for help with items ranging from rent and rent deposits, stair lifts, winter clothing, replacement window frames, new boilers, replacement white goods, funeral expenses, and priority debts.

COVID-19 has made these requests more frequent, but whilst Shipwrecked Mariners' Society have released their own emergency fund, the criteria still often exclude some who they feel should be supported.

Most of these applicants have no savings or insurance to cushion the blow of unfortunate events such as the failure of a washing machine or boiler in the cold months. Applicants may be retired, on Job Seekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, or indeed in employment but facing financial difficulties, such as eviction because of rent arrears.

Thanks to the Merchant Navy Fund, they have been able to support some people who do not fully meet all their criteria.

“ *We provide financial help to both retired and working-age seafarers and their dependants who are in need... Since Covid, many have had to rely on Universal Credit for living costs as their income has disappeared. There's a 4 to 6-week wait for many benefits and we help keep the lights on until they kick in.* ”

Captain Justin Osmond, Shipwrecked Mariners' Society Chief Executive



A £20,000 grant was awarded to Age UK for The Silver Line

The grant will ensure the continued provision of long running and much needed telephone friendship groups known as Seafarers Link, which connect older seafarers via regular, supervised telephone-conference calls.

These groups aim to help reduce loneliness and isolation and enhance relationships and social interaction by ensuring continued connections with other seafarers and seafaring communities. A vitally important service in the past year when the restrictions of the pandemic meant that they were the only social contact the callers had all week.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on people's loneliness and subsequent mental health, meaning they need greater emotional support, companionship, and reassurance, in addition to the usual friendship and conversation they are seeking.

Now that Seafarers Link is under the Age UK umbrella, there is also a large pool of older people waiting for 1-2-1 friendship. The service has moved from fortnightly calls to weekly to offer vital additional support to the group members during the coronavirus crisis.

The grant will help fund the team that supports the calls, including the coordination and technical support, and ensure that the friendship groups continue and develop. The aim is to expand the number of groups currently running each week.

“ Sometimes I just feel like having a chat and there's no one at that time I can phone. Now I've got The Silver Line, I feel I've got a whole lot of new friends and have had some lovely conversations. Where did you find such lovely people? ”

Vera, Silver Line member



“ I am very grateful to the Falklands Veterans Foundation, The Seafarers' Charity and the Merchant Navy Fund for the chance to go to the Falkland Islands and truly thank everyone who made this possible. It will be something I will treasure forever. ”

The late Lucene Hughes on her pilgrimage to the Falkland Islands in memory of her father James Hughes who lost his life during the 1982 Conflict.



THE LATE LUCENE HUGHES RETURNED TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS IN NOVEMBER 2019

A £1,300 grant has been awarded to the Falklands Veterans Foundation

This grant will enable a Merchant Navy Veteran's granddaughter to accompany her mother, for emotional support, during a visit to the Falkland Islands whose father who was killed in action during the Falkland Islands Conflict.

The Falklands Veterans Foundation was the first UK-based charity for Falklands Veterans and their immediate families and is committed to providing a network of support and direction for those in need. They work in partnership with other service charities and organisations to aid Falklands Veterans and their families.

In 2019, a Merchant Navy Fund grant to the Falklands Veterans Foundation enabled Lucene Hughes, the daughter of a Merchant Seaman killed in action during the Falklands Conflict, to visit the islands with a companion. Now, the daughter of a Merchant Seaman, who was also killed in the Conflict, is hoping to visit the Falkland Islands in 2022.

A £15,000 grant was awarded to **Sailors' Children's Society**

This forms part of a larger grant of £75,000 which will support children and young people from Merchant Navy families on low incomes with essentials such as school uniforms, winter coats and shoes, school trips, educational equipment and more.

Families often turn to the Society following a traumatic event such as bereavement, loss, or diagnosis of a life-changing illness. The society provides assistance via its Family Support scheme with financial, emotional and practical elements until the family is again self-sufficient or until the children have left full time education.

Each family receives a small monthly grant towards the children's activities, or towards food, heating, or clothing such shoes and a new school uniform, or a coat in the winter.

This grant will support approximately 205 children and young people out of the 727 they are already supporting. It is a 62% increase on the number of families they were helping pre-covid.

The Society's aim now is to allow children to be children as they adjust to the new circumstances and encourage the family to become more independent again.



“ *I would like to say a massive thank you for all your help and support. We are overwhelmed by the receipt of the computer...now the boys can do their schoolwork easily...thank you again.* **”**

Sailors' Children's Society beneficiary

The Seafarers' Charity has also partnered with a national charity, Relate, to offer relationship support and counselling for UK-based Merchant Navy families and we are keen on promoting this service to our readers.

This new service provides free access to a range of face-to-face and digital relationship support, including:

- Relationship counselling
- Family and parenting counselling
- Children and young people's counselling
- Bereavement and loss counselling
- Separation and divorce counselling

If you or your family members come from a Merchant Navy background and think you could benefit from this service, please phone **Seafarers' Advice and Information Line** on **0800 160 1842**, email **advice@sailine.org.uk**, or call **Seafarer Support** on **0800 121 4765**.

relate
the relationship people

**SEAFARERS
LINK**

The Silver Line

helpline for older people

0800 4 70 80 90

In 2019, the The Seafarers' Charity teamed up with 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 discuss shared experiences, you can call **0207 224 2072** to find out more.

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.

You may also be able to discuss any COVID-19-related problems if you experience difficulties. **PLEASE CALL TODAY.**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF...

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the relatives and friends of those recently deceased. We also would like to thank those people who have chosen to make a quiet, personal remembrance of a loved one anonymously. We may not have their names, but we acknowledge them all with honour and respect.

Mr Dennis Bibby

Mr Peter Francis Cheyne

Mr Michael Chopin

Mr Terence Michael Frary

Mr Knud Godthaab

Mr Frederick Malcolm Hollis

Captain Roger Keyzor

Commodore Oliver R T Lindsay

Mr Victor Norman McGlade

Mr Steve Mellode

Mr Glyn Richards

Mrs J Rose

Mr Ted Stebbings



If you are organising a funeral, or memorial service to honour someone you loved then you might like to consider donations in place of flowers. For some, it's the best way to keep those special memories alive in a way that would make your loved one proud.

For further information, or to request envelopes for a donation collection at a service please contact us at mnfund@theseafarerscharity.org.

The Merchant Navy Fund (MNF), administered by The Seafarers' Charity and supported by the Merchant Navy Welfare Board, is a unique fund to specifically benefit UK Merchant Navy seafarers and their families. The aim of the fund 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@theseafarerscharity.org 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@theseafarerscharity.org, phone 020 7932 0000, or write to The Seafarers' Charity, 8 Hatherley Street, LONDON, SW1P 2QT.

The Merchant Navy Fund is administered by The Seafarers' Charity (Seafarers UK, formerly King George's Fund for Sailors), and supported by the Merchant Navy Welfare Board. The Seafarers' Charity is a Registered Charity in England and Wales, No. 226446, incorporated under Royal Charter. Registered in Scotland, No. SC038191. Registered office: 8 Hatherley Street London, SW1P 2QT.



Merchant Navy Fund Supporting Partners

the
seafarers'
charity



MERCHANT NAVY WELFARE BOARD