

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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In this issue//Houthi Attack on MAERSK DETROIT Stopped//TRANSCOM Pledges Continued Cooperation with Industry//Union Membership Swelled Last Year//USNS CODY Delivered to MSC Fleet//Last Chance for Union Plus Scholarships//Nautilus Wants Mariner Survey Response//AMC Photo Contest//CMES Indoor Pool Reopened//

CLOSE CALL ON MLL SHIPS IN RED SEA LEADS FORCES RETHINK

Maersk Line Ltd. has put a temporary pause on its US-flag operations in the Red Sea following a targeted attack by Houthi militants on the MAERSK DETROIT. The incident, occurred near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait yesterday where both the DETROIT and the MAERSK CHESAPEAKE, laden with Government cargo, were in close proximity of sighted explosions during a U.S. Navy accompaniment on a northbound transit. Both vessels are crewed with M.E.B.A. Engine Officers. According to the US Central Command, the attack, carried out by Iranian-backed Houthi terrorists, involved three anti-ship ballistic missiles fired at the MAERSK DETROIT. CENTCOM reported that "one missile impacted in the sea. The two other missiles were successfully engaged and shot down by the USS GRAVELY. There were no reported injuries or damage to the ship."

Following the incident, the US Navy rerouted both vessels back to the Gulf of Aden. MLL subsequently announced that it would halt transits in the region until further notice, emphasizing the safety of its crews as a top priority.

This incident comes amidst escalating tensions in the region, with the Houthis launching numerous attacks on international shipping since November. The United States and allies conducted additional strikes against eight targets in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen on Monday. They noted that the strikes were designed to disrupt and degrade the capability of the Houthis to continue their attacks on global trade and innocent mariners from around the world, while avoiding escalation.

In a statement, the U.S. and 23 allies noted, "The thirty-plus attacks that the Houthis have launched on commercial and naval vessels since mid-November constitute a threat to all countries that rely on international maritime shipping. We condemn these attacks and demand an end to them. We also underscore that those who supply the Houthis with the weapons to conduct these attacks are violating UN Security Council Resolution 2216 and international law. The January 22 international response to the continuing Houthi attacks demonstrated shared resolve to uphold navigational rights and freedoms, and to defend the lives of mariners from illegal and unjustifiable attacks."

TRANSCOM PLEDGES CONTINUED COOPERATION, COMMUNICATION WITH INDUSTRY AS RED SEA TURMOIL PERSISTS

After U.S. maritime labor leaders penned a letter to the U.S. Transportation Command about the concerning attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, TRANSCOM's commanding officer pledged enhanced communication and collaboration to help mitigate threats in that part of the world.

In the letter sent to USTRANSCOM last week, U.S. maritime unions along with the TTD and MTD expressed appreciation for the military's protection of U.S. commercial ships in the volatile region. They also called for "continued cooperation and information sharing, to ensure that our vessels and their crew have all the tools needed to ensure safe transits of the area."

In a return letter, TRANSCOM Commander General Jacqueline Van Ovost called the U.S. Merchant Marine "the backbone of our national maritime capability" and noted that the concerns forwarded by the maritime coalition remain at the forefront of their "thinking and planning efforts."

She pledged to further enhance the communication flow to U.S. shippers and mariners in order to help facilitate better planning and safeguard navigation in the Red Sea and critical areas around the world.

General Van Ovost pointed out, "our relationship has been built on years of close collaboration. The safety and security of our shipping industry and our mariners require a united and proactive approach. We will continue to evolve tactics, increase communication, and deepen collaboration to mitigate threats in the Red Sea."

UNION MEMBERSHIP GREW BY 139,000 IN 2023, THANKS TO WORKER WINS

A newly-released annual report on union density from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows that union membership grew by 139,000 in 2023. Union membership in the private sector increased by 191,000 members, with a majority of new members under the age of 45. These numbers are a reflection of worker victories which included more than 900,000 union members winning double-digit wage increases through new contracts last year.

In response to the report, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said, "Workers are fed up with low wages, few benefits, and a lack of dignity and respect on the job, which is precisely why more are interested in joining a union now than ever before. Although union density remained flat in 2023, that doesn't reflect the surging momentum that working people have carried into this year. Waves of workers across industries and geography are joining unions despite vicious union-busting campaigns by large corporations."

Polling data shows that 71% of Americans support unions, the highest level in nearly 60 years, with 88% of young people showing support for unions.

LATEST MSC EPF DELIVERED TO FLEET

The U.S. Navy took delivery of the first Flight II Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessel, USNS CODY this month from Austal USA marking the 14th EPF that has joined the MSC fleet. EPFs are designed to operate in shallow waterways and are capable of a wide range of activities. These versatile, non-combatant transport ships are used for the high-speed transportation of troops, military vehicles, and equipment.

Flight II EPF vessels have added medical mission afloat capabilities. The ships can also transport approximately 419 short tons and travel 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 33 knots. Each vessel includes a flight deck to support day and night aircraft launch and recovery operations. The ships are capable of on/off-loading heavy equipment and vehicles such as a fully combat-loaded Abrams Main Battle Tank.

Austal USA is also constructing two additional Flight II vessels, the future USNS POINT LOMA and an unnamed 16th EPF. M.E.B.A. represents the engine officers aboard each of the MSC EPF vessels.

LAST CHANCE TO APPLY FOR UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS

M.E.B.A. families have until January 31, 2024 to apply for college education assistance money through Union Plus. Union Plus is awarding \$200,000 in scholarships. 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 www.unionplus.org/scholarship for details. 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 Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at noon (EST). Applications arriving after the deadline will not be considered. The award date is May 31, 2024. During the first week of June 2024, 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 2024. Students may re-apply each year. Get the official application and all the details including eligibility criteria by visiting unionplus.org/scholarship Now in its 32nd year, the program has given over \$5.4 million in educational funding to more than 3,800 union members, spouses, and dependent children.

NAUTILUS LOOKING FOR MARINER RESPONSE ON MEETING CLIMATE GOALS

The Nautilus Federation is asking mariners to take a quick survey to help shape an industry campaign on meeting industry climate targets. M.E.B.A. is an affiliate of the Nautilus Federation which represents international mariners and shipping professionals with the objective of spotlighting officer issues such as criminalization, fatigue, and the impact of automation.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has committed to more stringent decarbonization targets while the European Union has announced new regulations to reduce emissions in maritime by 2% by 2025 and 80% by 2050. The maritime industry has already started the transition towards 'net-zero' with increasing investment in alternative fuels and new technologies with the pace of change likely to increase over the next decade. This transition will have a huge impact on the working lives of maritime professionals.

Nautilus notes that they want to ensure the transition to alternative fuels and new technologies is achieved in a just, equitable and holistic way, guaranteeing no one is left behind. At the same time, they also want to address existing systemic issues facing sea-going professionals to make the sector more attractive to recruit and retain talent. Their targets include future-proofing skills and training, securing safety at sea and creating fair pay and conditions.

You can help by completing their “Mapping Our Maritime Future” survey that will help them formulate their international campaign. You can visit this link to fill out the quick survey: <https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/mappingourmaritimefuture>.

AMC PHOTO CONTEST

The American Maritime Congress is running a Photo Contest until February 29, 2024 with a grand prize of \$1,000. 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). 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.

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. 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!

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.

SCHOOL POOL REOPENED

The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that its indoor pool has reopened. It is available from Monday to Wednesday (evenings) and Saturday afternoons. Specific hours have yet to be determined but will be posted on campus once established.

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.