

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



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M.E.B.A. CREWS UP MAERSK KANSAS; VESSEL REPLACES THE IDAHO

M.E.B.A. engineers crewed up the MAERSK KANSAS this week in Bahrain. The vessel is managed by Maersk Line, Ltd and replaces the aging MAERSK IDAHO. The KANSAS is seven years younger than the IDAHO which was coming up against a Maritime Security Program age restriction. The newer vessel takes over the IDAHO's MSP chit and was deployed into the company's Trans-Atlantic Northern European service.

The first M.E.B.A. crew of the MAERSK KANSAS includes Chief Engineer Stephen Haines, 1st A/E Michael Dale, 2nd A/E Kevin Barry and 3rd A/E Stephan Voris.

The IDAHO is transitioning to the company's international fleet and its current crew will depart the vessel in mid-January. The KANSAS is the sister ship to the SAFMARINE MAFADI. It was constructed in 2007 and is a 958-foot, 4,824 TEU container vessel propelled by a Wartsila Sulzer 8RT-Flex96C engine.

MARITIME PROVISIONS IN NEWLY PASSED DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

The largest-ever Defense Authorization bill has been signed into law after previously passing the House and Senate by large margins. Among many other programs and initiatives, the \$777 billion package covering Fiscal Year 2022 supports continued Defense Department modernization efforts and would provide necessary resources for a strong national defense.

Authorization bills continue or establish agencies and programs and create dollar ceilings for them. But the actual funding is reliant on the passage of a subsequent appropriations measure that defines the specific funding level and secures the allocation of funds for the agencies and programs that have been authorized. Currently, the government is operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) through mid-February, when Congress will either have to punt once again with another CR, or push through the "regular order" spending legislation that will fund the remainder of FY 2022, but only for programs at the same rate of the previous year's funding level.

The Maritime Security Program was previously authorized until 2035, and thus it was not necessary to reauthorize the program in the new Defense bill. However, M.E.B.A. and U.S. shipping interests

will continue working hard to ensure that full MSP funding for FY '22 (\$318 million - \$5.3 million per ship) is appropriated.

Among other things, the Defense bill authorizes continued funding for maintenance and repair of State maritime academy training vessels as well as over \$315 million to support the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel Program to supply the maritime academies with new state-of-the-art training ships.

Full \$60 million funding for the Tanker Security Program was authorized in the new bill, but the TSP has not yet gotten off the ground because of the failure of the last Congress to pass an appropriations bill for the FY '21 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). However, the current CR cannot provide any new funding for the TSP since it was not funded upon inception in FY 2021.

The NDAA authorizes a series of Maritime Administration programs including funding for operations and maintenance of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy including the creation of an advisory council to provide advice and guidance to strengthen the Academy's ability to ensure a safe learning environment for midshipmen.

The bill also reauthorizes the Port Infrastructure Development Program which provides project management assistance to improve port capacity and operations. It also increases the funding level to support port development activities to \$750,000,000 - with the noteworthy caveat that no funding may be used for automation-based cargo handling systems if such systems would result in a loss of jobs.

CONGRESSIONAL INACTION MAY NECESSITATE RE-NOMINATION OF MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

It doesn't appear that Congress will hold a confirmation vote for the nomination of Rear Admiral Ann Phillips as the next Maritime Administrator before the New Year's deadline.

Nominees for federal positions not confirmed by the Senate by the end of the year normally must be re-nominated by the White House in the new year. The Senate adjourned before Christmas for its holiday recess, but remains in "pro forma" session each day this week – allowing for the slim possibility of a unanimous consent "hotline" confirmation process.

Rear Admiral Phillips and other nominees including Max Vekich for a seat on the Federal Maritime Commission, as well as several assistant secretaries of transportation underwent recent confirmation hearings but haven't been scheduled for a final confirmation vote before the full Senate.

DEFENSE BILL AUTHORIZES MARAD TO PURCHASE DUPLICATE GOLD MEDALS TO HONOR WWII VETERANS

The newly passed Defense bill for Fiscal Year 2022 authorizes the Maritime Administration to purchase duplicates of the forthcoming Congressional Gold Medal that will honor World War II mariners.

Last year, after many years of failed legislation to honor WWII Merchant Marine veterans, Congress finally passed, and the President signed, a bill to award them the medal. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor bestowed by Congress. A single gold medal of appropriate design is being created and will be placed on display in the American Merchant Marine Museum at the Academy in

Kings Point, NY. Duplicates will then be created and made available to the public. There is no released timetable for the medals, but maritime observers expect it to happen this year.

At the recent American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) conference in Linthicum, MD, attendees got an advance look at the design for the Medal. M.E.B.A. will be working with the Maritime Administration and the American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) on the distribution of the Gold Medal reproductions.

MAKE SURE YOU'RE READY FOR JOB CALL!

It is the responsibility of members and applicants to have all their necessary documentation in-hand ahead of time for job call.

Those who have recently upgraded their license should make sure their STCW reflects the upgrade. Your license, passport and other important documents should be valid for at least six months from the time you begin working aboard ship. Your drug-free certificates have to be valid at least until the day you join your ship. Check your expiration dates!

