

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
**M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**  
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## **NATIONAL MARITIME DAY OBSERVED**

The contributions of U.S. shipping as well as past and present mariners across the country were recognized on Wednesday during the annual National Maritime Day observance in Washington DC.

In 1933, Congress selected May 22<sup>nd</sup> as National Maritime Day to honor mariners who have served our nation in times of peace and in war. The day is also a tribute to the maritime industry as a whole and its critical importance to our economy and national security. May 22<sup>nd</sup> marks the date in 1819 that the American steamship SAVANNAH left Savannah, Georgia, on what was the first trans-Atlantic voyage under steam power.

An observance at the Department of Transportation honored the great day with the theme of "Navigating the Future: Safety First!" Deputy Maritime Administrator Tamekia Flack hosted the ceremony that included addresses by Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg (by video), the Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command General Jacqueline Van Ovost, Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips; SIU President Dave Heindel, Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro and Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ). At the ceremony, World War II mariner Allen Johnson, who joined the war effort as a 17-year old, was introduced to a standing ovation and was honored by MarAd with a medal presentation.

Gen. Van Ovost said that mariners are a vital aspect of our nation's force projection and reiterated her agency's full-throated support of efforts to recruit, train and retain the next generation of merchant mariners. She stressed the need for the U.S. fleet to thrive – not just survive – and endorsed Military Sealift Command initiatives to improve conditions for mariners including increased shore leave and better pay. SIU President Heindel discussed the sacrifices made by mariners and the need to protect and support them, "give us the ships, give us the cargo and we'll deliver," he said.

Senator Mark Kelly, who was a 1986 Kings Point graduate and whose grandfather sailed on a WWII Liberty ship, gave extended remarks laying out steps needed to help revitalize U.S.-flag shipping. He is one of the leaders behind the recently released bipartisan "Congressional Guidance for a National Maritime Strategy" and mentioned several initiatives to boost the industry including financial incentives for companies using the U.S.-flag, restoring cargo preference requirements and agency

reimbursements, and increasing stipends for the MSP, TSP and cable security fleet. He also called for regulatory reforms to improve efficiencies in how the Coast Guard licenses and regulates vessels and additional tax benefits for U.S. mariners. You can view the event at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8O5DTTHT-uQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8O5DTTHT-uQ)

President Joe Biden issued a Maritime Day Proclamation leading into the weekend. Among other things, he noted, "...Merchant mariners are engines of our economy. They facilitate international trade and strengthen our supply chains by transporting billions of dollars of goods across oceans, seas, and waterways to the hands of American businesses and consumers. Our merchant mariners have always met the moment — and my Administration will always have their backs...."

### **NAVY SECRETARY SUPPORT FOR MARITIME STRATEGY**

During Thursday's Senate Armed Services Committee meeting, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro voiced his support for the recently published congressional action plan aimed at halting the decline of America's maritime strength. Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ) stressed the importance of bolstering the US Merchant Marine, expressing concerns about its current state and the associated national security risks. He pointed to a bicameral report titled "Congressional Guidance for a National Maritime Strategy," which lays out a detailed framework for rejuvenating the nation's maritime sector. Sen. Kelly also urged the Secretary to consider the report's recommendations.

"I have reviewed the recommendations," Del Toro responded with enthusiasm. "And I fully support all ten of them." The bipartisan group behind the report, which includes Congressmen John Garamendi and Mike Waltz, and Senators Mark Kelly and Marco Rubio, called for a thorough national maritime strategy to combat the decline of America's maritime power. The guidance document emphasizes the critical need to revitalize the U.S. maritime industry, citing its essential economic and national security implications.

In a compelling call to action, it urges immediate, substantial investment in America's maritime future, describing it as a once-in-a-generation opportunity. The report, backed by data from the Office of Naval Intelligence, highlights a staggering disparity: China's shipbuilding capacity surpasses that of the United States by a factor of 230. This significant imbalance jeopardizes the U.S.'s position in the global ocean economy, estimated to be worth between \$3 trillion and \$6 trillion. The report calls on government leaders to promptly address this critical issue. It urges the President to establish a National Maritime Council, led by a Presidential appointee, to develop and implement a comprehensive national maritime strategy. Furthermore, it appeals to Congress to review and adequately fund maritime agencies essential to the industry, such as the US Coast Guard, Maritime Administration and Federal Maritime Commission. These agencies have faced significant challenges due to chronic underfunding and understaffing. For example, MarAd operates with less than 2 percent of the workforce of the Federal Aviation Administration. Similar staffing shortages plague maritime desks in other departments, including the State Department and Treasury, further exacerbating the problem.

