

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

*The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"*

Number 19 – May 12, 2022



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### **SENATE CONFIRMS REAR ADM. PHILLIPS AS NEW MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR**

The U.S. Senate has confirmed Rear Adm. Ann Phillips (Ret.) as the nation's next Maritime Administrator following a 75-22 vote on Tuesday. Once Adm. Phillips is sworn in, Acting Administrator Lucinda Lessley will return to her regular role as Deputy Administrator. Phillips spent 31 years on active Navy duty, commanded a Destroyer, Destroyer Squadron and Amphibious Strike Group and served on the Chief of Naval Operations' Climate Change Task Force. She retired from the Navy in 2014 with a slew of commendations and achievement medals and continued to work on climate security issues as an independent consultant.

Earlier this year, M.E.B.A. leadership had an opportunity to meet with Admiral Phillips and discuss the vital service performed by our membership and the critical challenges the maritime industry faces in light of ongoing supply chain issues and a limited mariner pool.

### **LET CONGRESS KNOW SIDELINING U.S. SHIPS IS NOT OK**

U.S.-flag shipping interests are voicing their displeasure with a Congressional proposal to sideline U.S.-flag ships in favor of foreign vessels for a Ukrainian aid package. As detailed in last week's issue, Senate Concurrent Resolutions 37 & 38 would temporarily waive the cargo preference requirement that at least 50% of international food aid cargoes be carried on U.S.-flag ships. The House passed its supplemental military and food assistance package for Ukraine last week without the waiver but Senators are beginning their own debate and may include the offending language. U.S. Senators Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and Chris Coons (D-Delaware) are leading the charge for the waiver in the name of cost savings.

But U.S. shipping interests point out that the cost of shipping American, as cited by the Senators, was "dramatically overstated." In fact, they noted, all ocean shipping under the Food for Peace program—foreign-flag and U.S.-flag combined — accounts for only 8% of program costs and that the premium for using U.S.-flag ships accounts for less than 1% of program costs. USA Maritime, which represents U.S.-flag interests, said the resolutions wouldn't exclusively apply to Ukrainian relief. "Resolution 37 would waive Ship American rules indefinitely, Resolution 38 would divert cargoes to foreign carriers for an arbitrary three-year period."

The Navy League has set up a "Voice to Congress" webpage where you can let lawmakers know they shouldn't bypass U.S. ships and mariners in favor of foreign counterparts. The Navy League is a non-profit civilian organization whose mission is to educate Americans about the enduring importance of

sea power and to support the men and women of the U.S. sea services. It advocates for the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and U.S. Merchant Marine. You can visit <https://navyleague.quorum.us/campaign/40368/> where you fill out a few blanks and let Congress know that cargo preference is crucial for our economic and national security!

### **ILWU TALKS WITH THE PMA BEGIN**

As retailers collectively hold their breath, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) began contract negotiations on Tuesday with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) as both parties remain hopeful for a timely agreement. The parties have about a month and a half before the current contract expires at midnight on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Wages, benefits and automation are seen as top negotiating issues for the 22,000 dockworkers serving at 29 West Coast ports. The PMA represents shipping lines and terminal operators at those 29 ports. The existing contract had been set to expire in 2019 before longshore workers agreed to a three-year extension. PMA had sought another extension but ILWU President Willie Adams rebuffed the offer immediately and supplied the employer with three pages of news headlines detailing the record profits shipping companies have enjoyed during the pandemic as supply chain woes deepened.

As talks begin, both parties remained upbeat that they can find common ground even if an additional short-term extension is needed to accommodate talks. “I think everybody is optimistic going into this one that we're gonna get where we need,” PMA President Jim McKenna said. “Whether we go past July 1 or not is not the issue. It's just we need to stay at the table and get an agreement without causing any further disruptions.” ILWU President Willie Adams told reporters last month that, “There are adults on both sides of the table, it is called a process...We will get an agreement. It takes both sides...”

Though both sides have been saying the right things, the automation issue is seen as a particular sticking point. The PMA trumpeted the release of a new study that they commissioned claiming that “automation boosts cargo throughput, generates longshore work faster than conventional terminals, and preserves the competitiveness of the West Coast ports.” ILWU called the study “self-serving” and “an insult to all workers who have seen their jobs outsourced to machines.” ILWU President Willie Adams said that “automation not only kills good jobs but does not move more cargo. In addition to a loss of jobs, automation poses a great national security risk as it places our ports at risk of being hacked as other automated ports have experienced.”

The ILWU President insisted that dockworkers must be respected with a contract offer that recognizes their vital role in the nation's economic during the pandemic and beyond. President Adams noted, “We make no apologies for achieving wages that allow workers to provide for their families, have retirement, and the healthcare these difficult and dangerous jobs require. It's our belief that the American Dream shouldn't be reserved for CEOs and companies based overseas, but should be within reach of the workers who are responsible for their employers' success.”

