

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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M.E.B.A.-CREWED VESSEL HEADS UP EVACUATION EFFORTS IN SUDAN

This week, the USNS BRUNSWICK, a Military Sealift Command (MSC) Expeditionary Fast Transport vessel with M.E.B.A. engineers aboard, served as the lead vessel in the evacuation of Americans caught in war-torn Sudan. The U.S. State Department is heading up efforts to protect Americans as rival Sudanese generals are battling for control of the country. The U.S. Government put together several bus convoys carrying U.S. citizens, locally employed staff, and nationals from allied and partner countries who were trapped in Khartoum. They were bussed to Port Sudan with armed drones performing a watch during the ride. Approximately 300 people boarded the USNS BRUNSWICK in Port Sudan and were transported to safety in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Pentagon reported that following the successful evacuation, the BRUNSWICK was back in Port Sudan to continue to assist.

Another M.E.B.A.-crewed vessel, the Expeditionary Sea Base USS LEWIS B. PULLER, is also on hand in the Red Sea, and is prepared to aid in the evacuation mission.

U.S. SHIPPING INTERESTS LOOK FOR STRONGER MARAD CARGO PREFERENCE ENFORCEMENT

U.S. shipping interests stressed the importance of cargo preference to the U.S. Merchant Marine and delivered input to the Maritime Administration on how to better enforce such statutes. USA Maritime, a coalition of maritime interests (including the M.E.B.A. and AMC), recently responded to a MarAd "Request for Information" that was put out to solicit input from stakeholders on how to better implement cargo preference requirements via federal regulation.

Comment was solicited soon after a Government Accountability Office found that MarAd was either deficient in some areas or lacked the tools to adequately provide oversight and enforcement of agencies' compliance with cargo preference requirements.

The GAO noted that MarAd continues to notify federal agencies and contractors about potential violations and encourages shipping additional cargo on U.S.-flag vessels. However, they found that MarAd has not taken any enforcement actions, partly because regulations have not been developed to allow them to do so. The recently enacted Fiscal Year '23 National Defense Authorization Act

requires MarAd to implement rules to enforce its cargo preference authority before the end of the year.

Existing requirements stipulate that U.S.-flag vessels must be utilized for at least 50% of Government-impelled cargo and 100% of military shipments.

USA Maritime noted that cargo preference statutes are integral to the continued viability of U.S. shipping and American mariners, and that MarAd must move forward on regulations strengthening their oversight and enforcement. They urge MarAd to curb the many waiver abuses government agencies routinely employ to bypass the statutes.

They also ask MarAd to implement the recommendations made in the GAO report on increasing transparency such as publishing compliance statistics. Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips has since told Congress that MarAd will resume publishing “comprehensive federal cargo preference data” to provide transparency on the movement of government-impelled cargo on both U.S.-flagged and foreign-flagged vessels. Among other suggestions, USA Maritime also proposed that MarAd advocate for statutory changes requiring 100% compliance with cargo preference rules.

The joint industry comments concluded, “MarAd must substantially improve its cargo preference efforts to prevent a significant decrease in the number of vessels and mariners sailing under the U.S. flag. By doing so, MarAd can grow the fleet to better service the American public and Federal agencies who rely upon the U.S. Merchant Marine, ensuring that we are not, as a nation, at the mercy of foreign-controlled ocean supply lines in times of war and peace.”

The USA Maritime comments can be viewed in full on the M.E.B.A.’s homepage located at www.mebaunion.org

KEEL LAYING FOR NEW MAINE MARITIME SCHOOL SHIP

Philly Shipyard held a keel-laying ceremony this week for the future Maine Maritime Academy training vessel, the third of five new National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMVs) being built. The NSMVs will replace aging training ships at maritime academies across the country. They will not only enable world-class training for future mariners, they’ll be also used to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in times of need.

The first vessel in the series will replace the 60-year old SUNY vessel EMPIRE STATE in the coming months. The PATRIOT STATE II will replace Massachusetts Maritime’s 54+-year old TS KENNEDY next year. Maine Maritime’s NSMV will be ready for action in late 2024. The fourth newbuild is slotted for Texas A&M Maritime Academy and should be completed in 2025. The fifth will go to the California State University Maritime Academy (CMA) and delivery is set to take place in 2026.

AFL-CIO REPORT CATALOGS ALARMING “DEATH ON THE JOB” STATS

The AFL-CIO recently released its 32nd annual “Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect” report, a national and state-by-state profile of worker safety and health. Key findings from the report point to a troubling rise in worker deaths, particularly among Black and Latino workers, and illustrate the urgency of funding and support needed for critical job safety oversight and enforcement.

The report shows the fatality rate for Black workers grew from 3.5 to 4.0 per 100,000 workers and more than 650 died on the job, the highest number in nearly two decades. Latino workers have the greatest risk of dying on the job, with a fatality rate at 4.5 per 100,000 workers that has grown by 13% over the past decade. There was also a slight uptick in deaths for Latino workers in 2021, and the overwhelming majority who died were immigrants.

