

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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M.E.B.A. SECURES HISTORIC CONTRACT WITH INTERLAKE

The M.E.B.A. locked up a landmark 12-year agreement with Interlake Steamship Company, delivering significant and lasting improvements for our licensed deck and engine officers sailing in the fleet. The contract, which includes scheduled wage and benefit reopeners every four years, ensures long-term stability while securing meaningful gains from the outset.

From the very first year, members will see not only substantial wage increases across the board, but enhanced vacation time and new provisions that recognize the demanding nature of Great Lakes shipping. Chief Engineers and Assistant Engineers, along with Mates, benefit from competitive salary adjustments, improvements to vacation structures, and stronger recognition of specialized work assignments. The agreement also provides a major boost in areas that had long been a priority for M.E.B.A. members, including compensation for holidays, new protections for winter work, and premium pay for extended service when reliefs are delayed. Additional measures, such as rolling clerical pay into base wages and improving work guarantees during the off-season, further solidify the gains.

"We've secured the most significant wage increases in our history with Interlake" said M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan. "But what truly breaks the mold is the transformation of our vacation structure. For decades, mariners on the Great Lakes have lived under the 15-for-30 model, sacrificing family time for their livelihoods. This new agreement moves us meaningfully closer to a true 30-for-30 schedule — a monumental step toward restoring work-life balance for our members."

Negotiations were led by ACVP Callahan and Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway with contributions from HQ Contracts Officer Mark Gallagher, along with a hard-charging rank-and-file group consisting of Ryan Carpentier, Jared Anderson, Mark McTaggart, Jeff Chabot, Kelsey MacDonald, Justin Kuznicki and Lucas Karhoff.

Bargaining unit members, with almost 93% of eligible members participating, ratified the contract in an online vote that concluded yesterday. Congratulations! Details and contract language will be discussed at the upcoming September membership meetings.

EASTERN SHIPBUILDING TAPPED FOR WSF HYBRID-ELECTRIC NEWBUILDS

Eastern Shipbuilding in Panama City, FL will build at least two 160-vehicle hybrid electric ferries, with an option for a third, for Washington State Ferries. The yard was responsible for constructing the three 4,500-passenger Ollis-class Staten Island Ferry vessels a few years ago (MV SSG MICHAEL H. OLLIS, MV SANDY GROUND, & MV DOROTHY DAY).

“This is an exciting milestone in bringing new hybrid-electric ferries to our fleet,” said David Sowers, Washington State Ferries’ Electrification Program Administrator. “These vessels will not only incorporate state-of-the-art technologies in shoreside charging and battery storage to cut diesel-generated emissions, but they will also provide dependable service for the communities who rely on us every day.”

The state-of-the-art hybrid/electric vessels will have a length overall of 409’-6” with an 83’-2” beam and a hull depth of 24’-6”. They will be certified to transport 160 standard-sized passenger vehicles and 1500 passengers. With a draft of 16’-6”, the ferries will achieve a speed of 17 knots at full load and were designed to interface with all existing WSF dock facilities.

M.E.B.A. URGES FMC TO CRACK DOWN ON FOC ABUSES

The M.E.B.A. has submitted forceful comments to the Federal Maritime Commission in strong support of FMC’s investigation into the abusive and exploitative practices of the global Flag of Convenience (FOC) system. For decades, FOCs have allowed shipowners to dodge national regulations, exploit vulnerable crews, and endanger the world’s oceans — all while undermining U.S. maritime jobs and weakening America’s supply chain security. In its filing, the M.E.B.A. made clear that these practices have fueled a global “race to the bottom” that cannot be tolerated. FOCs “have long undermined fair trade, the well-being and rights of seafarers, and America’s broader maritime interests,” the Union declared. The FMC’s investigation “is a critical step toward restoring accountability and responsible flagging practices across global trade.” The Union cited glaring failures in FOC regimes, including:

Paper-Flag Registrations: Many FOC nations issue temporary registrations without a single inspection, giving substandard ships months of unchecked operations. The St. Kitts & Nevis registry, for example, has repeatedly harbored vessels tied to sanctions evasion.

