

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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AGREEMENT WITH SEACOR ON WAR BONUSES IN HIGH-RISK WATERS

Following continued overseas hostilities involving Israel and Hamas, the free flow of commercial shipping has come under threat in certain hotspots around the world. In the last several months in the Red Sea, vessel crews have been subject to drone attacks, shore-based missile attacks, armed small boats, helicopter boardings and ship hijackings.

For several weeks, the Union has been negotiating with four of our contracted companies for a comprehensive war risk package covering M.E.B.A. mariners on vessels transiting through high-risk waters. This week, M.E.B.A. Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith reached a war bonus agreement with Seacor/Waterman covering their fleet of vessels.

The International Bargaining Forum (IBF) has designated various global shipping lanes as high-risk areas including the Southern Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Israeli territorial waters and parts of the Gulf of Aden. Agreement terms include bonuses for our mariners transiting these areas (with retroactivity) equal to their base wages and payable for the duration of the transit. When the vessel is in Israeli territorial waters, a minimum of five days will be paid with an additional day each day thereafter. In addition, the agreement includes Harbor Attack and Vessel Attack bonuses as well as Company-paid death and disability insurance.

COALITION FORCES CONSIDER STRIKE AGAINST HOUSHI

The U.S. and United Kingdom have strongly hinted at the possibility of taking military action against Yemen's Houthi rebels following continued shipping disruptions. This comes in the wake of the largest attack on Red Sea shipping that was thankfully repelled.

On Jan. 9, the Iranian-backed rebels launched a complex attack of UAVs, anti-ship cruise missiles, and an anti-ship ballistic missile from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen into the Southern Red Sea towards shipping lanes where dozens of merchant vessels were transiting. Eighteen UAVs, two anti-ship cruise missiles, and one anti-ship ballistic missile were shot down by a combined effort of U.S. Navy ships along with a UK war ship. No injuries or damage resulted but that attack represented the 26th Houthi assault on commercial shipping in the area since late November. News sources are reporting that a Houthi spokesperson said that U.S.-flag ships that are "providing support to Israel" have and will be targeted.

On Jan. 3rd, 14 countries, including the U.S, issued a joint statement noting, “The Houthis will bear the responsibility for the consequences should they continue to threaten lives, the global economy, or the free flow of commerce in the region's critical waterways.”

The situation in the Red Sea is becoming increasingly untenable, both economically and militarily. In light of these escalating tensions and persistent attacks, the possibility of direct military action against the Houthi rebels seems increasingly imminent. The international community is watching closely as the US and UK navigate the complex geopolitical landscape in the Red Sea region.

CAPTURING THE MARITIME SPIRIT: AMC PHOTO CONTEST CAN LAND YOU COLD HARD CASH!

The American Maritime Congress (AMC) is inviting mariners and academy cadets to immortalize their maritime adventures while winning up to \$1,000. The 2024 AMC Photo Contest will begin accepting entries on Monday (Jan. 15) and continues welcoming submissions until Leap Year Day - February 29, 2024. Chart your course to glory and capture the essence of life at sea! Winners will be notified by March 8, 2024, with the selection process overseen by AMC’s Board of Directors. The AMC is a research and education group comprised of U.S.-flag ship owners and operators that have collective bargaining agreements with the M.E.B.A.

Category 1 of the contest is open to all M.E.B.A. members as well as professional mariners working on AMC-affiliated company vessels (APL, Crowley, Interlake, Keystone, Liberty Maritime, Maersk Line, Matson, NCL America, OSG, Pasha Hawaii, Patriot, and Seacor). The 1st place winner in this category will be showered with \$1,000. 2nd place takes in \$200 with 3rd place good for \$50. Category 2 of the contest is for Maritime Cadets – specifically for full-time students enrolled at one of the state maritime academies or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) involving AMC-affiliated vessels. The 1st place winner in this category will sail to victory with \$750, 2nd place rakes in \$200 and the 3rd place winner will be rewarded with \$50.

This is your chance to showcase your unique perspective through the lens. This contest is not only a celebration of maritime life but also an opportunity to share your experiences with the world! There are two ways to submit your entries, by social media or by email:

Social Media: Post your photo on either Facebook, LinkedIn, or X (choose one platform). Tag American Maritime Congress and your ship. Cadets, don't forget to tag your school. In your caption, include the hashtag #AMCphotocontest2024, a brief photo description, and the date it was taken. AMC can be found on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#)

Email: Send your photo and required information to amcphotocontest@gmail.com. Use “2024 Photo Contest Submission” in the subject line. Include your first and last name, the ship’s name, photo description, and the date it was taken.

Photos must have been taken after January 1, 2023. Contestants must be the sole creator and copyright owner of the submitted photo. Entrants agree that submitted photos can be used by AMC for advertising purposes, with proper attribution. Multiple submissions (up to five photos) are allowed. Photos must be in their original state, without alterations. Images should be no smaller than 1MB and no larger than 5MB. Winners will be contacted via the provided email address and must

respond within three business days. Submissions will not be accepted after the February 29, 2024 deadline. Visit <https://americanmaritime.org/> for full rules and additional details.

A treasure trove awaits the winners! Unleash your photographic skills, make waves and showcase your seafaring spirit!

M.E.B.A.-CREWED VESSEL IS PART OF ANTARCTIC RESUPPLY MISSION

The M.E.B.A.-crewed OCEAN GLADIATOR, a Seacor/Waterman heavylift vessel, is participating in Operation Deep Freeze 2024, the annual mission to resupply scientists' year-round operations at the South Pole's McMurdo Station. The Military Sealift Command has supported the operation since 1955, the year the station was established.

