

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
**M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**  
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*In this issue//Maritime Day Observances//WWII Mariners at This Sunday's Memorial Day Concert/Rep. Sought for L.A. Hall//TTD Policy Summit//Another Oiler for MSC Fleet//Union-Made Memorial Day//Last Chance for Applicants Seeking Membership//Halls & Offices Closed Monday for Memorial Day//*

## **MARITIME HAS ITS DAY**

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

This was the 90<sup>th</sup> celebration of Maritime Day which was established in 1933 to commemorate the May 22, 1819 Trans-Atlantic crossing of the S.S. SAVANNAH. Captained by Moses Rogers, the side-wheel steamer departed Savannah, GA on that day using steam propulsion – though it mostly relied on sail power for that voyage. The vessel arrived in Liverpool, England on June 20, 1819 and was met by cheering multitudes.

An observance at the Department of Transportation honored the great day on Monday with the theme of "Mariners Move the Nation: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow." M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac and several other M.E.B.A. members and staffers attended on behalf of the Union.

At the observance, Maritime Administrator Rear Adm. Ann Phillips applauded the valuable contributions of mariners pointing out that they are "our greatest asset." But she noted, "We are short the number of mariners needed in the event of a full mobilization exceeding 4 to 6 months - which is a very real scenario in a large-scale deployment."

Other speakers including Federal Maritime Commission Chairman Daniel Maffei pointed out that the "silent workforce" has always been vital to the nation's national and economic security, and mariners proved how crucial they are, yet again, during the COVID crisis, despite extended assignments, restricted shore leaves, and many other challenges and uncertainties.

The Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command Adm. Jacqueline Van Ovost said that mariners are a vital aspect of our nation's force projection. We cannot achieve success without merchant mariners, she said. They are the "difference between victory and defeat."

"Mariners are patriots," she continued. "They are people of deeds, not words. They will be there for us when we need them. And when they are called, they will rise to the occasion taking cargoes to the four corners of the world, across contested seas, in support of our national defense."

In Vero Beach, FL, a great new World War II Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial was unveiled and M.E.B.A. members, including Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway along with several M.E.B.A. retirees, were on hand for the ceremony. A handful of Florida-based World War II mariners were presented with the Congressional Gold Medal for their service and M.E.B.A. retiree Dru DiMattia, who is the President of the American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV), was a featured speaker.

The Los Angeles Maritime Day festivities were held at the Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial in San Pedro, CA on Monday. The well-attended event took place at the Memorial statue under slate grey skies. The observance was attended by M.E.B.A. members and retirees including L.A. Branch Agent Rich Doherty.

The Military Sealift Command hosted a Maritime Day celebration aboard the hospital ship USNS COMFORT, crewed with engineers represented by the M.E.B.A. The event began with remarks from MSC Commander Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer and featured keynote speaker Dave Yoho, a World War II Merchant Marine veteran.

“The Department of Defense depends on the Merchant Marine to support 90% of our sealift requirements in national emergency, crisis or conflict,” said Adm. Wettlaufer. “Long serving as our nation's ‘fourth arm of defense,’ American mariners bravely faced combatants and pirates, pandemics and natural disasters. They answer the call to serve their fellow Americans in ways and in places many of our fellow citizens don’t know about.”

During his speech, Yoho recalled his experience as a young mariner during wartime. “We were in great trouble when the war started. We were outmanned, outmaneuvered, out-gunned, and out-financed, but we took a collective stand,” he said. “I was a fireman water tender. I [asked an officer], ‘Sir, what’s the best way to get out of here if we take a hit?’ He said, ‘Kid, if we take a hit, you don’t get out of here.’ That’s the first time I realized we could get killed.” “The Merchant Marine had the highest mortality rate of any of the services. One out of 26 of us died,” said Yoho. “I bring you my story in hopes that you will tell others. Tell them about [mariners], and say we gave up our yesterdays for their tomorrows.”

President Joe Biden issued a Maritime Day Proclamation leading into the weekend. Among other things, he noted, “My Administration remains steadfast in its support of the Merchant Marine as well as the Jones Act, which ensures American workers see the benefits of our domestic maritime industry...The United States Merchant Marine underpins our Nation’s prosperity and upholds our Nation’s highest principles — freedom, liberty, and dignity. Today, and every day, we honor merchant mariners’ service and sacrifice and renew our commitment to stand by their side, from sea to shining sea.”

## **WWII MARINERS TO BE HONORED ON SUNDAY NIGHT AT MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT**

On Sunday evening, during the National Memorial Day Concert on the U.S. Capitol grounds in Washington D.C., the Public Broadcasting Service and Capital Concerts will honor more than 9,500 U.S. Merchant Marine men and women who were killed in action during World War II. WWII Merchant Marine veterans, representing the American Merchant Marine Veterans organization, will be honored in a special segment of the concert.

Dave Yoho, a WWII Merchant Marine veteran, will be a featured spokesman during the concert. He gave vivid and heartfelt remarks, recorded earlier, about our Nation's fallen heroes and the value of the Merchant Marine. His moving description of his wartime experience as a teenager and his respect for all his Merchant Marine shipmates will be a highlight of the show.

In addition to Yoho's interview, four Merchant Marine WWII veterans, William Balabanow, John Laughton, Charles Mills, and George Worsham, will honor their fallen shipmates during the show. In particular, Laughton and Worsham survived enemy attacks that sank their ships and killed many of their fellow mariners.

Captain Dru DiMattia, President of the American Merchant Marine Veterans, said, "I appreciate the decision to honor U.S. Merchant Marine WWII casualties during the National Memorial Day Concert, as valued contributors to the Allies' victory. This is a historical event for the U.S. Merchant Marine and our country."