If flying with your documents on the way to a hall, double-check that you haven't left any essential documents at home and make sure to keep your docs with you in your carry-on luggage. *The primary documents you'll need include your Merchant Mariner Credential with current STCW, VSO or VPDSD endorsement, TWIC, Passport, USCG Medical Certificate, Annual M.E.B.A. physical card, Drug-free Certificate or Drug-Free Letter, Group Card, Fit-for-Duty, Dues Receipt and proof of vaccination(s).* Permanent or relief employees should get their company clearance to the hall ahead of time. Work with the Military Sealift Command will require security clearances.

As you should know, no one can be dispatched to a job while on vacation or while receiving a paid vacation benefit without a waiver. The Union requires a return to work date when clearing for a vessel so make sure you have your vacation pay and vacation carry over statements, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of return to work. It should also be noted that failure to obtain prior Union permission to return to work early, before the return to work date as listed on your carry-over or vacation statement, will subject you to a penalty.

Remember, a member or applicant cannot be dispatched for a job requiring STCW credentials if the Coast Guard Medical Certificate is due to expire prior to the completion of the job called. Members are encouraged to have their paperwork for the USCG Medical Certificate completed and to submit it for renewal at every annual physical in order to avoid an issue at job call. Certain jobs require proof of benzene or shot records, MSC Physical and MSC courses, GMDSS, High Voltage/Marine Propulsion, Crowd Control, Welding, or other courses to satisfy company requirements.

Mariners are reminded to keep their vaccination records with them when sailing – especially when shipping onboard MSC-contracted vessels. Keep your documents with you at all times when travelling and NEVER leave them in your car. If unsure what is required, it is a good idea to check with an M.E.B.A. clinic. If you have questions about your documents, direct them to your local hall.

M.E.B.A. JOB CALL REVERTS TO “3 BUSINESS DAYS” ON MONDAY

M.E.B.A. returns to more uniform dispatching procedures in the New Year as vaccine mandates are implemented by the contracted companies. On Monday (January 3, 2022), the standard job call returns to “3 business days” prior to boarding/flying.

M.E.B.A.’s Coastal Vice Presidents will still maintain the discretion to call jobs earlier, particularly for harder-to-fill work or for jobs with extra requirements.

As the COVID situation is continually evolving, we recommend you check with your Union hall or officials to get the most up-to-date information on job call timing and requirements.

APPLY FOR UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS

M.E.B.A. families have until January 31, 2022 to apply for college education assistance money through Union Plus. M.E.B.A. members, retirees and their families - as well as members of affiliated M.E.B.A. unions - are eligible courtesy of the Union’s enrollment in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to financing children’s educations.

Visit unionplus.org/scholarship for more. Families of M.E.B.A. members or affiliated members are among past scholarship money recipients. Union Plus Scholarship are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school. Recipients are selected based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor.

Applications can be submitted up until Monday, January 31, 2022, at noon (EST). Those arriving after the deadline will not be considered. The award date is May 31, 2022. During the first week of June 2022, award recipients will be notified. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended. The required essays can account for up to half your total score. Scholarship applicants are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators.

Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2022. Students may re-apply each year. Get the official application and all the details including eligibility criteria by visiting unionplus.org/scholarship. Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$5 million to students of union families. Over 3,500 union families have benefited from the program.

AFTER PARTY RELIEF – UNION-STYLE

If you wake up on New Year’s Day having had one too many, no worries! There’s plenty of union-made relief out there. Stock up for the start of 2018 and beyond, and know that by buying union-made products, you are supporting good middle class jobs and recharging your way to a stronger America: **The Medicine Cabinet** – Afrin; Aleve; Alka-Seltzer; Bayer; Milk of Magnesia; Pepto-Bismol. **A Strong Brew** - Eight O’Clock Coffee; Folgers; Kauai Coffee; Maxwell House; Millstone Coffee; USA Coffee Company. **Hydration** – Alhambra; Crystal Springs; Hinckley Springs; Pocono Springs; Sierra Springs; Wisconsin Glacier Springs.

PHOTOS FROM THE FLEET NEEDED!

We are always looking for photos from any of the M.E.B.A. bargaining units to keep our Facebook site current. Members are urged to send in your photos to marco@mebaunion.org. Any photos with an M.E.B.A. connection, at sea or on shore, are appreciated. Digital pictures should be taken at the highest resolution setting. In all cases, make sure you I.D. the photos. Check out the M.E.B.A. Facebook site which is usually updated daily.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The M.E.B.A. wishes you and your family a safe and thriving new year filled with warmth, love, and happiness. Eat well, stay safe, and try to take some time to rest and relax.

Many thanks to all our members and applicants who continue to work throughout this holiday season, and to all, we appreciate all the hard work you do year round. May your New Year be filled with prosperity and joy.

M.E.B.A. halls and offices are closed tomorrow, Friday, December 31st in observance of the federal holiday. Business will resume on Monday, January 3, 2022. Happy New Year!

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS (*All times are local*)

Monday, January 3 – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

Tuesday, January 4 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

Wednesday, January 5 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register now at mebahq@mebaunion.org

Thursday, January 6 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, January 7 – 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. 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.