

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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DOD ENDS PRE-PO SHIP PROGRAM

The Department of Defense has decommissioned the Army's supply ship prepositioning program that gives them access to equipment, vehicles, and supplies aboard Full Operating Status (FOS) ships that remain afloat and ready for rapid deployment in strategic areas. Cost savings were cited for the retirement of the Army Prepositioned Stock 3 (Afloat) program. M.E.B.A. crews five of the seven vessels in the APS-3 program.

Those vessels, deployed globally, function as floating warehouses stocked with essential military supplies, including ammunition, tanks, medical equipment, and spare parts. The military cargoes they carry complement the land-based supplies stored in the U.S., Europe, South Korea, and the Middle East. Five of these vessels are managed by M.E.B.A.-contracted Patriot and include the LMSRs USNS RED CLOUD, USNS CHARLTON, USNS WATKINS, USNS POMEROY and USNS SODERMAN. The other two are the AMO-manned Ammunition ships MV LTC JOHN UD PAGE and MV SSG EDWARD A. CARTER JR. The contract for the PAGE was not renewed and the vessel has already been reflagged out of the U.S. fleet. The 45 American jobs attached to it were lost. The CARTER had its contract cancelled and was de-flagged from the U.S. fleet adding to another 45 jobs lost.

As part of the proposal, recently signed off on by the DOD, operational control of the LMSRs would go over to the DOT/MarAd and the ships would be homeported stateside in Reduced Operating Status (ROS). In ROS status, the remaining vessels will carry no cargo, be minimally crewed and maintained, and will be subject to a five-day activation standard. With the end of the program, the Army will no longer have ready-to-sail vessels in standby status and will instead rely on MarAd to activate ROS vessels in the continental United States. The M.E.B.A. and other impacted groups have thus far been unsuccessful in stopping this transition. We believe it is bad for our nation's military readiness and is counter to the Administration's goals of increasing US-flag vessels and mariners.

BIPARTISAN BILL PROPOSES OVERHAUL OF MARINER CREDENTIALING EXAMS

A pair of lawmakers have put forward new legislation aimed at reforming what they describe as an antiquated system for licensing maritime professionals. The Mariner Exam Modernization Act, introduced by Representatives Mike Ezell (R-Miss.) and Salud Carbajal (D-CA) targets what they call "outdated, redundant, and unnecessarily burdensome" processes in the current Coast Guard

credentialing system. If enacted, the bill would direct the U.S. Coast Guard to develop and implement a plan to modernize the Merchant Mariner Credentialing exam, aiming to eliminate redundancies and improve efficiency within 270 days of receiving recommendations from a dedicated working group.

“The men and women pursuing careers in the maritime industry shouldn’t be held back by an antiquated credentialing system,” said Rep. Carbajal. “The Mariner Exam Modernization Act is a commonsense step to ensure our licensing process reflects the skills mariners actually need on the job—eliminating redundancy, updating outdated requirements, and making the path to certification more efficient. This legislation is about strengthening our maritime workforce and ensuring the Coast Guard’s processes keep pace with the needs of the 21st century.”

The legislation’s proponents argue that the current Merchant Mariner Credentials examination process forces candidates to demonstrate identical competencies multiple times — first through extensive practical assessments spanning years, followed by a comprehensive seven-part written examination. According to the bill’s sponsors, these inefficiencies are creating barriers for newcomers to the profession and taking valuable time away from training in crucial modern areas such as cybersecurity. They also note that the examination lacks adequate modern review mechanisms, leaving new graduates ill-prepared for contemporary maritime operations. “Our mariners deserve a credentialing system that reflects the realities of today’s maritime industry—not outdated exams and unnecessary hurdles... This is about building up America’s maritime workforce and supporting the professionals who keep America’s maritime commerce moving safely and efficiently,” said Rep. Ezell.

M.E.B.A. is onboard with the legislation and the USA Maritime coalition, which includes our Union, issued a statement in support of the bill saying, “The maritime industry continues to evolve and change, but the Coast Guard’s licensing exam hasn’t. The Mariner Exam Modernization Act will remove redundancies, ensure testing isn’t duplicative with other licensing requirements, and align testing with the realities of serving in the 21st century Merchant Marine. We look forward to working with Congress to pass this bill and remove one more impediment to creating new Merchant Marine officers.”

