

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 – Bill to Overturn Anti-Worker Orders to Get Vote//NTSB Traces Cause of Bridge Disaster//Bridge Repair Bill Skyrockets//Crews Recognized for Environmental Excellence//M.E.B.A. Holiday Hoopla//Applicants Seeking Membership Should Forward Their Docs//

LEGISLATION TO OVERTURN ANTI-WORKER ORDERS WILL GET A VOTE

A discharge petition on the Protect America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2550) earned its 218th signature from House Members this week, which will force a vote on the Floor for the legislation to restore union rights to federal workers. Earlier this year, two union-busting executive orders stripped over a million Federal employees of their union rights - on the auspices of enhancing the national security of the United States - including M.E.B.A. mariners sailing in the Military Sealift Command and Army Corps fleets.

The House version of the Protect America's Workforce Act was introduced by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1) and Jared Golden (D-ME-2). Almost every House Democrat signed on to the effort and Republicans who are standing with Federal employees include Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Don Bacon (R-NE), Rob Bresnahan (R-PA), Nick LaLota (R-NY) and Mike Lawler (R-NY). A Senate version was introduced by Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) in September and so far has garnered 47 co-sponsors, though only one Republican signed on to the bill as yet (Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski). More than 70% of Americans — Democrats, Republicans and Independents — support unions.

NEW MSC COMMANDER

Rear Adm. Benjamin Nicholson has taken over as Commander of the Military Sealift Command following the retirement of Rear Adm. Phillip Sobeck, who helmed the MSC for two years.

He is a graduate of the Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Nicholson becomes the 30th Commander of MSC after serving as the assistant deputy of Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy.

NTSB TRACES SOURCE OF DALI DISASTER THAT WRECKED BALTIMORE BRIDGE

The National Transportation Safety Board said this week that the power failure aboard the Singapore-flagged DALI that led to the destruction of Baltimore Key Bridge in March 2024 was caused by a loose signal wire in the high-voltage switchboard. This disconnection, they said, led to a loss of propulsion and steering, leaving the vessel unable to maneuver near the Key Bridge, resulting in an accident that led to the collapse of the bridge and the loss of six lives.

An earlier Department of Justice investigation found that the DALI experienced a power loss the day before the encounter with the Key Bridge – which required the Coast Guard to be notified “immediately after addressing the resultant safety concerns.” However, DOJ points out, it was not reported. DOJ said, “This tragedy was entirely avoidable. The electrical and mechanical systems on the DALI were improperly maintained and configured in a way that violated safety regulations and norms for international shipping...In sum, this accident happened because of the careless and grossly negligent decisions made by (owner) Grace Ocean and (operator) Synergy Marine, who recklessly chose to send an unseaworthy vessel to navigate a critical waterway and ignored the risks to American lives and the nation’s infrastructure.”

The M.E.B.A. strongly agrees with the DOJ. A single loose wire was not the only cause of the destruction of the vital bridge that killed six people. Malfunctions and breakdowns happen all the time at sea. That is why quality Officers and crews and a sufficiently sized maneuvering crew are so important. The cause of the collision was the way the company and foreign crew chose to operate the vessel in an unsafe manner, with electrical redundancies on manual mode and jury-rigged fuel delivery to the generators that did not have automatic restart capability after a black out. These were profit-driven human-made decisions to operate in this unsafe fashion, it was not an accident nor a single loose wire’s fault.

The NTSB said the initial blackout was traced to the loose signal wire in the vessel’s high-voltage switchboard. Improperly installed wire-label banding prevented the wire from seating fully in its terminal block. This caused a high-voltage breaker to trip, cutting power to the low-voltage bus, which controlled propulsion, steering, and main engine cooling pumps. They said the vessel experienced a second blackout due to insufficient fuel pressure for the diesel generators; the flushing pump used to supply fuel was not designed to automatically restart after a power loss, leaving the generators without power. They noted that operational oversight by Synergy failed to address this unsafe practice.

The NTSB noted that contributing factors to the disaster included insufficient emergency countermeasures, delayed worker evacuation, and the lack of a port warning system that may have alerted highway workers on the bridge and given them time to attempt to evacuate.

The DALI has since been repaired and is back in service for Grace Ocean and Synergy Marine. However, nine of the vessel’s crewmembers at the time of the accident 19 months ago, including the Chief Engineer and Captain, are still being restricted to Baltimore, MD while lawsuits play out and potential criminal charges are considered.