### **CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR WWII MARINERS TO BE PRESENTED NEXT WEEK**

World War II mariners are coming to Washington DC next week for a series of events, including the long-awaited presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal. In March of 2020, after a tireless fight by U.S. shipping interests, lawmakers voted to recognize the efforts of the WWII U.S. Merchant Marine by authorizing the highest honor bestowed by Congress. The presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal will be made on Wednesday in the Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol.

The American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV), led by President Dru DiMattia, will bring a delegation of at least ten WWII mariners to attend the ceremony. Following the ceremony, the delegation will stop by M.E.B.A. Headquarters for a brief reception. The AMMV is an organization of active and retired mariners that trumpets the vital role of the men and women of the Merchant Marine and their service to the country during peace and war. The gold medal will be placed on display in the American Merchant Marine Museum at the Academy in Kings Point, NY. WWII mariners will receive duplicates which will also be made available to the public. On Tuesday, the delegation will visit the WWII Memorial in downtown DC where they will make themselves available for interviews. That evening, they will attend the “Salute to Congress” event in Arlington, VA to honor Congressman Joe Courtney (D-CT) for his support of the U.S. maritime industry.

The U.S. Merchant Marine suffered the highest casualty rate of any service during World War II, with one mariner out of every 26 lost. Today, there are less than 1,500 remaining World War II merchant mariners.

## **2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL LEROY KOEHLER DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT ON 6/17**

The M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) will host its second annual Leroy Koehler Disc (Frisbee) Golf Tournament to take place on Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. Everyone is invited. The tournament benefits the Memorial Park at the CMES.

As you know, the Memorial was created to honor fallen seafarers who have delivered the goods and answered the call of this country since 1775. The Foundation supporting the Memorial is a section 501(c)(3) entity under Internal Revenue Service rules, so all donations are tax deductible. Leroy Koehler was a greatest generation mariner and consummate Chief Engineer who deeply cared about the M.E.B.A. heritage and made a generous financial contribution to the Memorial Park.

There is a \$25 entry fee for the tournament which will begin at 1300. For further information, contact 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo at (443) 676-6248 or [bvanloo@bvlworks.org](mailto:bvanloo@bvlworks.org)

## **M.E.B.A.-CREWED HOSPITAL SHIP SAILS TOWARD PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP**

The Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS MERCY left San Diego last week to join the Navy’s Pacific Partnership mission with international partners. Civilian Mariners aboard the vessel are represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU.

Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. The Pacific Partnership 22 team will work with host nation counterparts and regional partners to provide tailored medical, dental, and veterinary care and conduct bilateral engineering civic actions, and exchange information related to disaster response processes and procedures. As part of PP22, Mercy and the mission team will conduct missions throughout Oceania and the Western Pacific. Typical Pacific Partnership events include the building of schools, medical and engineering expert exchanges, and host nation outreach events.

## **ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR PORT RELATED PROJECTS**

The Maritime Administration announced that funds available for Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grants have been beefed up by another \$234 million. \$684.3 million is now available for awards to port-related projects that help strengthen the supply chain. Projects that improve the movement of goods to, through, and around ports at coastal seaports, inland river ports, and Great

Lakes ports are eligible to receive funding. Applications for the grants are due on May 16, 2022. Additional information is available from Peter Simons, Office of Port Infrastructure Development at (202) 366-8921 or [PIDPgrants@dot.gov](mailto:PIDPgrants@dot.gov)

## **LIFE INSURANCE THROUGH UNION PLUS**

Do you have someone who depends on you? Take the necessary step now to help protect them from the unexpected by getting covered today. Union Plus programs, which are available to M.E.B.A. members, applicants, retirees and our affiliates, provide a vast range of money-saving benefits and services. The M.E.B.A. is enrolled in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from auto service discounts to theater and flower discounts. Union Plus offers a Term-to-70 Life Insurance policy for those between 18 and 64 which provides important protection against the financial impact of unexpected death. Whether it's help with final expenses, outstanding loan balances, or student debt, Term Life coverage can help surviving families put the pieces back together. The plan's rates are based on 5-year age bands. And with its "living benefit" feature, you can collect a portion of your benefits from the plan when you might need the money the most — during a terminal illness.

Talk to a Union Plus Insurance Representative at 800-393-0864 (M-F, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., ET) or submit questions online through the Union Plus Insurance website. Go to <https://www.unionplus.org/benefits/insurance/life-insurance> for more.

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

**Monday, June 6** – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.

**Tuesday, June 7** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

**Wednesday, June 8** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

**Thursday, June 9** – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

**Friday, June 10** – Honolulu Hall Closed (King Kamehameha Day)

**Monday, June 13** – 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](mailto: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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*