

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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DEFENSE-MARITIME INDUSTRIAL BASE STUDY TRUMPETED AT HILL EVENT; BUZBY DELIVERS REMARKS

An independent Washington DC think tank specializing in U.S. defense policy has issued a long-awaited study pinpointing how certain government policy changes could promote the growth of the U.S. domestic maritime industry while reducing gaps in strategic sealift. The recently-released study, "Strengthening the U.S. Defense Maritime Industrial Base: A Plan to Improve Maritime Industry's Contribution to National Security" was conducted by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA). A panel discussion moderated by study authors was set up by Maritime Administrator RADM Mark H. Buzby who gave opening remarks on the state of the industry. He talked about our nation's limited U.S. flag commercial fleet, our outdated U.S. government-owned fleet, and the shortage of qualified mariners necessary to sustain overseas military operations.

Within the report are recommendations that include, but are not limited to: 1) Creating and implementing a national maritime strategy that recognizes the vital role our commercial industries serve toward our national security; 2) Increasing the fleet of U.S.-supported vessels including an expansion of the Maritime Security Program or other specialized military useful vessels (i.e. oil product tankers, etc.) and enforcing our cargo preference laws; 3) Strengthening the U.S. shipbuilding and repair industry base to promote the construction of new commercial and government-owned vessels on a continuing basis; and 4) Implementing a national fleet comprised of commercial vessels and military vessels that will reduce long-term costs for the U.S. government while providing sealift faster and more reliably than existing practices.

A copy of the study can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ra38ad7>

GOOD TIMES AHEAD! CAA REUNION ANNOUNCED

Active and retired members as well as applicants, along with friends and family are welcome at the just-announced CAA Reunion taking place this summer at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The Calhoun Alumni Association revived this popular picnic and get-together that began in 1997 but has been dormant since 2016. Though this great event was created to reunite those who attended the old CMES cadet program, it is open to everyone in the M.E.B.A. family.

The three-day affair will take place from June 26-28. Mark it on your calendar and begin making plans.

Information, event fees, and forms can be found on the CMES website located at www.mebaschool.org. Those of you who know a former CMES classmate who has dropped off the radar should let them know about this upcoming event.

The weekend kicks off with the traditional Golf Tournament on Friday, June 26. The all-day party on the Manor House Lawn will take place on Saturday, June 27. This is a wonderful time for both kids and adults. Do yourself a favor and make plans to attend.

Direct any questions to caa@mebaschool.org and check out the School website which is being updated to provide the complete lowdown.

MARINERS DEALT WITH MINE WARNINGS THIS WEEK

Mariners already shoulder a vast amount of responsibilities and navigate countless obstacles in their duties, but seafarers in the Southern Red Sea were faced with a different unwelcome challenge this week.

The Maritime Administration put out a Maritime Alert last week to warn of untethered mines in the Red Sea, possibly between Midi, Yemen and Jizan, Saudi Arabia.

An Egyptian fishing boat reportedly fell prey to the floating explosives in recent days and three of the six-person crew succumbed to their injuries. Houthi militias have been blamed for deploying such mines in the past. MarAd didn't single out any responsible entity as it issued its Alert but noted that the mines may be drifting north from Yemen "following a seasonal change of current flow."

The Alert was set to expire at midnight tonight and there had been no further update or incidents reported. For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories you can visit www.marad.dot.gov/MSCI.

POLAR STAR SOLDIERS THROUGH ANOTHER MISSION

The Coast Guard's only operational heavy icebreaker, the POLAR STAR, was heavily tasked during its Operation Deep Freeze support this year, but was able to persevere.

The 44-year old cutter just completed its 23rd Antarctic support mission in slightly better shape than last year's adventure that nearly ended in disaster. Last year, while supporting the McMurdo Station resupply effort, the POLAR STAR incurred electrical switchboard wiring damage and one of the vessel's two evaporators used to make drinkable water failed. As the mission progressed, ice operations ruptured the icebreaker's centerline shaft seal, allowing water to flood into the ship. Ship-wide power outages also plagued the crew while breaking ice in McMurdo Sound. On the return trip last year, the crew battled a fire in the ship's incinerator room. This year's operation was devoid of such drama though the vessel was pushed right to the limit during the annual joint military service mission.

