

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter



Number 28 – July 13, 2017

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M.E.B.A. ACES SIMULATED BREAKOUT

M.E.B.A. satisfied its exercise obligations less than three days into this year's massive tabletop Government fleet activation taking place this week. The nine-day exercise involving a virtual breakout of the Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force fleet and Military Sealift Command surge sealift vessels began on Monday. The annual Command Post Exercise is done on paper and mariners were not actually required to report to the vessels. However, the exercise evaluates whether the industry's workforce is capable of supporting a full-scale activation of the 63 organic surge sealift vessels.

The Union got word on Monday that the first wave of M.E.B.A.-contracted vessels had been "activated" requiring a flurry of phone calls to members with the necessary licenses and qualifications. Gulf Coast V.P. Erin Bertram oversaw M.E.B.A.'s virtual crewing efforts and relied on several Union officials who were relentless in their response on behalf of the Union including Tampa Branch Agent Adam Smith, NY/NJ Patrolman Nico Sermoneta, Oakland Patrolman Max Alper, Houston Dispatcher/Rep. Donn Reamer and Mary Starita in our New Orleans hall. Many other officials across the country assisted in this winning effort.

M.E.B.A. was assigned to fill engine and deck officer positions on 23 Ready Reserve Force (RRF) and Military Sealift Command Surge Fleet ships managed by Patriot Contract Services, Keystone Shipping and Matson Navigation. Members currently serving aboard vessels were not eligible for the exercise.

Agreeing to a virtual ship assignment does not preclude mariners who participated in the exercise from subsequently taking a real-world shipping job. Many thanks to the membership for their participation in this important annual test. Had the activation been real, members were poised to rush to the defense of their country. The Union once again demonstrated that in every conflict, real or imaginary, M.E.B.A. will always answer the call.

EASY WAY TO VOICE SUPPORT FOR MARITIME-FRIENDLY LEGISLATION

Members, applicants and retirees should know about an easy way to trumpet maritime-friendly bills to their elected representation in Washington DC. Through the Navy League, a portal has been set up where you can type in your full zip code to have access to a sample letter that can be modified then easily emailed to the President, Vice President and your specific Members of Congress.

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/yd9ng8o2> and enter your full zip code. This particular link contains a message in support of H.R. 1240, the “Energizing American Maritime Act” but there are several other sample letters on other important issues accessed on the right-hand side of the webpage. H.R. 1240, introduced by Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA), would require 30% of U.S. strategic energy exports to be carried on U.S.-flagged ships. This site is a good and easy way to help lawmakers understand the critical importance of the U.S. Merchant Marine. Check it out.

RANK & FILE INPUT FOR UPCOMING MAERSK TALKS

The Union will begin negotiations on all three M.E.B.A./MLL contracts (MLL, E-Ships, and M-Ships) starting in August. The M.E.B.A. is seeking input and participation from our members and applicants who have recently worked under any of our contracts with MLL. Negotiations for all three M.E.B.A./MLL contracts will take place at the same time. Permanent and longtime employees who feel they have pertinent information or ideas to add to the conversation should send an email to jcallahan@mebaunion.org or call the NY/NJ hall at (201) 433-7700. Please email your priorities for any contract items that should be amended, withdrawn or added.

CMES HOSTING CADETS AT THREE-WEEK INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

About 80 cadets from each of the nation’s maritime academies are prowling the grounds of the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School as the three-week Licensed Cadet Internship summer program lit off this week. The annual program helps corral the next generation of M.E.B.A. mariners and paves the way toward a shipping career with the Union. This year’s program runs from July 10-28.

Cadets, some who just graduated and already made application with the Union, are loaded up with a full itinerary as they learn more about the excellent career opportunities the M.E.B.A. presents. Many are undergoing Government Vessel Operations training which includes Small Arms, CBR-D, Civilian Mariner Engineering Officer (CMEO) and Damage Control. Others are taking advantage of the Marine Electric Propulsion/High Voltage Safety course. Other available training includes diesel engineering, electricity, refrigeration, welding and machine shop which will assist cadets that take proficiency testing.

GET YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE FOR MSC-CONTRACTED VESSELS

The process of obtaining security clearances required for Military Sealift Command-contracted vessels can take several months to complete from the time of application. This delay could affect the ability of members and applicants to take a job off the board and report to the vessel in the required time period. To increase the pool of candidates that hold active security clearances within the M.E.B.A., it is recommended that members and applicants start the process of obtaining a security clearance before taking an MSC job.

Patriot Contract Services has indicated they will process your security clearance if you have taken any MSC training in the past, are currently enrolled in MSC training, or have MSC training scheduled for the future. Therefore, if you desire to work on an MSC contracted vessel for any employer in the future, get your security clearance completed now. If you do not have a security clearance, you may not be able to take the job when it is called – due to the delay in obtaining a security clearance.

