

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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IMO RAGES AGAINST INACTION AS CREW CHANGE CRISIS LINGERS

In advance of a meeting of the United Nations' General Assembly, the International Maritime Organization is renewing its call on governments to take swift action to resolve the crew change crisis afflicting mariners worldwide.

IMO estimates that over 300,000 seafarers and marine personnel are currently stranded at sea and unable to be repatriated following the expiration of their assignments. A similar number of mariners have been unable to join ships and relieve them. The crisis was caused by COVID-19 restrictions imposed by governments, including constraints on travel, embarkation and disembarkation in ports, quarantine measures, reductions in available flights and limits on the issuing of visas and passports. IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim has declared that urgent action is needed to protect seafarers' health and ensure the safety of shipping.

Some seafarers have now been on board their ships for more than 17 months, exceeding the 11-month limit set out in the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). Many have been denied proper access to medical care and shore leave, in breach of their rights under the MLC and other international instruments. This creates serious concerns, not only for seafarers' health and wellbeing, but also for the safety of shipping. Overly fatigued and mentally exhausted seafarers are being asked to continue operating vessels, increasing the risk of shipping casualties.

"Seafarers cannot remain at sea indefinitely," Lim insisted. "If the crew change crisis is not resolved soon, ships will no longer be able to operate safely pursuant to the Organization's regulations and guidelines, further exacerbating the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic," he declared. Shipping moves more than 80% of global trade and is a crucial component of the global economy.

There has been some global progress on the issue, but it has not kept pace with the backlog of ships requiring crew changes.

CONGRESS URGED TO SUPPORT PROPOSED TANKER SECURITY FLEET

Representatives Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) have headed up efforts to gather Congressional signatures for a bipartisan "Dear Colleague" letter in support of the proposed Oil Tanker Security Fleet program. In July, the House of Representatives passed the annual defense bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2021, which includes the

establishment of a 10-vessel program modeled after the Maritime Security Program, to support the carriage of fuel on privately-owned, militarily-useful U.S.-flag product tankers to meet the energy needs of the Department of Defense. Citing the need to strengthen the U.S.-flag fleet and address the shortage of qualified American mariners, the letter states, “A tanker security program as passed in H.R. 6395 would begin to rectify this situation, adding additional commercial vessels to the U.S.-flag fleet and creating new jobs for American mariners.”

The letter is addressed to the “Big Four” Chairpersons and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees as they work to negotiate the differences of their respective defense bills through a conference committee in preparation of a final vote and the President’s signature by the end of the year.

The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, has also been encouraging Members of Congress to support the formation of the Tanker Security Fleet. TTD President Larry Willis noted, “Today, the Department of Defense reports that it is nearly 76 fuel tankers short of its needs. Not only is this detrimental to military readiness, but it also ensures that jobs that could be performed by U.S. mariners on ships built in domestic shipyards will continue to be outsourced to foreign nations and crew. By authorizing the tanker security program in the final NDAA, Congress can simultaneously take action to create good jobs in the maritime industry that is currently facing a manpower shortage, while meeting the needs of the Department of Defense.”

NMC ANNOUNCES REOPENING OF SEATTLE REC

The National Maritime Center (NMC) is reopening its Seattle Regional Examination Center (REC) on Monday for limited exam services. This adds to the list of recent reopenings at various RECs and Monitoring Units around the country. The full notice has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website in the “Documents & Member Notices” section.

Mariners seeking to schedule examinations at these locations may do so by using the contact info below:

REC Boston – recboston@uscg.mil
REC Honolulu – rechonolulu@uscg.mil
REC Houston – rechoustonexam@uscg.mil
REC Juneau – recjun@uscg.mil
REC Long Beach – reclb@uscg.mil
REC Memphis – recmemphis@uscg.mil
REC Miami – recmia@uscg.mil or (305) 536-4331
REC Seattle – recseattle@uscg.mil
REC Toledo – rectol@uscg.mil
MU Ketchikan – (907) 225-4496 (extension #3)
MU San Juan – (787) 729-2368

REMINDER: FORUM WITH 9/11 MARINERS TOMORROW

Tune in tomorrow for an online event sponsored by the Transportation Institute honoring maritime heroes of September 11, 2001. Friday marks the 19th anniversary of the terrorist attacks and a free online forum will honor mariners who helped evacuate New Yorkers out of the danger zone when the towers came down. On Friday evening at 6 p.m., participants will hear from Navy veteran and retired M.E.B.A. Staten Island ferryboat captain Frank Peters who piloted the last Staten Island ferry

in and out of Manhattan on that dark day 19 years ago. Frank will tell his story along with others during the virtual event. You can register by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/y64yo2qh>

LATEST MSC EPF: USNS NEWPORT DELIVERED

Austal USA has delivered the latest newbuild Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessel that becomes the 12th such vessel in the Military Sealift Command fleet. The Spearhead-class EPFs have proven to be workhorse vessels and are deployed on high-profile missions around the world. EPF civilian mariner crews are represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU. The engine room on the USNS NEWPORT is headed up by Chief Engineer Steven Johnston and includes 1st A/E Matthew Connolly.

