

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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WSF MEMBER/APPLICANT SURVEY CONCLUDES

Thanks to nearly 200 members and applicants sailing in the Washington State Ferry system who took the time to fill out a 13 question online survey. The 30-day survey concluded yesterday (May 24).

The survey afforded the opportunity for the M.E.B.A. to help capture member and applicant feedback on how the Union can maximize its functionality and better serve the membership. It also gathered input on how the Union can shore up its ability to provide sustainable future representation.

M.E.B.A. will form a review team of officials to consider submitted responses while ensuring the anonymity of the respondents.

INDUSTRY SALUTED IN MARITIME DAY OBSERVANCE

On the 200th anniversary of modern shipping, the nation's capital observed Maritime Day with a particular emphasis on the role of women in the industry. In 1933, Congress selected May 22nd as National Maritime Day to honor mariners who have served our nation in times of peace and in war. The day is also a tribute to the maritime industry as a whole and its critical importance to our economy and national security. May 22nd marks the date in 1819 that the American steamship SAVANNAH left Savannah, Georgia, on what was the first trans-Atlantic voyage under steam power.

At the observance, that took place at the Department of Transportation in Washington D.C., USTRANSCOM Commander General Stephen Lyons praised the contributions of merchant mariners past and present and pointed out how critical the seafaring women and men are to our country's security. Rear Admiral Mark Buzby, the nation's Maritime Administrator, had similar praise and vowed to continue efforts to solidify our fourth arm of defense. Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin delivered a moving keynote address and had some inspiring words to say about the important and ever-growing role of women in our industry. Congresswoman Jenniffer González-Colón, who represents Puerto Rico, also delivered strong words of support for American shipping and lauded the role of U.S. flag ships in aiding the island when it was devastated by hurricanes in 2017.

Several World War II mariners were in attendance and were recognized. WWII mariners Charles Mills, Gerard Driscoll and Eugene Barner have been in town all week visiting members of Congress to promote awareness about the value of the Merchant Marine. Their contingent included Gerard's daughter Cindy Komlos, Dennis Ng - son of a WWII mariner, and Sheila Sova and Laura Riddle who

are both daughters of World War II mariners. They have been raising awareness of a bill to authorize a gold medal for WWII merchant mariners (*more on that later*).

They were also joined at the Maritime Day observance by Capt. Arthur Murray Jr. who was presented with a plaque at the ceremony recognizing his service during the war. In addition, following a video presentation spotlighting the importance of women, Kay Morrison, a welder during World War II, accepted a special honor in tribute both to her accomplishments and to all the “Rosie the Riveters” who proved pivotal in the war effort by ensuring America was supplied with the war materiel needed to achieve victory.

The annual Maritime Day Proclamation issued by President Trump this week recognized merchant mariners “for helping to fuel our economy, maintain our sea power, and support our national security.”

“Merchant mariners extend goodwill into all parts of the world, serving as a peaceful United States presence on international waterways,” the statement continued. “...During times of war, merchant mariners courageously sail into combat zones to provide sealift for the Department of Defense, carrying weapons and supplies to America’s fighting forces. In every conflict, United States citizen mariners have answered the call to duty and risked their lives.”

DEBUT OF BOOK DETAILING A HARROWING MURMANSK RUN MISSION

A late afternoon Maritime Day event at a Congressional building in Washington DC helped underscore the tremendous contributions of WWII mariners and promoted legislation to assist survivors. A spirited group of maritime industry representatives, Congressional staffers and eight Members of Congress - as well as several mariners who sailed in World War II - took part in the event which included a launch party for a new book relating the harrowing true story of a convoy making a Murmansk Run mission in 1942. Author William Geroux discussed his new book “The Ghost Ships of Archangel: The Arctic Voyage That Defied the Nazis.” It appears to be another absorbing and terrific book – following the author’s first effort which was embraced upon its release several years back. That book “The Mathews Men: Seven Brothers & the War against Hitler’s U-Boats” is a must-read.

World War II mariners, who have been visiting Congress this week as part of an American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) contingent, were on hand during the event along with eight Congressional Members who joined them while giving their endorsement to legislation honoring the fourth arm of defense. Members taking part included Reps. John Garamendi (D-CA), Don Young (R-AK), Brian Babin (R-TX), Duncan Hunter (R-CA), Bob Gibbs (R-OH), Morgan Griffith (R-VA), Susie Lee (D-NV) and Paul Tonko (D-NY).