### **M.E.B.A. PUSH TO REPRESENT OSG DECK OFFICERS GOES TO NLRB REPRESENTATION ELECTION**

Deck Officers serving in OSG's U.S.-flag tanker fleet have been granted the right to choose if they want collective bargaining rights and the advantage of union membership. The National Labor Relations Board has approved a Representation Election for Chief Mates, Floating Chief Mates,

Second Mates, and Third Mates in the fleet. Engine Officers in the OSG U.S. tanker fleet are already represented by the M.E.B.A.

Ballots will be mailed to OSG Deck Officers on June 12, 2024, and must be returned to the Tampa NLRB office by October 22, 2024 for the NLRB ballot count which will take place on October 22, 2024 at 1400 local time.

M.E.B.A. has a lot to offer the OSG Deck Officers with the best contracts in the maritime industry - the highest paying jobs, most protective work rules and best benefits. The M.E.B.A. has a long and successful history with OSG dating back half a century.

### **SALTCHUK ACQUISITION OF OSG**

Saltchuk Resources, Inc. will acquire Overseas Shipholding Group, Inc. in a \$950 million merger agreement. Following the close of the transaction, OSG will operate as a stand-alone business unit within Saltchuk, becoming a member of its family of diversified freight transportation, marine service, and energy distribution companies. M.E.B.A. has closely monitored the situation which has unfolded over several months and expects OSG operations to continue as normal. “We are excited to enter into this new chapter together with Saltchuk, which has been a significant shareholder of OSG over the past several years and has a close understanding of our business,” said Sam Norton, OSG’s President and CEO. “Saltchuk’s operating companies have distinguished themselves in their respective segments, and this transaction partners us with an organization that shares our values and focus on customers. We are thrilled to soon join the Saltchuk family of companies.”

OSG’s Norton also noted that, “Saltchuk has expressed to us their intention to keep operating OSG as a standalone entity, running the business the same way we do today, under the leadership of our existing management team. Because of this, we anticipate there will be little impact to our existing staffing.”

### **M.E.B.A. PARTNERS WITH WOMEN OFFSHORE MENTORING PROGRAM**

Observed annually in May, International Day for Women in Maritime aims to promote the recruitment, retention, and empowerment of women in the sector, as well as a barrier-free workplace. 2024 also marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first federal academy to enroll women – the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY. This year’s International Day for Women in Maritime is dedicated to highlighting women’s role in maritime safety and environment. The M.E.B.A. Trustees Committee is continuously working to promote safety and health for everyone in the maritime industry.

The Committee is pleased to announce their partnership with Women Offshore on their mentoring program, with the goal of connecting maritime academy students and newly minted officers with those more experienced to share experiences, lessons, and fraternity. Participation in the program is a great opportunity to build a personal connection with someone who has “been there, done that” as well as to build your own professional network. To learn more and sign up click here: [Women Offshore MentorSHIP](#) To learn more about International Women in Maritime Day and the IMO please visit [IMO International Day for Women in Maritime](#) and [Safety 4 Sea International Day for Women in Maritime](#)

## **TRANSPORTATION LABOR LEADERS DISCUSS POLICY PRIORITIES**

M.E.B.A. took part in meetings this week with leaders from over 30 transportation unions at a bi-annual Washington DC Executive Committee meeting to adopt policy goals supporting transport workers. M.E.B.A. was represented at the meeting by President Adam Vokac, who sits on the Executive Board, and Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

At the meeting, TTD principals set key policy goals to improve safety and well-being of the nation's transportation systems and the workers who build, operate, and maintain them. Transportation labor leaders unanimously adopted new policy statements to address pressing issues affecting workers in maritime, rail, aviation, student transportation, and public safety sectors. Regarding our industry, the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, MD prompted transport leaders to highlight the need for stronger safety standards for international shipping. Labor leaders adopted a policy statement demanding improved global safety standards for ocean shipping. They also adopted policy statements calling for federal regulations to protect workers against extreme temperatures; federal regulations for safer freight train mechanical inspections; and decarbonization efforts that prioritize the well-being of rail workers. The leaders also urged the Administration to reject efforts to reduce the number of pilots in the flight deck of commercial airliners.

