

# **THE FORGOTTEN FOURTH SERVICE**

**We are this year (2005) celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Second World War.**

**A lot of people born since then show little interest in the sacrifices made by the people of my generation, but, without these sacrifices the world today would have been completely different. The standard of life, which we all now enjoy, has been possible only by the suffering and sacrifice of the hundreds of thousands of people from 1939 to 1945.**

**Everyone knows we had an Army, Navy and Air Force, but we had a fourth Service, THE FORGOTTEN MERCHANT NAVY, a civilian service. We were trained to help man the guns that were installed on all merchant ships by the Ministry of Defence. Supporting the D.E.M.S. (Defence Equipment Merchant Ships) gunners, who were either Royal Navy or the Maritime Regiment of the Royal Artillery.**

**From the day that war was declared on Germany on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 to VE Day, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945. The Merchant Navy was fighting on all the seas and oceans of the world, carrying supplies to enable the war to be fought in all the campaigns. 2536 British merchant ships were sunk by enemy action.**

**In the year 2000, HM the Queen declared that September the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annually would be recognised as INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT NAVY DAY, and that the MN flag, Red Duster should be flown from all public buildings.**

**I have finally got the Stockport MBC to agree to fly the flag for the first time this year. The flag will have to be purchased, at a cost of approximately £130, by myself.**

**September 3<sup>rd</sup> this year falls on a Saturday, and I am hoping to arrange a gathering of interested persons around the flag staff at the Town Hall, at 10-00 A.M., recruiting the services of a local minister and members of the Hawk Green Band, to conduct a short service.**

**Ron Singleton, Merchant Navy 1944/1956 R307363**