

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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FINISHED WITH ENGINES: LONGTIME CMES REGISTRAR SHIRLEY SHELTON

Shirley Shelton, longtime registrar at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES) from 1988 to 2009, crossed the final bar on June 20, 2025, at the age of 80. Shirley dedicated 21 years of exceptional service to CMES before her retirement and left a lasting impression on everyone who knew her.

She made her home in St. Michaels, Maryland, with her husband, Fred, and their Boston Terrier, Oliver. A lifelong animal lover, Shirley had a particular fondness for Dobermans and enjoyed traveling to dog shows. She cherished her M.E.B.A. family and will be deeply missed by colleagues, friends, and former students. Shirley is survived by her sister, Betty Swinford of Ohio; her niece, Sharon; and her nephew, Bryan. She was predeceased by her mother, Fern Cassity, who passed in August 2024 at the age of 98. To honor Shirley's memory, a collection has been started for a memorial bench to be placed outside the Administration Building at the CMES. Those wishing to contribute may contact Tracy Gannon at CMES/MMMMF.

MARINERS KILLED, TWO VESSELS SUNK AS HOUTHI RENEW ATTACKS

At least four crewmembers on the Greek-owned Liberian-flagged bulk carrier ETERNITY C were killed and several others may have been kidnapped after a drone and speedboat attack on Monday off the coast of Yemen. This was the first deadly Houthi attack on commercial shipping in over a year. The vessel was struck by ballistic and cruise missiles and sank soon after. At least 10 of the 25 crewmembers were rescued. A search has been ongoing for the missing 11, though a Houthi spokesperson said that at least six of the crew have been captured. The strike follows another Houthi assault a day earlier on the M/V MAGIC SEAS and ended a weeks-long lull in Red Sea violence. The MAGIC SEAS, also a Greek-owned Liberian-flagged vessel, was disabled and it eventually sank, though the entire crew was rescued by a passing vessel.

Tensions in the region are rising again amid ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas and growing speculation about renewed U.S.-Iran nuclear talks. Israel later responded with airstrikes on Houthi ports and facilities across Yemen.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez called for intensified diplomatic efforts following the renewed wave of attacks. "After several months of calm, the resumption of deplorable attacks in the

Red Sea constitutes a renewed violation of international law and freedom of navigation,” Secretary-General Dominguez said. “Innocent seafarers and local populations are the main victims of these attacks and the pollution they cause.” According to IMO data, at least 69 attacks on international shipping, linked to broader geopolitical tensions in the region, were recorded between November 2023 and October 2024. This week’s incidents mark the first since October.

HUGE ROBBERY/PIRACY SPIKE IN ASIAN WATERS

Piracy and armed robbery incidents against ships in Asia surged 83% in the first half of 2025 compared to the same period last year, according to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC). A total of 95 incidents were reported from January to June - up from 52 in 2024 - including 93 armed robberies and two piracy cases. Most incidents were low-level thefts, often in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, where 80 incidents occurred - 84% of all cases in Asia. Nearly all took place in the Singapore Strait’s eastbound lane, mostly targeting slow-moving bulk carriers. In half of the cases, perpetrators fled empty-handed; in others, items like engine parts and ship stores were stolen.

While incidents in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines declined, cases slightly increased in India and Vietnam. Notably, no abductions were reported in the Sulu-Celebes Seas for the fifth consecutive year, with the threat level downgraded to “low.” ReCAAP ISC urged littoral states to step up patrols and called on shipmasters to maintain vigilant watch and security measures during transits through high-risk areas.

REPORT WARNS OF RISING SEAFARER DEATHS; MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Marine insurer Gard released its 2025 *Crew Claims Report*, offering a sobering look at the state of seafarer health and safety worldwide. Drawing on data from 3,000 crew-related insurance claims in 2024 and survey responses from over 6,000 seafarers, the report reveals a troubling 25% rise in crew fatalities in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to the three years before.