The MSC-chartered OCEAN GLADIATOR sailed out of Port Hueneme, California in late December after a loadout of 407 pieces of cargo, consisting of containers filled with mechanical parts, vehicles, construction materials, office supplies and electronics equipment, and mobile office units; supplies needed for the year's survival at McMurdo Station, Antarctica. The heavy-lift ship recently checked in at Lyttelton, New Zealand to load additional cargo. Its next stop is the South Pole where it will pull up at the ice-pier by McMurdo Station, where members of Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One will conduct the offload. Before departing McMurdo, OCEAN GLADIATOR will be loaded with ice core samples to be stored on the ship in sub-zero freezer containers. The samples will be delivered to the U.S. for scientific study. In addition, retrograde cargo will be loaded onto the ship for transportation off the continent. These include trash and recyclable materials for disposal and equipment no longer required on the station. C/E Trent Enoch is heading up the M.E.B.A. Engine Department aboard the GLADIATOR along with 1st A/E Peter Warner, 2nd A/E Jack Shaffield, 3rd A/E Mitchel Jacobsen, 3rd A/E Luca Tallarini as well as Crane Technician Brandon Perdue.

MARITIME BENEFITS IN RECENTLY SIGNED NDAA

The President recently signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2024 following broad, bipartisan support in the House and Senate. The U.S. defense policy legislation authorizes a record \$886 billion in military spending and advances various maritime policy issues to modernize ports, improve maritime infrastructure and shipbuilding, and address mariner workforce issues through the reauthorization of the U.S. Maritime Administration (MarAd).

Specifically, the NDAA:

- Designates the U.S. Maritime Administration as the federal authority to determine non-availability of qualified United States flag vessels eligible to ship government-procured cargoes thereby limiting circumvention of cargo preference laws by shipper agencies (i.e. USAID food aid cargoes).
- Eliminates the three-year waiting period required of foreign vessels re-flagged under the U.S. registry before they are eligible to carry preference food aid cargo starting in 2030, thereby increasing capacity and access to U.S. vessel capacity.

- Boosts funding and expands the Federal Ship Financing Program (Title XI) to now allow for the reconstruction, repair, and reconfiguration of vessels at U.S. shipyards, and double the loan program funding, making nearly \$500 million available for loan guarantees.
- Doubles the annual Student Incentive Payment Program stipend for state maritime academy cadets from \$8,000 to \$16,000 for eligible expenses including tuition, uniforms, and books.
- Establishes a maritime workforce working group chaired by the U.S. Maritime Administrator and comprised of industry stakeholders comprised of labor, vessel operators, and government/military leaders, to examine and assess the pool of mariners with covered credentials necessary to support the U.S. flag fleet.
- Temporarily reduces the sea time requirement from Ordinary Seaman (OS) to Able Seaman (AB) to address and streamline workforce shortages of unlicensed mariners.

The NDAA was approved by the Senate with a strong bipartisan majority of 87 to 13 while the House of Representatives voted in favor 310 to 118.

GREAT LAKES ICE COVER REACHES 50-YEAR LOW

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL), the Great Lakes experienced their lowest ice cover on New Year's Day in over 50 years. As of January 1, only 0.35% of the lakes were covered in ice, far below the historical 10% average for this time of year, according to the Great Lakes Ice Tracker. This compares to 4.1% in 2023.

According to Wisconsin Public Radio, GLERL Physical Scientist James Kessler noted a consistent trend of decreasing ice coverage on the Great Lakes, with an average annual reduction in maximum ice extent of about 0.5% each year, or 5% per decade. According to US National Ice Center (USNIS), in the ice season of 2022-2023, the Great Lakes reached their peak ice coverage on February 4, 2023, with an extent of approximately 23.35%. This figure is notably below the average maximum coverage, typically around 53%.

The shipping industry in the Great Lakes region may experience economic advantages due to the reduction in ice cover. However, it could have ecological effects on certain species like whitefish which depend on ice to protect their eggs during winter storms.

OSG PLEDGES \$90K FOR MASS MARITIME FOUNDATION

M.E.B.A.-contracted Overseas Shipholding Group has made a three-year \$90,000 pledge to Massachusetts Maritime Academy to promote women in the U.S. maritime industry. The OSG pledge will go to undergraduate and sea term scholarships and sponsorship of the Academy's Women's Network and Sea, Science and Leadership Career Exploration Program. Scholarship recipients will have ongoing interaction with OSG and the opportunity to become familiar with OSG's business and fleet of vessels. The OSG Scholarship Program is intended to ease the financial burdens as well as encourage young women seeking opportunities to enter an industry that offers a non-traditional workplace and opportunity for growth.

The scholarships will promote a variety of financial aid efforts offered by Mass Maritime. Eligible recipients, which include current academy students, high school students, and alumni, are encouraged to apply. More information on the scholarships will be made available on the Massachusetts Maritime Academy's website at <https://www.maritime.edu/financial-aid/undergraduate-aid/awards>

M.E.B.A. HALLS AND OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY TO HONOR MLK

M.E.B.A. Union halls and offices will be closed on Monday, January 15th in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Along with his exceptional leadership in advancing civil rights, MLK was a champion for workers and for those seeking union recognition. He believed that unionization is one of our most important civil rights. At the Illinois AFL-CIO Convention in 1965, King declared, "The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, government relief for the destitute and, above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome. When in the thirties the wave of union organization crested over the nation, it carried to secure shores not only itself but the whole society."

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

Monday, February 5 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, February 6 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, February 7 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, February 8 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, February 9 – **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.