



WE CANNOT ACHIEVE IT WITHOUT YOUR HELP

Please accept this as a personal letter to the Merchant Navy Community and to those who have an interest in Australia's maritime history.

In addressing our Vision Statement our Board is focussed on 'making a difference' in all that we undertake.

To ensure that the Australian Merchant Navy "A title emblazoned in battle and honoured in freedom" is recognised as an important part of Australian Maritime History and Social Culture.

Earlier this year, with the assistance of our Architects, Daryl Jackson Alastair Swain and Construction company Manteena, we made a submission to the National Capital Authority (NCA) for the construction of new works, at the National Merchant Navy War Memorial, Kings Park, Canberra. This has been approved and will result in the installation in Brass of the names of the 184 and 678 Australian Merchant Navy men and woman, who sailed under the red ensign and gave their lives for their country in WWI & WWII.

This significant representation of names and vessels will ensure that their sacrifice will be more readily recognised by not only those that remain but most importantly, add significant additional meaning to the memorial as we encourage younger generations to take up the recognition so much deserved by our country's Merchant Navy.

It is too often overlooked that the Merchant Navy were the means by which Australian diggers and allied infantry were landed, sustained, armed, fed and reinforced. And finally, in late 1945 it was the Merchant Navy and RAN who brought them home.

The Canberra Memorial opened by former Governor-General The Hon Bill Hayden AC, could not have been achieved without the contributions received through a National Fund-Raising Appeal.

The new and remedial works simply cannot be fully funded without the support of individuals and organisations. We have invited Governor-General Elect, General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC, as the guest of honour and deliver the annual address at the 30th Commemoration, on Sunday 20th October and to unveil the Plaque to commemorate the new works. We thank you on behalf of those that gave their lives and all those who served. Every donation makes a difference and can be expressed as 'individual commitment to a group effort' and will ensure the memory of those Merchant Navy Mariners whose resting place is the deep ...Lest We Forget.

David Field FAICD

Chairman, The Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund

ABOUT THE MERCHANT NAVY WAR MEMORIAL FUND (MNWMF)

FORMATION

Prior to the MNWMF formation, several prominent citizens conducted an appeal for funds known as the Merchant Navy War Memorial Appeal with a first meeting on 19 July 1944. The appeal was launched at the Sydney Town Hall on 19 July 1945 with the Lord Mayor presiding. As a result several thousands of pounds were raised, and the company known as The Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund Limited (MNWMF) (Referred to as 'the Fund') was formed. The first meeting of Directors was held on 22 March 1946 and in the years following WWII numerous fund-raising activities were organised.

VISION STATEMENT

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ACTIVITIES

Since inception the Fund has actively pursued its primary objectives, consistent with its original Memorandum and Articles of Association. Successive Board of Directors have had the responsibility, to ensure that they appropriately react to 'fine tune' its activities to meet both changing times and the present day aspirations of its numerous stakeholders.

ROOKWOOD ANNUAL COMMEMORATION APRIL

In 1947 a section of the Necropolis at Rookwood in which seamen are interred was granted to The Fund by the Church of England Cemetery Trust. The Stone Wall enclosing the Merchant Navy section and the Columbarium erected thereon, were paid for by the Fund. The ongoing maintenance of the site, including the beautiful Memorial Rose Garden, continue to be undertaken by The Rookwood Cemetery. During 2014 the Board acted to put in place a stronger partnership with the Rookwood Cemetery and are very appreciative of the very generous 'in kind' support received. The annual National Commemoration is held in April, with significant financial support from the Fund.

CANBERRA ANNUAL NATIONAL COMMEMORATION OCTOBER

In the late 80's the Fund responded to a request from The Merchant Navy Association (MNA) together with the RSL Merchant Navy Sub Branch and The Company of Master Mariners of Australia (CMMA) to construct a National Merchant Navy War Memorial on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra. The Fund provided a grant of \$100,000 to enable the project to succeed. With government, public and shipping company donations, the Memorial was unveiled on 7 October 1990 by His Excellency The Hon. Bill Hayden AC, Governor-General of Australia. The annual National Commemoration is held in October, with significant financial support from the Fund.

www.mnwmf.com.au



Proudly supported by:



IN HONOUR OF THOSE OF THE AUSTRALIAN MERCHANT NAVY WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY AND HAVE NO GRAVE BUT THE SEA. THEY WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR EVER MORE.

1914-18

1939-45

THE MERCHANT NAVY WAR MEMORIAL FUND (MNWMF)

NATIONAL FUND-RAISING APPEAL

The MNWMF is seeking donations for construction of new works to the Merchant Navy War Memorial, Kings Park Canberra that will see the installation of the names of Australian Merchant Mariners that sacrificed their lives for their country in WWI (184) & WWII (678)



NATIONAL FUND-RAISING APPEAL

On 3 September 1901 (now Australian National Flag and Merchant Navy Day) the results of the Australian Flag Competition were announced by the Prime Minister at a public ceremony held at the Royal Exhibition buildings, Melbourne.

The new blue Australian Federal Flag was raised officially for the first time and in the same year, was assigned as the official ensign of the ships of Australian Commonwealth Naval Forces. The Red Ensign became the official "National Colours" of our Australian registered merchant vessels. The two versions of our flag were identical in design with the field (background) colour being blue and red.

Australian merchant seamen sailed into battle in freighters, troopships, hospital ships, landing ships, and most dangerously in fuel tankers and ammunition ships. They stayed in their civilian ships when they were converted into Navy auxiliary warships and armed merchant cruisers and went looking for the enemy.

The Merchant Navy suffered heavy losses in Australian waters. There were 76 merchant ships lost to mines, torpedoes, shelling and bombing around our coast. 29 of these sunken ships were Australian registered vessels and 349 Australian seamen were killed on these ships or perished later at sea in open boats before they could be rescued. In all 184 Australian merchant mariners lost their lives in WWI and 678 in WWII.

Since the Second World War the national memory of these brave men has faded, with little done to teach Australians about their part in the victory in WWI and WWII.



On 12 May 1943 the *Centaur* sailed unescorted from Sydney at 0945 hours carrying her crew and normal staff, as well as stores and equipment of the 2/12th Field Ambulance but no patients. It was sunk without warning by a torpedo from a Japanese submarine on 14 May 1943 at approximately 0400 hours. Of the 332 persons on board, only 64 survived. These survivors spent 35 hours on rafts before being rescued. Sister Ellen Savage, the only one of twelve nursing sisters on board to survive, though injured herself, gave great help to the other survivors and was awarded the George Medal for this work.



SS Iron Crown had 43 crew on board when it was hit by a torpedo from a Japanese submarine in June 1942 off the coast of Victoria. Five survivors were rescued by *SS Mulbera*, while 38 crew members were killed. She was recently found by marine archaeologists.

Our Architects, DJAS Canberra impression of the four (4) new concrete blades that will bear the names and respective vessels of Australian Merchant Navy men and woman who sacrificed their lives for their country in WWI & WWII



DONATIONS MAY BE MADE TO:

The Secretary
Merchant Navy War
Memorial Fund Ltd
PO Box 3058,
Rosemeadow NSW 2560

or by EFT to:
Account Name: MNWMF Project
Development Fund
BSB: 032 197 **Account No:** 477684
Reference: Your name

Please note: If paying by EFT please forward an email with your Name, Address, Phone & Organisation (if applicable) to secretary@mnwmf.com.au
A receipt will be forwarded for all donations received.