“Every American should be alarmed and outraged by the tragic data unearthed in this report,” said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. “It is unconscionable that in the wealthiest nation in the world, Black and Latino workers are facing the highest on-the-job fatality rates in nearly two decades. This report is more than a wake-up call, it is a call to action. No one should have to risk their lives for their livelihoods. There is no corporate cost-benefit analysis that should put human life and worker safety on the wrong side of the ledger.

APL CELEBRATING 175th ANNIVERSARY

American President Lines is celebrating the occasion of its 175th anniversary, reached this month. APL noted that it was founded on April 18, 1848 as the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. In the early 20th century, the company was sold to W.R. Grace and Company and then Dollar Shipping Company in 1925. Finally in 1938, when Dollar was in danger of going under, the United States Maritime Commission took over company management and renamed it American President Lines. APL had a prominent role in World War II and ever since. The tradition continues – congratulations!

SOME RAIL UNION WORKERS FINALLY RECEIVING SICK DAYS AFTER PUBLIC OUTRAGE

Many of the nation’s rail workers who were denied paid sick days from rail corporations late last year are finally getting some of those benefits after being forced to swallow an imperfect contract. In December 2022, in order to avert a perceived economic disaster as railroad workers mulled striking to get a better contract, Congress passed legislation imposing a contract on the workers that they had previously voted against. To the disgust of many, that contract offered no paid sick days to workers, even though railroads reported record-breaking profits.

Now, in a surprising move, railroads granted paid sick days to nearly half of their workforce. After facing widespread criticism for their previous failure to accommodate workers, leading rail companies such as BNSF, CSX, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific agreed to provide four paid sick days per year to many of their 93,000 employees through labor negotiations. Moreover, workers now have the option to take three more paid sick days from their personal days.

According to Artie Maratea, the president of the Transportation Communications Union, this development has been a long time coming. He said, “We're very happy about this. We've been trying to get this for decades. It was public pressure and political pressure that got them to come to the table.”

In the past, freight rail workers were not allowed to call in sick on the morning of their shift. However, they could receive approval weeks in advance to take paid personal days. CSX was the first to grant paid sick days to several of its unions and has now extended this benefit to 61% of its 17,089 unionized employees. Union Pacific has granted sick days to 47% of its workers, Norfolk Southern to 46%, and BNSF, the largest freight railroad, to 31%. Most of their unions have reached

agreements, except for the unions representing workers who operate trains day-to-day, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

Mark Wallace, the first vice-president of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, has stated that the railroads have negotiated deals with non-operational workers first, making it harder for operational workers to take paid sick days. The railroads are considering giving demerits to operational workers when they take paid sick leave. Amy McBeth, a BNSF spokeswoman, has confirmed that discussions are ongoing with the remaining four unions, including the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, and that the company intends to provide paid sick day agreements covering their entire scheduled workforce.

APPLICANTS SEEKING MEMBERSHIP SHOULD FORWARD DOCUMENTATION

Qualified applicants trying to make membership in June must make sure they provide Headquarters with required documentation to ensure their inclusion on the next District Investigating Committee (DIC) report. The DIC meets twice a year to review applicants for membership and are finalizing their report that will be voted upon by members during the regular membership meetings that begin the week of June 5th.

To make membership, an applicant needs the required sailing days or specified years of employment with a particular bargaining unit, must be current with service charges and must complete other necessary requirements which may include an initiation fee and/or letters of recommendation. 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. Applicants who have fulfilled the necessary requirements should forward their information to Headquarters. Qualified applicants who fail to make the deadline will have to wait another six months – until the December report – to make membership. For further information you can visit your local union hall or contact the HQ Membership Department at (202) 638-5355 or membership@mebaunion.org

SPRING CLEANING – UNION STYLE

It's the time of the year when millions of Americans roll up their sleeves and get to some Spring cleaning! Whether it's washing or mopping or scrubbing, here's a list of union-made supplies to get a fresh start while supporting good union jobs!

Unions represented include: International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT); International Union of Electrical Workers/Communications Workers of America (IUE-CWA); United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); United Steelworkers (USW); International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB); United Steelworkers (USW); International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC); and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

Ajax (IBT, IUE-CWA); All Laundry Detergent (IBT); Borateem Laundry Detergent (UFCW, IBT, USW); Bowl Fresh Toilet Bowl Sanitizer, Deodorizers (IBT, IBB, ICWUC-UFCW); Clorox (IBT, ICWUC-UFCW); Craftsman (IBEW, IBT); Final Touch Fabric Softener (IBT); Liquid Plumber (IBT); Lysol (IBT); Mop & Glo (IBT); Purex (IBT, UFCW, USW); Renewenz Dishwashing

Detergent (IBEW, IBT, USW); Rit Dye Laundry Treatment (IUE-CWA); Snuggle (ICWUC-UFCW, IBT); Soft Scrub (IBT); Sunlight Detergent (IBT); Surf Detergent (IBT); Tide (IBT)

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

Monday, May 8 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, May 9 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, May 10 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, May 11 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, May 12 – **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. 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.