Illness emerged as the leading cause of death, accounting for 83% of crew fatalities. Notably, eight of the ten most common illnesses among seafarers are linked to stress, highlighting the significant mental health pressures faced by crews. The number of suicides also exceeded that of fatal accidents, emphasizing the urgent need for stronger support systems and mental health interventions. Christen Guddal, Chief Claims Officer at Gard, highlighted that there is a strong link between the health and wellbeing of seafarers and operational safety at sea. “Getting enough rest, having good social support, being part of a team – all of this impacts your state of mind and situational awareness.”

“Seafarers are the backbone of global trade, and their health and safety should be a priority for all of us,” said Gard CEO Rolf Thore Roppestad. “By sharing this data and insight, we hope to raise awareness, support better decision-making, and to further strengthen the industry’s commitment to those who keep the world trade moving.”

HUGE WINDFALL FOR COAST GUARD IN ‘BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL’

The U.S. Coast Guard will receive a massive funding boost under the Trump reconciliation bill signed into law last week. The new law allocates nearly \$25 billion to tackle long-overdue maintenance needs, upgrade infrastructure, and expand the Coast Guard’s fleet of ships and aircraft. Of the total, \$6.6 billion is earmarked for repairs and improvements to shore facilities, depots, and training centers. The overall investment - more than double the Coast Guard’s typical annual budget - comes on top of the

\$14.4 billion already requested for fiscal year 2026. The funding marks one of the largest single injections of resources in the service's history, aimed at bolstering readiness and maritime capabilities.

This funding will allow the Coast Guard to procure an estimated 17 new icebreakers, 21 new cutters, over 40 helicopters and six C-130J aircraft while modernizing shore infrastructure and maritime surveillance systems. The package also strengthens the Coast Guard's ability to counter drug and human trafficking, conduct search and rescue, enhance navigational safety and enable maritime trade.

AFL-CIO KICKS OFF 'IT'S BETTER IN A UNION' BUS TOUR

Labor leaders and workers rallied at AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington DC as they launched the nationwide bus tour called "It's Better in a Union: Fighting for Freedom, Fairness and Security."

At the rally, labor leaders demanded "freedom, fairness and security" to launch the summer of action that will engage workers across the country about the issues facing their communities, their fights to organize workplaces and win fair contracts, and the impact of reckless policies on their lives. The bus tour will visit 26 states to join picket lines, support organizing campaigns, visit Veterans Affairs and Medicaid-funded facilities and hospitals gutted by DOGE, and speak directly with workers.

"Working people are the backbone of this country. We do the things our communities count on - at our schools and hospitals, factories and construction sites, small and big businesses - yet still too many families can't keep food on the table, pay the rent, afford child care," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "The answer is not more of this same broken status quo. The answer is a good union job. The answer is working people in our communities - no matter who you are, how you voted - joining together and standing up for our freedom, fairness, and security."

"Working people have been betrayed by this administration - by the elected leaders who sold out the working class to the billionaire class. And we're going to let them know. We are going to crisscross the country and talk to workers. We're getting on this bus to make sure they know who sold us out - who is taking our jobs, our health care, our paychecks. To make sure every working person knows there's a place for them on this bus," said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond. The campaign runs until Labor Day.

MAKE SURE YOUR DOCUMENTS ARE IN ORDER 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 VPDSO endorsement, TWIC, Passport, USCG Medical Certificate, Drug-free Certificate or Drug-free Letter, Group Card, 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 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 you have questions about your documents, direct them to your local hall.

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

Friday, July 11 – **Honolulu@1100**

Monday, August 4 – **Boston@1200**; Seattle (Fife)**@1300**.

Tuesday, August 5 – **CMES@1430**; **Charleston@1400**; **Houston@1315**; **Oakland@1230**.

Wednesday, August 6 – **Jacksonville@1300**; **New Orleans@1315**; **Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting)** – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org

Thursday, August 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230**; **NY/NJ@1300**; **Norfolk@1300**; **Tampa@1300**.

Friday, August 8 – **Honolulu@1100**

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***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. Website: www.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. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org