

# 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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### **TALKS WITH APL FOR PORT ENGINEERS CONTINUE; REPLACEMENT SHIP FLAGGED-IN**

Reopener talks continued this week with American President Lines for language covering shoreside port engineers. An M.E.B.A. negotiating team met with APL twice this week by Zoom and continued making progress.

In December, a reopener agreement was reached with the company covering M.E.B.A. deep-sea engineers. That agreement secured raises as well as increased pension and training benefits, among other items. M.E.B.A. Executive Vice President Claudia Cimini heads up the M.E.B.A. team along with L.A. Branch Agent Rich Doherty and Oakland Patrolman Max Alper. Rank & File members Tony Aiello, Staffan Jonsson, Nathan Wirt and Chris Coombs are also assisting the M.E.B.A. team and other M.E.B.A. port engineers in the bargaining unit have contributed meaningful input.

The company recently flagged-in the CMA-CGM DAKAR to take the place of the aging APL SAIPAN. The DAKAR assumed the Maritime Security Program chit from the SAIPAN. The vessel is 8 years younger than the outgoing ship which raised the Liberian flag and was deployed into the CMA CGM international fleet. The DAKAR was constructed in 2010 in a Chinese shipyard and had been flying the flag of Malta. It was deployed into APL's Guam Saipan Express service alongside the CMA-CGM HERODOTE which replaced the older APL GUAM last year.

The first Chief Engineer of the U.S.-flagged DAKAR is Benjamin Johannessen and Dennis Goman serves as the 1<sup>st</sup> A/E. M.E.B.A., MM&P, SIU, SUP and MFOW mariners will continue to crew the vessel under the existing agreement.

### **AUTHORIZED TANKER PROGRAM STILL UNREALIZED**

The Tanker Security Program (TSP), which was established to supplement the U.S. tanker fleet, has still not been formerly funded because of the failure of lawmakers to pass an appropriations bill.

The TSP is a planned fleet of 10 commercial U.S.-flag petroleum product tankers supporting our nation's long-term strategic defense needs. The program would reduce military reliance on foreign-flag commercial vessels while also expanding the qualified mariner pool.

The TSP and \$60 million in funding was authorized by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. Though Congress checked off on the formation of the program, its launch

is reliant on the passage of an appropriations measure that secures the allocation of funds. Because Congress was unable to pass an appropriations bill, they approved a Continuing Resolution (CR) that keeps the Government running but prevents spending on newly authorized programs.

The CR is due to expire on February 18. If Congress cannot pass an Omnibus Appropriations bill by then, they would then look to pass another CR to avoid a Government shutdown.

You can help the cause and ask Congress to support and fund the Tanker Security Program by filling out a quick and ready-made letter, accessed from the Navy League website. Visit <https://navyleague.quorum.us/campaign/37676/>, fill out a few blanks, and let Congress know that the TSP is important to American mariners and the U.S.-flag fleet!

### **CONGRESSMAN LAUDS MARINERS FOR ROLE IN RESCUE**

This week, before his Congressional colleagues, Representative Kaiali‘i Kahele (HI-2) honored HORIZON RELIANCE mariners for their role in the rescue of two airmen who crashed into the sea in November 2020.

The Pasha Hawaii containership responded when two pilots from a single engine Pilatus PC-12 NGX aircraft crash landed into the Pacific after the plane’s engine failed about 1,060 miles northeast of Oahu, Hawaii. The RELIANCE crew battled 30 knot winds and 10-foot waves en route to effecting an efficient yet harrowing rescue.

Congress Kahele, who is also a pilot, recounted the rescue and noted that “the men and women of the HORIZON RELIANCE – union members of the Masters, Mates and Pilots, Marine Engineers’ Beneficial Association, and Seafarers International Unions — recovered the pilots aboard the vessel and brought them to safety.”

The comments were included in the “House Speeches and Inserts” section of the February 1, 2022 *Congressional Record* and has been placed on the M.E.B.A. homepage for your review.

“It speaks even more to the dedication and devotion to duty of the mariners of the U.S. merchant fleet,” he said, “the brave men and women who carry goods across the globe in support of the U.S. military, as well as humanitarian food-aid, research cargo to Antarctica and countless other missions in support of our country.”

