

# 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"*  
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### **LAWMAKERS CRITICIZE TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS TO COMPROMISE WORKSITE REPRESENTATION**

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have taken issue with a series of White House Executive Orders compromising workplace rights of federal employees.

On May 25, President Trump signed three Orders chipping away at federal workers' due process and collective bargaining rights. The first Order drastically reduces "official time" which allows labor unions to represent union and non-union bargaining unit members in disciplinary actions and other matters. A second Order waters down grievance procedures and eases the way for agencies to fire workers instead of disciplining. A third Order targets collective bargaining agreements to aid the Government against unions negotiating contracts.

23 top Democrats expressed outrage in a strongly worded letter sent last week asking the President to rescind the Orders immediately. The letter said that the goal of the Trump Executive Orders "appears to be to completely eradicate unions from the federal workplace. This approach contradicts decades of federal law based on hard lessons learned after a history of abuses, and moving ahead in this way would have severe, negative consequences for the American people and the effective and efficient functioning of our government."

21 House Republicans dispatched their own letter to the White House which also called for rescission of the three orders. The Republican letter was not as provocative as the letter from the other side of the aisle but was still clear in its opposition to the Orders. In part, it read "...We urge you to uphold the current law and longstanding federal labor statutes that protect America's civil service from discrimination, unfair treatment, and sexual harassment."

Days later, another letter was forwarded to the President by 45 Democratic Senators led by Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) asserting that the Executive Orders "undermine the foundations of our civil service system." The Senators told Trump they support improving federal workforce performance, but these Executive Orders will have the opposite effect. The letter alleges the Orders will "discourage federal agencies from using their discretion to create reasonable plans for federal employees to improve their performance if they are at risk of demotion or termination. Firing employees without

due process undermines the merit-based civil service system, and opens the door for managers to satisfy their own personal vendettas or political agendas.’

“It is time to stop the attacks on our federal workers,” the Democratic Senators stated. “These are also attacks on our veterans, who make up roughly one-third of the federal civilian workforce. We need to keep politics out of the civil service, and we urge you to reconsider these Executive Orders.”

As readers of the *Telex Times* are aware, there is also a lawsuit pending before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia concerning the Executive Order restricting “official time.” The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) says the Order violates the right to freedom of association guaranteed by the First Amendment and exceeds the President’s authority under the U.S. Constitution.

### **DEFENSE SECRETARY MATTIS LAUDS MERCHANT MARINE DURING KP COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS**

Secretary of Defense James Mattis had strong words of support for America’s commercial seafaring force during his commencement address at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY on Saturday. Speaking to 187 new graduates, Secretary Mattis said the Merchant Marine “is near and dear” to his heart as his father served as a mariner from 1935 to 1949. He told cadets that “as small as our Merchant Marine may be today, it is absolutely essential. It's in every war plan that I review, I guarantee you, because you're going to be the fourth arm of defense.”

“You're going to sustain our allies and fuel our ships and ferry our warriors. It's as simple as that and we're going to need you as we see the storm clouds gather elsewhere as our diplomats are in a position where we have to buy time for them to solve problems.”

### **MATSON BARGAINING DATES SET; RANK & FILE SOUGHT FOR MATSON, APL, OSG, HAPAG TALKS**

Those rank and file members interested in supplementing the M.E.B.A. negotiating team in contract talks with Matson should confirm their availability for upcoming dates. M.E.B.A. is scheduled to meet with Matson in Oakland from July 17-18, July 20 and July 23-24.

Those rank and file members should confirm their availability with Oakland Patrolman Max Alper at the hall or by email at [malper@mebaunion.org](mailto:malper@mebaunion.org). The Matson contract covering the A3 and CV2600 vessels as well as Port Engineers expires on August 15, 2018. Negotiations will also include terms for the forthcoming newbuild Matson vessels.

In addition, rank and file members are being sought for upcoming talks with American President Lines. The APL contract covering the deep-sea vessels and Port Engineers expires on September 30, 2018. Oakland Patrolman Max Alper can also be contacted by those interested in assisting APL talks.

In addition, M.E.B.A. will have reopener talks this summer covering economic terms with both OSG Ship Management and also with Hapag/MTL. Experienced members sailing with those fleets are being sought to supplement the M.E.B.A. negotiating teams. Those interested should contact Gulf Coast V.P. Erin Bertram at the Houston Union hall or by email at [ebertram@mebaunion.org](mailto:ebertram@mebaunion.org).