The 13th EPF in the program USNS APALACHICOLA is under construction at the Austal yard in Mobile, AL and the 14th and last in the Spearhead-class series, USNS CODY, will follow. EPFs are shallow-draft, all-aluminum, commercial-based catamarans that are capable of intra-theater personnel and cargo transport, which provide combatant commanders high-speed sealift mobility.

M.E.B.A. ELECTION: ONLY VOTES FROM MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING WILL COUNT

According to our By-Laws, members who are not in good standing by November 15, 2020, with dues paid in accordance with the M.E.B.A. By-Laws, through the end of the quarter where applicable, are not eligible to vote in the ongoing M.E.B.A. election.

M.E.B.A. ELECTION: OBTAINING A DUPLICATE BALLOT

If you are an M.E.B.A. member and did not receive a ballot – or yours has been lost or destroyed - you can request a duplicate ballot in writing.

The M.E.B.A. By-Laws states, "A member shall be entitled to make a written request of the Impartial Administrator for a duplicate ballot and receive the same provided he states in his letter that he has not received his ballot or that his ballot has been lost or mutilated so that it cannot be used. Duplicate ballots shall be counted unless the original and duplicate ballot mailed to a member are both cast, in which event neither ballot shall be counted."

Please use the following Impartial Administrator contact information to request a duplicate ballot. Any written requests for duplicate ballots made to the M.E.B.A. will be referred to the Impartial Administrator.

TrueBallot, Inc.

3 Bethesda Metro Center

Suite 700

Bethesda, MD 20814

Email: 0212001@trueballot.com

Please make sure you include the address where the duplicate ballot should be sent.

BALTIMORE HALL CLOSED ON FRIDAY FOR DEFENDERS DAY

The Baltimore Union hall will be closed tomorrow (Friday, September 11) in honor of Defenders Day – a holiday in the State of Maryland. The official day of commemoration is September 12th which celebrates the successful defense of Baltimore from the British during the War of 1812.

Mere weeks after the redcoats defeated the Americans at the Battle of Bladensburg then burned Washington DC, the British turned their attention to Baltimore to continue punishing their former colony. But American General John Stricker and the Baltimore Garrison provided unexpected stiff resistance to the British forces commanded by Major General Robert Ross at the Battle of North Point, the opening salvo of the Battle of Baltimore. Ross was cut down by an American rifleman and the British temporarily broke off their attack to lick their wounds and regroup. This gave the Americans time to better organize their defenses and batten down the hatches during the British naval bombardment of Fort McHenry days later. Maryland lawyer Frank Key, better known today as Francis Scott Key, waited out the night aboard a sloop near the 50-ship British fleet during over 25 hours of aggression targeting the American fort. Unable to shatter the recently fortified American defenses, the British broke off their attack on the morning of September 14th.

At the early light of dawn, Key, trying to grasp the situation, looked toward the Fort and saw the Stars and Stripes still waving. The Americans had outlasted the bombardment! In a fit of patriotic euphoria, he feverishly scrawled out an epic four-verse poem on the back of a letter that captured the moment. His poem was reprinted in Baltimore newspapers a week later under the title of “Defence of Fort M’Henry.” Two months later it was redubbed “The Star-Spangled Banner” and it officially became our national anthem in March of 1931.

SIGN UP FOR M.E.B.A. VACATION PLAN DIRECT DEPOSIT

Designed for convenience, M.E.B.A. members can help themselves by taking advantage of the Vacation Plan Direct Deposit that will help save them time and ease Plans processing costs. Authorization forms are available from the Plans Office, Plans Outport Offices and at the Plans’ website – www.mebaplans.org (Forms & Documents, Vacation Plan Forms). Complete details are available on the Plans site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

OCTOBER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (All times are local)

Monday, October 5 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;
Tuesday, October 6 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;
Wednesday, October 7 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;
Thursday, October 8 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;
Friday, October 9 – Honolulu@1100.

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; mebahq@mebaunion.org. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org. Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.