Rep. Garamendi noted that efforts have stepped up to gain co-sponsors for his bill (H.R. 550) to authorize a gold medal collectively honoring World War II merchant mariners. The medal would be placed in the American Merchant Marine Museum and duplicates would then be struck and made available to the public. 290 co-sponsors are needed to better cement its chances to pass in this session of Congress. Currently, the bill has just short of 200 co-sponsors, but Rep. Garamendi pointed out that recent momentum in recruiting signatories has given him hope that the effort will finally meet success this year.

NEW FLORIDA MEMORIAL HONORS U.S. MERCHANT MARINE

M.E.B.A. members and retirees helped spearhead the creation of a new memorial that debuts this weekend honoring WWII merchant mariners and Navy Armed Guard. Southwest Florida's U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans chapter along with the local Military Museum & Library sponsored the design, construction and installation of the memorial that will be dedicated this Sunday at Eco Park along Veterans Parkway in Cape Coral, FL. M.E.B.A. retiree Dru DiMattia chairs the Merchant Marine Memorial Committee that oversaw the creation of the memorial from stem to stern. Area M.E.B.A. members and retirees were among those who generously contributed their time and talents to bring this tribute to fruition.

Known as the "Fourth Arm of Defense," the United States Merchant Marine suffered a higher fatality rate than any branch of the Armed Forces during World War II. Often overlooked, merchant mariners were crucial to victory in World War II. They kept the cargo coming and the supply lines open despite the loss of 733 cargo ships and over 6,000 mariners.

The WWII Merchant Marine & Navy Armed Guard Memorial dedication will take place at 11:30 a.m. this Sunday (May 26) at Eco Park (2500 Southeast 24th Street). Stop by if you can.

1980 RESCUE BY M.E.B.A. LNG CREW RECOUNTED IN NEW DOCUMENTARY

A new, well-received 48-minute documentary about a Vietnamese family's at-sea salvation will get a big city screening in early June. Lauren Vuong, currently a successful West Coast attorney, was rescued as a little girl at sea along with her family and dozens of others in 1980 following her family's escape from Vietnam.

After ten days in a decrepit fishing vessel adrift in the South China Sea, 62 starving, parched Vietnamese refugees faced impending death and hope was all but extinguished. That's when the U.S.-flag LNG VIRGO steamed onto the scene out of nowhere providing the prayed-for deliverance. After a week on the VIRGO, the refugees were transferred to the USNS SEALIFT ANTARCTIC (also an M.E.B.A.-crewed vessel). Eventually Lauren and her family resettled in San Jose, CA.

Her search for her rescuers years later was catalogued in a 2016 *Marine Officer* article ("My Florida Reunion: 36 Years of Gratitude to Seafarers") that can be read online by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/y5eobfv5>

M.E.B.A. members and retirees supported her efforts to raise money to create a documentary telling the story of her rescue and honoring mariners. Lauren said the story "demonstrates to the world how we can heal the wounds of war with the compassion of the human spirit."

The documentary is entitled "Finding the Virgo" and a screening will take place in New York City on Tuesday, June 4. Visit the following link to see details of the upcoming event: www.mocanyc.org/visit/events/mocafilms_presents_finding_the_virgo_by_barre_fong Director Barre Fong and Lauren Vuong, who produced the film, will be on hand to answer questions.

You can check out the documentary at the following link: <https://video.kqed.org/video/finding-the-virgo-v9omob/>

IMO ISSUES ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON SULFUR 2020 IMPLEMENTATION

The International Maritime Organization has approved and issued additional guidance as the industry plans for the implementation of the lower 0.50% limit on sulfur in ships' fuel oil goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2020.

The stricter limit will be globally applicable under IMO's MARPOL treaty. In designated emission control areas (ECAs), the sulfur limit will remain at 0.10%. The additional guidance and guidelines are accessible from IMO's homepage www.imo.org.

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 (Forms & Documents, Vacation Plan Forms). Complete details are available on the Plans site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

M.E.B.A. HALLS & OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY FOR MEMORIAL DAY

All M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Monday, May 27th for Memorial Day. Take a moment to remember and honor those who died for our freedom. The National Moment of Remembrance, established by Congress, asks Americans wherever they are on Memorial Day at 3 p.m. local time to pause for a minute of silence in an act of national unity and reflection. You could also fly the American flag at half-staff until noon, fly the POW/MIA flag (and/or Merchant Marine flag), and perhaps ring a bell eight times to signify the moment.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, June 3 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**

Tuesday, June 4 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**

Wednesday, June 5 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**

Thursday, June 6 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**

Friday, June 7 – **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 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.