PROPOSAL TO CREATE VIRGIN ISLANDS OPEN REGISTRY RE-FLOATED

Reuters is reporting that the Trump administration is exploring the establishment of a second shipping registry based in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The news agency says the initiative is being considered as to whether it could help expand the commercial fleet sailing under the American flag. Reuters says that some Administration officials see the potential registry as strategically significant, and are evaluating if it could help strengthen military logistics capabilities and reduce U.S. reliance on foreign vessels for transporting critical supplies and equipment across global maritime routes.

Sources say the proposal is being spearheaded by the Northeast Maritime Institute’s Center for Ocean Policy and Economics’ (NMI/COPE) in concert with the Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands. “This is an innovative solution to strengthen American shipping,” USVI Governor Albert Bryan Jr. stated in a recent LinkedIn post. NMI/COPE President Eric Dawicki said, “It’s time to let the cat out of the bag. America has an opportunity to engage in strategic competition for maritime trade and commerce. We can regularize trade and truly take advantage of an opportunity that has been ignored for too long.”

Details of the proposal weren't available but the same parties were involved in promoting a Virgin Islands open registry plan several years ago to bypass the regulations and requirements of shipping under the Stars and Stripes. U.S.-flag shipping interests, including the M.E.B.A., were vocal in their opposition to the earlier plan presented in 2022, that would have allowed vessel owners to forego the hiring of American maritime workers. Calling the scheme "little more than a flag of convenience that has at its core the outsourcing of American maritime jobs," the 2022 coalition criticizing the proposal noted, "We instead urge Congress and the Administration to work with us to strengthen and expand the U.S.-flag fleet in order to create jobs for America's maritime workforce and to further enhance America's economic, homeland and military security."

AMP AD CAMPAIGN TO PAY TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN MARINERS

The American Maritime Partnership (AMP) is launching a new ad campaign that will serve as a patriotic tribute to American mariners and vessels, a force behind U.S. national, homeland, and economic security. The campaign, "Always Ready. Always Present," will run on cable television in Washington, D.C., and on digital channels, in partnership with trade association partners. It is timed with the Administration's focus on prioritizing the strengthening of U.S. shipbuilding and shipping industries.

"Our mariners are always on watch, from our shores and shipyards to America's waterways and deep-sea trade lanes. This ad is a celebration of their service and a reminder that America's strength on the water must never be taken for granted," said American Maritime Partnership President Jennifer Carpenter. "Congress and the Trump Administration continue to stand with the men and women of American Maritime. This campaign is a powerful reminder of why. We urge policymakers to continue to invest in American ships and American jobs to secure this great nation's future." You can see the ad here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBmOcIQmQkY>

UNION PLUS SWEEPSTAKES & SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES

M.E.B.A. members, retirees and their families - as well as members of affiliated M.E.B.A. unions - are eligible to take part in the 2025 Union Plus "Explore America the Beautiful" Sweepstakes and Social Media Challenges, that could net you fabulous prizes. Explore 2025 features three sweepstakes and four social media challenges throughout the year to help raise awareness about travel benefits that are exclusively available to union members and their families. M.E.B.A. is enrolled in dozens of moneysaving Union Plus programs ranging from life insurance to financing children's education.

The first sweepstakes "Explore America's Iconic Beaches" wrapped up in April but the next one - "Explore Iconic American Cities" continues through June 6. The current sweepstakes will award a \$5,000 cash prize AND a 3 to 5-night stay worth up to \$2,000 at a property available through the Union Plus Hotel Discounts Program. There is no purchase necessary. The sweepstakes is not open to the general public. In addition, there are a series of Social Media challenges as part of the promotion. For official rules and the online form to enter visit <https://www.unionplus.org/explore>

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. Assistant Representative Ola Lassley can be reached at the same number or via email at Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org.

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. 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.

In the wake of Executive Order 14251 that intends to strip collective bargaining rights and union protections for many federal agency employees, M.E.B.A. continues to maintain its status as the recognized representative for Engineering Officers in the Military Sealift Command and Army Corps of Engineers at this hour, and contract protections remain intact. The M.E.B.A. is reaching out to our mariners working for MSC and Army Corps to inform them that they can continue to shield their sailing careers by maintaining their membership in the M.E.B.A. Petitioned-for waivers exempting those Government Fleet mariners from the E.O. have not yet materialized. If the order stands and the affected mariners are turned into at-will employees, the Union will provide options for mariners to protect themselves and avenues to reap the benefits of union membership. Recently, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) discontinued processing union dues through payroll deductions. Even with successful waivers, the payroll deduction system for union dues is unlikely to be reinstated.

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

Monday, June 2 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, June 3 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, June 4 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, June 5 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, June 6 – **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.***