

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

*The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"*

Number 16 – April 21, 2022



In this issue//Construction of Last of 5 Academy Ship Newbuilds Finalized//OCEAN GIANT Concludes Deep Freeze Mission//SA-SH Awareness//Train Engineer Who Went Loco is Sentenced for USNS MERCY Mayhem//CG No Longer Enforcing Mask Wearing//Applicants Should Forward Info to Make Membership//MarAd Expands Marine Highway Program//Openings in Upcoming Small Arms Course//

### **LAST OF FIVE ACADEMY SHIP NEWBUILDS AUTHORIZED**

The Maritime Administration has authorized the construction of the fifth and final National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV), through TOTE Services, to be built at Philly Shipyard in Philadelphia, PA. The recently signed \$1.5 trillion Omnibus Appropriations bill secured the funding for the last of the five newbuilds that will replace aging training vessels at maritime academies. The next-generation NSMVs will be capable of supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in times of need.

The first vessel in the series will replace the almost 60-year old SUNY training ship EMPIRE STATE VI by early 2023. The second will relieve the 54-year old TS KENNEDY at Massachusetts Maritime Academy. The third and fourth newbuilds will replace vessels at Maine Maritime Academy and Texas A&M Maritime Academy. The fifth will go to the California State University Maritime Academy (CMA). Construction for the fifth will begin in 2023 and delivery is set to take place in 2026.

"It is truly a great day for Philly Shipyard as we are now responsible for building the complete series of the NSMV program - a physical symbol of MarAd's investment in the future of maritime education and training," said Steinar Nerbovik, Philly Shipyard President. "The NSMV program continues to mark a turning point in our Company's transformation to serve both commercial and government markets."

### **OCEAN GIANT CONCLUDES DEEP FREEZE MISSION**

The Waterman-managed heavylift vessel M/V OCEAN GIANT successfully completed the last phase of its mission in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2022. The vessel just finished its Port Hueneme, CA offloading of retrograde materials and ice core samples brought from McMurdo Station in Antarctica. The vessel, with expert M.E.B.A. engineers aboard, was chartered by the Military Sealift Command for the annual mission to resupply scientists at the South Pole station. MSC has supported the mission since 1955, the year the station was established.

During the mission, OCEAN GIANT delivered 80% of the supplies needed by scientists for the year's survival at the station. The mission began in late December, with a loadout of dry cargo in Port Hueneme where the cargo was loaded before delivery to Antarctica. The ship arrived at the National Science Foundation (NSF) McMurdo ice-pier, where 503 pieces of cargo were unloaded, including containers filled with mechanical parts, vehicles, construction materials, office supplies and electronics as well as a modular building.

M.E.B.A. members involved in the almost four-month mission included Chief Engineers Rodney Kittelson and Justin Kisielewski, 1<sup>st</sup> A/Es Devin Savoie and Michael Cicero, and 2<sup>nd</sup> A/Es Adam Belson and Maria Asuncion. M.E.B.A.'s Andrey Pakhomov served as Crane Technician. The vessel also carried MM&P deck officers and an SIU unlicensed crew.

“This year’s ODF mission was a great success for MSC,” said MSC’s Pacific deputy commander Leonard Bell. “The mission presented unique challenges that the crews of our ships and our team on the ground handled flawlessly. The mission is an example of the true professionalism and dedication to duty that our entire team exemplifies over and over again. We are truly proud to have supported ODF 2022, and we look forward to our continued support to the National Science Foundation in the years ahead.”

### **SA/SH AWARENESS**

April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Non-profit organization RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) supports more than 800 assault survivors each day and operates a 24/7 hotline to assist survivors and their loved ones. They’re trained to assist all callers regardless of gender, orientation, race or ethnicity, and can connect them to needed legal, physical and mental health resources. You can learn more at [www.rainn.org/national-resources-sexual-assault-survivors-and-their-loved-ones](http://www.rainn.org/national-resources-sexual-assault-survivors-and-their-loved-ones) The RAINN hotline can be reached at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Military Sealift Command (MSC) sailors and civilians united on April 6 to raise awareness and show solidarity in the fight against sexual assault during the annual “Walk a Lap for a Survivor.” Chief Executive Officer of Fear 2 Freedom Virginia Woodard was guest speaker for the event. Her organization is a global non-profit that helps restore hope and dignity to survivors of sexual assault while empowering students and communities to combat sexual violence in all its forms. She said, “If you see something that doesn’t look right and you can safely intervene, please do so. Sometimes we say, ‘it’s not my business,’ but make it your business to prevent harm. The other thing is please encourage survivors to report, to hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable for their crimes.”

MSC Commander Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer added, “If you come across someone who is struggling with something, open your heart and open your ears and find them the support they need,” he said. “We cannot be committed to excellence unless we value everybody, we include everybody and we treat them with the respect and dignity that we all deserve unless we reach out and support them.”

