

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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BUZBY SAILS THROUGH SENATE NOMINATION HEARING

The Senate Commerce Committee staged a nomination hearing on Wednesday for Rear Admiral Mark Buzby, the nominee for the next Maritime Administrator. Buzby, a 1979 graduate of the US Merchant Marine Academy, served in the Navy for 30 plus years both afloat and ashore, retiring in 2013 following his 3 ½ year service as Commander of the Military Sealift Command. Since then, he has led the National Defense Transportation Association as President and CEO. Delivering his opening statement, Buzby said he was honored and excited to be considered for the position, "I was destined to be a mariner. Having been born in Atlantic City, my first breath of air was salt air; I got my first boat at age 9, and I bent my first set of dress blues at age 14 at Admiral Farragut Academy. I think you get the picture: I am proud to be an "Anchor Clanker" – this is what I do; this is who I am..."

Buzby recounted his 34 year career as a US Navy Surface Warfare Officer as well as his time at NDTA and noted, "I want to serve because I believe I can make a difference in strengthening the US Merchant Marine Academy and ensuring the maritime industry is strong in peace and able to support this nation's strategic sealift in time of conflict."

Though no date has yet been set, Buzby's nomination will be forwarded to the full Senate for a confirmation vote in the coming weeks.

OSG TANKER CREW RESCUES FIVE

All five hands on a 25-foot pleasure craft were whisked to safety from the sinking boat after the vigilant crew of the OVERSEAS TEXAS CITY acted quickly. The OSG-managed tanker was anchored 12 miles from the port in Galveston just after noon on Saturday. M.E.B.A. Chief Engineer Richard Marecki, credited Captain Peter Behling with spotting the small craft taking on water about ½ a mile away. The Chief and Engine Department were notified, the Coast Guard was alerted and the TEXAS CITY launched a rescue boat. Engineers got the tanker's main engine, hydraulic system and second generator online within minutes to support maneuvering operations if needed. As the rescue boat approached, the capsized boat was still afloat with its five former occupants hanging on without lifejackets. Rescuers were able to pluck all five out of the water unscathed and returned them to the TEXAS CITY. A Coast Guard Galveston response boat later transferred the rescued passengers from the OSG tanker and brought them back ashore.

“If not for the diligence of the crew of the tanker OVERSEAS TEXAS CITY, the outcome of today’s events may not have been as successful,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Chris Rendon, a search and rescue controller at Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston. “It is incredibly important that boaters are aware of their surroundings and prepared for emergency situations.” Rendon also stressed the importance of life jackets whenever underway.

CYBER SECURITY WRAP-UP

Following the devastating cyberattack in late June that affected A.P. Moller-Maersk systems, the shipping giant has put a new IT security regime in place. Though the company has not quite returned to pre-attack normality, Maersk asserts that while operations and communications were hit by the international virus, “no data breach or data loss to third-parties is known to have occurred as of this date.”

Congressmen Alan Lowenthal (D-NY) and Ted Poe (R-TX) called on the Department of Homeland Security to provide a briefing to Congressional Members on the integrity and vulnerabilities of seaport cybersecurity.

Check out "Be Cyber Aware At Sea," a video available on YouTube that explores advice for seafarers while answering common questions about the various cyber security threats.

COAST GUARD REMINDER ON RENEWING CREDENTIALS

Late last year, the Coast Guard granted extensions of national endorsements for mariners whose Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) expired on or after Dec. 1, 2016. The extension was effective on that date and remains valid until Sept. 30, 2017. Mariners are not authorized to sail on an expired MMC after Sept. 30, 2017. The extension does not apply to Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for seafarer endorsements or medical certificates. Mariners are reminded that this extension deadline is rapidly approaching and are encouraged to apply for renewal as soon as possible. Overall processing time for applications remains approximately 60 days. Expiration dates of renewed MMCs will be five years from the date of expiration of the previous MMC. This means there is no advantage in waiting to submit a renewal application. For questions, please see the NMC website, or contact the Customer Service Center by e-mail at IASKNMC@uscg.mil, by Chat, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

MSC VESSELS WRAP UP SKIN-TO-SKIN OPS

Military Sealift Command vessels including a couple managed by Patriot Contract Services recently wrapped up a series of “skin-to-skin” operations near Saipan. The operations took place over the course of 17 days and included complex maneuvering and positioning drills with ships from Maritime Prepositioning Squadron Three (MPSRON-3). “Skin-to-skin operations are game-changers when it comes to supporting the Marine Corps and other expeditionary forces with greater flexibility at sea,” said Paul Grgas, Deputy Director of Operations for the MSC Far East.

During the skin-to-skin operations, Patriot-managed MSC LMSRs USNS SODERMAN and USNS RED CLOUD (as well as the non-M.E.B.A.-crewed USNS STOCKHAM and expeditionary transfer dock USNS MONTFORD POINT) rehearsed the transfer of equipment and cargo.