EXTENDED PRICE TAG, TIMELINE FOR NEW BALTIMORE KEY BRIDGE

Reconstruction of Baltimore’s Francis Scott Key Bridge — destroyed in the March 2024 collapse that claimed six lives — will cost far more and take longer than originally planned, according to a new Maryland Transportation Authority announcement.

State officials now estimate the price at \$4.3 to \$5.2 billion, with the bridge unlikely to reopen before late 2030, pushing the timeline back roughly two years from earlier projections, the Maryland Transportation Authority said. The revised figures more than double the prior estimate of \$1.7 to \$1.9 billion, previously confirmed by the Maryland Department of Transportation.

MARINERS, COMPANIES RECOGNIZED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

Merchant mariners responsible for environmental excellence were honored recently at the Chamber of Shipping of America (CSA) 22nd Annual Environmental Achievement Awards Dinner, an event held in Washington DC on November 12. A slew of shipping companies including Keystone, Crowley, Chevron and many others were recognized for their oversight of 1377 vessels with 13,358 cumulative years of operation without a reportable environmental incident.

Sean Kline, President and CEO of CSA, noted, “Tonight, we honor the men and women at sea and ashore whose commitment to safe and environmentally responsible operations sets the standard for our industry. These awards are not just about statistics; they are about a culture of stewardship that runs deep across the U.S. maritime community. Every year, our seafarers and companies prove that protecting the oceans and powering the global economy go hand-in-hand. Their professionalism, leadership, and dedication strengthen both our industry and our nation, and it is a privilege to recognize their achievements on behalf of the entire maritime community.”

THE LOWDOWN ON THE THROWDOWNS: YOUR GUIDE TO THE M.E.B.A. HOLIDAY HOOPLA

Forget “Silent Night” — the holiday season is about to get LOUD. Some wise soul once said, “Good friends and great stories don’t need a reason — just a place and a time.” So grab your crew, ditch the logbook, and chart a course straight into a typhoon of tinsel, toasts, and total chaos — M.E.B.A.-style! Here’s where the union-fueled holiday party hurricanes make landfall:

M.E.B.A. Headquarters & American Maritime Congress (D.C.) - On **Thursday, December 4**, the HQ and AMC crews host rooftop revelry in a high-altitude hoedown lighting off at 1730. The sky-high merriment will feature music, mischief and mayhem and won’t power down ‘til the wee hours. **Seattle** - On **Friday, December 5**, M.E.B.A.’s Fife hall becomes ground zero for the good times as the epicenter of holiday joy. Anchors up and party down from 1300 to 1600! **Boston** - Right after the membership meeting (around 1200) on **Monday, December 8**, the party fever in Boston will swell like a storm and members will whoop it up with rollicking holiday hubbub. The Beantown crew goes full force on a free-form fiesta fueling festive fervor from foredeck to fantail!

Charleston - Gavel down, sails up! On **Tuesday, December 9** after the membership meeting, Charleston swaps business for boisterousness. The fun fires up at 1630 at Holy City Brewing (1021 Aragon Ave.) with a flood of food and grog flowing like the tide. The night will refuse to drop anchor! **New Orleans** - Hold onto your beignets! The Crescent City goes full Cajun crazy on **Wednesday, December 10** when the NOLA gang transforms their post-meeting hours into full-blown, merry chaos. The swanky soiree gets going at 1500 and rolls on until the gumbo runs dry. **Los Angeles (San Pedro)** – After the meeting on **Thursday December 11**, the left coast goes loco as members storm the SS LANE VICTORY (2400 S. Miner Street, Berth 52 in San Pedro) for a deck-rocking, wave crashing holiday bash at 1400. Bring your sea legs and party shoes - full steam ahead until 1600.

New York/New Jersey – On **Thursday, December 11**, the Big Apple meets big energy after the final gavel drops at the membership meeting (around 1400) at the hall. It’s full throttle and no lifeboats, the only order from the bridge is to keep the good times afloat. **Norfolk** – After the membership meeting on **Thursday December 11**, the Norfolk hall trades paperwork for pandemonium. Members will go into full-blown festive overdrive at 1400 with a high-octane hootenanny that will wake the whole waterfront. **Baltimore** - Charm City unleashes a wingding on **Thursday, December 11** as the

Baltimore hall erupts into a riotous daytime rager from 1200 to 1700. All hands on deck for the holiday hullabaloo! **Tampa** – The Sunshine State crew sails straight into celebration mode after the **Thursday December 11** membership meeting. The gang will gather at Gaspar's Grotto (1805 E. 7th Ave.) two blocks from the hall, from 1500 to 1800. Wear your ugliest sweater for the contest. It'll be a rollicking refuge of raucous revelry - a froth-flying, fun-fueled fortress of food, friends, and frivolity!