## **TREGURTHA CLEARED FOR TRANSIT AFTER GENERATOR FIRE**

The PAUL R. TREGURTHA was cleared to sail to her next port for repairs hours after an onboard generator fire in the early morning hours on June 18<sup>th</sup>. No injuries or pollution occurred. Minutes after its outbreak, the fire was reported to the Coast Guard at 4:20 a.m. on Monday.

It was contained to one of the CAT diesel generators in the engine room and the CO2 system was deployed. At 5:20 a.m. the vessel master reported the fire had been extinguished and all 23 crew members were safe and unharmed.

The 1,013 foot bulk carrier freighter, managed by Interlake Steamship, was carrying 68,200 tons of coal, 124,000 gallons of fuel, and 88,000 gallons of caustic soda.

Coast Guard marine inspectors were conducting a Marine Casualty Investigation into the cause of the incident and the vessel remained at anchor near Brimley, Michigan for most of Monday. Once she received the "all clear," the ship headed out for St. Clair, Michigan late Monday to unload coal.

## **MORE ON TRENTON RESCUE OF MIGRANTS**

The fate of 41 African migrants rescued by crewmembers onboard the USNS TRENTON was in political limbo for five days before Italian authorities finally agreed to allow them to pursue asylum.

While conducting routine operations 20 nautical miles off the coast of Libya on June 12<sup>th</sup>, the M.E.B.A.-crewed Military Sealift Command high-speed ferry came across the migrants who were struggling to stay above water after the loss of their vessel. 41 were rescued and brought onboard the TRENTON. 12 others did not survive. However, the survivors' ultimate disposition was in limbo due to the Italian government's new hard line stance against immigration which has drawn international condemnation. Italy also recently angered neighboring countries by refusing to accept a rescue ship packed with 600 desperate migrants that drifted into their waters.

While European nations argued about Italy's new policy, the crew of the TRENTON cared for their temporary passengers, providing them with food, water, clothing and basic medical care. Last weekend, Italy finally acceded to international law which allows safe haven for asylum seekers. The TRENTON then conducted a passenger transfer with Italian Coast Guard vessels off the coast of Lampedusa, Italy on Sunday.

The USNS TRENTON is an expeditionary fast transport (EPF) vessel crewed by expert civilian mariners from M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU. The EPFs are 338-foot aluminum catamarans designed for speed, flexibility and maneuverability.

"Although it is seldom that we run into people in distress at sea, it is something we plan, practice and prepare for routinely," said Susan Orsini, ship master aboard TRENTON. "A rescue at sea involves all hands aboard the ship. I was so proud and impressed by the thoughtful resourcefulness of all hands on board USNS TRENTON; it filled my heart with hope and gratitude."

"The pivotal role the shore side units and personnel play in a rescue at sea cannot be minimized; the ship cannot do it alone," said Capt. Orsini. "Their efforts involve intense and intricate coordination, timely and critical communications to all units and personnel involved. The reward for our efforts was seeing the rescued personnel transferred, in good spirits and good health, heading to their next destination."

## **PASHA HAWAII UPGRADING CONTAINERS**

Honolulu-based Pasha Hawaii will accept 600 new 40-foot high cube refrigerated containers and 400 new 45-foot dry containers in 2018. They are cycling out older equipment and reducing the average age of their refrigerated container fleet by 2.7 years and 45-foot equipment fleet by 2.4 years. M.E.B.A. crews the former Horizon vessels deployed in the Pasha Hawaii fleet through our contract with ship manager Sunrise Operations.

The newly built containers arrived on the HORIZON ENTERPRISE as she returned from her regularly scheduled drydock. The ENTERPRISE's drydock included modifications that increases the vessel's capacity for the high-demand 45-foot equipment by 80 slots per sailing, similar to the updates made to the HORIZON PACIFIC last year.

“The significant, ongoing investments in vessels and equipment for Pasha Hawaii illustrates our long-term commitment to providing best-in-class service for the people and businesses of Hawaii,” said George Pasha IV, President and CEO.

## **LIBERTY PEACE RÉSUMÉS CONTINUE TO BE REQUESTED**

The Union is asking for résumés from members and applicants interested in employment on the LIBERTY PEACE to continue to be forwarded to the NY/NJ Union hall. Forward all résumés to M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast VP Jason Callahan ([jcallahan@mebaunion.org](mailto:jcallahan@mebaunion.org)) or NY Patrolman Nico Sermoneta ([nsermoneta@mebaunion.org](mailto:nsermoneta@mebaunion.org)) at the NY/NJ M.E.B.A. Union hall so they can ensure the Company receives them.

## **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS**

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

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

Wednesday, July 4 – *HALLS CLOSED*

Thursday, July 5 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, July 6 – Honolulu@1100; L.A.@1230;

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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](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)*