Check your local listings and give it a look!

### **REPRESENTATIVE SOUGHT FOR L.A. HALL**

M.E.B.A. is accepting résumés from an energetic and supportive member interested in serving as the Representative at our Los Angeles Union hall in San Pedro. This is a rare and exceptional opportunity available only to a member in good standing.

The Representative will complete the unexpired term of the hall's recently-retired Patrolman which runs until December 31, 2024.

Those who wish to be considered for this position should send their résumé and a letter of interest to Executive Vice President Claudia Cimini at [ccimini@mebaunion.org](mailto:ccimini@mebaunion.org)

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

M.E.B.A. took part in meetings last week along with leaders from over 30 transportation unions at a Washington D.C. legislative summit. M.E.B.A. was represented at the meeting by President Adam Vokac and Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents 37 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. Attendees welcomed keynote remarks from Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chair Jennifer Homendy.

At the summit, transportation union leaders unanimously adopted policy statements that call on Congress to pass a comprehensive rail safety bill that promotes public safety; invest in firefighters to improve rail and air safety; pass a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill that includes worker-centered provisions; allow the use of federal funding for public transit operations; and reform education policies to address the maritime worker deficit.

## **NAVY ORDERS ANOTHER OILER FOR MSC FLEET**

The Navy has exercised an option with San Diego's NASSCO Shipyard to construct a ninth John Lewis-class oiler that will be part of the Military Sealift Command fleet. The Lewis-class vessels will provide underway replenishment of fuel and stores to US Navy ships at sea and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. M.E.B.A. represents the engineers in MSC's Civilian Mariner fleet.

The first ship, the USNS JOHN LEWIS was delivered last year. The USNS HARVEY MILK, USNS EARL WARREN, USNS ROBERT F. KENNEDY, USNS LUCY STONE and USNS SOJOURNER TRUTH are currently under construction. Work has not yet begun on the USNS THURGOOD MARSHALL and USNS RUTH BADER GINSBURG. The as-yet unnamed ninth ship is scheduled to begin construction in the third quarter of 2025.

The double-hulled 742-foot vessels have a full load displacement of 49,850 tons, with the capacity to carry 157,000 barrels of oil, a significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and up to a speed of 20 knots.

## **UNION-MADE MEMORIAL DAY**

Memorial Day is a time to reflect on those who gave their lives for our country as well as a time to gather with family and friends and kick off the summer over a long weekend. And a good gathering needs good food and drinks. If you're shopping for groceries, why not choose union-made? Here's a list to get you going. Happy Memorial Day!

**Hot Dogs** - Ball Park (UFCW, IBT); Butterball (UFCW, IBT); Farmer John (IBT); Hebrew National (UFCW, IBT); Hormel (IBT); Oscar Mayer (UFCW, IBT). **Ice Cream** - Alta Dena (BCTGM); Breyers (BCTGM, IBT); Good Humor (IBT). **Snacks** - Cheez-It (BCTGM); Chips Ahoy (BCTGM) Clausen's Pickles (BCTGM); Doritos (BCTGM, IBT); Fig Newtons (BCTGM); Frito Lay (BCTGM, IBT) Jell-O (UFCW); Rold Gold Pretzels (BCTGM, IBT); Sun Chips (BCTGM, IBT); Wheat Thins (BCTGM, IBT). **Soft Drinks** - 7 UP (BCTGM); Arizona Iced Tea (UFCW); Coke (IBT); Dr. Pepper (UFCW, UAW); Mountain Dew (IBT); Pepsi (IBT, UAW); Powerade (IBT); Sprite (IBT, UAW). **Coolers** - Rubbermaid (IBEW). **Beer** - (UAW, IUOE, IBT, IAM & SEIU) Anheuser-Busch; Black Eye Ale; Black Hawk Stout; Blue Heron Pale Ale; Boxer; Budweiser; Busch; Clear Creek Ice; Eye of the Hawk; Genesee; Honey Amber Rose; Huber; Icehouse; Landshark Lager; Lazy Mutt Farmhouse Ale; Leinenkugel; Lionshead; Mad River; Michelob; Miller; Milwaukee's Best; Minhas Oktoberfest; Natural Ice & Light; O'Doul's; Olde English 800; Pabst; Peregrine Pilsner; Pyramid; Red Dog; Red Tail Ale; Rolling Rock; Samuel Adams; Shergill IPA; and Shock Top.

## **LAST CHANCE UNTIL DECEMBER FOR APPLICANTS SEEKING MEMBERSHIP**

Qualified applicants trying to make membership in June must make sure they provide Headquarters with required documentation to ensure their inclusion on the next District Investigating Committee (DIC) report. The DIC meets twice a year to review applicants for membership and are finalizing their report that will be voted upon by members during the regular membership meetings that begin the week of June 5<sup>th</sup>.

To make membership, an applicant needs the required sailing days or specified years of employment with a particular bargaining unit, must be current with service charges and must complete other necessary requirements which may include an initiation fee and/or letters of recommendation. Applicants should know that they are responsible for providing their local Union hall/Headquarters with the documentation demonstrating their fulfillment of the application requirements.

Once they submit the requisite amount of sea time (or documented years of service) to Headquarters and have otherwise fulfilled the needed requirements as stated in the application packet they signed, they may be eligible for membership. Applicants who have fulfilled the necessary requirements should forward their information to Headquarters. Qualified applicants who fail to make the deadline will have to wait another six months – until the December report – to make membership. For further information you can visit your local union hall or contact the HQ Membership Department at (202) 638-5355 or [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 and honor fallen heroes.

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

Monday, June 5 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, June 6 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, June 7 – **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 8 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, June 9 – **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.*