

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
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CHRIS NARDONE TO TAKE OVER BRANCH DUTIES IN NORFOLK

The District Executive Committee has announced that Chief Engineer Chris Nardone will take over as the next Branch Agent in M.E.B.A.'s Norfolk Union hall and work alongside Ola Lassley assisting our Government Fleet members.

Nardone is currently heading up the engine room on the CAPE RACE, a Keystone-managed Ready Reserve Force fleet vessel deployed in Full Operating Status on a Government mission. He is expected to saddle up at the Norfolk hall in late May or early June following the conclusion of his ship's activation.

Chris is a 1990 Massachusetts Maritime Academy graduate who made application with the Union that same year. He immediately began sailing on a slew of Military Sealift Command ships and supported the war effort as a merchant mariner during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. In 2001, he was part of the engine crew aboard the MSC Hospital ship USNS COMFORT that responded to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and supported affected New Yorkers during that terrible time. He eventually amassed over 20 years of Chief Engineer experience including heading up engine rooms on 8 different M.E.B.A. contracted vessels.

He has sailed out of the Norfolk Union hall and has worked aboard the Portsmouth, VA-based CAPE RACE for the last few years. A frequent face at Norfolk Union hall membership meetings, Chris is a solid Union man and stalwart M.E.B.A. member who was part of the 2021 M.E.B.A. Financial Review Committee. He was elected as a Delegate to the National M.E.B.A. in late 2024 and served at the M.E.B.A. National Convention in March 2025. Chris will serve as the Branch Agent in Norfolk and Assistant Government Fleet Representative. Ola Lassley will continue his good work at the hall as Government Fleet Rep. and the two of them will share the dispatching duties.

M.E.B.A.-CREWED VESSEL AMONG PAIR OF U.S. SHIPS EXTRICATED FROM DANGER ZONE

Two U.S.-flag commercial vessels safely exited the Strait of Hormuz under U.S. military protection as efforts continue to restore shipping through the strategic waterway. The M.E.B.A.-crewed ALLIANCE FAIRFAX, a Maersk Line Pure Car/Truck Carrier sailing under the Maritime Security

Program, was shepherded to safety earlier this week, after spending over two months in a holding pattern in dangerous waters. The Crowley/Stena chemical tanker CS ANTHEM also completed a transit to safety this week without incident, as part of the administration's short-lived Project Freedom, a CENTCOM initiative aimed at restoring commercial shipping.

M.E.B.A. OFFICERS SINGLED OUT FOR PRESTIGIOUS MARAD AWARD

Three of our own are being honored by the Maritime Administration at this year's Maritime Day observance for their exceptional and sustained contributions to the U.S. Merchant Marine.

M.E.B.A.'s Captain Darin Huggins, Chief Engineer Christian Yuhas, and Captain Dru DiMattia were tapped by the Maritime Administrator to receive the Merchant Marine Medal for Outstanding Achievement — one of the highest honors awarded by MarAd to civilian mariners and maritime professionals. The award recognizes individuals who have made extraordinarily valuable contributions to the maritime industry, including humanitarian service, leadership, and long-term dedication to advancing the U.S. Merchant Marine. This year's honorees are being recognized in part for their volunteer efforts to preserve the legacy of World War II merchant mariners through the American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) and to educate the public on their vital service to the nation. Three additional recipients will also be honored: Dennis Kelly, Capt. Chris Edyvean, and the late John Pitts, who will be recognized posthumously.

The awards will be presented during MarAd's National Maritime Day celebration on May 22, hosted at U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters in Washington, D.C. The event will feature remarks from Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, Maritime Administrator Steven Carmel, and other leaders from across the maritime industry.

M.E.B.A. leadership is extremely proud of all the honorees, especially our three M.E.B.A. brothers. The recognition of these officers underscores the enduring importance of honoring maritime service, past and present, and highlights the continued commitment of M.E.B.A. members to preserving the legacy of those who came before us.