Skin-to-skin operations occur when two ships connect at sea allowing specialized vessels to operate as a floating pier for simulated offload operations. The skin-to-skin drills build proficiency to operate

at sea for a sustained period and transfer large cargo from prepositioning ships for use by forces ashore and afloat.

OCEAN GIANT IS ON TOP OF THE WORLD

After recently completing a mission at the South Pole, the Waterman Steamship-managed heavy lift vessel OCEAN GIANT has sailed toward the other end of the earth – the Arctic. The M.E.B.A.-crewed vessel was chartered by the Military Sealift Command and is taking part in Operation Pacer Goose 2017, the annual resupply mission to Thule Air Base. The remote U.S. Air Force base is located in the northern coastal Arctic region of Greenland. OCEAN GIANT spent three days in Norfolk, VA at the naval station loading 100 containers of equipment and supplies. Operation Pacer Goose is one of the Arctic outpost's few sources of food, spare parts and other manufactured goods needed each year. M.E.B.A. engineers onboard the vessel include C/E William Morris, 1st A/E Ed Taylor and 2nd A/E Nicholas Berner. "The ship is...a great fit for this mission because it is double hulled to handle the ice and is extremely maneuverable," said Capt. Timothy Arey, OCEAN GIANT's master. "Additionally, the ship has its own cranes so it can load and offload cargo independently."

Even though the temperature will be freezing, summer is the only time of year that the ice is thin enough to break through. OCEAN GIANT is rendezvousing with the oil tanker MT MAERSK PEARY, which is loaded with fuel for Thule. The two ships are following a Canadian icebreaker through the ice and into the air base's harbor. The ships taking part in the mission also remove all of the base's solid waste and non-repairable equipment for return to the U.S. "OCEAN GIANT's merchant mariners run lean and mean," said Arey. "Because of the size of the crew, our mariners tend to wear a lot of hats. Our crew multi-tasks lots of different jobs which keeps the ship running efficiently."

ANNUAL CONTAINER LOSS RATE LEVELS OFF

The World Shipping Council has published results of a study finding the rate of containers lost at sea worldwide have dropped over the past three years. For 2014-16, the average number of containers lost at sea excluding catastrophic events was 612, which is about 16% less than the average of 733 units lost each year for the previous three year period. When catastrophic losses are included, the total containers lost at sea averaged 1,390 with 56% of those lost being attributed to catastrophic events. This is a 48% reduction from the average annual total losses of 2,683 estimated in 2014.

The data also consistently shows that the majority of containers lost at sea result from catastrophic events. For example, in 2013, there was a total loss of 5,578 containers – 77% of which occurred with the sinking of the MOL COMFORT in the Indian Ocean. The tragic total loss of vessel EL FARO occurred two years later in 2015. All containers on the EL FARO were lost and this event alone accounted for almost 43% of the total containers lost into the sea in 2015. While containers lost overboard represent about one thousandth of 1% of the roughly 130 million container loads shipped each year, the industry has been actively supporting a number of efforts to enhance container safety that should help reduce the number of containers lost at sea, including adherence to SOLAS amendments, Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU) and Revised ISO standards for container lashing equipment and corner castings.

REMINDER: INCLUDE ALL DOCS WHEN FILING FOR VACATION PAY

Members are reminded to be thorough when submitting an application for Vacation Pay at the halls and/or with the Plans Office and include all required documents, including Coast Guard Discharges and pay vouchers. Pay vouchers are used to track Social Security Tax maximums, to track wages as

Medicare Tax increases and to check for any overlap days that can be identified. As detailed on the application itself, the following documents must be submitted along with your application:

- A copy of the stub portion of your last vacation benefit check.
- Coast Guard discharges and pay vouchers covering all employment since your last vacation.
- Pay vouchers must cover the entire period of employment and show all wages and tax deductions.
- Pay vouchers covering any periods of unearned wages since your last vacation.

Failure to submit proof of all accumulated work performed to the date of application could result in the permanent loss of vacation benefits earned on the employment not submitted.

You may also need to submit:

- A Carry-Over Vacation Form from your last vacation – if applicable.
- An original copy of the Converted Overtime Worksheet, if applicable, regardless of whether or not you are applying for converted overtime vacation.
- A letter from an authorized Union official granting permission for early return or excess sailing, if applicable.

If prior written permission is not obtained and an Officer returns to work early, they will be subject to a penalty which is loss of vacation benefits for the next six months of employment (180 days).

You can contact the Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore prior to sending an application. They can be reached at 800-811-6322 or 410-547-9111.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, August 7 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, August 8 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, August 9 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, August 10 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, August 11 - 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. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact: Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org