Cleveland - There are no sanctioned shenanigans in Cleveland this season — but Cheryl has a cookie tray that's armed and dangerous. Come get your paws on some sweet treats! **Oakland** - On **Friday, December 12**, the Oakland hall hoists the holiday sails and plunges headfirst into a full-blown joyful maelstrom! Laughter will smash like thunderous waves, stories will swing from every mast, and the party will surge like a wild, untamable tide from 1230 to 1600 — no life jackets required! **Jacksonville** - On **Friday, December 12**, M.E.B.A. Jacksonville launches a bow-to-stern blowout at Pat's Lounge (4870 Highway Ave.), 1400 to 1700. Brace for a tidal wave of gourmet grub, rollicking sea shanties, and full-throttle, deck-shaking shenanigans that won't let up! **Honolulu** - Aloha means "hello," "goodbye," and "let's party." On **Thursday, December 11**, M.E.B.A. Honolulu hosts the ultimate island bash from 1000 to 1400 p.m. – it's a loco-sized ho'olaule'a! **Houston** - Finally, the Lone Star State takes the helm and makes waves on **Friday, December 12** at M.E.B.A.'s Houston hall (6604 South Loop E.). The crew kicks off the Texas-sized, full-throttle fiesta at 1800 and raises a ruckus until 2200 when the commotion finally dies down.

As someone once said, "Why drift in calm waters when you can ride the storm?" So, don't be tardy for the party, Marty! Stop on by. Catch up with old shipmates, meet new friends and raise a glass to those who can't attend. Be safe!!! And make it a joyful holiday season!

75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN DUNKIRK

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Hungnam Evacuation, and an upcoming commemorative event will honor the service members, civilians and especially the merchant mariners who took part in the historic operation. The Hungnam Evacuation was a massive humanitarian and military sealift conducted in December 1950 during the Korean War. As United Nations forces fell back from advancing Chinese troops, the port of Hungnam became the staging point for one of the largest emergency sealifts in history. Over the course of two weeks, U.S. Navy and Merchant Marine ships evacuated approximately 100,000 UN troops, 17,500 vehicles, and nearly 350,000 tons of cargo. Most remarkably, they also rescued around 100,000 North Korean civilians fleeing Communist control, transporting them to safety in the south.

At the heart of this humanitarian achievement was the SS MEREDITH VICTORY, a U.S.-flag merchant ship now remembered as "the Ship of Miracles." Designed to carry 12 passengers, the MEREDITH VICTORY instead safely evacuated an estimated 14,000 civilians from Hungnam — believed to be the largest single-ship rescue in history. Despite being unarmed, overloaded, and operating in freezing conditions, the crew completed the voyage without the loss of a single life, even welcoming five babies born at sea.

There will be a conference commemorating the 75th anniversary of the evacuation where they will honor those who played a role including the heroic MEREDITH VICTORY mariners. It will take place at the MITAGS Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights on Monday, December 15th from 9 am to 3 pm. You can visit <https://hungnam75.eventbrite.com> to find out more and register.

APPLICANTS SEEKING MEMBERSHIP SHOULD PROMPTLY FORWARD DOCS TO HQ

Qualified applicants trying to make membership in December 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 will issue a report in late November to be voted upon by members during the regular December membership meetings (December 8-12).

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. Applicants have been mailed letters from HQ referencing the missing requirements needed for that applicant to make membership. Referenced documents must be submitted to HQ before the DIC finalizes their report at the end of November if the applicant wishes to be considered for membership during this review period.

If you have questions about your status, you can contact the Membership Department at membership@mebaunion.org. All questions about service charge payments should be directed to the M.E.B.A. Accounting Department at accounting@mebaunion.org. Qualified applicants who fail to make the deadline will have to wait another six months – until the June 2025 report – to make membership.

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

Monday, December 8 – **Boston@1200. Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, December 9 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

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

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

Friday, December 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.***