

# 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 2 – January 10, 2019



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### **NYC FERRY CAPTAINS WILL VOTE ON M.E.B.A. REPRESENTATION**

The National Labor Relations Board has ruled in the M.E.B.A.'s favor and will allow Captains sailing in the NYC Ferry fleet to vote on whether they want to be represented by the Union. The Hornblower-operated HNY Ferry, doing business as NYC Ferry, has a 23 vessel fleet on six New York City routes connecting locations in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens.

In early November, through the efforts of Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan, Patrolman Nico Sermoneta and M.E.B.A. in-house counsel Nils Djusberg, M.E.B.A. collected pledge cards from the majority of 39 fleet Captains which enabled a representation election. However, the company argued that captains are not governed by the National Labor Relations Act because they fit the definition of "supervisor" and therefore a representation election is "inappropriate." M.E.B.A. counsel argued to the contrary during two days of hearing in New York in mid-November before NLRB Hearing Officer Nicole Lancia. The 31-page NLRB decision, issued this week, ruled in the M.E.B.A.'s favor. A one-day representation election has been set for January 24<sup>th</sup> to be held at the Brooklyn Navy Yard where vessel Captains begin and end their shifts.

### **WSF CALLS FOR 16 NEW FERRIES OVER NEXT TWO DECADES**

Washington State Ferries recently issued a long range plan calling for 16 new ferries by 2040 to keep the system running smoothly. 13 of those vessels would be replacement ferries for boats approaching retirement age, the other three are vessels needed to fill in when other vessels are being serviced.

The WSF submitted the plan to the Washington State Legislature on Jan. 3.

"This Long Range Plan provides a blueprint to guide WSF's investments and meet our customers' service expectations," Assistant Secretary Amy Scarton said. "We need to invest immediately in building new ferries, developing our workforce and upgrading technology and terminals to provide reliable, sustainable and resilient ferry service through 2040 and beyond."

For the first time, the WSF Long Range Plan includes recommendations for greening the ferry fleet and preparing for climate change and seismic events. Based on guidance from Washington Governor

Jay Inslee, the plan calls for electrifying the ferry fleet to reduce fuel use, emissions, noise and maintenance costs.

### **WWII MARINER COMPENSATION BILL RE-INTRODUCED IN HOUSE**

Rep. Al Green (D-TX) has re-introduced a bill for this 116<sup>th</sup> Congress that would provide surviving WWII merchant mariners with a one-time \$25,000 benefit. The bill will carry the same number as it did in the last session of Congress – H.R. 154. Specifically the bill would compensate qualifying individuals who were members of the Merchant Marine between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946 (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service). The “Honoring Our WWII Merchant Mariners Act,” was referred to the Veterans Affairs Committee.

M.E.B.A. has a sample letter on our homepage ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) that can be used as a template for members, applicants and retirees to inform lawmakers about the urgency and importance of the issue. (“Urge Your Lawmakers to Honor WWII Merchant Mariners - Sample Letter”). Member Christian Yuhas, who penned the letter, invites you to adopt some of the language in his letter for your own communication to Congress.

Merchant mariners were the unsung heroes of WWII. 733 U.S. cargo ships were lost to enemy action and over 8,500 mariners were killed with more than 11,000 wounded. Though the Merchant Marine suffered the highest casualty rate than any service branch during the war, they never received full veteran benefits despite their contributions. It took until 1988, supplemented by efforts from the M.E.B.A. and American Maritime Congress, for WWII mariners to be legally recognized as veterans. They were granted healthcare rights at Veterans Affairs’ hospitals as well as burial flags, but because they weren’t eligible for the original benefits under the G.I. Bill, they did not receive college tuition subsidies, home loan guarantees, pensions, or other provisions. The youngest WWII mariners are now in their 90s. We owe it to them to help recognize our WWII Fourth Arm of Defense and provide them a token of appreciation before the dying of the light.

### **WILLIAM RILEY, GREATEST GENERATION MARINER, SAILS INTO THE SUNSET**

The recent loss of greatest generation mariner William J. Riley is another sad reminder that precious few WWII mariners remain among us. Bill sailed into the sunset on Jan. 2, 2019 at the age of 94 in Easton, MD. He was an M.E.B.A. member who went to sea for over 50 years and served on vessels supporting the war cause during World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

During WWII, he was awarded the Merchant Marine Emblem, the Pacific War Zone Bar and the Honorable Service Button. In the Korean and Vietnam Wars, he served aboard munitions and troop ships. He was an ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1949 to 1961. He sailed with United States Lines, Matson Navigation, America Hess and many other shipping companies over the years. His favorite ship he ever served on was the luxury liner S.S. UNITED STATES. He retired with the rank of Chief Engineer in April 1992. There will be a mass for Brother Riley tomorrow in Easton, MD at noon at Sts. Peter and Paul Church. Burial will be at 2 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 14, at the Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery in Hurlock, MD. He is survived by many family and friends including wife Denise.