Exploitation of Mariners: Crews are routinely recruited through shady labor agencies, often abandoned without food, shelter, or repatriation when shipowners walk away. In 2024 alone, more than 3,000 seafarers were abandoned under FOC flags — a humanitarian crisis hiding in plain sight.

Safety and Environmental Risks: FOC vessels dominate accident and pollution statistics. From forged safety certificates to failing equipment, these ships endanger ports, workers, and coastal communities. The Union warned of a growing “dark fleet” of flag-hopping vessels engaged in illicit trade, often uninsured and operating with no accountability.

M.E.B.A. is calling on the FMC to go beyond fact-finding and take bold, enforceable steps to defend American mariners and protect global shipping. The union’s recommendations include:

- Defining and publicly identifying irresponsible flag states.

- Demanding full transparency on vessel ownership and flag history.
- Requiring financial guarantees to prevent crew abandonment.
- Restricting U.S. market access for FOC-flagged vessels that distort fair trade.
- Expanding U.S. Coast Guard authority to penalize abusive operators.
- Supporting international reforms through the IMO and ILO.
- Empowering Congress and the President to impose fines, tariffs, or sanctions on repeat-offender FOC nations.

The union made clear that this issue goes far beyond paperwork — it is about protecting lives, safeguarding the environment, and preserving the future of the U.S.-flag maritime industry.

If left unchecked, the Union said FOCs will continue to hollow out U.S. shipping, exploit foreign crews, and put our national security at risk. They said the FMC must act decisively to stop these abuses, restore accountability, and ensure that those who sail under the American flag are never forced to compete on an uneven playing field. The Union pledged to continue supporting the Commission's work and stands ready to provide additional testimony, evidence, and technical expertise to ensure strong, lasting reforms.

NEW BILL WOULD WAIVE U.S.-BUILD REQUIREMENT FOR COAST GUARD VESSELS

A new measure introduced in Congress aims to provide the U.S. Coast Guard with greater flexibility in procuring vessels by loosening restrictions on where they can be built. Under current law, Coast Guard vessels must be constructed in U.S. shipyards, a long-standing requirement meant to protect domestic shipbuilding while safeguarding national security. The proposed legislation would introduce narrowly defined exceptions, allowing the government to contract with select foreign shipyards if certain conditions are met.

H.R. 4952 – “Ensuring Coast Guard Readiness Act,” introduced by Rep. Mike Kennedy (R-Utah-3), outlines a series of safeguards and conditions for foreign construction. Under the bill, construction would only be permitted in NATO member states or in Indo-Pacific countries with which the U.S. has a mutual defense treaty. Foreign construction would need to be demonstrably less expensive than comparable work in U.S. shipyards and Congress would have to be notified before any contract is signed.

Supporters of the bill argue that expanding access to qualified foreign shipyards could help the Coast Guard modernize more quickly and at a lower cost. Advocates stress that the bill is not intended to replace U.S. shipbuilding but rather to provide a fallback option in cases where cost or urgency dictates broader sourcing.

WWII MARINER WILL GIVE KEYNOTE ADDRESS FOR UPCOMING V-J DAY ANNIVERSARY EVENT IN DC

Dave Yoho, a World War II Merchant Marine veteran, will be the keynote speaker for an 80th Anniversary commemoration of V-J Day, to be conducted in Washington D.C. on Tuesday, September 2nd. Victory over Japan Day (Sept. 2, 1945) marked the day Imperial Japan surrendered thus bringing World War II to a conclusion.

Still active at 97, Dave has a consulting and training business and is a very effective motivational speaker who continues to champion merchant mariners past and present. He enlisted in the U.S. Maritime Service in mid-1944 – completed training at Sheepshead Bay and was sent to the South Pacific on a T-2 tanker where he spent 13 months. Four days after World War II ended, he turned 17 years old.