To apply for a security clearance through PCS, you must have taken MSC training in the past, be currently enrolled in MSC training or be scheduled to take MSC training in the future. You can contact

Dave Nolan at (925) 296-2000 or email him at dave.nolan@asmhq.com to get your security application process started today!

MSC DEPLOYS EXPEDITIONARY SEA BASE

Following final operational testing and evaluation, the Military Sealift Command deployed its first-in-class Expeditionary Sea Base (ESB) this week. The USNS LEWIS B. PULLER left Norfolk, VA on Monday for its first full operational deployment in the Middle East. **M.E.B.A. represents the engineers in MSC's Civilian Mariner fleet.** The 784-foot vessel features a 52,000 square-foot flight deck, fuel and equipment storage, repair spaces, magazines, and mission-planning spaces. Able to accommodate up to 250 personnel, the PULLER will support multiple missions, such as air mine counter measures, counter-piracy operations, maritime security operations, humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions and crisis response operations.

INTERNET ACCESS AT SEA STILL LIMITED

While internet and email are now major means of communication in many parts of the world, seafarer access to full facilities while they are at sea is still limited, according to a new survey by the European maritime union Nautilus. The survey, which covered nearly 2,000 seafarers and shipping industry leaders, found that although nearly 88 percent of seafarers had some internet access at sea, most had very limited speeds and high costs. Only 57 percent of crew had personal email access and just one-third had social media access at sea. Barely six percent had sufficient internet connectivity for video calls when at sea. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63 percent) also suggested they would consider moving companies if better quality internet was on offer. More than one in 10 industry leaders surveyed (14 percent) admitted they did not provide any access to the internet for their employees.

PORT TRUCKER EXPLOITATION RUNS RAMPANT

The exploitation of non-union workers is still ever present in today's world. Especially in California, port truck drivers experience regular abuse for the sake of the bottom line. Unpaid overtime, threats of unemployment and forcing drivers to shoulder expenses (leading them to take out loans to pay for their equipment) is just a short list that makes up standard operating procedure for trucking companies in the California region. Some have described this set-up as a modern day indentured servant system.

In some cases, companies have physically prevented drivers from leaving work, compelled them to work against their will for up to 20 hours a day and fail to pay workers anything unless the worker agrees to falsify logs. In addition to lease payments, the companies sometimes charge drivers for maintenance, fuel, parking fees and even toilet paper and other supplies. After such deductions, a *USA Today* report found that some drivers can end up making as little as 67 cents a week or even end up owing money to their employers.

Some trucking companies have been misclassifying drivers as "independent contractors" instead of direct employees allowing them to evade wage and overtime requirements and denying benefits to workers. It's important to stand in solidarity against anti-worker tactics like these. There have been a series of job actions by the Teamsters to bring attention to the issue but the strikes and pickets over the years have not altered the plight of the port truck drivers. In a late June port protest, workers delivered a 10,000 signature petition to Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti stating their wish for the end of such indentured servitude. In the L.A./Long Beach area, the busiest in the nation, it was estimated that only 10% of port truck drivers are directly employed by companies.

The recent *USA Today* investigative piece descriptively details what port truck workers go through in this exploitative system. M.E.B.A. pasted a link to it on our Facebook page or you can check it out at www.usatoday.com/pages/interactives/news/rigged-forced-into-debt-worked-past-exhaustion-left-with-nothing/

MARAD WANTS COMMENT TO ASSIST REPORT ON U.S. MARINER POOL

The Maritime Administration is asking for public comment that will help with their development of a Congressionally-mandated assessment report on the state of the U.S. mariner pool in regards to the critical role mariners play in supporting our country in times of war and national emergency. MarAd plans to supplement the report with a series of actionable recommendations and is asking for input from the industry before July 31st.

MarAd is focusing on four related issues: Identifying the number of U.S. citizen mariners; Assessing the feasibility of assigning maritime academy graduates with a service obligation to certain maritime positions based on U.S. Merchant Marine needs; Assessing the Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Licensing and Documentation System and its accessibility and value to MarAd for evaluation purposes of the mariner pool; and Making recommendations to enhance availability and quality of interagency data, including data from USTRANSCOM, Coast Guard, the Navy and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, for MarAd use in evaluating the pool of mariners. There are a couple of ways to submit your comments but choose only one:

Go to the Federal Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov/>. To submit your input, type the docket number *MARAD-2017-0117* in the “SEARCH” box and click “SEARCH.” Click on “Submit a Comment” on the line associated with this Docket Number. Or use the mail: Send it to Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001. For further information Tania Adames who can be reached at (202) 366-7173; email: Tania.Adames@dot.gov.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, August 7 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;
Tuesday, August 8 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;
Wednesday, August 9 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;
Thursday, August 10 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;
Friday, August 11 - Honolulu@1100.

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven 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. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact: Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org