### **TALLYING COMMITTEE ELECTED FOR ONLINE SHIPPING RULE REFERENDUM**

A three-person rank and file Tallying Committee has been elected by designated halls at their membership meetings this week. They will help certify the results of a recently concluded month-long online referendum regarding a change to the M.E.B.A. Shipping Rules.

The Committee consists of Christian Yuhas (Oakland), Brian Evjen (Houston) and Erik Barton (NY/NJ).

Committee members will travel to M.E.B.A. Headquarters in Washington D.C. on Sunday, January 13. On the Committee's work day, Monday, January 14, they will ensure that each member casting a vote in the referendum was a member in good standing as of December 17, 2018, as specified in the M.E.B.A. By-Laws. Those who did not pay their 2018 Fourth Quarter dues by that date are not eligible to participate and their votes will not count in the final tally. The Committee will also review the online process used to conduct the vote and will issue a report. Voting results will then become official and the report will be made part of the meeting packet at the February membership meetings.

The online referendum involved a vote on a possible change to the M.E.B.A. Shipping Rules on whether to permit new Group III applicants to remain on the Port Relief List for one year from the date of their first registration. The Rule change was designed to extend the window for new applicants to seek viable shipping opportunities as they begin their seafaring careers.

### **PARTIAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AFFECTING MARINERS; NMC UPDATES MITIGATION EFFORTS**

Mariners are eying the ongoing partial government shutdown with a wary eye as it entered its 20<sup>th</sup> day today, one day short of tying the all-time record (21 days – Dec. 1995-Jan. 1996). Since the Coast Guard falls under the unfunded Department of Homeland Security – not the funded Defense Department which houses the other Armed services – about 42,000 active-duty Coast Guardsmen along with around 1,300 agency civilians are expected to continue working without a paycheck. Another 7,400 Coast Guard civilians are on indefinite furlough. The National Maritime Center has issued several updates on the situation as related to mariners and have now provided temporary relief regarding Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC) and Medical Certificates, providing extensions until March 31, 2019. The extension, however, does not apply to STCW endorsements and mariners will not be able to ship if their STCW is not valid for the duration of the voyage. The President has threatened that the shutdown could continue “months or even years” until Congress accedes to his ideas for border security. The National Maritime Center issued the following notice regarding mitigation efforts that spell out NMC actions taken to address the partial shutdown:

“To mitigate the impact caused by the partial lapse in appropriations and shutdown of National Maritime Center (NMC) operations, the following actions are being taken:

- Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC) (National Endorsements only) and Medical Certificates that expired in December 2018 or expire in January 2019 are extended as valid until March 31, 2019. The Coast Guard supplied a letter from the Coast Guard Commanding Officer that applicable mariners should print and carry with their credential. [*Editor's Note: The letter is available on the NMC site and has also been posted on the M.E.B.A. homepage ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)).*]
- Additional Information (AI) letters, sent to mariners that expired in December 2018 or expire in January 2019 are extended to March 31, 2019.
- Approval to Test (ATT) letters and mariner training course certificates that expired in December 2018 or expire in January 2019 are extended until March 31, 2019.

- For mariners whose 90-day testing cycles were interrupted by Regional Exam Center (REC) closures (starting on December 26, 2018), the days the RECs were closed will not count against the 90-day period. REC appointment calendars will be re-opened immediately once appropriations are restored.

- E-mail any course approval extension requests to [NMCCourses@uscg.mil](mailto:NMCCourses@uscg.mil).

The NMC understands the partial shutdown may affect our industry customers and stakeholders and we apologize for any potential inconvenience. If you have questions, visit the [NMC website](#), or contact the NMC Customer Service Center by using the [NMC online chat system](#), by e-mailing [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil), or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).”

### **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](http://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](mailto:vacation@mebaplans.org) for more info.

### **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](http://www.mebaunion.org) under the “Members” tab or in the “Documents & Notices” section. Alternatively, you can send your updated information to Doris Fitzgerald at HQ by mail, fax at (202) 638-5369, or e-mail at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto: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.

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

Monday, February 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**  
Tuesday, February 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**  
Wednesday, February 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**  
Thursday, February 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**  
Friday, February 8 – **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 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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org)*