## **ITF LOOKING FOR MARINER RESPONSE TO SHORE LEAVE QUESTIONNAIRE**

M.E.B.A. mariners are encouraged to respond to an online questionnaire launched by the ITF Seafarers' Trust that will aid the organization's mission to promote and improve the wellbeing of seafarers worldwide. The Seafarer Shore Leave questionnaire will only take a couple of minutes and will help shape the Trust's understanding of shore leave practices that will help guide their future efforts to assist mariners. Check it out at [www.seafarerstrust.org](http://www.seafarerstrust.org)

## **IMPORTANT ELECTION INFORMATION**

Important materials related to the M.E.B.A. District election taking place this year have been forwarded to each of our Union halls and offices. The "All Ports Bulletins" detail useful election information including instructions for submitting nominations along with a nomination form.

The District-wide nomination period for elected officials' positions and National M.E.B.A. Delegates begins on June 3, 2024, and will end on July 12, 2024. Only nominations received during this period can be accepted and put before an elected rank and file Credentials Committee for qualification review. Nominations must be received at District Headquarters addressed to the Credentials Committee (c/o District President) no later than the close of business on July 12, 2024. Nomination forms can be obtained at M.E.B.A. Union halls and have been made available on our website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) on the "Documents & Member Notices" page (under M.E.B.A. HQ & Union Hall Operational Notices). You can also request a nomination form from Headquarters. Use of the form is not required. You may use your own form provided you meet all applicable requirements of the National Constitution and District No. 1-PCD, M.E.B.A. By-Laws.

A special election edition of the *Marine Officer* will be published in August 2024. Each candidate for office may submit a passport-style photograph (headshot) along with a campaign statement of up to 400 words. The statement should be designed to promote, educate and inform M.E.B.A. members about a candidate's qualifications and background. Statements and/or photographs are not a

requirement for nomination. Policies and platforms may be included but profanity or personal attacks on candidates for any office will not be accepted for publication.

At the July 2024 regular membership meetings, Credentials Committee members will be elected. No officer or candidate for office is eligible for election to this Committee. The Committee is scheduled to meet on July 16, 2024 to review and decide on the qualifications of each nomination received and will also review all statements submitted for the special election edition of the *Marine Officer*.

All members interested in running for a position are urged to review the National Constitution and District By-Laws. All M.E.B.A. Halls & Offices have a copy of these documents, and both are available on the “Documents & Member Notices” page of M.E.B.A.’s website.

In order for your ballot to count, you must be in good standing by November 15, 2024, with dues paid in accordance with the M.E.B.A. By-Laws, through the end of the quarter where applicable. All members and potential nominees are urged to pay their dues to the end of 2024 (or beyond) as soon as possible. In accordance with the By-Laws, “Ballots shall be mailed to the membership on September 1st of the election year and must be returned to the depository and received therein at the time ballots are collected as provided in Section 4. If September 1st falls on a holiday, or on a Sunday, ballots shall be mailed on the next succeeding business day. Ballots should be returned to the depository by November 30 and ballots not received in the depository when the ballots are collected, as provided in Section 4 hereof, shall be disqualified and not counted.” Tabulation will take place on December 2, 2024. The Union urges all members to make sure Headquarters, not just Plans, has your correct address so that you receive your ballot. Additional questions relating to the election can be forwarded to [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)

### **M.E.B.A. HALLS & OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY FOR MEMORIAL DAY**

All M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Monday, May 27th for Memorial Day. Take a moment to remember and honor those who died for our freedom. The National Moment of Remembrance, established by Congress, asks Americans wherever they are on Memorial Day at 3 p.m. local time to pause for a minute of silence in an act of national unity and reflection. You could also fly the American flag at half-staff until noon, fly the POW/MIA flag (and/or Merchant Marine flag), and perhaps ring a bell eight times to signify the moment.

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

Monday, June 3 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, June 4 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, June 5 – **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 6 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, June 7 – **Honolulu@1100**

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