### **GREAT LAKES GROUP SAYS ICEBREAKER SHORTAGE CAUSING PROBLEMS**

Despite a relatively mild and delayed onset of winter in the Great Lakes, U.S.-flag lakers were hampered by a lack of Coast Guard icebreaking assets, U.S. shipping interests said.

Jim Weakley, President of Great Lakes Maritime Task Force, and the Lake Carriers’ Association, noted that, “The men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard do the best they can with the resources they are provided. Unfortunately, they do not have enough icebreakers to keep the system operating efficiently.” Budget reconciliation legislation now being considered in the U.S. Senate would provide the Coast Guard with funding for an additional Great Lakes icebreaker.

Typically, the icebreaking season begins on December 15<sup>th</sup> each year. However, this year Operation Taconite, which marks the official beginning of icebreaking operations in the Northern Great Lakes

did not begin until December 29<sup>th</sup>. From December 15<sup>th</sup> until January 15<sup>th</sup>, the scheduled closure date of the Soo Locks, the U.S. Coast Guard had four of its nine Great Lakes icebreakers in scheduled overhaul, scheduled maintenance, or unscheduled maintenance periods. A total of 68 icebreaking cutter days were lost due to equipment fires or engine breakdowns.

Even though the Soo Locks officially closed on January 15<sup>th</sup>, as of January 27<sup>th</sup>, the last U.S.-flag laker is just now arriving to its winter layup berth. Vessel delays were experienced in ports and in connecting rivers and waterways.

### **NOAA SATELLITES HELPED SAVE 330 LIVES IN 2021**

NOAA's fleet of advanced satellites are essential for predicting weather and climate, and last year they also helped rescue 330 people from potentially life-threatening situations throughout the U.S. and its surrounding waters. Of the 330 U.S. rescues, 195 were water rescues, 29 were from aviation incidents and 106 were from events on land. Alaska had the most SARSAT rescues with 55, followed by Florida with 52 and California with 37.

NOAA's polar-orbiting and geostationary satellites are part of the global Search and Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking system, or COSPAS-SARSAT, which uses a network of U.S. and international spacecraft to detect and locate distress signals sent from emergency beacons from aircraft, boats and handheld Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) anywhere in the world. Since its start in 1982, COSPAS-SARSAT has been credited with supporting more than 48,000 rescues worldwide, including more than 9,700 in the United States and its surrounding waters.

### **2021 WAS A YO-YO YEAR FOR GLOBAL MARINER MORALE**

The latest Seafarers Happiness Index report, published quarterly by the Mission to Seafarers, indicates that 2021 was a real "yo-yo" year for mariners. The Index is a barometer of the key issues facing global mariners gauged from the results of an online survey.

The Mission said that happiness results mirrored COVID infection waves. "Where there has been an opening up of movement, the optimism saw sentiment rise. While in times of rising infections and movement bans, the rates have fallen, which highlights the real-world impacts of decision making on seafarers."

At the start of the year, there was more seafarer chatter than normal about bullying, harassment, and tension aboard ships. Survey overseers recorded more reports about xenophobia and even racism. Oppression, victimization and intimidation were mentioned as a real cause for concern.

They said, the downward trend should serve as a reminder that "the maritime world is not dealing well with COVID, because nations are not supporting the industry - which means seafarers are suffering. From small scale injustices and frustrations to life and career-changing realizations. Seafaring may never recover unless life at sea is improved, and unless seafarers are recognized and respected as key/essential workers."

### **YOU SHOULD SIGN UP FOR THE FEB. 9 ONLINE HQ MEETING**

You should send an email to [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org) to announce your intentions to attend the upcoming online informational meeting held by M.E.B.A. Headquarters. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 9 at 1300 eastern time. This is not an actual membership meeting but it presents a terrific opportunity for Members, Applicants and Retirees to discuss M.E.B.A. business,

exchange information and learn more about the latest Union initiatives. Attendees need to register in advance for this meeting by sending an email to [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org) You should provide your full name and proof of good standing - such as your last dues receipt/service charge number or statement that you are enrolled in Dues Check-Off (DCO) with a particular bargaining unit. Retirees should provide their full name and indicate their status. Upon confirmation, the Zoom access link will be emailed to you shortly before the meeting.

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

**Monday, February 7** – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

**Tuesday, February 8** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

**Wednesday, February 9** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – **Register now at [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

**Thursday, February 10** – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

**Friday, February 11** – 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](mailto: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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*