The event will take place at the World War II Memorial on the mall at 11:00 a.m. where attendees will gather and reflect on the Allied victory and the extraordinary sacrifices that made it possible. Nearly 40 million lives were lost in the Pacific theater, and more than 60 million people were killed worldwide, including over 400,000 Americans, during the deadliest conflict in human history. As part of the ceremony, World War II veterans will place wreaths at the Memorial's Freedom Wall, paying tribute to their fallen brothers and sisters.

If you can't attend in person, you can see the full ceremony live-streamed on the Friends of the National World War II Memorial's Facebook page.

LAST CHANCE (FOR NOW) FOR CUSTOMIZED M.E.B.A. BASEBALL/HOCKEY SHIRTS

Due to popular demand and for a limited time only, customizable M.E.B.A. baseball AND hockey jerseys are now available for order. These iconic M.E.B.A. items can be customized on the back with a stitched name (of reasonable length) and number. Net proceeds generated will go to the Good & Welfare Fund. Payment can be made electronically through the M.E.B.A. payment portal. ***All orders must be submitted (and paid for) by Friday, August 29, 2025.***

The information and order form are available at each of the Union halls and a pdf copy is also available from the M.E.B.A. website on the homepage.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL THE UNION WAY + PARENT RELIEF

The new school year has started - or is about to begin for many - and you can help the cause by buying school supplies that assist working families. Once you're all set to get those little freeloaders back to school, parents can keep the dying days of summer rolling along by relaxing with a cold one. Here's the list:

Folders, Notebooks, and More - ACCO brands (CWA); Five Star Reinforced Filler Paper (CWA-USW); At-A-Glance Academic Daily Planner (CWA-USW); Mead Spiral Notebook (CWA-USW); Trapper Keeper Folders (CWA); Roaring Spring Pocket Folders (USW); Industries for the Blind Inc. Composition Books (IAMAW); Swingline Stapler (CWA). **Clothing** - All American Clothing (IBEW); Carhartt (IBT); Union Jeans (IBT); Wigman (IBT). **Tissues** - Kleenex Tissues (USW); Puffs Tissues (UFCW). **Drinks** - Dasani (IBT); Gatorade (UAW); Minute Maid Juice (IBT, UAW); Mott's Juice (IBT, UAW, UFCW); Snapple (UAW, IBT, UFCW); Tropicana (UAW); Welch's Juice (IBT, UAW). **End of Summer for Parents** - Anchor Brewing Company (ILWU); Bass (IAM); Beck's (IAM); Blue Moon (IUOE, IBT); Budweiser (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Coors/Coors Light (IUOE, IBT); Dundee (IBT); Goose Island (IBT); Hamm's (UAW, IAM, IBT); Henry Weinhard's (IUOE, IBT); Keystone (IAM IUOE); Kirin (IAM); LandShark Lager (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Leinenkugel (UAW, IUOE, IBT); Mad River (IAM, IBT); Mendocino (IBT); Michelob (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Miller (UAW, IAM, IUOE, IBT); Miller Genuine Draft (UAW, IAM, IUOE, IBT); Miller Lite (UAW, IAM, IUOE, IBT); Natural Ice (IAM IUOE, IBT); O'Doul's (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Pabst (UAW); Red Stripe (IUE-CWA); Rolling

Rock (IAM, IBT); Sam Adams (IBT, IUOE, SEIU); Schlitz (UAW); Shock Top (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Stella Artois (IAM).

CMES HAS OPENINGS IN UPCOMING WARTSILA COURSES

The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that there are still openings for two upcoming courses:

Wartsila RT Flex Basic (3-day course, Wednesday - Friday) - No time required on a flex engine - Students should expect to be in class until 1600 on the Friday. Still openings for the course running from September 10-12.

Wartsila RT Flex Operator (5-day course) - Pre-requisite: Time on a flex engine or have taken the Basic course – Still openings for the course running from September 15-19.

Applications for these courses can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org), faxed to (410) 822-7220, or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Monday, September 8 – **Boston@1200. Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, September 9 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, September 10 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, September 11 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, September 12 – **Honolulu@1100**

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated 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. Website: www.mebaunion.org 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. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org