

# 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: FORMER M.E.B.A. PRESIDENT GORDON WARD RE-ESTABLISHED & STRENGTHENED UNION DEMOCRACY**

Former M.E.B.A. President Gordon Ward steamed into the sunset on June 14, 2025 at the age of 86. Gordon helped re-establish and strengthen M.E.B.A. democracy after a difficult period in the Union's history. He led the M.E.B.A. from 1992-1994, leaving behind a legacy of integrity, resilience, and unwavering service. His impact on the Union was profound and enduring, and his contributions deserve lasting recognition.

Born in Waterville, Maine, he graduated from Maine Maritime Academy in 1959 and spent some years working for Mobil Oil in New York City with his first wife Victoria. In 1968, they moved to Baltimore where Gordon taught at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School on Light Street. Gordon returned to the sea in 1976 and spent years sailing as Chief Engineer on the SS PUERTO RICO, the original name of the doomed ship EL FARO. In 1977, Gordon and Victoria returned to Maine, settling in Gorham, Maine where they raised their four children and shared many wonderful years with happy memories and lifelong friends. Gordon enjoyed boating, Sebago Lake, taking long scenic Maine drives, sight-seeing, and the Boston Red Sox.

In 1989, a controversial M.E.B.A. president led a merger with the National Maritime Union, jeopardizing the M.E.B.A. pension plan and creating unrest among union members. Gordon rallied dissatisfied members and organized the Members Advocating Democracy (MAD) committee to oppose the incumbent leadership. The MAD slate overwhelmingly won the Union election and Gordon became the M.E.B.A.'s President in 1992. During his tenure he preserved the pension plan, expanded member job opportunities, and put safeguards in place to uphold democracy within the union. He retired in 1994 and returned to Maine. On September 11, 2001, his 33-year old son Stephen was killed in the World Trade Center attacks a month after he began working with Cantor Fitzgerald on the 101<sup>st</sup> floor of the North Tower. In 2011, at Gordon's 55<sup>th</sup> high school reunion, he was reintroduced to a classmate, Nancy Sewall, and a romance quickly ensued. The two married in 2015 and they enjoyed many joyful years of retirement in Maine and Florida. Gordon is survived by his wife Nancy; daughters Susan Moore and Kathryn Ward, and son Kenneth Ward; grandchildren Shawn Moore, Scarlett Moore, Stephen Graham, and Marin Graham. Thank you Gordon Ward for your service!

## **SIU HONORS MIKE SACCO WITH LASTING TRIBUTES**

The Seafarers International Union paid tribute to its longest-serving president, Michael Sacco, with heartfelt ceremonies on June 17 at the Paul Hall Center in Piney Point, Maryland. Sacco, who passed away in December 2023 at the age of 86, led the union for decades and was widely admired for his deep commitment to the maritime industry and labor.

The union renamed its most advanced educational building the Michael J. Sacco Media Center, and unveiled a bronze bust in his likeness. M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac and Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha attended for the Union and were honored to be part of the ceremony. Speakers from the SIU, maritime employers, and Sacco's family highlighted his integrity, foresight, and enduring impact on generations of seafarers. A marble monument honoring Sacco was also blessed at the nearby Seafarers Haven Cemetery. Described as a leader who viewed the union as family, Sacco's legacy lives on through the campus he helped shape and the mariners and industry he championed during his long and productive career.

## **REPORT: OCEAN WORKERS FACE MOUNTING DANGERS**

Ocean-based professions are becoming increasingly perilous, with new data showing that one in four workers in maritime and coastal industries have suffered injury or physical harm at work within the past two years. That's the stark finding from the latest "World Risk Poll – Focus On" report published by Lloyd's Register Foundation in collaboration with Gallup. Drawing on responses from 147,000 workers across a range of industries worldwide, the study underscores the disproportionately high risks faced by those who make their living on or near the sea.

The report defines "ocean workers" broadly — including seafarers, fishers, and dockworkers — and reveals that 25% of respondents in these professions reported being injured or harmed on the job in the last two years. That's significantly higher than the global average injury rate of 18% across all sectors and more than double the rate reported in the relatively safe utilities industry. A key issue spotlighted in the report is the severe lack of occupational safety and health (OSH) training for ocean workers. Nearly seven in ten (68%) have never received formal safety training, and just one-quarter have been trained within the past two years. In contrast, 38% of workers in shoreside industries reported receiving OSH instruction during the same period.

Weather-related hazards are another serious threat for ocean workers. Rough seas, high winds, and extreme weather events have taken a heavy toll: 33% of ocean workers said they experienced serious harm from weather conditions, compared to only 20% across other industries. Despite the dangers, many incidents go unreported. Only 41% of ocean workers who were injured or harmed said they had reported it to anyone—considerably lower than the 51% reporting rate among workers in other fields.

Experts warn that risks are likely to grow. As the world continues to rely heavily on ocean industries for food, commerce, and energy, advocates are calling for stronger protections and support systems for the workers who power this essential sector.