MOOSE MALLINI SAILS INTO THE SUNSET

Hard to believe, but the colorful Michael "Moose" Mallini, a hardworking Union man and longtime M.E.B.A. official, sailed into the sunset on April 17 at the age of 73. After years of dedicated service plying the waves as a Chief Engineer on a variety of vessels, Moose came onto the beach and turned in almost a decade of service as a Union official, giving back to the membership and assisting the next generation of M.E.B.A. mariners. He served as the Patrolman in our New Orleans hall for years in the early 2000s then further proved his versatility by deploying to a variety of Union halls around the country when the District Executive Committee needed him to fill various vacancies on a temporary basis. He spent time heading up the halls in Norfolk and Seattle before settling down at the Houston hall for a spell serving as Branch Agent.

Moose lived life on his own terms and made sure everyone around him had a good time along the way. Whether he was riding motorcycles, swapping sea stories with shipmates, or raising hell with family and friends on Mobile Bay, he brought laughter, adventure and an unmistakable spark wherever he went. His free spirit, booming personality and love of life made him unforgettable to all who had the privilege of knowing him. Moose's courage and instinct to help others extended far beyond the engine room and Union hall. In one memorable act of bravery, Moose fearlessly chased down and

helped police apprehend a violent assailant who had attacked a woman near his New Orleans home, an act for which the victim later called him “my hero.” That resulted in a subsequent *Telex Times* article entitled “M.E.B.A. Patrolman Neutralizes Drug-Addled Maniac.” Another time, he put a Headquarters phone call on hold while he dashed outside during a hurricane to rescue a woman who was being blown away by the high winds.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 5:00 pm, at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, 1621 Boykin Boulevard, Mobile, AL, with a party to follow, in the parish hall. Burial will be a private family service at Catholic Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Sailors’ Snug Harbor, which advocates for retired merchant marines at www.thesailorssnugharbor.org or to Catholic Maritime Ministry, at <https://mobarch.org/maritime>

END OF PARTIAL SHUTDOWN SIGNALS RESUMPTION OF NMC, REC SERVICES

Funding for the Department of Homeland Security and US Coast Guard has been restored, and the National Maritime Center (NMC) and Regional Examination Centers (RECs) are resuming normal operations in a phased approach to prioritize the most critical functions and address the backlog of applications and examinations resulting from the lapse in appropriations.

- The Application Submission Portal (ASAP) for submission of applications and supporting documentation remains active.
- Applications for merchant mariner credentials (MMCs), medical certificates, and course approvals and related requests will be processed on a first-in/first-out basis.
- Only applications that demonstrate a clear and documented nexus to national defense will be considered for expedited processing. Marine employers with national defense-related requests are advised to contact the NMC Customer Service Center (CSC).
- All extension policies and mitigation measures outlined in Update #3: Mitigation Efforts – Extensions, dated April 22, 2026, remain in effect through their stated expiration dates. Mariners should refer to that bulletin for full details.

During the prolonged lapse, the NMC accumulated a significant backlog of applications, currently more than 19,000 submissions and growing. Processing timelines are expected to extend 8-12 months from the date a completed application is received. To avoid potential delays and disruptions to employment and operations, mariners are strongly encouraged to apply at least 8-12 months in advance of expiration. After submission, mariners should also allow additional time for applications to be entered into the system before checking the status online or contacting the CSC. RECs resume operations; however, counter (walk-in) services will remain suspended until further notice to allow staff to focus on backlog reduction and examination scheduling. Examination scheduling will be conducted in the following order of priority:

1. Mariners with previously scheduled examinations on or after May 1, 2026: Appointments will be honored as scheduled.
 2. Mariners whose examinations were scheduled and cancelled between February 17, 2026, and May 1, 2026: Mariners will be contacted by REC staff to reschedule at the earliest available opportunity.
 3. All other applicants: Scheduling will open once priority groups have been accommodated.
- During the initial resumption period, the CSC will not schedule examinations. After the period for mariners whose examinations were canceled during the furlough to re-schedule is completed, the

opportunity to schedule an exam for all mariners will be available through the CSC. Anticipate opening exam schedule for all other mariners shortly.

