

# Veterans to be honoured at Merchant Navy Day 2009

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Sailors Society launches Sea of Remembrance at Trinity Gardens

International seafaring charity Sailors Society is asking supporters to remember the sacrifices veterans and current seafarers have made, on 6 September, Merchant Navy Day 2009.

It is hoped that the threat and media attention surrounding piracy, particularly off the coast of Somalia in recent months, will see even more support for the Sailors Society's Sea of Remembrance Campaign.

In recent years 2000 flags, sent in by supporters and loved ones of seafarers, have been planted at Trinity Gardens, London. The flags are sent to the Sailors Society, carrying poignant and often touching messages, remembering loved ones who have died at sea or thanking the seafarers of the past and of the future for the sacrifices they make. These flags create a memorable Sea of Remembrance tribute on Merchant Navy Day and are often a focus for visitors seeking solace and a moment of reflection after the Merchant Navy Day Commemorative Service at Tower Hill.

Jan Webber, Director of Fundraising and Marketing for Sailors Society explained: We have always had an excellent response to our Sea of Remembrance Campaign, with loved ones of seafarers who have lost their lives during various conflicts, becoming loyal supporters. We are keen to encourage as many people as possible to join us in our tribute and we want this year's commemoration to reflect the sacrifices current seafarers make as well as remembering those lost over the years. They will not be forgotten.

The launch of the 2009 Sea of Remembrance Campaign could not be more timely as Sailors Society Ukrainian Port Chaplain Eduard Myrmyr continues to support the family of seafarer Sergey Vartenkov, killed by pirates when they hijacked the MV Marathon off the Somali coast in May.

Jan reflected: We are hearing nearly every day about new ships being taken by pirates and the recent documentary by Ross Kemp showed the very real threat modern-day seafarers face just doing their day jobs. Sailors Society is committed to helping seafarers and their families where we can. Our thoughts are with the wife and children of Sergey Vartenkov and we all hope such tragic circumstances do not become regular events.

To support the Sailors Society with their Sea of Remembrance Campaign this year, please contact 023 8051 5950 to request one of the special Red Ensign Flags. This should be returned to the charity with an individual message in plenty of time for volunteers to plant them on 6 September.

Ends

Words: 437

Examples of messages written on Sea of Remembrance flags

" To all the seafarers who think they may not be special to anybody you are remembered and thought about in heads of people you have never met yet. May you feel their love and gain strength from this now and in moments when you perhaps feel alone. I look out to sea from my house and remember all those bobbing about on the horizon.

" In memory of the sailors who died during World War II, bringing food to Britain when I was a child .

" He gave his life to bring us food I will never forget. Sister-in-law of a WWII merchant seafarer

" With thoughts and thanks for a part of society that is often forgotten.

" In remembrance of those Merchant Seafarers who died, those who survived and those currently who sail the seas for our benefit many thanks.

Notes to Editors:

The Sailors Society is an international charity that provides a personal lifeline for seafarers throughout the world. Existing to enrich and enhance the well-being of the world's 1.2 million seafarers, the charity offers practical help, emotional and spiritual support and, when in dire need, financial assistance and family liaison through our Port Chaplains and Seafarers Centres. Our Port Chaplains visit thousands of ships every year, directly addressing the needs of seafarers – irrespective of a person's belief or nationality – as well as maintaining vital links within the Ports that they operate.

For more information, please visit [www.sailors-society.org](http://www.sailors-society.org), or contact Debbie Osborne at Logical

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