POLAR STAR commanding officer Greg Stanclik beamed about the 159-person crew that battled the unforgiving Antarctic conditions and persevered. "Maintaining and operating a 44-year-old ship in the harshest of environments takes months of planning and preparation, long workdays and missed holidays, birthdays and anniversaries with loved ones. The POLAR STAR crew truly embodies the ethos of the Antarctic explorers who came before us — courage, sacrifice and devotion."

Future crews on the icebreaker must continue to find a way to keep the ancient vessel working hard as there is no relief in sight until 2024 – when a newbuild heavy icebreaker is scheduled for completion. "Replacing the Coast Guard's icebreaker fleet is paramount," said Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, commander of the Coast Guard's Pacific Area. "Our ability to clear a channel and allow for the resupply of the United States' Antarctic stations is essential for continued national presence and influence on the continent."

Also involved in Operation Deep Freeze was the M.E.B.A.-crewed heavylift vessel M/V OCEAN GIANT, a Waterman-managed ship that was contracted by the Military Sealift Command. The POLAR STAR cleared the way as the OCEAN GIANT faced heavier ice closer to the Pole. The heavylift vessel hauled six thousand tons of supplies to the remote outpost, including frozen and dry food stores, building materials, vehicles, and electronic equipment and parts. Because the ice-pier at the Station was unavailable this year due to severe damage, the OCEAN GIANT also brought in a 65-ton marine causeway system that was used to unload the supplies. The M.E.B.A. crew included Chief Engineer Dave Morris, 1^s A/E Devin Savoie and 2nd A/E Nicholas Cabral along with MM&P deck officers and an SIU unlicensed crew.

CG ANSWERS PROBING TERMINAL ACCESS QUESTIONS AS JUNE DEADLINE APPROACHES

The Coast Guard continues to add to its Frequently Asked Questions section on the easing of seafarer access to marine terminals, as the final implementation of its new rules loom.

Though most terminals are already in compliance, the new regulations compel inflexible Coast Guard-regulated facilities that have maintained stringent access rules, to conform to more inclusive guidelines. This national policy easing cumbersome, inflexible marine terminal access issues for seafarers - at no cost to the mariner - became effective in May of 2019. Compliance with the rule begins on June 1, 2020.

It ensures that no facility owner or operator denies or makes it impractical for seafarers or other individuals to transit through a facility. Previously, marine terminals and individual states dictated their own rules of access creating unnecessary barriers essentially limiting terminal access for many individuals. Approximately 2,500 facilities nationwide are affected by these requirements.

The FAQ section helps clarify the import of the new rules and explains how mariners will be affected. You can visit the Coast Guard page at <https://tinyurl.com/tmoq62y>

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO WITH HQ

Be sure to inform Headquarters if you have changed your contact information. There is an address change form on our website to help expedite the process. It can be found at www.mebaunion.org under the "Members" tab or in the "Documents & Notices" section. Alternatively, you can send your updated information to Renee Bowman at HQ by mail, fax at (202) 638-5369, or e-mail at membership@mebaunion.org Since the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore and Headquarters databases are NOT linked, you must also forward a signed change of address form to the Plans Office if you wish to update your information with them.

LWOP DISRUPTS GOVT. FLEET DCO REGULARITY

Members shipping in the Government Fleet are reminded that if they are signed up for automatic Dues Check-Off (DCO), their dues will not be paid for any period they are taking Leave without Pay

(LWOP). Those mariners should ensure they remain as members in good standing by paying dues either at the Union hall or online to account for any dues payment gaps caused by LWOP.

Questions about dues status can be forwarded to the Accounts Receivable Department at Headquarters (202-638-5355) to either Darlene Knott (dknott@mebaunion.org) or Keera Batiste (kbatiste@mebaunion.org). You can also use the M.E.B.A. Payment Portal to make online monetary transactions. Check out the site accessed from M.E.B.A.'s webpage at www.mebaunion.org.

FACEBOOK PHOTOS NEEDED

We are always looking for photos from any of the M.E.B.A. bargaining units to keep our Facebook site current. Members are urged to send in your photos to marco@mebaunion.org. Any photos with an M.E.B.A. connection, at sea or ashore, are appreciated. Digital pictures should be taken at the highest resolution setting. In all cases, make sure you I.D. the photos. Check out the M.E.B.A. Facebook site which is usually updated daily.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, March 2 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

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

Wednesday, March 4 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

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

Friday, March 6 – Honolulu@1100.

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The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven 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.