

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
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KEYSTONE TAKES OVER FORMER OSG TANKERS

Keystone Shipping Co. is crewing up the three Veteran-class MT-46 Product Tankers it took over from OSG and has renamed the vessels.

Keystone bareboat chartered the ships from American Shipping Company after OSG declined to exercise its extension options with AMSC for the OVERSEAS LOS ANGELES, OVERSEAS TEXAS CITY and the OVERSEAS NEW YORK.

The LOS ANGELES has been renamed the SEAKAY STAR, The TEXAS CITY will now be known as the SEAKAY SKY and the NEW YORK has been redubbed as the SEAKAY VALOR.

M.E.B.A. engine officers had already been serving on those vessels for OSG and will continue in that capacity for Keystone. With the turnover of the three vessels to Keystone, which is expected to conclude by next week, M.E.B.A. picks up additional deck work (5 per ship, 40-hour work-week with OT after 40) and qualified officers with a Tankerman-PIC endorsement are encouraged to consider one of these positions.

NASSCO LAYS KEEL FOR NEXT JOHN LEWIS-CLASS OILER

San Diego's General Dynamics NASSCO has laid the keel for the future USNS ROBERT F. KENNEDY, the fourth John Lewis-class replenishment oiler that will serve in the Military Sealift Command fleet and provide crucial support to Navy ships.

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland was the ceremony sponsor for the vessel. She is the daughter of the ship's namesake, Robert F. Kennedy, who served as the U.S. Attorney General from 1961 to 1964 and as a U.S. Senator from New York from 1965-1968. RFK, the brother of President John Kennedy, advocated for the civil rights movement and fought against organized crime and the Mafia, among other initiatives.

Following construction and christening, the ship will go through a rigorous schedule of tests and inspections before joining the MSC fleet.

NDAA, FULL OF MARITIME PROVISIONS, PASSES HOUSE

House lawmakers approved the annual National Defense Authorization Act, an \$857.9 billion defense spending bill for Fiscal Year 2023 with numerous maritime provisions. The Senate is expected to approve the package next week. The NDAA is an annual bill that establishes defense priorities and sets guidelines for military-related spending. Among many other items, the 2023 NDAA calls for full funding of the Maritime Security Program, full funding and enhancements to the Tanker Security Program and further tightening up of the Jones Act waiver process.

It includes major reforms to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment in the maritime industry and directs a look into smoothing out Coast Guard credentialing delays for mariners. It also implements regulations to help transition veterans transitioning into the U.S. Merchant Marine.

The M.E.B.A. legislative team and other pro-U.S. shipping advocates have been working throughout the year with our partners on Capitol Hill to help refine maritime provisions contained in the bill.

The NDAA is must-pass legislation but must still gain (expected) Senate approval and the President's signature before becoming law.

IRANIAN PATROL BOAT HARASSES M.E.B.A.-CREWED MSC SHIP

U.S. Central Command announced that an Iranian patrol boat acted in an unsafe and unprofessional manner Monday evening in the Strait of Hormuz while U.S. military vessels were conducting a routine transit. CENTCOM said that the Military Sealift Command Expeditionary Sea Base platform ship USS LEWIS B. PULLER, which is crewed with M.E.B.A.-represented engineers, along with the guided-missile destroyer USS THE SULLIVANS, were approached by an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy patrol boat.

CENTCOM said that the Iranian vessel attempted to blind the bridge of one of the vessels by shining a spotlight and crossed within 150 yards of the U.S. ships – dangerously close, particularly at night. The U.S. vessels safely deescalated the situation through the employment of audible warnings and non-lethal lasers before continuing their transit without further incident.

“This dangerous action in international waters is indicative of Iran’s destabilizing activity across the Middle East,” said Col. Joe Buccino, CENTCOM spokesperson.

The incident occurred one week after the Navy crew aboard the USS PULLER confiscated over a million rounds of ammunition, thousands of fuses and propellants for rockets from a fishing trawler in the Gulf of Oman. In November, the U.S. 5th Fleet intercepted a fishing vessel illegally shipping lethal aid from Iran to the Houthis in Yemen.

RADM NUNAN INSTALLED AS USMMA SUPERINTENDANT

Rear Admiral Joanna M. Nunan (U.S. Coast Guard, Ret.) was sworn in as the first female Superintendent (14th overall), of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA). Maritime Administrator Rear Admiral Ann Phillips (USN, Ret.) presided over the ceremony which was attended by M.E.B.A. Secretary Roland Rexha. Rear Admiral Nunan talked about working together with industry partners, including labor, and singled out the M.E.B.A. among a few others.

Rear Admiral Nunan spent more than three decades in the U.S. Coast Guard and has commanded units at multiple levels both afloat and ashore. Admiral Nunan retired from the Coast Guard in 2022 as the Deputy Commandant for Personnel Readiness.

VACATION BENEFITS – 2022 YEAR-END CLOSING

Apply for Vacation and Port Relief Benefits early to avoid the year-end rush.

- **FILING DEADLINE:** The deadline for issuing checks dated in 2022 in the Outports *and* the Plan Office is Friday, December 16, 2022.
- **DIRECT DEPOSIT:** The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2022 will be made on 12/19/2022 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/21/2022.
- Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/16/22 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/3/2023.

Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2022 must file before this deadline. Remember, Monday December 26, 2022 and Monday January 2, 2023 are holidays and the Outports and the Plan Office will be closed. It is always wise to plan ahead, so you should verify the specific holiday schedule with the Plan Office Representative.

Split Your Vacation Payments between 2022 and 2023

You can submit an Application for Vacation Pay prior to the end of the year and request that the payment of your vacation benefits be split. Two checks will be issued to you, one in 2022 and a second in 2023. The 12/16/2022 deadline applies to split claims also. The vacation benefits paid in this manner MUST be a continuous vacation period.

Please contact the Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore at 800-811-6322 or 410-547-9111 if you have any questions.

REMAINING M.E.B.A. HOLIDAY PARTIES

This was a crazy week - but the fun's not done yet! There are still a few M.E.B.A.-sanctioned parties remaining as we go full-tilt into the holiday season. Here's what's left:

Friday, December 9

M.E.B.A. Jacksonville – Party at Pat's Lounge from 2 - 7 p.m.(4870 Hwy Avenue).

M.E.B.A. Oakland – Party at the hall at 12:30

Wednesday, December 14

M.E.B.A. Headquarters – M.E.B.A./AMC party on the rooftop - 3 p.m. – 7 p.m.. Contact HQ if you can attend.

Thursday, December 15

M.E.B.A. Honolulu – Party at the hall at 11 a.m.

Friday, December 16

M.E.B.A. Houston – Party at Karbach Brewery (in the outdoor biergarten – 2032 Karbach Street)
– Starts at 3 p.m.

M.E.B.A. Seattle – Party at the hall in Fife at 1 p.m.

Wednesday, December 21

M.E.B.A. Baltimore - Party at the hall at 1 p.m.

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

Friday, December 9 – Honolulu@1100.

Monday, January 2 – Halls Closed (*New Years Day Observed*)

Tuesday, January 3 – Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315;
Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300.

Wednesday, January 4 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online HQ “Town Hall”
Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thurs. January 5 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, January 6 – 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.