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THE PRIME MINISTER

I wanted to send my best wishes for the Merchant Navy Day commemorative service, taking place on 3 September.

I stand with you in memory of the courage, determination and heroism shown by those in the Merchant Navy, who gave their lives during the two World Wars. Their sacrifice helped to ensure that the provision of equipment and supplies needed to support the British people and our allies in some of their darkest hours never faltered. We cannot, and will not, ever forget them.

It speaks to the courage of Merchant sailors that they would risk life and limb on what were largely defenceless vessels, often in the roughest of seas with the threat of torpedo, bomb or shell ever-present. With this in mind may I offer my personal congratulations to this year's winners of the Merchant Navy medal for service to the industry.

While the British merchant fleet has changed significantly over the years, it has been and will continue to be an essential component of our national prosperity. Seafaring remains as vital today as it always has been, and the spirits of those bygone generations sail with the most recent intakes of cadets and junior ratings.

Thank you for your continuing dedication and service.

3 September 2023