

Armed forces day

The first ARMED FORCES DAY ceremony was held in London on June 27/2009.
It was pleasing to read that one of the awards that day was to a merchant seaman. ED.
(report from a website called –'this is local London.com')



Ernest Allum receiving his medal from Under Secretary of State Kevan Jones

A WAR hero from Woodford Green has been honoured during the veterans' parade across Tower Bridge to mark Armed Forces Day. Merchant Seaman Ernest Allum received a commemorative badge recognising a lifetime in service of his country.

The 88-year-old, of St Barnabas Road, joined the Merchant Navy when he was just 16 and was signed on as a catering boy. He was then seconded to the Royal Navy until war finished and he rejoined Union Castle where in 1966 he went ashore as marine purchasing officer and manager for South Marine Europe until 1986 when he retired.

Mr Allum said: “The first three years I was in the Navy I was on control mining ship which was used to mine harbours that were thought vulnerable.

“Then I was on an aircraft carrier for the last few months. I did enjoy that time as it was a very interesting experience.

“I was very pleased to get the badge. I know some of the chaps felt that they wanted some recognition sooner but I believe a lot has been going on since the war.”

But Mr. Allum's fascinating life at sea did not stop with the ending of hostilities. He added: “And in 1950 a South African Company bought three ships that they ran and the managing director was Sir Arthur Harris – otherwise known as Bomber Harris.

“I knew somebody there and was asked to join that fleet. Bomber Harris was a very good boss and said that in all his years in the RAF he was mess caterer and so knew his food and it was a very good company to work for.”

And despite never marrying and settling down Mr. Allum told the Guardian that he is as busy as ever. He added: “All the time I was at sea I thought 'what's the point of having a family as I'd never see them' and by the time I came to shore I was in my 40s and maybe it was too late.

“But what with my garden, car and house I'm honestly busier than ever.”

Mr. Allum was one of ten proud veterans to have received the special honour this year.

He took part in a parade across Tower Bridge, to mark the first Armed Forces Day, with a ceremonial gun salute and fly past by two RAF Puma helicopters.



The first UK Armed Forces Day took place on Saturday 27 June 2009. It is an annual day to celebrate the work of the Armed Forces community.

Armed Forces Day is an opportunity for the nation to show its support for our Service men and women, whether veteran or still serving. It's an opportunity to honour and celebrate the work they do in support of our country.