Course approvals will continue to be processed on a first-in, first-out basis. For questions, contact the Customer Service Center via the NMC online chat system, by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

MSC TOWING/SALVAGE SHIP CHRISTENED

Austal USA has christened the future USNS SOLOMON ATKINSON (T-ATS 12) at its Mobile, Ala., shipyard, marking a significant milestone in the construction of the U.S. Navy's newest Towing, Salvage, and Rescue Ship. The vessel will be turned over to the Military Sealift Command upon completion. Civilian Mariners in the MSC are represented by M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU. Named in honor of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Solomon Atkinson, a pioneering Navy SEAL, plank owner of the SEAL teams, and one of the service's most decorated Alaska Native sailors from the Metlakatla Indian Community, the ship recognizes a legacy of service, leadership, and dedication to the nation.

SOLOMON ATKINSON is the second of three T-ATS ships being constructed at Austal USA. The Navajo-class Towing, Salvage, and Rescue Ships are designed to provide ocean-going towing, salvage, and rescue capabilities to support fleet operations. This multi-mission vessel will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and feature approximately 6,000 square feet of deck space to support a wide range of embarked systems and mission sets. The T-ATS platform will support missions including towing, salvage, rescue, oil spill response, humanitarian assistance, and wide-area search and surveillance.

FORMER ACTING MARAD BOSS JOINS AAPA

Sang Yi, who served as Acting Maritime Administrator in the gap before current MarAd boss Steve Carmel took over, has been appointed as the new President and CEO of the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA). M.E.B.A. has had a terrific working relationship with the 2003 Kings Point graduate who had served as MarAd's Deputy Administrator since June 2025 before seizing this opportunity. Before his appointment to MarAd, Yi served in the U.S. House of Representatives for almost a decade and a half. Prior to his congressional career, he served in the Intelligence Community. Yi also served as a City Councilman in Fairfax, VA. For more than two decades, Yi has served as an officer in the Navy Reserve and held a U.S. Coast Guard-issued Merchant Marine license.

AAPA represents more than 130 public port authorities in the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America. Yi noted, "I am honored to lead AAPA...This is a critical time for the maritime industry, and investment in America's ports has never been more crucial. I look forward to working with AAPA's Board and membership to represent the ports and companies that are the backbone of the supply chain and produce countless jobs across the Americas."

COAST GUARD CREATES SPECIAL MISSIONS COMMAND TO COUNTER MARITIME THREATS

The Coast Guard is launching a new Special Missions Command (SMC) to monitor and respond to maritime security threats at home and abroad. The SMC will be commissioned in October 2026 and be based in Kearneysville, West Virginia. The Special Missions will include Maritime Security Response Teams to serve as the Coast Guard's first responders to maritime terrorism and other high-risk threats. They will be equipped to conduct the nation's most critical maritime security and defense operations at home or abroad, with both partner law enforcement agencies and joint services. Port

Security Units will provide shoreside and waterborne security including point defense of strategic shipping, designated critical infrastructure, and high value assets in joint and combined expeditionary warfare environments. In addition, Tactical Law Enforcement Teams will provide law enforcement expertise across the full spectrum of maritime response situations with specific focus on counter-trafficking and criminal networks attempting to exploit maritime transit zones. Maritime Safety and Security Teams will rapidly deploy boat teams that provide port, waterway, and coastal security capability to safeguard the public, protect the marine transportation system, and respond to maritime crime, sabotage, and terrorist activity. Additional units, capabilities and functions may be incorporated into the Special Missions Command in the future.

ADDITIONAL SPACE IN UPCOMING INSTRUMENTATION, WARTSILA COURSES

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that it has additional space available in the following courses:

- *Instrumentation - June 1-12*
- *Wartsila Flex Basic - June 3-5*

Applications can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org) or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

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

Friday, May 8 – Honolulu@1100

Monday, June 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.

Tuesday, June 9 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, June 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org

Thursday, June 11 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, June 12 – 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.***

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. Website: www.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 Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram. The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org