### **TRAIN ENGINEER GONE-LOCO SENTENCED FOR ATTEMPTED MERCY MAYHEM**

A former train engineer at the Port of Los Angeles has been sentenced to 36 months in federal prison for intentionally derailing a train in a delusional attempt to ram the Military Sealift Command Hospital ship USNS MERCY in March of 2020. The vessel was in Los Angeles to provide medical relief during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Eduardo Moreno ran the locomotive off the tracks through steel and concrete barriers, a parking lot and a chain link fence before the train ground to a halt, about 800 feet short of the vessel. No one was injured in the incident, and the MERCY was not harmed or damaged. The vessel is crewed with M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU civilian mariners.

Moreno reportedly believed the ship was part of a sinister COVID conspiracy that he thought may have been a planned “government takeover.” He had told investigators, “You only get this chance

once. The whole world is watching...I had to. People don't know what's going on here. Now they will."

He pleaded guilty in December 2021, was sentenced to 3 years in prison and ordered to pay \$755,880 in restitution, as the incident resulted in 2,000 gallons of diesel fuel spilled from the train requiring clean-up.

### **CG NO LONGER ENFORCING MASK WEARING**

After a U.S. District Judge in Florida vacated a CDC public transport mask wearing mandate, the Coast Guard announced it will not enforce directives requiring mask usage on public transportation and in transportation hubs. Health experts at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) believe the Judge's lifting of the mandate was premature and a Justice Department appeal is in process.

CDC continues to recommend that people wear masks in indoor public transportation settings. The CDC has published an updated list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) that can be accessed from [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). The Coast Guard has also published additional guidance that can be found on its FAQ webpage accessed from [www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil). The Coast Guard notice, Marine Safety Information Bulletin Number 02-21 (Change 5), has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) in the "Documents & Member Notices" section.

### **YOU MAY BE AN APPLICANT IF...; APPLICANTS NEED TO SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION TO MAKE MEMBERSHIP**

If your Book Number begins with "AB" and not "MC" you are an Applicant. In addition, your Group Seniority Card clearly identifies you as a "Member" or "Applicant." To make membership, applicants are required to satisfy certain obligations within an allotted period of time, as outlined in their application packet. Obligations include required sailing days or specified years of employment with a particular bargaining unit, the need to be current with service charges and other necessary requirements which may include an initiation fee and/or letters of recommendation.

Qualified applicants trying to make membership should make sure they provide Headquarters with the required documentation to ensure their inclusion on the next District Investigating Committee (DIC) report in early June. The DIC meets twice a year to review applicants for membership. Applicants should know that they are responsible for providing their local Union hall/Headquarters with the documentation demonstrating their fulfillment of the application requirements. Once they submit the requisite amount of sea time (or documented years of service) to Headquarters and have otherwise fulfilled the needed requirements as stated in the application packet they signed, they may be eligible for membership. The DIC will meet in late May to review candidates for membership at that time. Applicants who have fulfilled the necessary requirements need to get their information into Headquarters so they can be included in the next DIC Report and make membership subject to a vote at the June meetings.

M.E.B.A. Headquarters does not, and cannot, update an Applicant's record with sailing time/years of service unless that Applicant submits the required paperwork, i.e. discharges, sea service letters, documentation of employment, to HQ, by e-mail, fax, or mail or via your local Union hall. For further information you can visit your local Union hall or contact the HQ Membership Department at (202) 638-5355 or [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org).

## **MARAD EXPANDS MARINE HIGHWAY PROGRAM**

The Maritime Administration announced the expansion of its short sea shipping program to include additional routes and projects aimed at relieving landside congestion. They designated a new Marine Highway Route, two new Marine Highway Projects, and one Project Designation Extension as part of the America's Marine Highway Program (AMHP). MarAd said the new routes, designations and extensions will strengthen supply chain efficiencies in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, California, and Oregon.

“Investments in the America's Marine Highway Program help us move more goods more quickly and more efficiently to the American people, supporting our supply chains even while they continue to come under pressure from pandemic-driven disruptions,” said Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. “Today's announcements are an important step in the Administration's Port Action Plan to strengthen our supply chains, modernize port operations, and combat inflation.”

## **MORE SPACE IN UPCOMING CMES SMALL ARMS CLASS**

Members looking for Small Arms certification should know that there are several openings for the upcoming May 9-13 course at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School.

Applications for the course can be sent via the CMES website ([www.mebaschool.org](http://www.mebaschool.org)), faxed to (410) 822-7220, or emailed to [applications@mebaschool.org](mailto:applications@mebaschool.org)

## **NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS** *(All times are local)*

**Monday, May 2** – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.

**Tuesday, May 3** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

**Wednesday, May 4** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

**Thursday, May 5** – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

**Friday, May 6** – Honolulu@1100.

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



*M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.  
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline  
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.*

*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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). 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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*