## **U.S. ISSUES MARITIME ALERT FOLLOWING HOSTILITIES WITH IRAN**

The U.S. Maritime Administration issued Advisory 2025-003A, warning of potential threats from Iranian proxies or affiliated groups against vessel traffic near Iran. Mariners are urged to exercise

extreme caution, especially in light of recent incidents. The U.S. recently joined Israel in strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities and Iran retaliated with attacks on U.S. bases in Qatar and Iraq.

The escalation has prompted concerns over the safety of maritime traffic in the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, and Arabian Sea. A worldwide caution advisory for travelers has also been issued by the U.S. Department of State. Additional updates will be released as the situation evolves. The current maritime alert remains in effect through June 30, 2025.

### **MORNING MIDAS SINKS AFTER WEEKS ON FIRE**

The *Morning Midas*, a 600-foot pure car/truck carrier (PCTC) that burned at sea for nearly three weeks, has sunk in the North Pacific Ocean. It was reported the ship went down around 4:35 p.m. on June 23, about 450 miles southwest of Adak, Alaska in waters over 16,000 feet deep. The fire broke out on June 3 while the ship was enroute from China to Mexico, with smoke initially spotted near a deck loaded with electric vehicles. Despite crew efforts to contain the blaze, all 22 aboard had to abandon ship and were safely rescued.

The Liberia-flagged vessel, built in 2006, was carrying over 3,000 vehicles, including 65 EVs and 681 hybrids, along with significant fuel stores. The fire ultimately led to structural failure and flooding, causing the ship to sink. The U.S. Coast Guard says environmental monitoring is ongoing, with no pollution reported so far. The incident has reignited concerns about the dangers of transporting lithium-ion batteries by sea. The fire's cause is still under investigation.

### **MARINER MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING SURVEY**

The University of Washington invites mariners from all segments of the U.S. maritime industry to take 10–15 minutes to anonymously complete the 2025 Mariner Mental Health & Wellbeing Survey online at <https://redcap.link/mariners2025>. The survey runs until September 16, 2025. They want to hear from sailing, credentialed, mariners who work on U.S.-flagged vessels — including licensed and unlicensed mariners, cadets, and pilots. Participation from a wide range of mariners across the industry is critical to understanding the ongoing needs of the maritime workforce. This confidential survey asks mariners about mental health, wellbeing, job satisfaction, and experiences aboard vessels. It will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

With the exception of the screening criteria questions, all questions are optional. You should skip any questions you don't feel comfortable answering, or don't want to answer. No identifiable data (such as name, employer, or vessel) will be collected. Individual responses will be kept confidential and securely stored at the University of Washington in accordance with the ethics review board. Individual data will not be shared.

The survey is being conducted by the same research team that led the 2021 Mariner Mental Health Survey during the COVID-19 pandemic. This 2025 follow-up survey aims to understand how mariner mental health and wellbeing have evolved since COVID-19. The survey is being conducted independently by Dr. Marissa Baker, Associate Professor, University of Washington, Seattle, USA. This survey was reviewed by representatives from SOCP, MARAD, AWO, NOAA, Maritime Institutes, and CMTS.

Survey findings will be shared with vessel owners/operators, mariner unions, maritime training institutions, seafarer welfare organizations, and MTS stakeholders to help develop effective, evidence-

based solutions that benefit mariner mental health and wellbeing. They will also write a report which will be publicly accessible.

Please share the link to this survey with shipmates, employees, training institutions, industry associations, unions, or anyone else who could contribute to this effort to improve the well-being of U.S. mariners.

### **GOVT. FLEET MARINERS URGED TO AVOID LOSING UNION PROTECTION**

MSC and Army Corps mariners will LOSE all future union protections and benefits if their dues lapse. The Union will continue to provide critical safeguards and exclusive pathways to essential benefits that our Government Fleet mariners expect. Continued membership is a lifeline to maintain the collective strength needed to preserve fair treatment and help protect your sailing career during uncertain times. MSC and Army Corps members are urged to check in with our Norfolk Union hall to verify contact information and speak with our Government Fleet Representatives who are keeping the fleet apprised of the latest developments. Affected members should check in with M.E.B.A. Government Fleet Representative Craig Moran at the Norfolk Union hall at (757) 440-1820 or [govtfleet@mebaunion.org](mailto:govtfleet@mebaunion.org). Assistant Representative Ola Lassley can be reached at the same number or via email at [Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org](mailto:Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org). M.E.B.A. Government Fleet Reps. continue to contact mariners as well, and will be visiting ships to help them understand their options.

Members in those fleets should maintain their good standing by using M.E.B.A.'s online payment portal at <https://meba.workingsystems.com>. The Membership Department at Headquarters can provide assistance with any technical issues by phone at (202) 638-5355 or via email at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org). Those enrolling in the M.E.B.A. Payment Portal must have an email address on file with Headquarters that correlates to their payment portal i.d., so make sure the HQ records match. Payments can also be made in person at any M.E.B.A. Union hall or office. To ensure continuity, members are advised to complete payments through the fourth quarter.

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

Monday, July 7 – **Boston@1200**. *Bloody Thursday observed – West Coast Halls Closed*

Tuesday, July 8 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300**.

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

Thursday, July 10 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300**.

Friday, July 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.***