



Pictured are the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim along with Harbour Master, Stuart Wilson, Captain of European Causeway or European Highlander and David McCorkell Lord Lieutenant of County Antrim at the flag raising ceremony for Merchant Navy Day.

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Red Ensign raised for Merchant Navy Day

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council today marked national Merchant Navy Day in honour of the men and women who provided essential supplies to the UK during both World Wars and to celebrate our dependence on modern day merchant seafarers.

The Red Ensign, the Merchant Navy's official flag, was raised at the Port of Larne on Thursday (3rd September) at 10am by the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim.

Special guests included the Lord Lieutenant of County Antrim, Mr David McCorkell, Northern Ireland Executive Junior Minister Gordon Lyons MLA and the Port of Larne Harbour Master, Mr Stuart Wilson,

The flag-raising ceremony took place and messages were read from the Earl of Wessex and the Admiral The Right Honourable The Lord West of Spithead GCB, DSC, PC

The annual event supports a nationwide call from the Seafarers UK charity and the Merchant Navy Association for the UK Merchant Navy's official flag to be flown on public buildings and landmark flagpoles.

Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, Councillor Peter Johnston, said: "By flying this flag we are showing our support and appreciation to the men and women who work tirelessly on our behalf to keep the country moving.

"We are pleased to once again mark this important day and to publicly honour the great work the men and women of the Merchant Navy do on our behalf.

"Today we not only remember the brave personnel of the past, but also pay tribute to those currently serving. It is important for them and their families to know that we truly appreciate the time they spend at sea away from their loved ones."

Harbour Master, Stuart Wilson, added: "Merchant Navy Day is a day to honour the brave men and women who kept our island nation afloat during both World Wars.

"However, this year, it is also an opportunity to mark the contribution that the Merchant Navy has made in keeping our economy and essential services functioning throughout the recent pandemic.

"Both in the past and present, the Merchant Navy, despite adverse conditions, has continued to provide the vital links upon which so much that we, as island nations, rely.

"As a consequence, we at Larne Harbour, feel privileged to be able host this year's event on behalf of the Merchant Navy."

In the First and Second World Wars nearly 15,000 merchant seafarers were killed.

The UK relies on Merchant Navy seafarers for 95% of imports, including half our food. The UK has the largest ports industry in Europe. 75% of our exports (by volume) are shipped from UK ports.

Merchant Navy Day has been commemorated since 2000 on 3 September, the anniversary of the sinking of the SS Athenia, the first British merchant vessel lost during World War 2.

Seafarers UK is a leading grant-making charity that helps people in the maritime community, by providing vital funding to support seafarers in need and their families. www.merchantnavyfund.org/merchant-navy-day

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